



# ALUMNI JOURNEYS





# MERIT SCHOLARS





# FOREWORD

This volume shares a selection of inspiring stories of a few Dialog Merit Scholars who have travelled beyond boundaries in their quest for timeless and limitless knowledge, finding their way into the world to make a difference.

Since its launch in 2003, the Dialog Merit Scholarship Programme, supported by Dialog Axiata PLC, has supported talented and promising students who have emerged as high-flyers at the district and national levels at the G.C.E Ordinary Level and G.C.E Advanced Level Examinations – encouraging them to develop knowledge and skills in the field of engineering. In its efforts to contribute to the development of the telecommunication industry and the nation building process, the Dialog Scholarship Programme has worked with an emphasis on nurturing talents for the future, providing financial aid and guidance to a cohort of future professionals and leaders in the industry. Over the years, these scholarships have helped students striving for excellence in their education and to carry it on in their lives and careers.

Today, as we celebrate more than a decade of the Dialog Merit Scholarship Programme, we take great pride in presenting this volume of stories to commemorate great achievements of these Dialog Scholars who have displayed immense academic excellence, courage, determination and commitment in every aspect in life. The book unveils the amazing life-changing journeys of 40 scholars among over 600 scholars. The profiled individuals reflect Dialog Scholars from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds representing each district of the country.

This volume gives these scholars the opportunity to express their gratitude to those who stood beside them to support their journey, to emerge victorious as intelligent and knowledgeable individuals. This simple exercise to applaud the achievements of Dialog Merit Scholars, also aims to further lend insight to aspiring students in an effort to influence them to becoming innovative and thoughtful leaders of society, poised to act with a boundless sense of responsibility towards the local and global community. This book reinforces the importance of recognising students' achievements and providing the next generation of students with necessary strength and guidance - allowing them to flourish intellectually and personally to make a positive impact on society.

# Message from Hon. Lakshman Kiriella Minister of Higher Education and Highways



As a matter of policy, the Government of Sri Lanka works with a special focus on education, especially higher education, and has allocated significant funds towards the sphere of education through the budget, taking necessary steps to increase bursary and scholarship funds and to improve facilities offered to students. However, there is still a gap, and the funds never seem adequate. Under such circumstances, we praise private corporations like Dialog highly, for coming forward to support students financially, encouraging them to further their studies in the highly prized field of engineering , with a futuristic vision.

Sri Lanka is on the cusp of a major social, economic and technological transformation – and the country requires the right skills and resources, especially in the field of innovation and technology. The latest technological developments of the world today have created an increasing demand for highly qualified professionals with relevant knowledge in technology. In this age and time, the Sri Lankan Government has also recognized the need to produce more professionals in the field to help advance the development of innovation and technology in the country, and to level the playing field for our graduates to receive an equal opportunity to compete effectively in the global market.

In this journey, we commend the efforts made by Dialog in its contribution to expanding the opportunities available for local students, by offering scholarships for potentially high achievers to pursue studies in electronics and telecommunication, allowing them to enter careers that are in high demand, locally and internationally. We hope, Dialog's attempt to motivate students through scholarship opportunities will inspire the next generation of students and the society at large.

Hon. Lakshman Kiriella  
Minister of Higher Education and Highways

# Message from Hon. Akila Viraj Kariyawasam Minister of Education



I am very pleased to send this message to the celebration of Dialog Scholarship Programme of gathering of past scholars and congratulate the Dialog for this initiative.

As a government, we have set our goals to strengthen and improve resource and innovation capacity of schools in producing knowledgeable individuals – while facilitating a great number of students to receive higher education as they graduate from school after the A/Level examination.

The Government of Sri Lanka has identified education as a national priority – and therefore, we have taken steps to increase budgetary allocations to fulfill physical and human resources requirements of schools. We also aspire to give every student access to proceed to advanced level education irrespective of ordinary level prescribed qualifications and to pursue their education their interests, while creating an alternative education pathway for students who drop out from school after the O/Level examination. We plan to introduce an array of new subjects to the school curriculum in the future to produce a career-ready generation of students to meet the modern-day demands and requirements. Most importantly, we recognise the need to invest more in digital education for school students as innovation and technology is of paramount importance in this modern era. Therefore, we have taken steps to introduce digital technology at the school level, opening new avenues for students, equipping them with the appropriate skills required for the 21st century. The Ministry of Education has taken numerous initiatives, and designed various programmes to encourage young students to gain excellence in innovation and technology, thinking globally and foreseeing a better future for the country and its development.

To accomplish this task, Dialog has come forward to identify highflyers at the District and National Level, to offer the students financial aid to further their studies in the electronics and telecommunication field, aiming to transform the workforce of the country to better suit the technology-driven world. While congratulating the successful delivery of the Dialog Merit Scholarship Programme for over a decade, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Dialog for extending support to the government's efforts in the country's digital transformation process.

Hon. Akila Viraj Kariyawasam  
Minister of Education

# Message from Dr Hans Wijayasuriya

(Immediate Past) Group Chief Executive - Dialog Axiata PLC



Education has been central to Sri Lanka's development story, and to Dialog's story. Universal education, demanded by visionary leaders and realised by tireless technocrats and bureaucrats, has been a key enabler of Sri Lanka's people-driven success. Though the challenges and bottlenecks standing in the way of access to education to start with and the achievement of excellence downstream are many, the rewards to those who strive to achieve, will manifest in the form of multifaceted multipliers delivering immense value to our nation's forward journey.

It has been the vision of many a Sri Lankan government, corporate and citizen to ensure that the access to education and the facilitation of excellence be rendered plural and ubiquitous. Much has been achieved but many asymmetries remain even today – the challenges of affordability, distance, family care remain a material obstacle to many a brilliant Sri Lankan.

Dialog is a Company made up of Sri Lankans from every walk of life, proud to serve Sri Lankan citizens, who similarly originate from a broad cross section of demographic and socio-economic segments. Dialog strives on the excellence of its people and is proud of the culture of high performance, Integrity, equity and plurality it has nurtured within its team of Sri Lankans over the years. To turn our hands to levelling access to educational excellence across our nation, then, is an act of natural instinct for Dialog's many keen problem-solvers. Our initiatives targeting the elimination of asymmetries in the availability and affordability of high quality education range from our Nenasa Distance Learning Network spanning 2000 rural schools, through to the Dialog Scholar programme, the beneficiaries of which we celebrate today.

Much time has passed since the first Ordinary Level and Advanced Level students, one each from every district of the island, received their first monthly disbursement. The first ten batches of scholars, now counting a total of over 700 top performers, and their achievements, are a tremendous pride to everyone at Dialog and indeed to every customer and shareholder who has been party, in however small a way, to their success.

The stories of the more recent, current, and future Dialog Scholars are just being written, or are yet to be imagined. It has been, and it will remain a privilege for Dialog to be a part of their diverse, but uniformly value-creating journeys. We congratulate all the Dialog Scholars, and wish for them all success and a life which we hope will also involve giving back to our country and people.

**Dr. Hans Wijayasuriya**  
(Immediate Past) Group Chief Executive  
Dialog Axiata PLC

# Message from Supun Weerasinghe

Group Chief Executive – Dialog Axiata PLC



Inclusivity is a key facet of Dialog's business model, and it has served as a phenomenal transformational agenda within our community. Our 4 A's credo (affordability, availability, applicability and affinity) has enabled Dialog to create and share value amongst all stakeholders, ensuring that the pervasive qualities of ICTs are made available to all Sri Lankans to enrich and enhance their quality of life. We have been aggressive in our product development initiatives just as we were with respect to our transformational initiatives targeting a platform of sustainable profitability.

Education is a primary pillar in our ethos of inclusion, and forms the foundation for the digitally connected future that we envisage for Sri Lanka. In pursuing this cause to provide parity education opportunities for Sri Lankan youth and enrich the knowledge capital of our citizens; Dialog has connected the unconnected employing its competencies in digital technology. The 'Nenasa' satellite-based distance education programme serves as the single largest investment and most comprehensive programme in corporate responsibility in the country, connecting 2,000 underserved schools with the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education to bridge the divide in the education system. The higher education and technology scholarship programme we launched in 2003 supports students from across the country through their Ordinary Levels all the way up to tertiary education, and supplemented by our associations and investments such as the Dialog-University of Moratuwa Mobile Communications Laboratory for specialized research in electronics, mobile and communications technologies.

These programmes are aimed at empowering outstanding students from across Sri Lanka to accomplish their future aspirations. This holistic approach towards education – from Ordinary Levels to higher education and even beyond – enables us to create significant value outcomes, and as alluded before, pervades all aspects of our business and sustainability efforts. ICTs play a pivotal role in the growth and development of a nation, and Dialog's goal is to make education and technology affordable and accessible to all segments of society in Sri Lanka to create sustainable social equality and inclusion.

Dialog's goal is to transform Sri Lankan lives through contribution to sustainable development in the country. We will continue to champion inclusive business agendas and deliver value to every Sri Lankan.

This book shares the inspirational journeys of a few Dialog Merit Scholars who have molded themselves into exceptional Sri Lankans who have made us all proud. On behalf of the 12 million Sri Lankans who patronize us, I wish to congratulate all the Dialog Merit Scholars with the anticipation of seeing these empowered individuals give back to society as responsible and capable citizens.



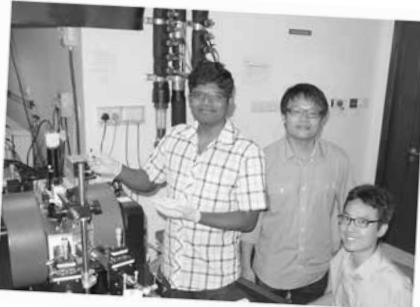
# A Global Platform, a Life-Sized Goal and Challenging the World



“Being a Dialog scholar was one of the best things that happened in my life. All that I have achieved is built around it. I am grateful”

Kulothungasagaran from Batticaloa

# Kulothungasagaran Narayananpillai



Currently attached to Global Foundries, Singapore, as its Principal Engineer, with a PhD. from the National University of Singapore (NUS), Kulothungasagaran had completed just one semester at the University of Moratuwa, when he won a special Dialog Merit Scholarship to continue his Bachelor's Degree at the Multimedia University in Malaysia (MMU). The four-year degree was fully sponsored by Dialog and saw him right through to his Doctoral studies at the NUS. He is also a member of the IEEE and the IEEE-magnetic chapter.

"Batticaloa is my home town. I schooled at St Michael's College, which was in the town itself. My father is a lawyer and the strongest influence in my life. I regard him my hero. My mother is a lovely, soft-spoken lady who selflessly took care of each member of the family and extended family. Home was such a secure place to go back to. I have four siblings. My older brother is a doctor and the others are yet in school. My father urged us to dream big. We just followed his example and applied ourselves to our studies."

Sagaran's childhood is marked by the conflict that ravaged the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka. "We spent most of our time at home with family. It was mostly school and home and, of

course, playing with my friends from the neighborhood and with my siblings. It was a simple, middle-class life that allowed me to dream big. Well, I am thankful that I realised those dreams" he says.

"If schooling was good, then I must say University life was fantastic. It is an excellent eye-opener to know that there are those who are smarter than you – from all over the island! It's a good lesson to learn. Thanks to Dialog, seven of us were able to enter MMU. It was a relief for me to have these friendships while studying there" he adds.

Sagaran is grateful for the education he received and opportunities that came his way, through the Dialog Merit Scholarship programme. Reading for his PhD., however, he says was quite a challenge in comparison to completing his Degree.

"Doing a PhD. is a journey by itself. It can be stressful, unless well-managed. Whether it is time, the process itself, relationship with my lecturer or life itself – everything should be managed well to create the balance that is so necessary in facing such a challenge. It can be daunting too, especially, when the selected project doesn't work out as expected. I don't believe there are failures in life – but there



can be setbacks. Then, one needs to evaluate, seek advice and move on. Well, that is the academic world, but we do grow in the process to face real challenges, in the real world. Something that I learnt in my childhood has stayed with me: 'Work hard and victory shall follow'. This has allowed me to overcome whatever difficulty and have the focus I need to have" he muses.

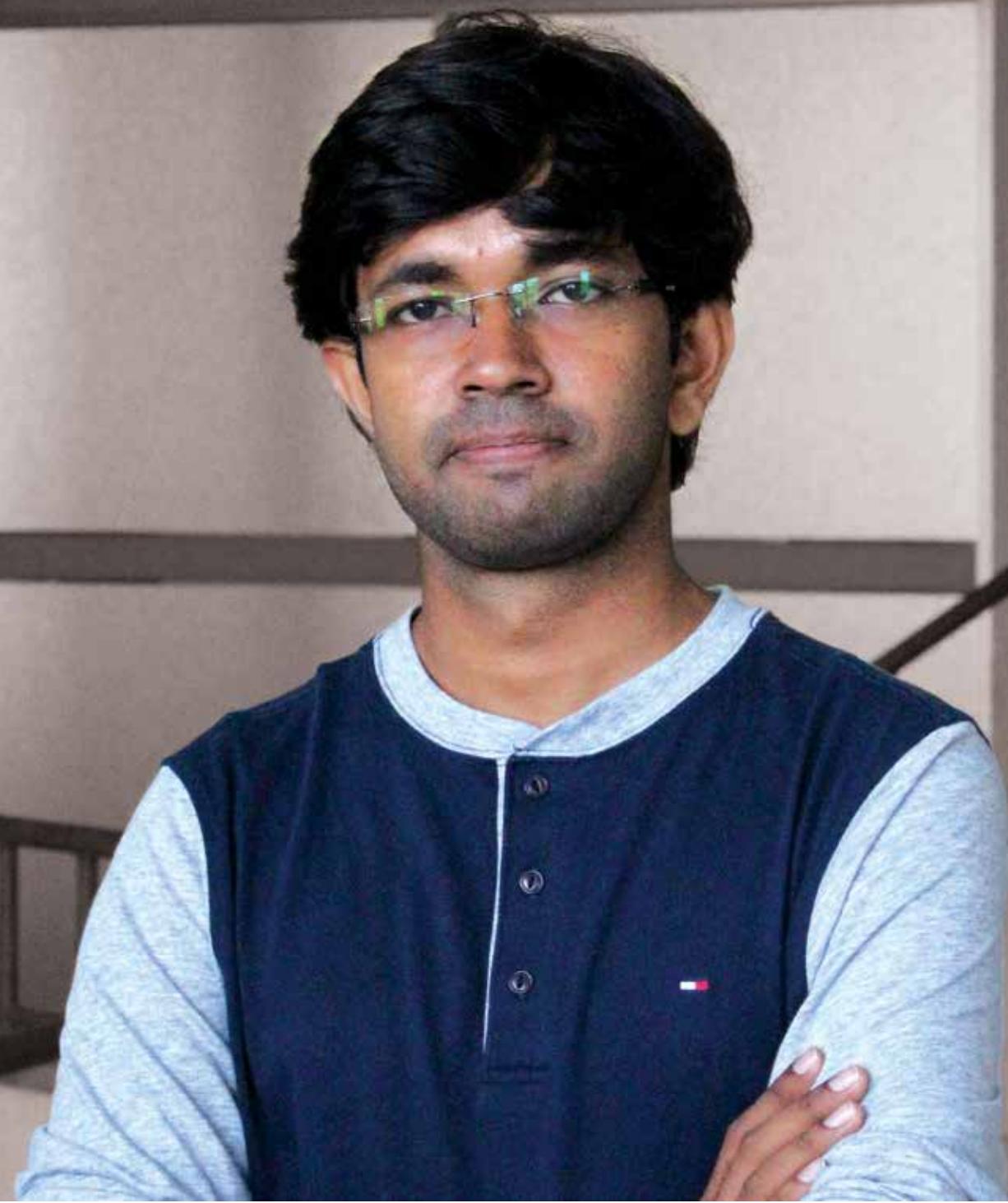
"I must also say that at times we create our own stress. I am newly-employed and so tied up in meetings most of the day, that getting through the day's work can be stressful. In that sense, stress is artificially created. This is a real challenge in the real world. We need to manage it better!" adds Sagaran.

His achievements are many. Chief among them is the patent rights he holds with two others for Spin orbit and spin transfer torque-based spintronic devices. He has co-authored several papers which were published in international peer review journals including *Nature Nanotechnology*, and has co-authored and presented his work in several international conferences too.

Married recently, Sagaran enjoys work and life at home. Currently a resident in Singapore, he says that working in the electronics industry which steers future technology is exciting.

He is a lover of cricket and Sri Lankan rice and curry – topped off with ice cream for dessert. With quite an extensive repertoire of achievements, what is that one thing he would like to do, if he could? Pat comes the answer - "I would love to be a child again!"

"The Dialog scholarship basically changed my life and opened a pathway for me to realise my dreams and aspirations. It gave me the opportunity to receive world-class education in an internationally-reputed university. I built a strong professional network through this programme and expanded my network of friends all over the world. All this wouldn't be possible without the scholarship and the continued support I received from Dialog. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dialog, especially Dialog CEO Dr. Hans Wijayasuriya for introducing this program. Being a Dialog scholar was one of the best things that happened in my life. All that I have achieved is built around it. I am grateful" he concludes humbly.



# From Vision to Success: How Hard Work Prevails



“Do what you say you will and mean it. Don’t talk the talk if you can’t walk the walk.”

Subodha from Matara

# Subodha Charles

Being a director of one's own business and a full-time lecturer at the University of Moratuwa before the age of 30, is remarkable. Subodha Charles can be described as a high achiever by the age of 26. His dedication and commitment to academia and the tech industry as a whole is inspiring. He has reaped the best results from his academic life and is facing the future with many great hopes and dreams.

Currently, Subodha serves as one of the directors at Alta Vision (PVT) Limited, a company he co-founded with his friends while he was still an undergraduate in his third year. He started working as a lecturer at the University of Moratuwa upon his graduation with a First-Class (Honours) Degree in 2015. He also has a registered patent (Pressure Ulcer Management System) and a research paper (focusing on Virtual Reality Real-Time Movement Mapping) in his name.

Born in September 1990 in Galle, Subodha grew up as an only child in the care of his loving parents. His childhood home, situated in the middle of Matara, was only a 10-minute walk from Rahula College, his alma mater. Aside from school activities, his childhood was spent with his neighbourhood friends and gaming on his PlayStation. He started practicing Cricket from an early age; even his mother, despite being a busy veterinary surgeon, would occasionally join him to play cricket in their backyard, despite not being very good at the game herself. His father, who initially worked at the Ports Authority of Sri Lanka, and worked overseas for 8 years, which led Subodha to feel more responsible for himself and his mother. The most anticipated moment of his childhood was when his father returned home each year for his annual vacation. His parents let him enjoy an unrestrictive childhood as he would always make time for his studies every day. Despite being an only child, Subodha never felt lonely, as he had many friends to play with around the neighbourhood.

At Rahula College, he was an active student and part of many clubs and activities, such as being a member of the Science Society and Chess Team (even becoming the Matara District Chess Champion twice). He served as a School Prefect for 4 years, starting from Grade 10. As Subodha grew older, his interest in cricket never went away and it bloomed into a passionate hobby. Aside from playing cricket, he would immerse himself in reading for hours on end. Even though his childhood ambition was to become a doctor, he developed a fascination with Mathematics during the last year of his Ordinary Levels classes. Soon after, Subodha decided to follow the Maths stream in Advanced Levels, aspiring to become an engineer. He received spectacular results for his performance at Advanced Level exams and was declared District First in Matara district in the Maths stream in 2009. This achievement led to him winning a Dialog Merit Scholarship. This also paved the way for an educational visit to Malaysia, facilitated by the Southern Provincial Council, as well as the admission into the University of Moratuwa.

Following his enrolment at the University of Moratuwa (eventually specializing in Electronics and Telecommunications), Subodha fully immersed himself in his studies. His commitment to academia prevented him from engaging in sports, especially cricket, with only an occasional game of badminton to lift his spirits. Due to Subodha's consistent performance at university, he was on the Dean's list for 6 out of 7 semesters for his academic achievements. He was also an active student member of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) and he is very fond of the work he did as a member of IEEE. Now a full member of IEEE, he is serving as the Student Activities Committee Chair for IEEE Sri Lanka at the time of writing. One of the proudest moments in his life was organizing an international conference successfully in 2015. He was also named as Best Student Volunteer in the Asia Pacific Region from IEEE for the year 2014/2015. Subodha graduated with



a BSc (Bachelor of Science) in Electronics & Telecommunications with a GPA of 3.92 (First Class Honours) in 2014. Following his graduation, he received a full scholarship to pursue graduate studies at the University of Florida. At the time of writing, He is working as a Lecturer at the University of Moratuwa until he leaves for USA.

Subodha has also applied for a patent along with some fellow engineers for a Pressure Ulcer Management System. Partnered with associates in the US, they are about to reach a major milestone as they are currently testing a prototype of a revolutionary biomedical device that they invented during their last years at university. This device is a tiny sensor that is attached to the skin of paralyzed patients to monitor their blood circulation and avoid pressure ulcers. The success of this device led to it being registered as a patent and could be a potential source of revenue in the future. Alta Vision (PVT) LTD, the company that Subodha co-founded with his partners, focuses on a multiple ranges of technological innovations and ventures with major focus on the energy sector. They are currently expanding and making a name for themselves as a company that installs and maintains complex solar powered energy systems for homes, companies, and power plants.

Though Subodha has achieved much, his dreams and hopes do not end there. He has more academic and professional dreams to fulfil. He also wants to be the owner of a company that is among the top five brands in Sri Lanka by 2030. As a first step towards realizing these dreams, he moved to Florida, USA in 2016, to commence his post-graduate studies. As a result of his academic excellence, he was awarded a full scholarship from the University of Florida for his graduate studies. He hopes to gain his PhD. by 2020, hoping to write his thesis in Embedded Systems.

Subodha likes to use his free time to hang out with friends, watch movies, travel, play badminton and especially cricket - which is still one of his favourite hobbies. He is someone who always strives to do better than he did yesterday and hopes for a better tomorrow. He believes the only competition that matters is with his own self. His advice to young students everywhere is simple; "Do what you say you will and mean it. Don't talk the talk if you can't walk the walk."



# Reaching Beyond Dreams



“The Mahapola Scholarship helped cover my living expenses and that combined with the Dialog Merit Scholarship gave me the strength to navigate through the university years. Without that, I would have undergone many difficulties.”

Sachinthana from Galle

# Sachinthana Prabashini Pathirana



Born in a small rural village in Galle, Sachinthana Prabashini Pathirana has come a long way, battling through ups and downs, conquering what she thought was not possible. From a very young age, Sachinthana displayed immense courage, confidence and talent – so much so that she stood out from children around her. Now that she has completed her degree in Telecommunication and Electronic Engineering from the University of Moratuwa, looking back, she marvels as to how well she has done - and says with pride, “I did it!”

Sachinthana went to Sangamitta Balika Vidyalaya in Galle and scored remarkably well at the scholarship examination and the O/L examination. Upon completion of her O/L examination, she chose the Mathematics Stream, simply because she was greatly influenced by her math teacher who made her fall in love with mathematics.

Her batch was the first to take the advantage of English medium classes that was freshly introduced to her school at the time. Despite the Sinhala-speaking background she came from, she was brave enough to study English, which she gradually became fluent in.

She recollects hardships she underwent during her school days. “They operated only two buses in the area where we lived. My brother and I had to walk about 45 minutes every day to take the bus to school” she recalls. Despite all the hardships and some personal issues that she had to undergo, she surpassed her parents' expectations by becoming the District Second at the A/L examination, which was beyond her own dreams. “I always aimed to pursue Engineering, but becoming the District Second was quite a surprise” she says.



However, Sachinthana was not just a bookworm. On the contrary, she took great interest in extracurricular activities during school days as well as during her university years. From the School Western Band to the IEEE Women in Engineering (WIE) Affinity Group and the Gavel Club of the University of Moratuwa, she was well-known among other students. She also took part in volunteering work which included her significant contribution to the tsunami victims' rehabilitation program that was launched in 2005. Sachinthana had to face financial difficulties during her studies as her father lost his job. Being a high-achiever at the A/L examination, she was granted the Mahapola Scholarship as well as the Dialog Merit Scholarship, to help her continue university education. "The Mahapola Scholarship helped cover my living expenses and that combined with the Dialog Merit Scholarship gave me the strength to navigate through the university years. Without that, I would have undergone many difficulties" Sachinthana says gratefully.

She has now overcome those challenges and emerged victorious upon successful completion of her degree. "I am now setting off to make a name for myself in the industry" she says with hope and determination.



# The Road to Success Through Inspiration and Hard Work



“Do not have self-centered goals. Be willing to learn and share your knowledge. Determine to contribute to the betterment of the country. Just because the world does not seem thankful to you, you should not stop your good work.”

Akbo from Colombo

# Akbo Rupasinghe

Akbo Rupasinghe, born 29th February 1988, excelled at academic studies throughout his school career. Akbo's family moved to Colombo from Gampaha when he was 4-years-old, due to his father's profession. He describes his childhood as being full of cherished memories, recounting his early life with his parents, Nimal and Lalani, younger brother Sapumal and grandfather. Akbo's father, who was an electrical engineer and somewhat of a disciplinarian, paved the way for his educational aspirations, while his mother encouraged him to be a risk-taker and a leader. His religious grandfather was always a source of spiritualism and inspiration for him and his younger brother.

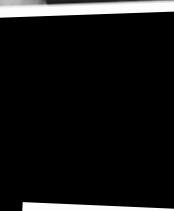
He recounts how proud his parents were when they found out that he was ranked all-island 1st in the Grade 5 scholarship exams as a student of D. S. Senanayake College, Colombo. He was able to attend Royal College Colombo afterwards, fulfilling his father's desire to send his son to his alma mater. Akbo, like most Sri Lankan children, used to spend most of his afternoons playing cricket with his younger brother and friends. His parents never pressured him to go for extra tuition, however, he gradually gravitated towards more curricular and extracurricular activities at school, especially Scouting. Akbo, who grew up accustomed to "engineering terms" throughout his life, aspired to become an electrical engineer just like his father.

From Grade 6 until A/L Examinations, Akbo won numerous awards at Royal College such as the Lalith Athulathmudali Award for the Most Outstanding Royalist and the Donhorst Memorial Prize for General Merit. He was named the Lorenz Scholar for becoming the 8th best in the island at O/L examination. Having won more than 40 academic awards throughout his school career including Shakespeare, Short Story, History and General Knowledge, he was recognised by the book "The History of Royal College" as the record holder for the recipient of the most number of prizes at a single

prize giving ceremony. He considers his greatest school achievement as being selected as the Senior Deputy Head Prefect at Royal College. He took part in Squash and competed at sports meets and junior nationals, and continues to play in his free time whenever he gets the chance. He was a President's Scout, the editor of "The Royalist" Magazine and held many offices in school societies. He cites his scoutmaster Mr. Rohan Wirasekera and teacher Ms. Lakshmi Attygalle as his biggest influencers after his parents.

Akbo had friends from various backgrounds and even though he studied maths for his A/Ls, he had good friends from all streams of study, including commerce and biology.

After A/L, Akbo decided to go to the University of Peradeniya after being convinced by his father, who was also an alumnus of the university. His university career was more relaxed than his over-achieving days at Royal College. He spent most of his time writing, especially on politics and his own ideas. He had a variety of friends from different departments of the engineering faculty and would give leadership to many ventures; such as restarting "Gauge", the student magazine which had become dormant. He and his friends chose to lodge at Ivor Jennings Hall of Residence, which was situated at the highest point of the university premises - at the edge of Hantana, just because he and his friends enjoyed the daily hike up and down. He describes his proudest memories as volunteering to teach at Royal College just after his A/Ls and the University of Peradeniya where he taught "kuppi classes" to his fellow students. It was around this time that he met his future wife, Gayamini, at the Royal-Thomian Big Match. He fondly recollects memories from Peradeniya when she used to visit him occasionally and they would tour the campus grounds together.



Having worked briefly in Sri Lanka at Resource Management Associates (Pvt.) Ltd., led by Dr. Tilak Siyambalapitiya, who he cites as an inspiring mentor, he moved to Canada to study further.

Akbo, 28 years old at the time of writing, lives in Canada with his wife, while reading for his Ph.D. at the University of Manitoba under the tutelage of Prof. Udaya Annakkage, and he's also halfway through the University of London's LLB degree. He recounts being inducted as a Dialog Merit Scholar in 2005 and meeting Mr. Kavan Ratnayake who gave him some of the best advice he had received from an adult.

His advice to young students is to have a dream instead of "goals" because it gives you freedom to fail without getting hurt.

"Do not have self-centered goals. Be willing to learn and share your knowledge. Determine to contribute to the betterment of the country. Just because the world does not seem thankful to you, you should not stop your good work."





# Investing in Her Today, to Raise up Tomorrow's Champions



"Becoming a Dialog Merit scholar is an unforgettable milestone in my life. Primarily, this shifted the burden of my university education off my parents. This realization gave me peace of mind to pursue my goal of becoming an engineer with full force and focus."

Anuththara from Kataragama

# Anuththara Kalyani

"My long-term plan is to complete my doctoral studies in Australia with the highest recognition possible and then join a research team for the next three years. I will then return to Sri Lanka and join University of Ruhuna as a lecturer," declares Anuththara Kalyani, Dialog Merit Scholar, currently reading for her PhD. in Engineering at Hawthorn Campus, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia. Her chosen research topic is 'Modeling of Slag Foaming in Steelmaking' as a member of university's High Temperature Processing Group.

A brilliant student from a young age, this young woman hails from Kataragama, in the southern region of Sri Lanka. Anuththara's home was geared to provide an excellent learning environment, as both her parents were teachers. She completed her senior level schooling at the National College in Kataragama and was selected for an engineering degree at the Ruhuna University campus.

"My father and mother were excellent teachers. They impressed on us the value of education and also societal values that will enable us to make our mark in the world. My younger siblings and I were provided with what we needed out of their government teacher salaries, so that we could focus on our education. It was a happy home – where all five of us went out to school in the morning, and regrouping at our humble home for the rest of the day. Our vacations were spent visiting places of beauty and interest in Sri Lanka, as well as interacting with our relatives. This marked my childhood days – and I enjoyed it" she reminisces.

From her young days, Anuththara was an achiever. She shined brighter, however, at the University, where she topped her batch as a Bachelor of Science in Engineering, specialising in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, with First-Class Honours.

"Becoming a Dialog Merit scholar is an unforgettable milestone in my life. Primarily, this shifted the burden of my university education off my parents. This realisation gave me peace of mind to pursue my goal of becoming an engineer with full force and focus. Until then, I had no scholarship offers for studies as both my parents were government servants. I am here in Australia now, pursuing a PhD., all



because of that scholarship. My childhood dreams have now come true. There's just one more I need to realise – that is becoming a Professor and lecturing at Ruhuna campus."

While at the University, Anuththara co-authored two papers that were published at various academic sessions. "If I could revisit any past event in my life, it would be the time I spent at the university as a student. We had such fun – while engaging in our academic work as well as participating in many other activities that a university life offers. I treasure the friendships I've made and value the societal orientation the university life instilled in me. It geared me to face the real world" she says emotionally.

Ever the high achiever, Anuththara was awarded the 'Mallika De Mel Memorial Gold Medal' awarded by the Ronnie De Mel Trust fund to the graduate who obtained the best overall grade point average, leading to the Degree of Bachelor of Science of Engineering in the year 2011. She also won an award for the best student presentation at the 1st International Conference on Advanced Materials, Science and Engineering (ICAMSE), while at the University.

How does this high achiever take the study pressure off? "Well, I watch some TV, meet up with friends and go travelling with my very supportive husband, who always provides encouragement when I need it" she adds.

Humble beginnings, a committed resolve, an unwavering focus and the Dialog Merit Scholarship propelled Anuththara to where she is today. Given her resolve, there's no doubt, she will achieve her ambition of mentoring others at her beloved University of Ruhuna in Sri Lanka.

Anuththara has a word of advice to young students. "Remember you are unique and what you are capable of doing and are required to do, is also unique. Never compare yourself with another. You need to mark out your goals and pursue them. My parents' words of wisdom are always with me. This is one of the lessons I learnt."





# Charting Her Own Course, with the Wind Beneath Her Wings



"When Dialog called me to say that I would receive a Merit Scholarship, I just couldn't believe my ears. Both my sisters were at University and my parents were supporting them – being teachers. I knew my expenses too will be paid without any hesitation, but the fact that I received a scholarship eased my mind – and of course, it was easy on my parents too. The scholarship helped me to purchase text books I needed and to move forward in my chosen career."

Induni from Gampaha

# Induni Punshara

"My childhood memories are of a home that allowed me to flourish academically, helping me to achieve my dream of succeeding in the Mathematics stream. My father was a Principal and my mother is still a teacher. I have two older sisters - and all four of them, helped me with my studies, right up to Grade 11. From there I made a difference, as I chartered a course quite different to what they had, in academic terms. My sisters chose Bio-science and Management whereas I selected Mathematics as my core subject for A/Ls." recounts Induni.

Quite early in Induni's life, when she was in grade three to be exact, her teachers identified in her a remarkably agile mind for Mathematics. Hailing from the Gampaha district, Induni's primary years were spent at Dompe Primary school. Scoring high at the Grade Five scholarship exams, Induni's parents decided a Colombo school would tire her out, simply by the journey to and from. Rathnavali Balika Vidyalaya at Gampaha was their choice for Induni, for further studies.

Youngest of three girls, Induni was very attached to her parents. "My mother is the wind beneath my wings. She kept encouraging me to move forward but there never was any pressure from either her or my father. My father was always available for me to turn to for advice or school matters. I know that it was he who washed and got me ready to school in my primary years, as my mother would invariably be in the kitchen cooking our meals for the day. We were well cared for - never pressurized or sent for unnecessary amounts of tuition classes. Home was an encouraging place and a place where help was readily available" she says, adding, "Even now, though I am boarded in the vicinity of University of Moratuwa, my weekends are spent at home. It is a place where I love to return to." The O/L exam was not a highlight in Induni's life, although she obtained 'A's in all subjects. Her core skill was in solving mathematical problems. She loved the subject and scored high in it. In all the

other subjects, however, she scored average marks. Induni identified this challenge as she prepared for her O/L exam and studied even harder for the other subjects. She felt unbridled joy when she obtained the second-best result in the Gampaha district and was awarded a Dialog Merit Scholarship.

"The A/L exam was the turning point in my life. As I was quite good in Mathematics, I chose Combined Maths and allied subjects for A/Ls. Soon I realized that there is a huge disparity in the level of study and what is taught in O/L and A/L classes. The first few classes I took in mathematics were discouraging. I just couldn't understand the subject. At this point, I made another choice, which proved fruitful for me. I studied on my own, using text books, past papers and, of course, by attending school and tuition classes. I felt that if I was to grasp the subject well early on, I should apply myself to it. It was a good decision, as soon after, I was adjudged island-best in mathematics, at an all-island competition conducted by Ananda College, Colombo. It was a great personal achievement and an honour to my alma mater" she recounts.

When she received the second-best result in the Gampaha district and 3 As for her Advanced Levels subjects and another Dialog Merit Scholarship, she was overjoyed. She knew she was now on the path that she dreamt of – that of studying at the University of Moratuwa and becoming an Engineer. "When Dialog called me to say that I would receive a Merit Scholarship, I just couldn't believe my ears. Both my sisters were at University and my parents were supporting them – being teachers. I knew my expenses too will be paid without any hesitation, but the fact that I received a scholarship eased my mind – and of course, it was easy on my parents too. The scholarship helped me to purchase text books I needed and to move forward in my chosen career" she adds.

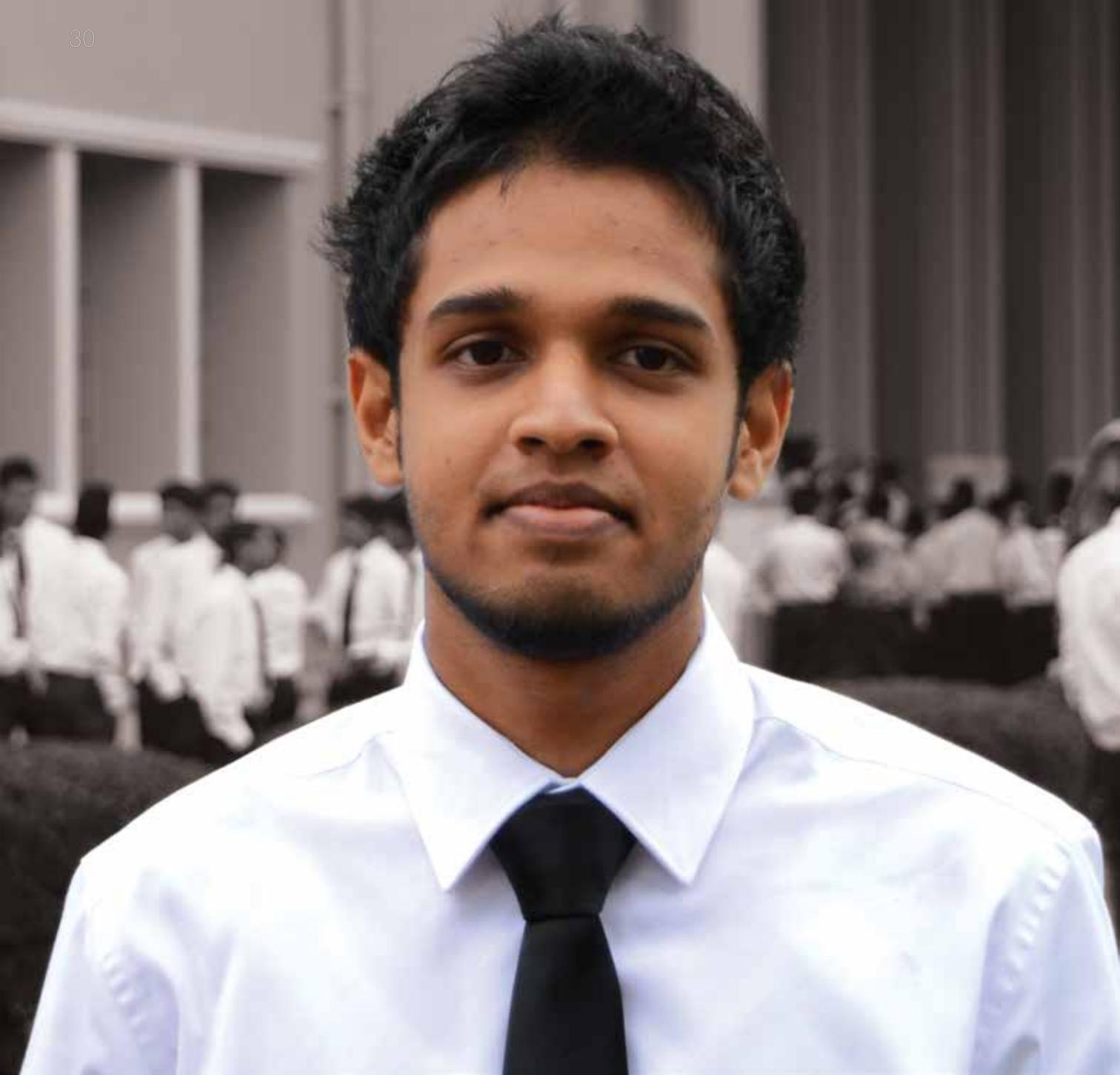
Induni is not much of an extrovert and loves to spend her free time at home with a few close friends. She was thrilled that five of her close friends from Rathnavali Balika Vidyalaya entered University of Moratuwa with her. The icing on the cake for her was when she was selected to follow Electronics and Telecommunications stream for the Engineering Degree. She is also a member of the University's Rotaract club.

In her own words, "I enjoy life – with my friends and my home. Yes, I did work hard but was never pressurized or stressed to achieve what I have achieved. I've learnt that if I apply myself well and take things in my stride, I will achieve my goals. I am blessed to have parents who never hounded us to study or enrolled us in so many different tuition classes. They gave us a choice. If it was hard and we needed it, they would send us to a tuition class."

Induni says, "I would like to convey to those who aspire to enter university that they should identify their strongest subject at an early stage and then stay with it and move in that direction. That is where they will achieve their goals and be successful."

She believes that Dialog embarked on a valuable scheme when the company offered scholarships to high achievers. "It strengthened my financial foundation to focus on my studies and to buy text books and resources. The company has pledged to help me with further studies too. I am grateful for this, as I intend pursuing a Master's Degree, so that my skill and knowledge are further perfected" she adds.





# Sticking to Your Higher Ideals



“Learn morals from role models, but don’t try to do the same things that they did. Create your own identity in society with your own style. Whatever happens in life, be happy; live this precious life the way you want to.”

Samitha from Kegalle

# Samitha Karunarathna

Young engineer Samitha Karunarathna, born March 1991, was raised in Pinnawala, away from the bustling city life of nearby Kegalle. The eldest of two children, Samitha spent his early childhood enjoying the countryside and the village life of Pinnawala with his younger brother. His parents were teachers who moved around frequently because of their professions. They eventually returned to resettle in Kegalle and Samitha enrolled at the Pinnawala National School, Rambukkana following his success at the Grade 5 National Scholarship Exam.

It wasn't until they settled down in their own house in Kegalle that Samitha developed an interest in academics and started to believe that he was capable of excelling at anything if he tried hard enough. Growing up, his biggest role models were his parents, as they were intellectuals that lived a simple, balanced and peaceful life.

He says, "I was involved in many extra-curricular activities in school, such as being an accomplished chess player and going on to win the All Island Chess Tournament of 2003 (B Division). I developed a fascination with programming languages when I was studying for my O/Ls. This fascination eventually grew into a full-scale hobby. In 2008, some of my peers and I became runners up at the National Schools' Computer Software Competition, held at University of Colombo by Computer Society of Sri Lanka (CSSL)." Though he wasn't particularly pressured by his parents to study, they tutored him whenever he had doubts and imparted to him some of the best advice he would receive. "Instead of strict discipline, my parents fostered my brother and me in a positive environment with lots of support and encouragement" he recalls.

Samitha passed his Ordinary Levels with flying colours and was ranked No. 4 in Kegalle district. He received a Dialog Merit Scholarship following his success. "This was a major motivating factor for me to succeed yet again at the A/L exam and made me believe in myself" he adds.

Following his Ordinary Levels, as a Dialog Merit Scholar, Samitha aspired to attend university and become an engineer. He selected Maths as his A/L stream and set his sights to make his dream a reality. As his parents were both Commerce teachers, they were not able to tutor him during A/Ls and Samitha had to work harder than ever with minimum support.

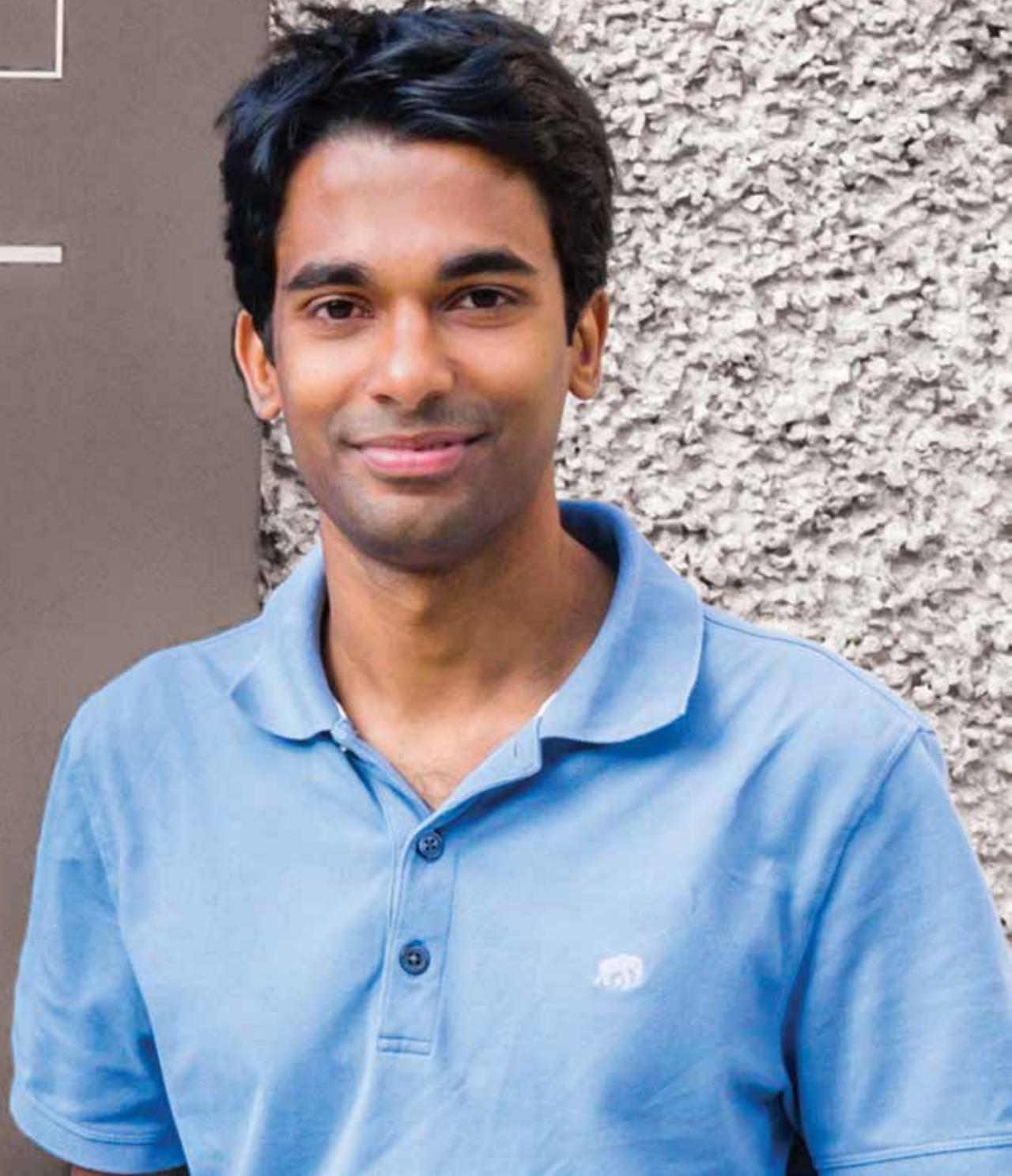
During this time, he was part of a 4-member team (4 highest ranking A/L students in the district) that won an Inter School Science Championship (quiz competition) at Kingswood College, Kandy, in 2010. With an ambitious target and eyes set on university admission, Samitha devoted his fullest attention to studies. His dream soon became a reality; he received 3 As and was ranked No. 16 in the district. Shortly afterwards, he was accepted into University of Peradeniya and entered the Faculty of Engineering.

Although he was initially interested in programming languages, Samitha eventually decided to specialize in Electrical Engineering. He continued to play chess in university as a hobby and even won an inter-faculty Fresher's Chess Championship in 2011. He was active in a multitude of faculty projects such as "Arunella", an O/L teaching project for a rural school, assisting with electrical installations for a semi-luxury hotel and developing smart wheelchairs for elders. He also became an editor (2013), treasurer (2014) and committee member (2015) of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Student branch, University of Peradeniya). He participated and successfully completed IEEE extreme 7.0 (in 2013) and IEEE extreme 8.0 (in 2014) programming competitions in a three-team capacity, using Java, and excelled at the Innovators - 2011 competition held by University of Peradeniya, Faculty of Engineering under 'Line following Robot' section.



During his final years at university, Samitha was chosen for internships at Dialog Axiata and Ceylon Electricity Board, giving him great insight into telecommunications and power industries. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering in 2015 with First Class Honours. Following his graduation, Samitha was employed by Mobitel (Pvt.) Ltd. as an Engineer in 2015 where he is currently working. Now, a newly-employed young engineer, he reveals, "I have many plans for my future such as pursuing a Master's degree in Engineering and post-graduate studies in business administration. I also want to travel the world and experience other cultures."

Samitha is an avid reader and often applies lessons he gains from books to his own life. His advice to young students and parents is that life should be balanced; it's not all about studies and tuition. "Students should have the freedom to express their creativity, ideas and competitiveness. Socializing with friends, playing sports and pursuing interests is just as important as academics, as all this will help mould a person in many ways that school cannot. Be yourself, always do the things that seem right in your heart and mind. Learn morals from role models, but don't try to do the same things that they did. Create your own identity in society with your own style. Whatever happens in life, be happy; live this precious life the way you want to" he states.



# Taking the Trail Back Home



"The scholarship certainly lifted a considerable amount of the financial burden off my parents. The Dialog leadership programmes were also pretty enjoyable and gave us the opportunity to meet other scholars."

Sadeep from Kalutara

# Sadeep Jayasumana

Sadeep Jayasumana, born to a middle-class family in a suburban town in Kalutara, obtained his primary and secondary education from Kalutara Vidyalaya. He carries very vivid memories of his childhood and school days, which laid a solid foundation for him to develop into who he is today.

Even as a child, Sadeep took a great interest in riddles and brain teasers, which developed his arithmetic reasoning and challenged his thinking. He flourished both personally and academically, backed by love and support from his parents and extended family. Sadeep is now a Post-doctoral Researcher at Oxford University and one of the very few scholars living abroad with the vision to come back to Sri Lanka to serve his nation. He holds Dr. Sanjiva Weerawarana, the CEO of WSO2 Inc., in high regard, saying, "Weerawarana had many opportunities abroad, but he decided to come back to Sri Lanka to make a contribution to the country."

Even though Sadeep and his sister were fortunate compared to many other children to have a comfortable childhood without many financial constraints, he admits that his parents could not afford to give them private education or send them abroad for studies – hence he and his sister worked hard to get into a state university. "We had to rely on our skills and our parents gave us all the support and strength we needed. My father worked as a Civil Engineer at Kalutara District Secretariat. My mother gave up her career to look after us." he explains.

During his school days, Sadeep always topped his class and even the parallel classes, for which he received handful of awards and prizes. Being a high achiever from a young age, he went on to be ranked 1st in the Kalutara District and 8th in the island at the A/ Level examination and entered the University of Moratuwa to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering. He became a Dialog Merit Scholar for his high academic achievements.

"The scholarship certainly lifted a considerable amount of the financial burden off my parents. The Dialog leadership programmes were also pretty enjoyable and gave us the opportunity to meet other scholars" he recalls with gratitude.

Sadeep also topped the class at the University of Moratuwa, securing the highest GPA across all disciplines. Amongst other accolades, he received a gold medal for Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering, and was honoured with a gold medal for ranking 1st at the Sri Lankan Physics Olympiad, and was recognised with an honorable mention at International Physics Olympiad 2005 held in Salamanca, Spain.

Later, Sadeep received a fully-funded scholarship from the Australian Government to read for his PhD. at the Australian National University. Following this, he moved to the UK to take up his post-doctoral research work at Oxford University. Before moving to the UK, Sadeep gained work experience as a Software Engineer at Orion Health Canberra, Australia, and at WSO2, Colombo, which shaped his professional profile.

During his undergraduate years, Sadeep also found romance, falling in love with the younger sister of a university friend, who he trusted to be his life partner. "We now live in Wheatley, a small village in Oxford, with farms and windmills. My wife is teaching at a pre-school in Oxford. She adds balance to my life. However comfortable it may be to live here, my objective is to come back to Sri Lanka" he says.





# Journey Towards True North



“My grandfather was the first to get me a computer, which led me to become who I am today. I did many interesting things using the computer. For example, when I was 15-years-old, I built a transliteration software which transliterated English keys to Tamil.”

Gartheeban from Colombo

# Ganeshapillai Gartheeban

Gartheeban spent most of his time writing poetry, drawing, and making his own comic books and handcrafts from an early age. Like other teenage boys, he also made time to play cricket and cycle around the city with his friends. Being the only child, he had enough time alone to dream at leisure and knit the perfect plan for his future.

Gartheeban was born in Jaffna, but his parents took a decision to move to Colombo when he was just a five-year-old, thereby providing exposure to a wider world outside of the North. In Colombo, Gartheeban had a typical childhood - attending school and then tuition classes, playing with his friends during his free time. What added excitement to his routine life were the visits of his grandfather and cousins from abroad – which he always looked forward to.

He recalls how much he missed his grandfather who left the country when Gartheeban was just a child. “My grandfather was the first to get me a computer, which led me to become who I am today. I did many interesting things using the computer. For example, when I was 15-years-old, I built a transliteration software which transliterated English keys to Tamil.” he adds.

Gartheeban also talks of his parents with great respect. His father, who is a retired government servant, and mother who has been a housewife always, put his needs first and made him the focus of their life, giving him everything required for a healthy upbringing.

Gartheeban started his primary education at Hindu College, Colombo, and moved to Royal College for his secondary education. Being a natural writer and a poet, he took part in poetry and short story writing competitions during his school days and showed equal interest in subjects such as physics and geography, displaying both creativity and immense academic strength.

Gartheeban continued to be at the top of his class since Grade 8, bagging numerous awards at the school prize-giving ceremony for a multitude of subjects. At the GCE Ordinary Level examination, he obtained a scholarship for receiving the highest marks for mathematics and later at the Advanced Level examination he was ranked first in the district, obtaining the highest marks for all his subjects in the Mathematics stream, receiving more awards and honours including the President’s Award, and a gold medal at the Sri Lanka Physics Olympiad. Among several other scholarships, he also received the Dialog Merit Scholarship for his high academic achievements which provided financial support for his university education.



Growing up, Gartheeban was passionate about becoming an aeronautical engineer and was preparing for a career in aviation. When he was selected to the University of Moratuwa with numerous scholarships to fund his studies, he decided to continue his BSc in Engineering in Sri Lanka without going abroad for studies. Owing to his high academic performance, he managed to get his name into the Dean's List of the University of Moratuwa and became the topper of his batch, receiving a First-Class degree with a gold medal. Later on, he received a chance to join the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA, as a Doctoral Candidate with a scholarship. Gartheeban describes coming to the US to study at MIT as the best decision he made in his life, which helped him experience a different dimension of life.

Gartheeban greatly admired Sir Tim Berners Lee, Prof. Stephen Hawking and Bill Gates for their work and contribution to the advancement of science and technology. He also admits that he has been influenced by Warren Edward Buffett, learning valuable lessons from one of America's well-known business magnates, investors and philanthropists.

At various points in his life, Gartheeban gained experience as an IT Consultant at 3rd Wave Consulting (Pvt.) Ltd., an Independent Consultant at Suntel Enabled, an Intern Engineer at Motorola, a Drupal Developer at FigmentaSRL, Developer at RAFT INC in the USA, as Research and Development Intern at VMware and Research Assistant at MIT CSAIL. After successfully defending

his PhD. research at MIT, he joined BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager that provides guidance to individuals, financial professionals and institutions. "I am part of the business unit called Scientific Active Equity (SAE). As a Big Data Quantitative Researcher, my focus is on big data technologies, machine learning, and generating investment signals from heterogeneous data sources," he explains the tasks he is involved in. Gartheeban is now married and lives in San Francisco with his wife who is a medical doctor. He describes his wife as a caring, dependable and passionate individual who is also driven to make the world around them a better place. Being a constant learner and a traveler at heart, Gartheeban looks forward to the day when they put their work aside and hit the road to travel the world in search of new adventures.

Sharing his life lessons, he advises young ambitious students to follow their dreams but to focus on the big picture and think about long term goals. "A compass, I learnt when I was surveying... it'll point you true North from where you're standing, but it's got no advice about the swamps and dessert and chasms that you'll encounter along the way. If in pursuit of your destination, you plunge ahead, heedless of obstacles, and achieve nothing more than to sink in a swamp, what's the use of knowing True North?" he says, quoting from the movie Lincoln.





# Poised for Future Success with Limitless Possibilities



"There is always something that we can learn from everyone we meet in our day-to-day life. It is a matter of letting only the good influence us, to shape our lives."

Oshada from Gampaha

# Oshada Jayasinghe

Little by little, drop by drop, gathering courage and confidence, Dasun Oshada Jayasinghe followed the footstep of his father, realizing his dream to enter the University of Moratuwa and opening doors to thousands of possibilities and opportunities to pursue a futuristic career.

His father, a Chief Engineer at the National Water Supply Board for over 25 years, influenced Oshada immensely, shaping his thoughts and future dreams. Being a musician, a violinist and a tabla player, Oshada's father has also instilled in him a passion for music. He inherited his father's skills for singing - and as a student, seized every chance to perform on stage to showcase his talent. "My father was a bright student who came first in the Gampaha District at the Advanced Level examination, and pursued his studies in civil engineering at the University of Moratuwa. As a child, even without knowing what it is like to be an engineer, I drifted in that direction," he recollects. His mother, showered him with love and affection – and gave up her career in teaching to make a warm and comfortable home for Oshada and his sisters.

He read adventure books and Sinhala classics, learning to admire the work of great Sinhala novelists such as Martin Wickramasinghe and K. Jayathilaka. He also grew fond of watching adventure TV series, wanting to soon launch his own life adventure. "My elder sister is currently studying at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Peradeniya, and my younger sister is still schooling. Given the pressure of academics, we find little time to sit down for a chat as often as we would like – yet the bond that we built as children remains unshaken despite the fact that we seem to be moving in different directions. The connection that we have to our family is deep-rooted" he says.

In his lovely home, surrounded by paddy fields in an evergreen environment in Gampaha, Oshada was engaged in a lot of outdoor

activities, enjoying his time without any unnecessary pressure from his parents to go for tuition classes. Oshada topped the list of Gampaha Sri Bodhi Primary School at the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, while ranking 16th in the island and 4th in the Gampaha District – which gave him the opportunity to enter Royal College, Colombo for his secondary education.

Even though it was challenging for him to stay after school due to the distance he had to travel back home, Oshada made an effort not to let his school life slip away without any significant involvement in school activities. Showing his ability to multitask, he took on the responsibility of school junior prefect, the coordinator of Science Society, and a member of many school clubs and societies including the Oriental Music Society, Sinhala Literature Society, as well as the Mathematics Society. Apart from that, he played cricket for a sports club in Gampaha and went for regular badminton training. In 2007, he won the Bronze Medal at the International Mathematical and Science Olympiad (IMSO) held in Indonesia. He also took part in the 17th Asian Physics Olympiad held in Hong Kong, and at the 47th International Physics Olympiad held in Switzerland, where he secured a Bronze Medal, bringing honour to the country.

Being part of various clubs and societies in school, he nurtured a strong network of friends in the primary and the secondary school, building an impressive support system to help each other in academia and personal matters, striking a good balance in work and play. He also developed the art of finding the best in people that he came across, absorbing good qualities into his life and discarding negative tendencies. "I have never had one role model. There is always something that we can learn from everyone we meet in our day-to-day life. It is a matter of letting only the good influence us, to shape our lives. Hence, I guess, I have a lot of people to thank" says Oshada.



Despite all his extracurricular activities, he emerged 1st in the island at the Ordinary Level examination and yet again later at the Advanced Level examination in the Mathematics stream in 2015, bagging the Dialog Merit Scholarship to pursue his degree in Engineering at the University of Moratuwa.

"Even though I have decided to pursue an Engineering degree for the moment, I intend to explore various other avenues. There are limitless possibilities in this modern technology-driven world. In the future, I might change my career direction based on my career prospects and interests. I do not want to be fixated on one path" he says.



# Footsteps along a Stream to Reach a High Goal



"Dialog took the initiative to extend a helping hand, when the Merit Scholarships were awarded to us. This means the company too has sacrificed a share of its profits to support our academics. I am grateful for all this support and my ambition is to put back into the society what I've gained through another's sacrifice."

Randika from Polonnaruwa

# Prasad Randika

He was not a typically shy child or teenager. If he could make his parents happy by performing for them, then that made his day. This included his extended family as well. A close-knit community in Polonnaruwa was where Randika gave wings to his dreams. Little footsteps by a stream and a cool bath in the afternoon sun made life complete for this scholar.

"Polonnaruwa Rajakeeya Madya Maha Vidyalaya was my school. I had many friends there who played in the hot sun with me. We walked to school by the stream that ran along our walking path. It was a carefree childhood. My two brothers and I were the treasure that my mother strived hard through her life to bring up and educate. A teacher by profession, my mother would spend hours teaching me the finer points of good handwriting. Thanks to her, my handwriting was seen as the best in the school. My father was a photographer by profession. We were a happy family and it was a good home to be nurtured in" says Randika, currently an undergraduate in Electrical Engineering.

"Amongst my earliest memories is the nursery that I attended at the age of three-and-a-half. I was taught in English and often would be asked to orate in English, which cemented my foundation in the English language. When I moved to O/Ls and A/Ls, I was ranked first in the district. This was a historic moment as I was the only student who had achieved the first rank in both from the Polonnaruwa District" says Randika, who has won the Presidents' Scout Award in his school days.

"The Physics Olympiads that were held among schools proved to be a game-changer in my life. Through the local Olympiads, I was able to participate at India's Physics Olympiad and then on to the IPhO held in Estonia. That was a marvelous opportunity by itself, as I was able to meet students from so many other nations represented at the event. What is etched in my memory is how my parents supported these events. My mother, who kept a well organized home, and my father, never saying no to a need I had. We – the three brothers – have a close relationship with both our parents and we were able to approach our father very easily. It was to him that



we took our needs. We were sure that he would never let us down and true to his nature he never has. Even now, my father is keen to know how I manage my daily life here at the University" says Randika, with great fondness to his parents.

The Dialog Merit Scholarship was a boon for this aspiring Electrical Engineer. Having won it at both O/Ls and A/Ls, Randika was able to shift some of the financial burden off the shoulders of his parents and take care of his academic needs by himself.

He says, "Life throws challenges at various points in life and it is up to us to take it in both hands and overcome it. Achieving anything is not easy but it definitely can be. In fact, while at school we did a project where the company that advertised the competition requested students to form an informal company, define a product, sell and make a profit with all other requirements that a company in Sri Lanka is required to do.

Then we had to present our 'company' and its profit and/or loss to the assessors. My school friends and I did this with great zeal and we were quite successful in our bid."

Randika adds, "I still remember the words of my Grade 11 Mathematics teacher. On our last day in school, he had some profound words for us. He said that we owed a great debt to every citizen of this country, who have contributed to our education by way of paying taxes, regardless of living in a mansion or doing a business on the pavement. This is something I never forgot. I am here today because so many sacrificed for it. To cap it all, Dialog took the initiative to extend a helping hand, when the Merit Scholarships were awarded to us. This means the company too has sacrificed a share of its profits to support our academics. I am grateful for all this support and my ambition is to put back into the society what I've gained through another's sacrifice."





# Challenge Yourself to Rise to New Heights, the Climb Never Stops



“Every individual has a different skill set - identify your unique skill set and nurture it. If you feel confident in your decision, you have made the right choice.”

Malaka from Buttala

# Malaka Gallage

At 27 years of age, software engineer Malaka Gallage is a rising star in Sri Lanka's tech industry. Born in 1989, he currently serves as an Associate Tech Lead at AdroitLogic, a leading software development company in Sri Lanka. Developing software and writing code isn't enough for Malaka, he aspires to become a leading figure in the tech industry by starting his own company someday, perhaps even sooner. He has already developed a multiple year plan and set sights on greener pastures. With an exciting career opportunity in Singapore and plans to do his Masters (MSc) in the near future, Malaka has already filled up his schedule for the next couple of years.

Born in his father's hometown of Balangoda, Malaka and his family moved to Buttala, Uva Province, when he was only 5-years-old after his father, who worked in the National Water Supply and Drainage Board, was transferred to the Monaragala District. The youngest of four children, he is described as the most mischievous child of the family with an ingenious talent for understanding complex things beyond his age. Of his two older sisters and older brother, he is closest to his older brother who did his A/Ls and graduate studies in Mathematics. From a young age, Malaka harboured a deep interest in Mathematics due to its complex nature.

He explains, "My parents were regular people who did their best to raise their four children. Being a government employee in a time when the war was rampant in the country meant they had to sacrifice many luxuries. Both of them worked part-time to make ends meet. My father's greatest joy is that his children are all accomplished and independent individuals now. Succeeding in life is the best way that we children can thank our parents."

Malaka attended Buttala Dutugemunu Central College from Grade 1 until Grade 13. He says, "This was my second home that brought me together with my closest friends even today. After passing the Grade 5 Scholarship exam, I decided to stay behind at

Dutugemunu Central College as I was happiest here." Playful from a young age, Malaka excelled at sports in school tournaments, involved in volleyball, cricket and athletics. He captained the school volleyball team that went on to win several Provincial Council tournaments. He also served as a school Senior Prefect. Malaka's father's philosophy in raising children is to let children thrive wherever they show potential. Malaka was never pressured to study hard or succeed - that motivation came to him naturally as he started identifying what his talents were. After successfully passing his O/Ls in 2005 with a high ranking (which earned him a Dialog Merit Scholarship), Malaka stopped engaging in sports and became more academically inclined. Fueled by his deep interest in Computer science and Mathematics, he decided to follow the Mathematics stream in hopes of attending the University of Moratuwa. Malaka made it his prime target to get 3 As for Mathematics at A/Ls, something that no student had achieved at Dutugemunu Central College. Tuition classes were the most challenging part of preparing for A/Ls for Malaka as he and his batch mates had to travel 4.5 hours to Matara every weekend to attend classes.

His hard work and dedication paid off when Malaka beat the school record and achieved his target by getting 3 As for A/Ls - being ranked 1st in the Monaragala District. Soon after, he was accepted into the University of Moratuwa in 2009 and entered the Computer Science and Engineering Department of the Faculty of Engineering. Malaka played a lot of sports in university as well and was a member of the university cricket team. In addition to his studies, he was a student member of IEEE, IESL and Buddhist Society. During his third year, he worked as a Trainee Software Engineer at IronOne Technologies, as an Android and iOS app developer. "The six months I spent there as a trainee provided me with great insights into the operations of a real software developing company" he adds.

Malaka graduated from the University of Moratuwa with a BSc (Honours) in 2014. He was then employed at AdroitLogic as a Software Engineer. It was during his time at AdroitLogic that Malaka came into his own and was exposed to a different level of competitiveness, which was not seen in the university. The tech industry in Sri Lanka is a rapidly developing sector with new competitors setting up and expanding expeditiously. Being able to thrive in an innovative company like AdroitLogic granted Malaka access to new cutting edge technologies and latest resources.

He says, "During my 2-year stint at AdroitLogic, I rose to the position of Associate Tech Lead of the company, which pitched me against other rising, innovative young leaders in the tech industry of Sri Lanka. There is little doubt in what I want to achieve in the long run - to establish a leading tech company with me at the helm, steering forward on my own terms in an exciting new world."

Even with his busy career, Malaka still finds time to play sports and engage in his hobbies. He is a fan of symmetry; always striving to find the right balance in everything - be it work or leisure. His advice to students is quite straight forward: "Identify your skills and stick with it. You can never achieve success at something unless you have the talent and perseverance for it; if you don't have the talent, no amount of patience can help you. Every individual has a different skill set - identify your unique skill set and nurture it. If you feel confident in your decision, you have made the right choice."





# Home is Where the Story Begins



“Learn to compartmentalize and set smaller goals - things you can achieve every day and it will pay off in the long run.”

Dimuthu from Galle

# Dimuthu Asiri Jayawardane



The son of a school teacher and a school principal, Dimuthu Asiri Jayawardane is a young man from modest beginnings. Until he was in the 7th grade, Dimuthu, and his family lived in the village of Urala in the Galle district. He spent his early childhood leisurely with his friends, younger sister and older brother, playing cricket and flying kites. His father, worked as a school principal and his mother, taught Sinhala and Buddhism. A look of nostalgia crosses Dimuthu's face as he recollects memories from life in the village, when he and his older brother used to help their father tend their paddy field during school holidays.

Dimuthu began his education at Nagoda Royal Collage located in a little village in Urala, which he attended until the second grade. He was later enrolled at Aloysius College in Galle, but his parents never pressured him to study for the Grade 5 Scholarship Exams. However, he managed to pass the exam and was able to attend Mahinda College, a prestigious boys' college in Galle. Dimuthu describes going to Mahinda College as a game-changer for two reasons: firstly, his family moved away from rural Urala to Hapugala and secondly, the extreme competition between students at Mahinda College. Realizing this, he threw himself into his studies and got help in Mathematics and Sinhala from his parents, and took extra tuition in Science subjects. He played badminton briefly in the 8th

and 9th grade but gave it up to focus more on academia. Commenting on his motivations, he says, "All I wanted was to ensure I scored high enough to do Mathematics for A/Ls, as my older brother too had decided to do Mathematics. It was quite a shock for my friends and family when they found out that I had scored 9 As for O/Ls!"

He also reminisces that competition between his friends was one of the major factors in his motivation - during free classes, he could not stay idle for even a second when other students engaged in further reading and aspired to work harder. It was this competition that drove him to study hard. He cites his elder brother as another influencing factor and wanted to surpass him at the A/Ls. "During my final two years of college, my parents finally began to put a little pressure on me, reminding me how hard my brother had studied for A/Ls. In retrospect, I am grateful for the tough love, as it spurred me to work harder. I completely immersed myself in my studies and often competed with my two best friends. We would help each other and also try to surpass each other at the same time. We were some of the few students who still attended school during the A/L study break and I would advise students to do the same, as it offers an opportunity to get further clarifications from teachers" he notes.



Dimuthu followed a self-imposed lifestyle during his school career: he never used a mobile phone, never watched television, set strict study hours and compiled his own past-paper books. "My Applied Mathematics teacher Janaka Abeywardhane was someone who greatly influenced me and taught me that instead of over-stressing to reach a specific goal, try to set little goals and win them one step at a time" he adds.

Dimuthu's hard work paid off when he was ranked 1st in the Galle district in the A/L results and 10th Place in A/L island rankings in 2012. He has been awarded a Lead Prize and a Dakshathama Sishyaya (Most Talented Student) award from Mahinda College among many other awards.

With top notch results, Dimuthu was able to attend the University of Moratuwa and pursue further studies in Electronics and Telecommunications. He has had a very successful university career since then. He is engaged in diverse university programs such as robotics and statistics. He is a member of LEO club and participates in charity functions.

Dimuthu is certainly more relaxed now compared to his school years and likes to go on road trips regularly with his school friends and older brother. He participates in stage dramas occasionally as a hobby. At the time of writing, Dimuthu has an average GPA of 3.9 which is very impressive and impossible to achieve without the level of concentration and hard work that a model student like Dimuthu has demonstrated in his youth.

Dimuthu is a double Dialog Merit Scholar. The first time was when he received 9 As for his O/Ls and the second time when he was ranked 10th in Sri Lanka for his A/L results.

He explains modestly, "I used my prize money to purchase textbooks and for other academic requirements. Many young students now are distracted by their comforts, wasting time idling and doing nothing to improve themselves. My advice to students is never to waste time; there is only a certain period in your life that you can dedicate entirely to studies. If you don't take advantage of that and engage in adding value to your time, you will lose your effectiveness and your motivation. Learn to compartmentalize and set smaller goals - things you can achieve every day and it will pay off in the long run."



# Gaining Wisdom from the Lessons of Life



“Anything can be achieved as long as you collaborate with like-minded people, let knowledge thrive and share that knowledge with the rest of the world. Nothing is impossible if you have the willpower and friends who believe in you.”

Supun from Puttalam

# Supun Randeni



Supun Randeni was born in July 1987 during a dark period of Sri Lankan history. Preparing for Supun's birth, his parents risked travelling to Colombo during the onset of chaos in their hometown - a fact that he reveres about his parents. Supun's parents were both dedicated educators who took great care in their children's upbringing - and motivated them through nurture and encouragement rather than with a strict disciplinarian approach.

Supun was raised in his parents' hometown of Marawila (about 5 kilometres west of Nattandiya, Puttalam District) and attended Dhammissara College, Nattandiya, along with his older brother. His main role model growing up was his older brother and he followed in his footsteps no matter what he did. Their early life was spent playing sports, fighting, going on adventures and in general mischief. Neither of them was ever pressured to study or work hard and were given the chance to enjoy their childhood. Much of their time at home was spent watching his parents, who were both Maths teachers, teach tuition classes to older students. The constant exposure to competitive academia helped mould Supun's brother into a more serious student. His brother's studious nature inspired Supun to follow in his path from a young age. Both boys had a deep interest in the classes that their parents taught.

He continued to attend Dhammissara College following the Grade 5 Scholarship Exams until A/Ls. He was involved in a multitude of extracurricular activities such as music, badminton, table tennis,

cricket, singing, drama and so on. In fact, one of his fondest memories from school is the time he used to play the National Anthem on the keyboards every morning at the school assembly. He was also part of the school band, was active in athletics, and took part in school plays. Supun's primary source of motivation was his mother, who was more of a best friend to him than a parent. His mother always encouraged him in whatever he did.

Though he did moderately well in his studies, it wasn't until Grade 7 that Supun's academic performance skyrocketed. "The credit for this improvement goes to my best friend Rasika, who threw a fun challenge. Rasika was extremely hardworking but he could never top the grade rankings. Being a co-educational school, the female students of Dhammissara College were consistently ranked the highest in every grade. In Grade 7, Rasika convinced me to team up with him and work hard so we could beat the girls' academic performance. From that point onwards, the two of us collaborated and went to great lengths to improve our performance, eventually coming 1st and 3rd respectively in Grade 9 and were consistently ranked among the Top 3 students in each grade until A/Ls. We were extremely collaborative yet competitive with each other and this helped me improve in every subject" he adds. Supun received the Dialog Merit Scholarship following the A/L exam at which he excelled.



Supun and his brother had a deep fascination with electronics while growing up, so much so that no electronic item at home was safe from the boys, as they would always disassemble, study and reassemble electronic items much to their mother's annoyance. While waiting for their A/L results, Supun and a friend started a computer repair service to earn pocket money and to play around with troubleshooting computers and software. This exposure to electronics and computers eventually inspired Supun to study Computer Engineering. Much of their A/L years were spent attending tuition classes taught by Supun's parents. Supun's intensively competitive nature motivated his peers to work harder and he always enjoyed helping friends who were struggling with course work. He went on to complete his A/Ls in Mathematics and was able to attend the University of Peradeniya where he decided to study Computer Engineering.

Supun says, "I took a more balanced approach to university life. I had fun, participated in competitions, played sports, practised music, went on trips, made acquaintances with students from all faculties, helped younger students with studies and participated in many extracurricular activities. Much of my free time was spent in the beautiful gardens of Peradeniya with friends."

Despite his carefree approach, when it was time to study, he studied hard. He did extremely well in his exams and maintained a high GPA. During the end of their first year, his friend Rasika was

diagnosed with cancer. Rasika was his roommate and Supun did the best he could to help his friend cope with the disease in its early stages. Rasika passed away during their final year after battling cancer. His untimely death devastated Supun and he wanted to honour his best friend by passing his finals with flying colours – which he did. He graduated from the University of Peradeniya in September 2011. The university experience helped Supun grow as a person and helped him understand the value of friendship.

Following his graduation from the University of Peradeniya, Supun was employed at Dialog, where he continues to work to-date while doing his Masters at the University of Colombo. He is an Associate Member of the Institution of Chartered Engineers - Sri Lanka and he is currently working towards getting a full membership as a Chartered Engineer. A newly-married young professional, Supun has many dreams and aspirations that he wants to fulfil for his parents and in memory of his friend.

"I hope to do my PhD. abroad sometime in the future" he says. His humble disposition is evident in the way he describes his early years despite all his successes and triumphs. The advice that he has for students is that "Anything can be achieved as long as you collaborate with like-minded people, let knowledge thrive and share that knowledge with the rest of the world. Nothing is impossible if you have the willpower and friends who believe in you."



# Walking into the Spotlight



"I came from a remote area like Anuradhapura and nothing fell into my lap. All that I have achieved in life is due to my hard work"

Nirmal from Anuradhapura

# Nirmal Vithana Pathirana

Nirmal Vithana Pathirana who grew up in the heritage city of Anuradhapura was never a quiet child. On the contrary, one might even call him a troublemaker, who occasionally engaged in and encouraged fellow students to engage in mischievous activities - simply for fun. Despite all that, his parents and teachers were well aware of his potential to achieve great heights in life - and were always fond of him. Nirmal, being the youngest in a family of four children, felt entitled to create a little bit of trouble now and then for attention.

"Before retirement, my parents worked in the public sector, which consumed most of their time. Yet, I admire how they managed to allocate time for the children, helping us overcome both academic and life challenges. Owing to our parents' dedication and commitment, all of us turned out well in life" he says with gratitude.

During his primary school days at St. Joseph's College, Anuradhapura, Nirmal stayed after school with his gang of friends, catching small river fish - and took them home in his water bottle only to get scolded by his parents. He also spent time idly cycling around the city and playing cricket with his friends – and munching chocolate after chocolate just to collect a pile of promotional stickers. When he was tired of hanging out with his friends, he loved listening to his grandfather's stories, even though it frequently ended in arguments.

After the Grade 5 Scholarship examination, Nirmal moved to Anuradhapura Central College, where he continued to be mischievous - yet he maintained his grades. He became a Scout in school and went on camping trips exploring most part of Sri Lanka. Apart from honours he received as a Scout and at the School Annual Prize Giving for his academic achievements, he bagged numerous other prizes at events like Olympiad Exams and Australian Chemistry Quiz. Without much difficulty, Nirmal secured very good results at GCE O/L exam and later became the District First in the Mathe-

matics Stream at the 2005 A/L exam, claiming the Dialog Merit Scholarship and several other scholarships to enter the University of Moratuwa.

With the Dialog Merit Scholarship, Nirmal was encouraged to aim high and grab the opportunity to pursue his degree at the Department of Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering. Continuing to shine academically, he managed to get his name on the Dean's List of the Faculty of Engineering several times. Apart from academics, he became part of the Rotaract Club and the Electronic Club of the university, displaying his talent in several other areas.

Upon receiving his degree, he worked several years at Fentons (Pvt.) Ltd. as a Project Engineer and at Dialog Axiata as a Converged Core Network Planning and Operation Engineer – and later he continued to work at Dialog Axiata PLC as a Specialist Lead Engineer under the Enterprise Solutions Engineering Division. Meanwhile, Nirmal also obtained his MBA in Project Management from Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK, to add more professionalism to improve his career outcomes.

"I came from a remote area like Anuradhapura and nothing fell into my lap. All that I have achieved in life is due to my hard work" he says, reminding young students the importance of not taking anything for granted.

Nirmal is now married to his childhood friend who crossed his path again in his early 20s. Both of them have just begun knitting their life together, with plans to bring out the best in each other to serve the community around them.





# Dreaming Big and Achieving Even More



"Work hard, because what you get in life will depend on how much work you put in; nothing comes for free in life. Always remember to have fun no matter what you do. Enjoy your work and be passionate about it because you will be spending a lot of time doing your job, and so you might as well have fun doing it."

Chathuranga from Kandy

# Chathuranga Widanapathirana

A senior data scientist and an analytics product manager specializing in Big Data Analytics and Machine Learning, Chathuranga spent his childhood in the cool climes of Kandy, surrounded by lush green hillsides and gentle breeze.

Chathuranga's mother is a teacher and father is a doctor. Chathuranga has fond memories of a home where he was allowed to flourish at his own pace and given independence to pursue his dreams. As his father worked in Mahiyanganaya throughout his career, Chathuranga treasures the memory of him returning home every Saturday to be with his family. "My mother was a great help with my studies, especially in the middle school days. I remember late night study sessions, just before the exam day! I remember walking to school on misty mornings around the Kandy Lake, passing Dalada Maligawa and playing outdoors with my friends in the afternoons. Studies, however, were a priority" says Chathuranga reminiscing about his childhood.

A product of Dharmaraja College, Kandy, Chathuranga's childhood dream was to become an Engineer. Mathematics and Science were his favourite subjects. Engineering would have been woven into Chathuranga at that early age as his passion flourished in the Astronomy and Science clubs. He led the Astronomy club, Science Society and their respective quiz teams, winning a number of national quiz championships in both astronomy and science and school awards for the best student in the grade.

Chathuranga's dreams were big. He was ranked the best student at school and got selected to the Faculty of Engineering at University of Moratuwa, where he was placed among the top students during the first year. "My aim was to be as creative as possible, get international exposure, to graduate First-class and rank high in the university to be able to pursue a postgraduate degree with a full scholarship" he reveals.

He has achieved his goals in no small measure, considering the accolades he has received during his university years and thereafter. In 2006, Chathuranga moved to Multimedia University, Malaysia, upon completion of his first-year studies in University of Moratuwa with a full scholarship from Dialog. Chathuranga was the Best Engineering Graduate of Class of 2009, Multimedia University – Malaysia with a grade point average of 3.99/4.00. He won consecutive Dean's awards every year and completed university in just three-and-a-half years.

He says, "The Dialog scholarship gave me the first international experience in my life. It also allowed me opportunities to gain valuable exposure and became a springboard for my career to study in one of the best universities in Asia. The added benefit has been that because of the scholarship and the exposure it afforded me, I was able to forge valuable friendships in many parts of the world."

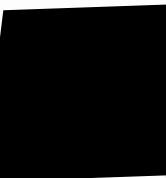
In recognition of achievements during undergraduate studies, he was awarded the Monash University's postgraduate research scholarship, which saw him move to Melbourne, Australia. Chathuranga holds a PhD. in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence from Monash University, and is a leading analytics professional in Melbourne. He has built one of the most advanced analytics platform products for Australian higher education industry and currently manages analytics teams in Open Universities Australia Group, the largest online education organization in Australia.



Chathuranga still dreams big. A character trait that has made him achieve the big goals he has already achieved as a young engineer. "Well, I am happy about what I have achieved professionally, driving innovative products in a high profile Australian organization. I am happy that I've built a good reputation in this industry. My next goal, professionally, is to move to a senior leadership role in technology and innovation in Big Data analytics and also to build my own software company. Personally, I'd like to go around the world with my family for at least six months – taking time off from work" he adds.

Married to his childhood sweetheart, Chathuranga is a proud father to a beautiful baby daughter. Now resident in Australia where his parents have joined him, he truly is an accomplished young man with a strong grounding. He would like to be remembered as an innovator, having fun while working hard and enjoying family life.

His advice: "Work hard, because what you get in life will depend on how much work you put in; nothing comes for free in life. Always remember to have fun no matter what you do. Enjoy your work and be passionate about it because you will be spending a lot of time doing your job, and so you might as well have fun doing it. Life will undoubtedly throw curveballs at you, so always be grounded in your family because they will always be with you through thick and thin."





# If There is a Will, There is Always a Way



"My goal is to obtain a PhD. and return to Jaffna. I want to give back to the society and share my success. If there is one thing I'd like to do over and over again, it is helping those in need."

Pranavan from Jaffna

# Theivendiram Pranavan

Reading comics, enjoying cricket and listening to A. R. Rahman songs did not distract Pranavan from achieving his dream of earning an Engineering Degree with First-Class Honors from the University of Moratuwa.

"I was born in a village called Thikkam, which is in the Northern part of Sri Lanka. I studied at a small school in my village, called J/ Thikkam Sithivinayagar Vidyalayam with a class size of 12 students. Actually, those were the best days of my life which I will remember forever. Unlike large schools where there is so much competition and pressure from parents about academics, I had the freedom to be myself in my modest school" he recounts. Pranavan was placed first in the North-East Province Mathematics quiz in 2005. It is no surprise that he dreams of being a reputed mathematician.

On a typical day in Pranavan's young days, his mother would cook, his father would be at work and Pranavan and his younger brother would feed the few cows, goats and hens that brought them a meagre income. Unfortunately, this simple lifestyle was marred with the loss of his father, which occurred when Pranavan was a tender nine years of age.

"My aunt is a teacher and the first to enter University from our relatives. When my father passed away, she encouraged me to study hard and also bought me books to read. Living in a rural area and living a carefree life allowed me to think about my future and apply myself to studies. One of my best days was when I received my A/L result, which launched me into campus life at the University of Moratuwa. Just as I had dreamt, I was selected to the Engineering Faculty and was listed in the Deans' list for all semesters. This was an amazing achievement for me" he exudes.

"My father was a bus driver, so there were no great savings for our future. Being a housewife, my mother had no income to spend on me for my studies or university life. I remember her obtaining a loan for this purpose. Although my aunt always helped me, she did this while supporting her own family, and that too on a teacher's salary. Although I received a scholarship from Hartley College, Jaffna, the Dialog Merit Scholarship was the real relief for me and my family, as I was able to carry on with my studies with the financial support it offered" says Pranavan, who is currently attached to the University of Moratuwa's Engineering faculty as a Junior Consultant.

Pranavan has seen difficult days - but those days have served to fashion a deep sense of responsibility in him. Difficulties do not daunt him but spur him on to achieve his cherished dream of becoming an Engineer. This, he has done with flying colors, going on to earn a First-Class Honours degree.

"My goal is to obtain a PhD. and return to Jaffna. I want to give back to the society and share my success. If there is one thing I'd like to do over and over again, it is helping those in need. Volunteering, to be precise. Academics is where I want to invest my life in" says Pranavan with determination.

His advice: "Studying is never a loss. What you study will take you in the direction of your goal. My advice to the young is - establish your goal and study hard towards achieving it. Never give up."





# Journey Towards a Well-balanced Happy Life



"I want to come back to Sri Lanka and be an opportunity creator for the Sri Lankan youth. I love this country. I have received so much from this country and now it is my turn to give back to it."

Brinthan from Trincomalee

# Thavaneswaran Brinthan

"My childhood memories are of a happy home in the tranquil town of Trincomalee, in the Eastern region of Sri Lanka. Blessed with the best natural harbor in the world, Trincomalee reflects peace and quietness, blended with the right amount of modernization. It is no wonder that tourists from around the world come seeking this tranquility as well as pristine beaches to relax on" says Brinthan, currently a Specialist Software Engineer at the Millennium Information Technologies (MIT).

He is one of the first Dialog Merit Scholars in his district, having obtained best results for the O/L exam in 2005. The scholarship offered him much-needed assistance right from his A/L years throughout his university education, where he was qualified as an Electronic and Telecommunication Engineer from the University of Moratuwa.

The second in a family of three boys, Brinthan's fascination with engineering started at an early age, where he saw his father passionately engaging in the work he did for Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB). Brinthan's father is also a graduate from the same university and is attached to the CEB as the Deputy General Manager of the Eastern Province. "Not only he was a passionate engineer, he treated everyone very equally" says Brinthan, who aspired to be like his father and become an engineer someday. "My mother made a loving home for us. It was she who told us that if we plan our lives and work according to that, we need not depend on others to enjoy our life. While enjoying our childhood, we continued with our school work. It was a balanced childhood. In fact, I became the Head Prefect of my school, R. K. M. Sri Koneswara Hindu College, Trincomalee" he adds.

Brinthan sat for his O/L examination and gained the regional best result. Unknown to him, Dialog too tracked each district's best

students to award scholarships for their future education. When he received news that he is one of the recipients, Brinthan says, "It was very motivating to know that someone out there took notice of what I achieved. Yes, my parents were overjoyed, but for someone else to take notice was a heartening factor." He became a double Dialog Merit Scholar in 2008 for the achievement of topping the District at A/Ls, which is a rarity indeed, amongst the student population.

He goes on to say, "My parents provided us with all that they could afford and never said 'no' to our requests, although we never asked for anything that was beyond their means. However, I had peace of mind that all additional resources needed for further education and devices or subscriptions would be covered by the scholarship that Dialog offered. This reinforced my dream of becoming an Engineer. Now it is up to me to do the best I could to achieve my dream." Brinthan was not just a student. He was one of the Representatives for the Department of Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering, University of Moratuwa; Member of AIESEC; Member of SL2College; and a Writer / Editor at MoraSpirit ([www.moraspirit.com](http://www.moraspirit.com)), the sports magazine for the University.

When talking about future aspirations, Brinthan says, "I am happy to be a part of the MIT team. Being able to work on high quality trading platforms, surveillance and clearing platforms is an opportunity by itself. Currently, I am in a team that works for the Global Clearinghouse Systems, to define a clearing platform. Within the next 10 years, I want to do a Masters in my chosen discipline, in a highly recognized foreign university. Yes, and I want to come back to Sri Lanka and be an opportunity creator for the Sri Lankan youth. I love this country. I have received so much from this country and now it is my turn to give back to it."

His path was not always strewn with roses. "I've also had some failures in my university career. But failure is a teacher. Learn from it and move on to achieve what you need to achieve, rather than dwelling on it. Be focused in your chosen discipline and stay with it. Reach out if you need any help. I want to become a person who can be an inspiration to others and who could be easily approached" he declares. His advice is "Stay close to your family and connections. They are the ones who made you and will stay with you throughout your journey. Have a balanced life."





# Breaking Boundaries



"I am a late bloomer, unlike my elder brother, who displayed academic strength from a very young age. My elder brother passed the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination and moved to Colombo, whereas I was left behind in Nikaweratiya. However, I think it worked out very well in the end,"

Asiri from Nikaweratiya

# Asiri Rathnayake

Asiri Rathnayake humbly calls himself a small town boy who grew up playing cricket in paddy fields and on the streets in Nikaweratiya, a rural town in the North Western Province in Sri Lanka. Despite his love for the place he grew up in, he always felt disconnected from his peers and his surroundings, dreaming big and wanting more - as if he knew, by then, what the future held for him. His desire to seek new knowledge, to find new people and to explore the world, urged him to break free from his surroundings.

"I am a late bloomer, unlike my elder brother, who displayed academic strength from a very young age. My elder brother passed the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination and moved to Colombo, whereas I was left behind in Nikaweratiya. However, I think it worked out very well in the end" he says.

Asiri received his primary education at Nikaweratiya Jayanthi Central College and moved to Maliyadeva College, Kurunegala, for his A/Ls. While growing up, he was set on becoming an engineer or a cricketer, with the ambition to play for the national team. At times, he day-dreamed, wanting to pursue both careers, if possible. However, eventually he concentrated solely on becoming an engineer.

Asiri's parents were both bank officers who did not force him to create any views of the world – instead, they promoted independent thinking. The family had to go through a rough patch when his father had a stroke when Asiri was very young, and his mother hardly had any time to spare for the three boys as she had to spend more time taking care of his father. Asiri recalls his father's gradual recovery and the strength he displayed standing up and facing life again - which made a strong impact on Asiri's perception of life.

Despite all the odds, at the A/L examination, Asiri ranked 9th in the island scoring high marks and graduated from the University of Moratuwa with honours, among the first 10 high-achievers. The Dialog Merit Scholarship provided him the necessary funds for extra reading materials during his studies at the university – which allowed him to make the most of university life without having to undergo financial constraints.

Most importantly, Asiri met his future wife, Rishni at a Scholarship event. "She opened a new chapter in my life, helping me bring out the best in me both personally and academically. It is Rishni who pushed me to apply for my PhD. I owe her a lot for what I have achieved today" he adds with a smile. Asiri and Rishni, another Dialog Merit Scholar, are a couple governed by simple philosophies of life, challenging each other's thinking to explore and grow both intellectually and personally.

Asiri went on to receive a PhD. scholarship from the University of Birmingham, UK, and made the move to the UK. Asiri is now a Compiler Engineer at ARM Holdings, living in Cambridge, UK, and is quite content about the decisions he has made in life. He thinks, he has by now achieved all what he has aspired to in life - and from this point on, anything that he accomplishes would be "a bonus". He is of the view that the formal education and learning that one receives are tools to build a better career – however, to benefit the society, one needs to be truly generous and develop a better perspective of life – which comes from within.

Presently, Asiri leads a life full of excitement and inspiration with Rishni and their three-year-old daughter in beautiful surroundings of Cambridge, UK, which he believes is as perfect as he would want his life to be.





# Finding Strength to Unleash Full Potential



"We went through hard times. Under such circumstances, the Dialog Merit Scholarship helped me to a great extent to cover most of my expenses while I was at university - from travelling to food and extra reading materials."

Rishni from Colombo

# Rishni Ginige

Rishni Ginige's adventure started when she entered the University of Moratuwa as a fresher, where she met Asiri Rathnayake, her pillar of strength, who gave her confidence to face many challenges in life with her head held high. Just like Asiri, Rishni entered university as a Dialog Merit Scholar with many accolades as a high-achiever who ranked 10th in the Island at the A/L examination.

Growing up, Rishni wanted to become an independent working woman. Born and raised in Colombo to a close-knit family, she drew comfort from the warmth and support her family extended her to take each step in her life with utmost confidence. She recalls her parental home with some nostalgia. Falling asleep to the sound of the ocean and spending hours in the garden feeling the sea breeze, her sandy salt-water filled childhood in her parental house in Mount Lavinia gave her space for imagination and encouraged her to think independently to be a free spirit, wanting to see more and explore more.

During her school days at Musaeus College, Rishni balanced her academics and extracurricular activities remarkably well and proved herself to be an all-rounder who excelled in all what she undertook. At every school annual prize giving, she bagged a prize or two without much effort.

"My parents did all what they could do to give my sister and me a good education, so that we would one day be independent" she says with gratitude. Their efforts have not been in vain as both Rishni and her elder sister entered the University of Moratuwa and successfully graduated as engineers.

It was towards the latter part of her school days that Rishni's father was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He started deteriorating physically and mentally and passed away soon after she started attending university. Apart from the challenges she faced as a fresher in a new university environment, her father's death clouded the first year of her university life.



"We went through hard times. Under such circumstances, the Dialog Merit Scholarship helped me to a great extent to cover most of my expenses while I was at university - from travelling to food and extra reading materials" she explains.

She says, it gave her the leisure to spend time with friends, 'drinking copious amounts of plain tea from the canteen', without having to worry about any financial burdens. "The workshops organized by the scholarship programme were equally fun, and helped me shape my personality" she recollects.

Despite the fact that Rishni received her first degree in electronic engineering, she pursued a career in Software Engineering. Asiri was most supportive at this juncture, helping her gain confidence and progress in her career. She recollects many other instances where Asiri helped her make certain academic and professional decisions in life.

Rishni has now taken a long journey away from home with her friend-turned-husband, Asiri, to live and work as a Software Developer at ADC Ltd., in Cambridge, UK. Even though she was working in Sri Lanka upon graduation, she took the decision to accompany her husband to move to the UK, knowing that better opportunities awaited both of them.

Rishni, now a mother of a three-year-old, only expects her daughter to grow up to be an independent individual – which is what her own mother taught her. Looking back at her own life, Rishni says if given a second chance, there is nothing that she would do any differently. "The journey I have taken has been amazing" she speaks with great conviction.





# With the Vision to Nourish the Next Generation of Students



"I want to learn all I can while I still have the initiative – and then come back to Sri Lanka, well-equipped to nurture the next generation of engineering students and guide them in the right direction with a global perspective."

Aslam Suja from Kalmunai

# Abdul Careem Aslam Suja

Unlike many other kids, Abdul Careem Aslam Suja approached numbers and arithmetic problems with great ease, focused on untangling numbers and mathematical knots, finishing two-hour math papers in an hour. He is in fact proud to be called a math geek who makes numbers sound interesting.

Suja could not quite say when and how he fell in love with numbers – but he could recall how he influenced his sister, Shatheela Farween, to develop a liking for mathematics. “My older brother was more into science. On the contrary, I could not help but play with numbers. I always liked teaching mathematics to my sister and to show off a little” he says. These small teaching sessions helped Suja uncover his ability to teach clearly and comprehensively, exhibiting his great passion for mathematics as well as teaching.

Suja gained his primary education at the Government Muslim Mixed School (G.M.M.S) in Sainthamaruthu and transferred to Zahira College - Kalmunai for his secondary education. During his school days, he took part in many mathematics competitions in school as well as at the divisional and district levels, bagging numerous awards and certificates. Confident in playing with numbers, Suja easily secured three A's at A/L examination and ranked 1st in the Ampara District in the Mathematics stream.

Soon after, he entered the University of Moratuwa and was awarded the Dialog Merit Scholarship and several other scholarships for his exceptional performance. “The Dialog Merit Scholarship supported me through my first year of university, helping me to get my studies off the ground. Later, I opted to study Civil Engineering, targeting a different career path” he noted.

Like his sister, Suja recollects the unparalleled support his siblings and he received from his parents to do exceptionally well both in

terms of academics and life. “Even during the most difficult times, my father spared money for our educational needs – and we were not deprived of anything. My mother gave us love and proper guidance in life, giving us a right vision for the future” he added gratefully.

Suja graduated from the University of Moratuwa as a Civil Engineer in year 2014, with a Honours in his Bachelor of Engineering degree. During his university years, he worked as a trainee engineer at Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau Sri Lanka (CECB) – and upon graduation, he joined Sierra Construction as a Site Engineer before starting to work for State Engineering Corporation of Sri Lanka as a Civil Engineer. Taking a significant career turn within a very short period of time, Suja later applied for the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka and secured a permanent position as a lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering.

“I fit in well within the academics. I discovered my passion for teaching at a very young age. Yet, I needed to explore some more and gain experience in the field before I was absolutely certain of my decision to join academia. I am most honoured to be a lecturer at a state university, especially in the Eastern Province, the place where I come from. This is a very good opportunity to share my knowledge and nourish another generation of students” he says with positivity.

Suja now aims to find a scholarship to continue his PhD. with a focus on Hydraulic Engineering. “I want to learn all I can while I still have the initiative – and then come back to Sri Lanka, well-equipped to nurture the next generation of engineering students and guide them in the right direction with a global perspective” he adds with hope.





# Moulding a Better Future



"I succeeded in claiming the 6th place in the Ampara District in the mathematics stream and entered Peradeniya University – a university that I always dreamt of as a child."

Shatheela from Kalmunai

# Shatheela Farween

Healthy parental support, strong social connections, the immediate environment, intelligence and personal capacity are some of the attributes responsible for academic excellence in individuals. At the same time, the role of siblings in influencing and shaping the life of an individual cannot be undermined. Shatheela Farween's life has been clearly moulded by her older brothers. Learning from their successes and drawbacks, they have guided Shatheela with a vision for a better future, helping her develop the utmost confidence and determination to see a future without limits. Speaking to Shatheela and her elder brother Abdul Careem Aslam Suja, anybody will be amazed how effectively and positively some siblings influence each other to unleash their full potential.

Coming from Kalmunai in the Ampara District, Shatheela made her way to the Engineering Faculty of the University of Peradeniya, with a persevering and positive attitude. She completed her primary education at KM/Government Muslim Mixed School Sainthamaruthu and moved to KM/Mahmud Ladies College in Kalmunai for her secondary education. At the O/L examination, she ranked 4th in the Ampara District and was awarded the Dialog Merit Scholarship, which gave her a boost to pursue her studies in the mathematics stream.

"My brothers advised me to study physical science. They have the intuition to identify what my strengths are. Because of them, my life has been less challenging. With great support from my parents and my brothers, I succeeded in claiming the 6th place in the Ampara District in the mathematics stream and entered Peradeniya University – a university that I always dreamt of as a child" Shatheela says proudly about her achievements.

Her father is a retired Cooperative Branch Manager who has been strict but kind. According to Shatheela, her father has the capacity

to maneuver his family even through the most difficult times in life without letting them down. "My mother put all her time and energy to feed us and make us feel loved – which gave us energy to conquer any obstacle" she says recollecting all the support she and her brothers received from her parents.

Shatheela is not the only one in her family to be eligible for the Dialog Merit Scholarship and various other scholarships – both her brothers also displayed extraordinary intelligence and outstanding academic strength. "My eldest brother Saja had qualified for the Dialog Merit Scholarship for his O/L results but he chose to forego it and went into the science stream for A/Ls. He later entered the University of Sabaragamuwa to study Food Science and Technology. My second brother, Suja, became district first in the A/L mathematics stream and entered the University of Moratuwa as a Dialog Merit Scholar – that is how I was encouraged to perform well academically with the goal of entering a state university" she notes.

Despite the fact that Shatheela describes herself as more of a reserved and quiet individual, she has not been a laid-back student even in terms of partaking in extracurricular activities. From her school days, she developed a great passion and particular interest in social work, ready to contribute to the betterment of society.

As a Dialog Merit Scholar, during her A/L studies, she could continue her studies without any financial struggle. As a consequence, she realised the importance of assisting those with the talent to reach higher. Now, as an empowered woman equipped with higher education, Shatheela has already commenced engaging with society, helping students from remote areas to have a better and equal access to education. Led by a larger vision, she conducts seminars for O/L and A/L students in areas such as Eravur and Sainthamaruthu, becoming a role model for girls in underprivileged

areas, giving them hope and confidence to achieve greater goals in life. Shatheela also works closely with orphans and the elderly community in an attempt to build a social support structure for those in need.

At the time of writing, as a final year undergraduate studying Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering, she looks forward

to graduating from the university as an accomplished electronic and telecommunication engineer to join a career in the telecommunication industry. Her long term goal is to play a crucial role in promoting the country to invest in new innovations in the electronic and telecommunication field, targeting technological advancement and holistic development of the nation.





# Reaching Greatness Amid a Storm of Hardships



After obtaining his Master's Degree in 2013, specializing in global scale flood analysis, Roobavannan moved to Sydney, Australia, in 2014, where he is currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Roobavannan from Kilinochchi

# Mahendran Roobavannan

Born in Jaffna and raised in the village of Vaddakkachchi in the Kilinochchi district, Civil Engineer Mahendran Roobavannan was born in 1986, a time when conflict was rife across the North and North-East of the island. Roobavannan's parents were well-established in pre-war Jaffna, where his father initially worked as an electrician at a cement factory in Kankesanthurai and his mother was employed as an agricultural instructor. Followed by the political and economic instability in the ensuing years, Roobavannan's father lost his job due to foreclosure of his workplace and his mother left her job to take care of him and his younger sister. Eventually, the family moved to Vaddakkachchi where Roobavannan's father owned a paddy field. Roobavannan often enjoyed helping his parents during the harvesting seasons after his father had started to work the paddy field.

Even though they did not have much, Roobavannan's parents were hardworking people with high ambitions for their children. Roobavannan received his primary education at Ramanathapuram West G.T.M.S (Government Tamil Mixed School), where he continued to study until O/L. His first academic success was passing the Grade 5 scholarship exam with the highest marks in the district. After completing his O/L exam, Roobavannan enrolled at Vaddakkachchi Maha Vidyalayam where he studied until A/L exam.

Although he liked to spend most of his time in study, he also participated in school athletics and took part in dramas in his spare time. As the political climate was becoming more and more uncertain, his parents were always packed and prepared to move in case the war ever reached their village. Despite this, Roobavannan and his sister had a pleasant childhood, close to their parents, but the conflict was always a looming threat and neither of them spent too much time outdoors, instead preferring to read books and study in their free time.

Roobavannan became a Dialog Merit Scholar after topping the O/L exam. Mathematics and Science were always his favourite subjects in school and Roobavannan aspired to become an engineer from a very young age. He was highly motivated and at that time, a good education was his only ticket to a wider world unconstrained by war.

Believing in his talent and hard work, Roobavannan was always assisted and encouraged by school teachers, principal, peers and family. The stellar results he achieved for the A/L exam in the physical sciences stream (ranked first in his district) made him a double Dialog Merit Scholar. Roobavannan remembers the day he told his mother his A/L results as one of the proudest moments of his life. Shortly afterwards, he was accepted into the University of Peradeniya in 2006. Towards the end of the Civil War and the following reconciliation, Roobavannan's family had a difficult time in their village. This fact often weighed in on him and it further fueled his aspirations.

University life provided a highly competitive environment with a scale of academia that Roobavannan had never imagined, far away from the political instability in the North. It was a time of unprecedented self-discovery, learning, teamwork and friendship. His main goal was to become a civil engineer and become the top student in the civil engineering field. During his university career he was an Associate member of IESL, Member of the Civil Engineering Student Union at University of Peradeniya, Student member of American Geophysical Union and a student member of European Geo-sciences Union. He also received the Ceylon Development Engineering prize for the best performance in Civil Engineering. Roobavannan obtained his BSc. in Engineering (Civil) in 2010. After his bachelor's degree, he worked as an instructor at Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya, and as a consultant engineer for a housing project funded by the World Bank.

Years after the war ended and his family was living in an era of peace, he moved to Japan to pursue his Master's Degree at the University of Tokyo in 2011. During this period, he received an Excellent Poster Award at the annual conference of Japan Society of Hydrology and Water Resources. After obtaining his Master's Degree in 2013, specializing in global scale flood analysis, Roobavannan moved to Sydney, Australia, in 2014, where he is currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Roobavannan spends his spare time watching movies, programming and travelling. His vision for the future is using advanced technologies to reduce the impact of natural disasters in less developed countries and reduce poverty with better natural resource management which will help sustain low income communities.





# Wielding the Weapon of Courage



"It is always wise to obtain qualifications and experience in many areas as much as possible. Then, you have the leisure and pleasure to easily pick and choose from a multitude of diverse career avenues."

Randil from Bandarawela

# Randil Gajasinghe

Randil Gajasinghe, born in Bandarawela, grew up with his siblings, enjoying stunning panoramic views surrounded by misty mountains. Finding joy in simple pleasures, he embraced life fully, seeking excitement in everything he did. Finding nature trails, climbing mountains and camping in hills, he spent his youth dedicated to the Scout Movement, bonding with nature, refreshing his mind. He stepped out of his warm and well-sheltered home into the world to experience life in different shades and colours, only when he was selected to the University of Moratuwa, passing with flying colours at the Advanced Level examination.

Randil studied at S. Thomas' College, Bandarawela, up to his Ordinary Level exam - and received his Advanced Level exam education at Bandarawela Madya Maha Vidyalaya. Being a highly enthusiastic student, he believed in duly completing his work on time without putting them off – in fact, he was someone who did an extra bit of work just to be at ease and feel satisfied.

Randil does not deny being stressed out during exam time. “It is natural to get stressed out when studying for exams. That's when I play a few computer games or read a novel. I do not consider it as time wasted because it helps me release stress and have a fresh start” he states, advising young students to find their own technique to release tension for better outcomes.

Owing to his dedication to studies, Randil found it easy to keep up with his academic work and attain good grades, easily securing a place at the University of Moratuwa to pursue his degree in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering. As a Dialog Merit Scholar, he was able to continue his higher studies without having to undergo financial struggles.

*“I consider myself fortunate to receive financial support from Dialog. I am happy to contribute to the continuation of their efforts to help local students pursue their higher education dreams”*

Randil says quite modestly. Being motivated by the Dialog Merit Scholarship, Randil and a few others, during their university years, formed a small organization, to uplift the results of Mathematics stream students of the Badulla District - which now celebrates its 11th year of successful operation, aiding students to perform better at the Advanced Level examinations.

Upon graduation from the University of Moratuwa, he worked briefly in Sri Lanka before moving to Thailand to obtain his Master's degree in Microelectronics and Embedded Systems Engineering from the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) on a full scholarship. Thereafter, owing to his outstanding performances throughout his academic life, Randil easily claimed a scholarship for his PhD. at the University of Miami – which exposed him to a whole new world



in America, the land of opportunities, especially for those in the field of technology and innovation.

Further displaying his inbuilt desire to manoeuvre the next generation of students in the right direction towards achieving their academic and career goals, Randil, a PhD. candidate in Electrical Engineering at the University of Miami, USA, at the time of writing expressed his willingness to share his experience and to provide necessary advice and guidance to local students on selecting their post-graduate courses wisely.

Despite having found his way into a wondrous world, home is where his heart is. "My parents have been right beside me at all times of need, to help me achieve what I have achieved today. My brother and sister are also a massive part of my life. Like many other siblings, we had our fights as kids, but we grew up to be the best of friends. I stay in constant touch with them to make sure that we do not drift apart" says Randil, clinging on to the fond memories of the past. He talks of his parents with great admiration, especially in terms of how they managed their finances to give all three children a comfortable home and good education, despite the fact they lived in a middle-income household.

Now that he has travelled some distance away from home, he misses out on being with his family and roaming the hills of that beautiful town where he was born. He calls it the 'opportunity cost' of a choice that he had to make to explore new avenues of life to advance personally, professionally and academically, and to benefit the community in return.

Filled with dreams for a better future, Randil now looks forward to raising his own children with great values and ideas. "I will let them enjoy their freedom but encourage them to make rights choices in life, one day, to pursue a career that has prospects - just like my parents did. It is not about being a doctor or an engineer but about pursuing their dreams in a field of their interest" he adds with a serious tone.

No matter where he is or what he chooses to do, his passion for social work still persists, beckoning him to help the youth of the country and make a difference in this part of the developing world. "I am waiting for the time to come back to Sri Lanka to give back the knowledge I gained, in form of service to the country" Randil says with conviction.



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# Reaching for the Stars



"It is always wise to obtain qualifications and experience in many areas as much as possible. Then, you have the leisure and pleasure to easily pick and choose from a multitude of diverse career avenues."

Sumudu from Kegalle

# Sumudu Herath



"When opportunities come knocking at your door, open the door, grab them with both your hands and make use of them the best you can! Opportunity never knocks twice" says Sumudu Tharanga Herath bluntly. Believing in himself, Sumudu held onto all the opportunities that came along his way with utmost confidence, stepping out into the world to find new adventures.

He was born in Walalgoda, a small village in Rambukkana in the Kegalle District, surrounded by all that he needed for a healthy and happy childhood. "As a child I had was given enough space to play, be creative and dream – which is imperative" he recollects memories of his childhood that nourished him intellectually and shaped his personality. With an air of respect and gratitude, Sumudu speaks of his father, a local businessman, who always helped him build confidence to overcome obstacles in life – and his mother, a Special Nursing Officer of the Kegalle District Hospital, who awaited his return from school in Colombo on Fridays, to welcome him with his favourite food. Sumudu spent most of his time with his elder brother, ganging up with boys of the same age group in the village. His elder brother is now a Computer Science Engineer who also graduated from the University of Moratuwa. Unfortunately, his younger sister was born with Down's syndrome, giving him motivation to gather strength to take care of her in the future.

Until the Grade Five scholarship examination, Sumudu studied at Parakrama Maha Vidyalaya, Rambukkana, and passed his examination with flying colours, which paved his way to enter Royal College, a prestigious school in Colombo, for his secondary education. He admits that it was a challenge to stay away from home at the age of 11 – however, he did well with the support of his parents, friends and his aunt, who accommodated him in her home and took care of him during his school days. Being a mathematics devotee, he naturally chose to pursue his Advanced Level studies in the Mathematics stream and attained a high Z-score, placing second in the island at the 2010 GCE Advanced Level examination, securing the opportunity enroll at the University of Moratuwa. He was also entitled to several scholarships including the Dialog Merit Scholarship which lessened the financial burden on his parents.

The university was a place where he redefined his interests, determined to follow the path of a research engineer. At the final examination, Sumudu topped the batch in the Department of Civil Engineering and came second in the Engineering Faculty by maintaining a GPA of 4.12. For his outstanding performances in both academic and extra-curricular activities, Sumudu was awarded the gold medal as the 'Most Outstanding Graduate of the Faculty of Engineering' at the General Convocation 2016. Complementing his engineering degree, he accepted a full scholarship from Achievers



Lanka Business School, to complete the CIMA qualification, aiming to gain a competitive edge over others in the global job market. "It is always wise to obtain qualifications and experience in many areas as much as possible. Then, you have the leisure and pleasure to easily pick and choose from a multitude of diverse career avenues" he noted. He outshone other CIMA finalists in his batch by winning the Prize for Enterprise Strategy at the 2012 CIMA Examination. Amongst many other accolades, he won the Sri Lankan 1st prize and was placed 7th in the world for Corporate Reporting (P2) at the 2014 ACCA Examination, showing his strength to succeed in any task that he takes on.

Sumudu also realized the importance of practical training and experience if he is to further his journey as a research engineer. With that in mind, he briefly interned at MAS Holdings as an In-Plant Trainee and then secured an internship at Peter and Lochner Building Engineering Consultants in Germany. Thereafter, he found another internship as a research assistant at EMPA in Switzerland.

Being a big fan of Sinhala classical music, Sumudu steeped himself in timeless music of great musicians such as Master W. D. Amaradewa, Nanda Malini and Victor Rathnayake. Music always helped Sumudu to reduce the stress of competitive exams and academic work. Like many Sri Lankan boys, he also became a cricket enthusiast at a young age, looking for an excuse to run to the field

with a bat and a tennis ball to play cricket with his gang of friends. He also managed to sneak out of the house during weekends to idle around the village, petting and feeding stray dogs - wanting to find shelter for them.

Sumudu was involved in many extracurricular activities during school days and university years - and excelled in everything he put his heart into. Amongst many clubs and societies that he was part of, he was an active member of the Rotaract Club of University of Moratuwa, taking a lot of responsibility to organise a multitude of activities, chairing various sessions and projects. Using these clubs and societies as a platform, he also promoted social service projects and volunteerism to raise environmental awareness, improve skills of less privileged students and sharpened the professionalism of fellow students.

When Sumudu applied to Cambridge University, UK, for a research PhD., he easily secured an offer of a place to start in the fall of 2016 with a full scholarship covering his tuition fees and living expenses. He is now looking forward to completing his PhD. and coming back to Sri Lanka to join the University of Moratuwa as a lecturer to disseminate his knowledge and nourish the next generation of engineers.



# Believing in Giving Back to Society



“Coming thus far in life, owing to the free education system and other support I received, I have the obligation to contributing to the development of society using both my personal and professional capacity.”

Tharindu from Hasalaka

# Tharindu Adikari

Watching the ripples of the river dancing into the rhythm of the waves, Tharindu Adikari grew up in a beautiful cozy house on the bank of River Mahaweli at Hasalaka, on the border of Central and Uva Provinces. The picturesque landscape and the fresh and dynamic water body flowing freely and vigorously, had a great effect on shaping Tharindu's character and personality. He spent most of his time pedaling across the beautiful village, uncovering stunning locations to sit down and read a book at leisure. When he was tired of cycling or playing with his friends, he joined his older sister to bury treasures in the garden – mostly cassettes and CDs which they planned to unearth after 20 or 30 years once they became 'antiques'.

Tharindu also fondly recalls the time that his sister and he gathered their friends during the Damba fruit season to pick the sweet-sour yellow fruits lying beneath the huge Damba tree in the front yard of their house. He and his sister also waited impatiently for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year to visit their grandmother, who always hid a surprise gift in the house for the young treasure hunters to discover. "Now my sister is married and a mother of two beautiful girls. She works in the Base Hospital in Mahiyanganaya – but everything seems like just yesterday" he muses.

Tharindu obtained his primary education at Pallewatte Model School. Achieving good grades at the scholarship examination, he moved to Mahiyangana National School for his secondary education and shifted school once again during his Advanced Level studies to Bandarawela Central College to continue his studies in the Mathematics stream. Both his parents being in the education sector, Tharindu received immense guidance and support from a young age to excel at his studies. His father is a retired Director at the Theldeniya Zonal Education Office and his mother is the Vice-Principal of Ranasinghe Premadasa National School in Hasalaka.

With hard work and determination, Tharindu obtained the best island-wide results in the Physical Science stream at the Advanced Levels and was selected to the Department of Electronics and Telecommunication of the University of Moratuwa, a university which receives the cream of the country's engineering students. For his continuous excellent academic performance during multiple semesters, Tharindu was placed on the Dean's List. As the President of E-Club of the university, the official student body of the Department of Electronics and Telecommunication, he was also involved in numerous activities – representing Sri Lanka at Techfest International Robotics Challenge and taking responsibility as the Chief Organiser of the Sri Lankan leg of the Techfest.



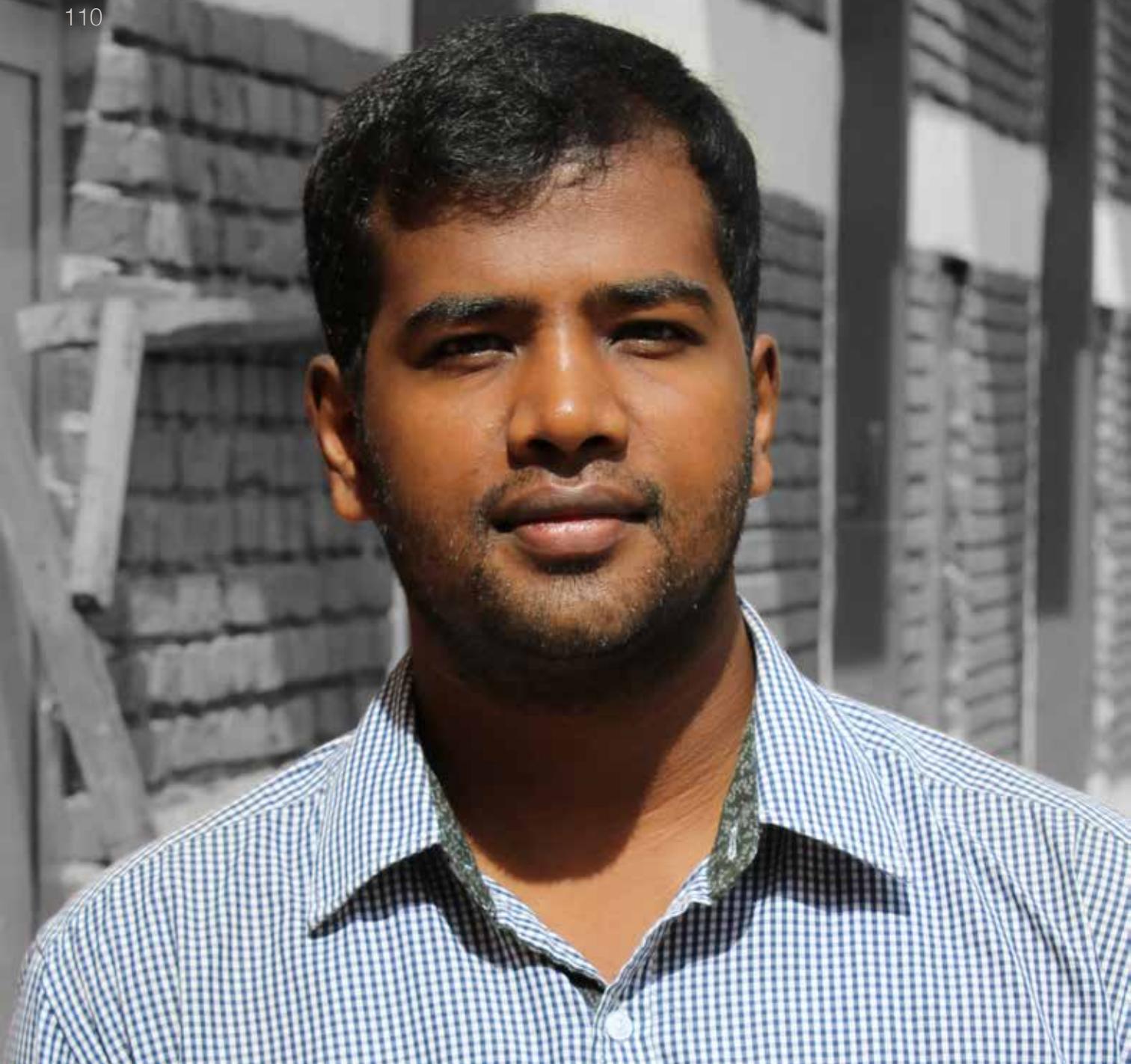
"My life has not been without hurdles. However, my parents and sister have always been pillars of strength, supporting me in every way possible. I must admit that the Dialog Merit Scholarship also provided great financial aid to get me through the four years of the university. As an electronic engineering student, I had to spend a lot of money for various gadgets needed for my course work. Thanks to the scholarship, I did not have to trouble my parents for money" he states. He also thinks the affirmation that the scholarship gives is a great motivation for students who receive it as well as for the future students who are encouraged to try hard to do their best.

Tharindu describes himself as a learner, researcher and an innovator who is constantly inspired by new technological advancements, especially related to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and knowledge discovery. Since his school days, he was involved in various projects, challenging his knowledge in electronics – and he succeeded in developing a library managing system for the school library which enabled users to borrow and return books and check the availability of study materials using the system. Later in life, he became part of a multitude of projects to help uplift the lives and living standards of people utilising technology.

Towards the end of his university years, in 2012, he launched GlassCUBE, a tech start-up focusing on mobile application development and became the Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of a successful enterprise. The team also won the Faculty Award and Peoples' Choice Award for best startup company at Accelerating Information Technology Innovation 2012, organized by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). At present, Tharindu also works for Millennium IT Software (Pvt.) Ltd., as a Software Engineer and lives in Malabe in a quiet neighborhood, making use of every holiday to travel to new destinations in the world.

Tharindu, being a great admirer of Nelson Mandela, a global icon and a champion for civil and human rights, believes in giving back to the society and contributing for the greater good of humanity. "Coming thus far in life, owing to the free education system and other support I received, I have the obligation to contribute to the development of society using both my personal and professional capacity. I strongly believe in creating the same opportunities for under privileged students from different parts of the country that I received – helping them in their struggle to emerge victorious" he says with a greater vision.





# Thinking Beyond Boundaries



"I directed the award winning short film named 'Suicide'. This romantic melancholy short film which reveals the consequences of teenage suicide. It had been officially selected and nominated for finals in International Short Film Festivals like NTFF (Norway) and NSFF (France). It won the Best VFX (Visual Effects/Graphics) Award at -NSFF (Navalar Short Film Festival) & received Special Mention at the NTFF. It also won awards for 'Best Story' and 'Best Editing' at the Adcharam Short Film Competition."

Gowthaman from Vavuniya

# Shivakumaran Gowthaman

"The difference between the successful and the unsuccessful is that what the successful think as 'can do', the unsuccessful think as a 'cannot do'" says Sivakumaran Gowthaman, who has overcome insurmountable challenges in his childhood to be where he is today.

Born in Nallur and brought up in the vicinity of famous Nallur Murugan Temple, Gowthaman's childhood wasn't the idyllic one it should be for a youngster. His family was displaced thrice due to the conflict that was ravaging Sri Lanka's North and East. His family moved from Nallur to Vavuniya, and then to Bandarawela and again back to Vavuniya, just so that they could lead a semblance of a normal life.

"It wasn't the best life for a young child to experience, but it also gave me an opportunity to widen my horizons through a great deal of reading. My father was a philosopher who was proficient in Tamil and other literature. So, I read books such as 'War and Peace' at a tender age. We spent our time reading great novels and literature that my father brought home. In fact, if there were squabbles between my older brother and myself at home, it was to see who would read the book first! The books made me a deep thinker" he muses.

"My mother has sacrificed a great deal as a home-maker to look after us. My older brother and I are very close, as we went through a difficult period in life together. So, we know what it meant to be close and to survive. Our younger brother is much younger than us and still in school" he adds.

Receiving his education at Vavuniya Tamil Madhya Maha Vidyalam, Gowthaman joined the English medium stream, which had been freshly introduced to his school, in a bid to progress in the English language. He was placed in the top 25 in the country at Ordinary Level exam and 71st at Advanced Level exam. Winning Gold medals at the National Informatics and Physics Olympiads, Gowthaman also excelled in speech and creative writing in his school days.

Sixth grade was a milestone year in Gowthaman's life. He watched the film, 'Finding Nemo', gave up eating fish and decided his passion was to make films. "I followed through with my idea with my leaning towards creativity. I wanted to excel in animation and direction. At the selection level at the University of Moratuwa, I was placed 22nd on the Dean's list for Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering. It started an amazing journey, which I enjoyed and continue to enjoy. A high point in my university career was directing a short film called 'Suicide'. As I mentioned earlier, war and the post war era brought on a new wave of suicides among the young



population in the northern region. I felt that I should do my part to address this issue with the skills I possess. So, I directed the award winning short film named 'Suicide'. This romantic melancholy short film reveals the consequences of teenage suicide. It had been officially selected and nominated for finals in International Short Film Festivals like NTFF (Norway) and NSFF (France). It won the Best VFX (Visual Effects/Graphics) Award at NSFF (Navalar Short Film Festival) & received Special Mention at the NTFF. It also won awards for 'Best Story' and 'Best Editing' at the Adcharam Short Film Competition" he explains.

He goes on to say that not wanting to burden his family with the costs involved with his passion on these projects, he is grateful for the Dialog Merit Scholarship which helped him fund these projects and thereby, engage in his passion. "In actual fact, these were so aligned to what I was studying, it helped me gain further insights by turning academia in to reality" says Gowthaman.

He adds, "I was given a great opportunity as a Research Assistant intern at the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) under Professor Chen Lujie. I was involved in three projects during my internship: Volumetric Rendering, Algorithm Development for 3D Prototyping and Volumetric Large Scale Prototyping Projects & Achievements (Academic). This proved to be an excellent opportunity."

The war had ingrained in Gowthaman the need to give back to society. He has organized a series of debates with his friends in 153 schools islandwide and volunteered as the Nationwide Student Programme Coordinator for Uplifting Peace & Harmony in the northern region in 2009. He also volunteered with the Department of Education for the project 'Nena Guna Weduma Sisu Diriya' (Enriching students with knowledge and virtue) to build peace and harmony among the youngsters from war -torn areas.

"A word of advice to the young - if you have a passion which seems opposed to your profession, choose your passion and make it a bridge, to arrive at a profession that goes hand-in-hand with it. You will enjoy what you do and be a valuable member of the society" concludes Gowthaman.





# Turning Setbacks Into Opportunity



"Although my parents spent on everything I needed, the Dialog Merit Scholarship gave me an extra boost to forge ahead with confidence, secure in the knowledge that I will not be a burden to my parents and yet, achieve my dreams."

Shamane from Ratnapura

# Gayal Shamane



"It was like entering paradise" declares Shamane when he achieved his lifelong desire of entering the University of Peradeniya. The younger of two boys in a loving family, Shamane was playful from his childhood and took life in his stride with the same playfulness he displayed outdoors. This prompted his parents, both teachers, to gently prod him along his education goals.

Sivali Central College in Ratnapura was Shamane's alma mater. Shamane looked up to his older brother who passed the Grade Five scholarship exam and entered the prestigious Royal College, Colombo. Although Shamane passed the exam, he missed out on a scholarship. This did not deter him, for he looked at the missed opportunity as a reward to continue being educated in a co-ed school!

A bright young lad, Shamane topped the ranking list in Ratnapura at the Ordinary Level exam. The Advanced Level exam too was no exception and that is where he became a Dialog Merit Scholar, which anchored him securely to his academic dreams. "Although my parents spent on everything I needed, the Dialog Merit Scholarship gave me an extra boost to forge ahead with confidence, secure in the knowledge that I will not be a burden to my parents and yet, achieve my dreams" he avers.

A careful spender, Shamane utilized the extra funds carefully, stretching them to ensure that his educational needs were well supplied. At the time of writing, Shamane is a final year student at the University of Peradeniya, reading for his degree in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering. He was also a member of the



university's Hockey team, which won him colours for the sport. A high point in Shamane's life was when he received an opportunity to be trained overseas, not only in Electronics but in Management as well. "As an Engineer, I should not only know my engineering skills, but be able to manage, anything from a project to a team. I am glad that I had the opportunity to combine both which, no doubt, would stand me in good stead in the challenging market place, which is where I will finally invest my skills to carve out a place in life" he says.

Data mining and the world of information technology is not the only area that Shamane is proficient in. He is an animal welfare advocate, who deeply cares about human rights, disaster management and humanitarian relief. Adding to this, his keen eye for arts and culture blends harmoniously with his passion for science and technology.

Shamane has no regrets about the path he has travelled. His goal is to serve his motherland in the area of telecommunication. He advice to the parents is, "Be firm with your children and guide them in the right path to set up the initial grounding needed for them, but don't pressurize them. Pressure on a young student can do great damage in the long term. Instead, allow them a well-balanced life style of discipline, daily work routine, fun and play. The rest will follow."



# Daring to Dream Big



“Dialog did not stop with financial assistance alone. It took us through Leadership Development Programs, Life Skill Classes and also to the Sunflower Children’s Village to engage in community service. This opened my eyes to the contribution and the investment I can make in the lives of others who need that support. This was the starting point for my vision in carrying out motivational workshops in my home-town of Badulla for the aspiring youth.”

Upul from Bandarawela

# Upul Aruna Shantha Thennakoon

"While I was pursing my secondary education at Bandarawela Central College, I was awarded a scholarship by The Royal Chemistry Association of Australia, to follow a degree in Chemistry at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, as I obtained the best result in the Badulla district at its exam" reveals Upul Thennakoon, currently attached to the Corporate Planning & Strategy team at Dialog Axiata PLC. This may seem unusual for a Graduate of University of Moratuwa who obtained a First-class honours degree in Engineering, specializing in Electronic and Telecommunication. What is even more awe-inspiring is the fact that the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), UK adjudged Upul to be the best ICT Engineering undergraduate in Sri Lanka in the year 2007. Upul's story is a remarkable one. He has gone on to obtain an MBA from the Postgraduate Institute of Management, ACMA from CIMA UK (obtaining World Rank 10 for CIMA Decision Management Module and Sri Lanka prize for CIMA Performance Evaluation Module) and CGMA to his achievement list. He says, "Yes, it was my dream to become a practicing engineer; but during the university tenure, where I also got exposed to management studies and management training programs arranged by Dialog, I realized that management too is an interesting option for a future leader. This was my motivation for pursuing management studies as my future goal is to head a multinational corporation."

Hailing from Welimada, Upul's primary education was at Welimada Primary school. The eldest in a family of three, Upul helped his younger sisters accompanying them to classes and back, as his parents were hard-working bankers with People's Bank. Childhood friendships, he says, stayed throughout his student years and well into his life at the University of Moratuwa.

"My parents were bankers. They worked hard to ensure we are well placed in life. My mother was a hardworking person, who, as a Branch Manager turned around a loss-making branch into a

profitable outfit. My parents were my role models for life" says Upul. To this day, his sisters and other members of his extended family seek his advice when it comes to their careers.

The Grade Five scholarship paved the way for Upul to attend the Bandarawela Central College, acclaimed as one of the best schools in the Badulla district. Although it was 25km away from his home, Upul did not mind the distance as some of his childhood friends were also Grade five scholarship winners, attending the same school. He enjoyed his childhood with his friends, some of whom followed him to the university as well. Being placed District First and 14th islandwide at the Advanced Level examination was a milestone in Upul's life.

At the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Electronic and Telecommunication Department of University of Moratuwa, Upul and his fellow students worked hand-in-hand with sponsors and suppliers to make the event a milestone in the university's history. Upul was the President of the Electronic Club of the university, which organized the Expose 2009 exhibition, where many of the innovations by undergraduates were on display for the public alongside special workshops for students to gain encouragement to enter University. He also held the position of President – IET Younger Member section, of the University of Moratuwa.

"In my time, only a few students were selected to the University of Moratuwa from Badulla. Thereafter, many a youth from the district has entered the university. I am humbled to say that I may have to some extent impacted their lives through the precedent set and specially our motivational workshops" he adds.

"I am grateful that while I was an undergraduate, the Dialog Merit scholarship allowed me the financial freedom to pursue additional study programmes such as CIMA. Dialog did not stop with financial



Programs, Life Skill Classes and also to the Sunflower Children's Village to engage in community service. This opened my eyes to the contribution and the investment I can make in the lives of others who need that support. This was the starting point for my vision in carrying out motivational workshops in my home-town of Badulla for the aspiring youth. This is something I wish to continue" says Upul.

He goes on to say, "This is why I have now carved out a different journey for myself. Although I have a sound foundation with my engineering degree, I am building myself with different kinds of building blocks, so that my dream of becoming a leader of a multinational corporation will materialize in good time."

Upul has words of wisdom for youth: "What I was able to achieve was because I valued the time and engagement with my friends and colleagues. We should not be competitive with our own team, but collaborative."

He also proffers a word of caution – "While you are on a journey to achieve your goals, don't forget to enjoy the journey. A balanced life is a well-lived life!"





# Sustaining Performance to Achieve Your Goals



“Discover your own meaning in life and stay true to yourself in whatever you do and there will always be a community that also finds meaning in things you do.”

Madushanka from Galle

# Madushanka Soysa



Madushanka Soysa was born and raised in Karapitiya and attended Richmond College - Galle from Grade 1 until Advanced Level. Madushanka and his elder sister grew up in their large and crowded childhood home with many relatives living with them from time to time. Due to their close proximity to the Karapitiya Teaching Hospital, his parents rented out rooms to medical students who Madushanka looked up to. He was exposed to an academically focused environment from an early age which steered him towards a studious path. When he was about 6-years-old, Madushanka was enamoured by a book called 'Mathematics Can Be Fun' by Yakov Perelman, which sparked his interest in Mathematics.

"My father worked as a chief Civil Engineer at the Southern Provincial Government and my mother served as a school Vice Principal. My parents were polar opposites who nurtured me in different ways: my father was a stoic man who handled pressure extremely well and taught me perseverance and inner strength, while my mother was a friendly, exuberant lady who encouraged me every step of the way. They were dedicated parents who gave me and my sister all the support and attention we needed as children" he recalls.

He had an outstanding school career being ranked as the top student consecutively from Grade 4 onwards. He passed his Grade 5 Scholarship and got the highest marks in Richmond College that year. His hobbies growing up were reading, playing cricket and

going on occasional hikes. His first major scholastic achievement was winning a Mathematics Competition hosted by the University of New South Wales at the age of 10. It was his first award at national level and a defining moment in his early life. From that point onwards, his parents made a habit of buying him comic books every time he won an award or passed an exam. Madushanka grew up reading detective stories and science fiction novels. Perhaps this was another reason that motivated him to study electrical engineering. He delighted in observing and discovering how things worked and his father was his greatest influence, being an engineer himself.

His mother, who was a business studies teacher at the time, taught Advanced Level classes and took great pride in her students who were able to go to university despite hardships and difficulties. As a result, Madushanka too grew up wanting to follow the same path and make his parents proud by pursuing university education. He received awards every year for achieving the highest marks in his grade for individual subjects, and throughout his Ordinary Level and Advanced Level studies he received awards for each subject he took. He received several gold medals at Mathematics Competitions affiliated with the University of New South Wales and several awards from National Mathematics Competitions during A/Ls. Madushanka was also a gifted chess player during his school career and won several awards in chess. He was part of the school chess team that won the national school games - school colours and pro-



vincial colours in chess. He also got the opportunity to represent Sri Lanka in the International Mathematics Olympiad held in Greece in 2004, and won an 'honorable mention' at the competition.

His influences throughout later school life were Professor Richard Feynman, an American theoretical physicist, English author Douglas Adams and American novelist Kurt Vonnegut. All of their work shaped Madushanka's academic and personal development during this time. Madushanka sat for the Advanced Level examination in Mathematics stream in 2004 and achieved the highest Z-Score in the country. As a Dialog Merit Scholar, he was part of an outreach program organised by Dialog at Sunflower Village orphanage – Mulleriyawa, where he and fellow scholars taught computer lessons to physically disabled orphans, which he describes as a memorable experience of his life.

"The Dialog Merit Scholarship Program was the first allowance I received other than from my parents and spent it wisely by buying stocks in the Colombo Stock Exchange. I am still friends with several fellow Dialog Merit Scholars to this day and feel they are remarkable people" he adds.

Matriculated at the University of Moratuwa in 2005 to study Electronics and Telecommunications, fulfilling his lifelong aspiration, he continued the same streak of excellence throughout his university career, being included in the Dean's List in all semesters.

He describes the university as "A more challenging environment where I had to work harder than ever before. I was a member of the

student organisation AIESEC and went on to serve as the National Support Manager, Information Systems at AIESEC in Sri Lanka and later as the Leader of the Global Information Management Support Team of AIESEC International. I graduated 3rd in my batch from the University of Moratuwa in 2009 with a GPA of 4.07."

In the same year that Madushanka graduated from the University of Moratuwa, he moved to Canada to do his Masters. Following the completion of his Masters in 2011, Madushanka moved to San Diego, California, where he studied for his PhD. at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and worked as a research assistant from 2011 - 2015. His PhD. thesis was on 'Video transmission in tactical cognitive radio networks under disruptive attacks'. He obtained his PhD. in 2015.

At the time of writing, Madushanka is working with a startup in distributed storage systems as a staff systems architect, working towards developing greener cloud storage solutions for businesses and websites. "I hope to contribute more time and resources to organizations promoting and protecting individual and minority rights. I enjoy camping, hiking and reading, and spending time with my elder sister and her family who live in Northern California" he says. Madushanka's advice to young students is – "Discover your own meaning in life and stay true to yourself in whatever you do and there will always be a community that also finds meaning in things you do."



# An Early Passion Grows Into a Profession



“Today, I am proud to be known as a Telecommunications Engineer! I had a dream, a passion and a vision and that is precisely what I am pursuing even today, thanks to Dialog. The scholarship carved a path for me to achieve my dreams.”

Kolitha from Kalutara

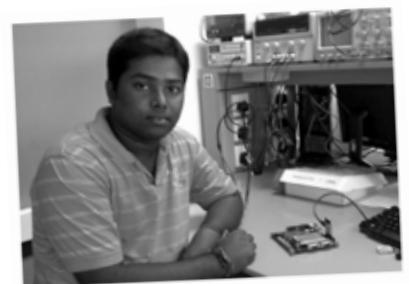
# Kolitha Hasanga Amaratunga

"As a child, when I held my father's mobile phone in my hand, I wanted to know how it worked, how was it possible to receive and make a call? It was a passion as a child to know how telecommunication worked, although I didn't quite phrase it that way. Today, I am proud to be known as a Telecommunications Engineer! I had a dream, a passion and a vision and that is precisely what I am pursuing even today, thanks to Dialog. The scholarship carved a path for me to achieve my dreams. I am now a Telecommunications Engineer attached to Dialog. All of my childhood dreams have come true" states Kolitha Hasanga Amaratunga, who received his Electronics Engineering degree from the Sheffield Hallam University, UK, specializing in Electronics, becoming the second-highest GPA holder in the Bachelor's degree in 2012.

"I studied at Sri Sumangala College Panadura, as we were residents of Wadduwa. I consider myself and my brother to have had the best childhood possible in a loving environment. Both my parents were government servants and would be out during day. My grandparents filled the gap for both of us and we hold such wonderful memories of that period. I would say that my hero was my grandfather, a retired policeman. He would relate stories to us from his police days which kept us spellbound in the afternoons, not before my grandmother had ensured that we had had our lunch and done our homework! When my parents came home in the evening, my mother would supervise our homework. I never felt pressure from my parents to only keep studying. Instead, there was this quiet motivation from them that studies will achieve our dreams and I knew that was our priority. I enjoyed my evenings with my friends, being outdoors and playing, mostly cricket. We grew up together, studied well and pursued our dreams. I am grateful to say that all of my friends are doing well in their chosen professions. Some have already achieved a PhD." he says.

Although Kolitha was athletic enough to gain recognition in sports at the regional level, his talents were more visible as a chess player. Joining the school's chess team at a tender age, he was adjudged the All-Island Best Chess Player in Board Number 01 - Inter school chess tournament - 2003. Pursuing his dreams in chess, Kolitha is now a valuable member of the Dialog Chess team. "Playing chess builds mental discipline that is required to stay on course and focus on the result you need" explains Kolitha.

"I must specifically mention the Mathematics class that my friends and I went to during school days. It was a pleasure to be there, simply because all of us had a vision and a



passion for the subject. Mathematics was enjoyable and we knew what we had to do. This class not only taught me the subject, but also gave me some life skills. Very early on in life, I recognised that if I am to move towards my goal, I must surround myself with friends who had a dream for themselves or a goal to achieve. Our passion or goals may have been different, but we treaded a common ground to achieve our goal. I believe this as a key criterion that helped me define and pursue my dreams" he reflects.

Kolitha explains, "This is when Dialog came into my life. The financial benefit I received from the Dialog Merit Scholarship helped me through University and in pursuing further studies and completing an MSc. in Information Management. What's more – Dialog employed me as an intern during my degree and later employed me in its cadre. I feel that Dialog has held my hand in my transition from student to an employee. It has provided me the opportunity to satisfy my curious mind about how telecommunication works – especially mobile telecommunication. As a child, I held my father's phone in my hand and now I am involved in product development in data packaging for Dialog mobile service enhancements. A satisfying journey indeed!" Kolitha aspires to follow through with his academic studies while impacting the world through telecommunications.

Now married to his teen sweetheart, Kolitha has a word of advice for the next generation: "Define your vision and fix on to a passion. When you do that, your will take the right actions to move towards your goal. You must also accumulate friends who have a vision for themselves, who want to do better, follow through with a dream - and that will create a bond between you and your friends, just like what I enjoy now with my childhood friends. You will not only enjoy your childhood, you will have good friends for life."

Finally, he is ever grateful to Dialog for defining an effective scholarship program that helped him financially move from Advanced Level studies through to University and much more. "It simply opened the world to me!" he declares.





# Innovative Leadership, Creating Pathways and Serving the Community



"Entering the University of Peradeniya was my childhood dream. With my Advanced Level result, this became a reality. It was marvelous. Soon I learnt that University life is a sharing and caring life. We are in it for a reason and we need to help each other achieve our respective dreams. One cannot be selfish. If a fellow student needed help, we helped and vice versa."

Maneesh from Nuwara Eliya

# Maneesh Sashiprabhath Yatiwella

"Life is full of challenges and I have faced many while studying for my Advanced Level exam. My father, who was a Government Surveyor, developed a hernia and, my mother, was diagnosed with breast cancer. My older sister and I had to help while continuing with our studies. This did not deter me and nor did it become an excuse for poor performance. Instead, there was greater courage to face the day and whatever came with it. In fact, I triumphed by being ranked 1st in Nuwara Eliya district at the Ordinary Level exam" says Maneesh Yatiwella, who hails from scenic Nuwara Eliya.

Born in Padiyapelella, Maneesh completed his primary education at Padiyapelella Primary school. A strong performance at the Grade Five scholarship exam saw him through to Poramadulla Central College, from where he completed his Advanced Level examination with flying colours.

"When I was in Grade four, our school had an event where a huge pandol was set up. As a young student, I was awestruck with its lighting system. As I go back down the memory lane, I know it is then that the dream of becoming an Engineer was born in me. I was mesmerized with the way the lighting system worked and my goal eventually became to enter the University of Peradeniya" he points out.

His childhood memories are filled with walking through the cool and sometimes chilly town, with his older sister and friends, wandering off to explore unknown paths into meadows and shrubberies filled with seasonal fruit. Climbing trees, plucking fruits and dipping their toes in ice cold rivulets streaming through the mountains were some of the antics that his little troupe indulged in.

"My mother is a sensitive person who cries if one of us was hurt. My father, on the other hand didn't show much emotion, although he was as caring as a father can be. Being a surveyor took him away

from home on many journeys. When he was home, he was keen to see that we did our studies well and cared well for the home" he recalls.

In addition to his engineering acumen, Maneesh displayed sharp skills in music – especially with the guitar. This made him the lead guitarist in his school band and to date, strumming a guitar is his best form of relaxation, other than getting together with friends.

"As I mentioned before, entering the University of Peradeniya was my childhood dream. With my Advanced Level result, this became a reality. It was marvelous. Soon I learnt that University life is a sharing and caring life. We are in it for a reason and we need to help each other achieve our respective dreams. One cannot be selfish. If a fellow student needed help, we helped and vice versa" he adds.

A high point in his first year was the Freshers' Meet. It was a fun event where freshers were grouped and competed against each other. It created such a camaraderie among the freshers that bonding was easy, he says.

"We rose early and attended lectures from eight in the morning till five in the evening, followed by sports practice! It really was a memorable time in my life at the University. While we did well in academic work, we also took part in other parts of University life as well" He says.

Maneesh talks fondly about the special project – Arunella, which not only extends a helping hand to students in remote areas where school work is not adequately covered, but also to their own fellow students – who need help in the fourth year.

"The Project runs for four full years. In the first two years, we select schools where students need further education and conduct seminars in English, Maths and Science. In the third year, we review the school's physical resources and supply what is lacking. It could be



a science lab or a library etc. In the fourth year, we concentrate on our fellow students who need help with their resources. We are not only proud but privileged to provide this service, as we know this is how we can give back to the society in a meaningful way" says Maneesh.

Armed with his ambition of becoming a Rocket and Aircraft Engineer, Maneesh also hopes to compose his own music someday. What's more – earning the title of 'Kung Fu Master' is also on his very diverse list.

"I'm also a hiker. I have climbed so many mountains in Sri Lanka. I dream of climbing Mt. Everest. Our university's exploration club takes teams to the Himalayan range every year. I'm hoping to go in my final year, which is three years from now. This is a possibility which I believe will become a reality" says Maneesh, adding another facet to his already diversified life's goals.

His advice: "Don't be a follower. Be innovative and do something new for which the world will remember you."



# Making Challenges the Stepping Stones of Success



"I've learned early in life that challenges are only stepping stones to success. What I would like the young to know is to take each challenge as that stepping stone and treat it as another milestone in your pathway to achieving your goal. Challenges polish up your character to achieve the goals you have set for yourself in life"

Sunethra from Matale

# Sunethra Priyadarshani

Quietly self-possessed, Sunethra's personality fits well with the ambition she holds for herself – that of being an academic and lecturing at the Institute where she obtained two Degrees. The institute is the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT) and the degrees were in Information Technology and Software Engineering from the Curtin University of Western Australia.

"Matale is a peaceful place where I spent my childhood. I was never overloaded with tuitions and extra classes in my younger days and I loved playing outdoors in the mild climate of Matale, with my brother and neighbourhood children. I treasure the memories of a childhood well-spent as a child. My mother was a teacher at Christ Church College Matale. I, however, schooled at Sri Sangamitta Balika Vidyalaya in Matale in my primary years and then went on to the Government Science College for my Ordinary Level and Advanced Level years. My father was attached to the education office in Kandy. Both were of a mild and kind nature and nurtured and mentored me to be who I am today. My father is quite an optimist and always encourages me to achieve great things in life. By the time I was born, both my maternal grandparents were deceased. My paternal grandparents filled the void well as I remember them relating stories to me and teaching me to sing" she recounts.

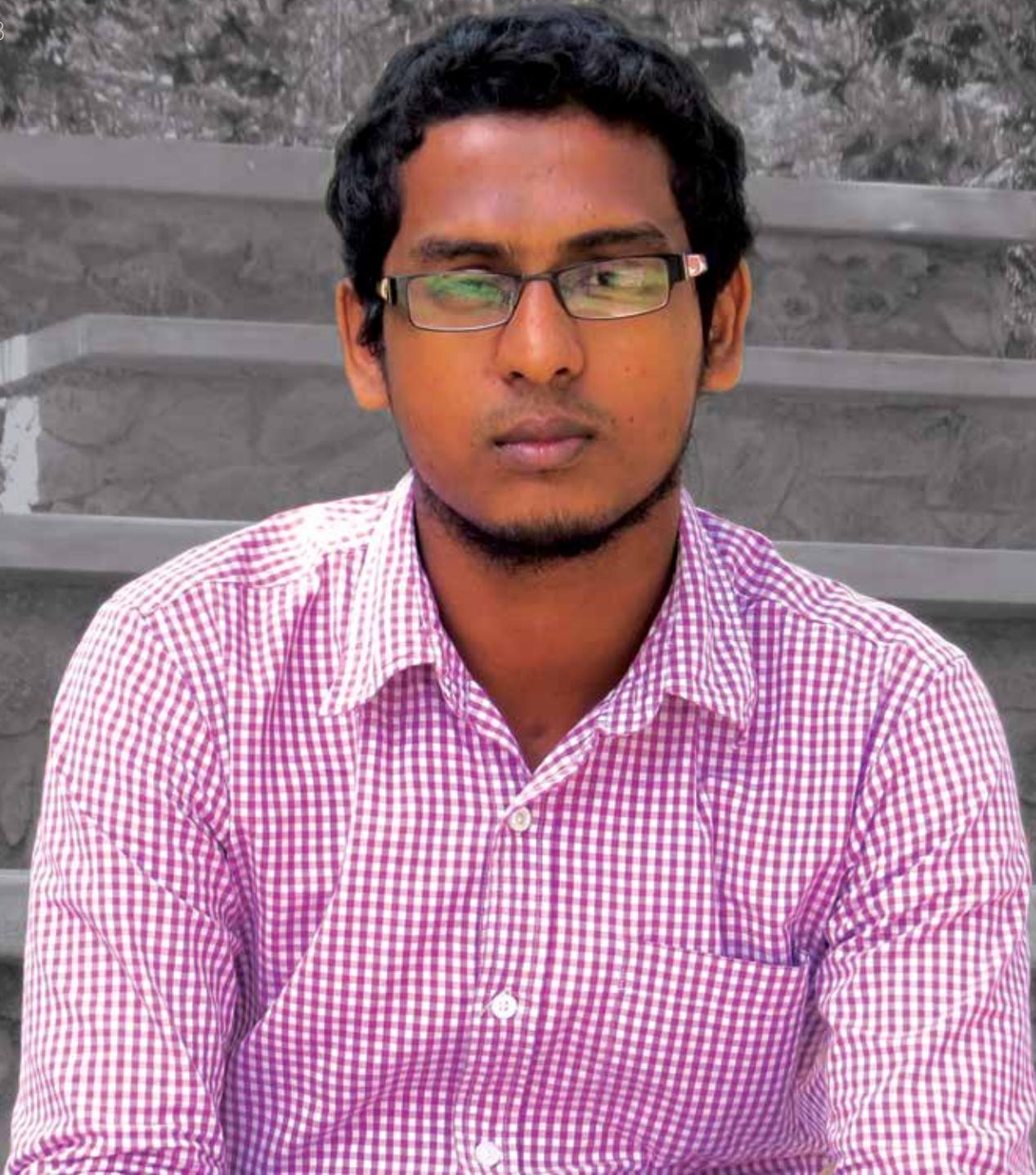
Soft spoken and mild-mannered, Sunethra excelled in Mathematics at her O/L examination, gaining the highest marks for the subject and ranking second overall from the Matale District. Growing up, her one desire was to be involved in scientific research, especially related to the universe and cosmology. Even now, she has a keen interest in both as well as astronomy. As such, it is no surprise that Maths and Science were her favourite subjects along with English

Literature. She combined academic studies with extra-curricular activities of Chess, Badminton and Swimming. She was recognised as the Best Student in the Grade and the Best Student of the Year during her student years at Government Science College.

"My father was the most influential person in my life. His unending optimism is contagious. It just spurred us on – both my brother and I are graduates of SLIIT. I am privileged that I am now lecturing at the same University that I obtained my degrees from. My ambition is to go through to MSc. and widen my knowledge and experience to become an outstanding person in my academic career. When people think of me, I would like them to remember me as a person who influenced them positively" she stresses.

Ever the outdoors-girl from Matale, currently Sunethra enjoys cycling, travelling and camping. A trip around the world is also on her pending list of things to do. "I've learned early in life that challenges are only stepping stones to success. What I would like the young to know is to take each challenge as that stepping stone and treat it as another milestone in your pathway to achieving your goal. Challenges polish up your character to achieve the goals you have set for yourself in life" she muses, adding, "That is why I am so grateful for the Dialog Merit Scholarship that I received when I passed my O/L exam. It encouraged me to achieve greater goals in my life and motivated me to go after my dreams. This is exactly what I did and what I continue to do – go for my dreams."





# Achieving Greatness Against All Odds



"Every human being is born with unique, innate skills and abilities which should be identified and perfected. It doesn't matter what kind of environment a child grows up in as long as there is passion for knowledge and determination to overcome difficulties using every resource that is available. No one can stop you from achieving your dreams as long as there are commitment and a genuine interest for knowledge and studies."

Ramsath from Polonnaruwa

# Ramsath Rasik



Mohammadu Ramsath Rasik Fareed currently works as a Systems Engineer at hSenid Mobile, one of the largest tech companies in Sri Lanka. He is a young man who holds many dreams and aspirations. At only 24 years of age and with an honours degree in Electronics and Telecommunications, Ramsath believes that his journey has only begun and that his ultimate purpose in life is to contribute to the knowledge base in the world in a way that it benefits all future generations.

Born in 1991, in the rural village of Thambala, Polonnaruwa, Ramsath is the second of four children. A young man of humble origins, Ramsath confesses that overcoming difficulties and challenges in life is his biggest achievement. Their father was a hardworking paddy farmer whose commitment to his work inspired him. His mother was a caring homemaker who would often sacrifice her happiness for her children. Even though his parents were not fully educated, they would often help Ramsath and his brothers with studies in any way they could. Ramsath recalls almost drowning in a river when he was 9 and his mother coming to his rescue - one of his strongest memories of her.

Ramsath attended PL/ Al Rifai Maha Vidyalaya in Thambala from Grade 1 to Grade 11 until he did his Ordinary Level exam. He

achieved extremely good results at the Grade 5 Scholarship exam and became eligible to attend D. S. Senanayake College but he missed that opportunity. His free time was spent playing cricket, football, and studying. As times went by, hardships and debts caused his family to sell their paddy fields and his father eventually found work as a labourer while his mother went abroad to work as a housemaid to support the family.

During this time, Ramsath and his brothers were looked after by his maternal grandmother who was a loving and devoted surrogate parent, who did the best that she could to raise and educate them. "My school career was particularly difficult and I underwent a challenging period due to financial difficulties, but hard work and determination kept me going. The house that I lived in had no electricity and we had to often study under an oil lamp. My favorite subject was Mathematics and solving geometric theorems was one of my favorite past-times. I was a high achieving student from early on, often being ranked among the top students in school" he recalls. Following his Ordinary Level studies, which he passed with flying colors, Ramsath went on to enroll at PL/Polonnaruwa Muslim Central College where he studied until he sat for the Advanced Level exam. His commitment to studies never wavered as the years went by; if at all, it only grew stronger. He would make a lot of self-sac-



rifices to achieve his goals, including skipping meals just so he could afford to buy Advanced Level textbooks. Ramsath achieved spectacular results at A/Ls and became the highest-ranking student in the district.

He says, "I was the only student chosen from the Polonnaruwa district to enroll at the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Moratuwa in 2010 - a fact that I am incredibly proud of. I was so surprised and delighted when I received a Dialog Merit Scholarship. The aid from Dialog helped me greatly during my university career."

Although attending university was something Ramsath had dreamed of all his life, he was not familiar with university culture and he has never even heard of the word "computer programme". All he had was hope - the hope of achieving his dreams despite all difficulties. He was determined to succeed and was able to pass the first semester exams at university with a high ranking, following which he chose to enroll at the Department of Electronics and Telecommunications. Armed with a deep-seated hunger for knowledge and academia, Ramsath often spent his time studying at the library, researching deep into theories and trying to understand everything from a core perspective. Due to this method of studying, he was not able to do as well as he hoped during his first few semesters. Realizing a fault in his studying methods, he focused more on syllabus related academia and was eventually able to improve his grades and even be placed on the Dean's List during the final two semesters of university with an average GPA of 3.8.

"During the university years, I was a student member of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and took part in international events such as IEEE - Xtreme 24 hours Programming Competition and much more. Although I was helped financially by my relatives, many financial difficulties arose from time to time. I was finally able to obtain an interest-free loan from the Islamic Development Bank which helped me greatly during my final year. Eventually I graduated in 2015 with an honours degree in Electronics and Telecommunications" he explains.

Now a graduate with a full-time job as a Systems Engineer (Implementation) at hSenid Mobile, Ramsath is determined to support his family and study further. He dreams of becoming an innovative leader who can benefit the world with his inventions and intellectual contributions. His insatiable hunger for knowledge and wisdom is his biggest driving force. He loves mentoring and guiding young individuals and helps them achieve success by overcoming difficulties.

His biggest advice to aspiring students is to never underestimate one's own talents: "Every human being is born with unique, innate skills and abilities which should be identified and perfected. It doesn't matter what kind of environment a child grows up in as long as there is passion for knowledge and determination to overcome difficulties using every resource that is available. No one can stop you from achieving your dreams as long as there are commitment and a genuine interest for knowledge and studies."

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# Benefits of a Well-balanced Life



“Study hard and enjoy life when there are opportunities to do so. In the meantime, don’t forget to let your loved ones know how much you love them.”

Shavindra from Peradeniya

# Shavindra Premaratne



"My paternal grandfather was a farmer in Kadawathrambawewa, near Mahadivulwewa in Anuradhapura. He was an awe-inspiring person to talk to. My paternal grandmother was also involved in farming, helping my grandfather. She cooks the best authentic Sri Lankan 'gamey kaema', and I have no words to describe how much I love them. We would visit them often for Avurudu and feast on her delicious food. She is quite old now and it is not easy for her to do all the things she did awhile back. I am very grateful to both of them for all that they have done for us. My maternal grandfather was an education officer and my maternal grandmother was a school teacher. Both of them passed away when I was very young. I remember them as very kind and gentle people. I am again very grateful for all they did for us" says Shavindra Premaratne, currently reading for his PhD. in the US.

Shavindra's parents hail from Anuradhapura. Both are professors attached to the University of Peradeniya. "I am where I am now, because of all the things my mother and father did for me" Shavindra remembers fondly. Both his parents encouraged Shavindra, his brother and his sister to study well. His brother studied at the Faculty of Medicine and is awaiting internship, while his sister is currently studying in the same faculty at the University of Peradeniya. "We had a very relaxed childhood. My most treasured memory is of the Avurudu season where we dressed in new clothing and took part in sumptuous Avurudu feasts. As my parents worked at the University, our lives were mostly spent in and around Peradeniya in close vicinity to the University. Our parents provided us with all

we needed and instilled in us the value of education, which made us who we are today. My next major step would be to decide on my career path after graduation. I yearn to return to Sri Lanka and engage in an area where my doctorate can be put to good use. After all, I am in the US because of the free education system in Sri Lanka and the many sacrifices that people have made for us" says Shavindra.

Primarily a product of Dharmaraja College, Kandy, he is currently working as a Research Assistant while reading for his PhD. at the University of Maryland, USA, having completed his Masters in 2016. Shavindra's childhood years seem to have built in him the emotional balance that a student needs to cultivate, in order to achieve a set goal in a focused manner. A typical day in his young life would involve a great deal of family-time after school, eating together and engaging in conversations, outdoor play and brief periods of watching a good teledrama or playing a computer game. An ideal background to breed the professionals that he and his siblings have become.

Shavindra became a Dialog Merit Scholar when he was ranked 10th best student island-wide at his O/L exam. In addition, he was the recipient of the V. Appapillai Memorial Scholarship in Physics (2009/2010) at the University of Peradeniya, Mahapola Higher Education (Merit) Scholarship (2008-2012) and 'Sisu Udana' Scholarship Award for Excellence in Education (2004).



"The dream of being a physicist was born in my Ordinary Level year" says Shavindra, who was also ranked 4th in the district at his Advanced Level exam in the mathematics stream.

Academia was not the only arena in which Shavindra shone. He was heavily involved in his school's Media Unit, English Literary and Drama Association; the lead English announcer for the school's activities; a member of the school Science quiz team (which won many top prizes) and; in sports, won a gold medal for the shot put at the school sports meet. Shavindra was also the winner of the national level creative writing contest held under the auspices of the Ministry of Education; a gold medal holder at the Sri Lanka Physics Olympiad, held by the Institute of Physics; as well as the prizewinner in Grades 12 and 13 for all subjects, and the top student in Mathematics stream at Dharmaraja College. A balanced childhood and a balanced life, indeed.

His prizewinning streak did not end there. It carried over to his University life, where he won the University Award for Academic Excellence (2012), George Dissanaike Memorial Gold Medal in Physics (2012), Dr. C. A. Hewavitharana Memorial Prize in Physics (2012), Prof. A. Wolfendale Prize for Physics (2010/2011) at the University of Peradeniya, Prof. V. K. Samaranayake Gold Medal for the Best Performance at the B. I. T. (External) Degree (2011) at the University of Colombo and the Dean's Fellowship (2013-2015) at the University of Maryland.

Shavindra arrived in the US in 2013, after graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Physics from the University of Peradeniya. "It is unfortunate that physical and biological science subjects haven't gained much recognition in Sri Lanka. These subjects constitute the basis for research and development and most developed countries place a great deal of importance on natural sciences" says Shavindra, who ponders the possibility of becoming a Quantum Computing Physicist, as he is already involved in the quantum computing area as a Ph.D. candidate. This is also Shavindra's second stint in the US. In his younger days, he accompanied his parents and moved to the US for two years. He rejoined Dharmaraja College on his return to Sri Lanka to follow his chosen path in the Physical Sciences.

"A major portion of the cost of my first laptop was covered by the scholarship funds I received from the Dialog Merit Scholarship programme. I used this for my studies at University of Peradeniya, my final project at University of Colombo and I still have it. So, in that sense, the Dialog scholarship has had an impact on many of my achievements during university" he points out.

Shavindra is married to his university sweetheart. His advice to the young is, "Study hard and enjoy life when there are opportunities to do so. In the meantime, don't forget to let your loved ones know how much you love them."



# Parenting is About Love, Encouragement and Nurturing the Talents of Your Children



"Viduranga competed at the International Mathematical Olympiad in 2011 and was chosen to go to Amsterdam along with six other students from Sri Lanka. His semester results were always consistent and he loved participating in university events."

Viduranga from Maharagama

# Viduranga Bandara Wijekoon

My name is Karunarathne Wijekoon I am currently serving as the Deputy Commissioner of Examinations, Department of Examinations. As a former teacher, I understand the grievances of parents. Parents feel like they cannot take a break until their children have completed their education. Of all the pressures that you face in life, the hope and the need to see your child succeed academically is one of the most daunting. I was no different when it came to my children. Viduranga Bandara Wijekoon, my only son, wanted to be an artist when he grew up. During his early life, we encouraged our son's talent for drawing - not wanting to steer him away from his natural talents.

We lived in Maharagama and there weren't many children his age nearby to play with. Because of this, Viduranga and his older sister shared a special bond, playing and competing with one another. My wife and I were both teachers at the time and we set aside extra time to educate our children whenever we could. We came from humble beginnings, and with hard work and determination we were able to overcome our struggles and maintain a stable life for our children so they may flourish.

Viduranga attended Highland College, a private school in Nugegoda, from Grade 1 to Grade 5. From an early age, Viduranga was studious and he understood the importance of the Grade 5 scholarship exam. From the third grade onwards, he was determined to pass the scholarship. It didn't surprise us when we learned he had

passed the exam, but when we found out that he had been ranked 3rd all-island, we couldn't believe it! We were very proud and realised that our son had much more potential than we assumed. For his achievement, Viduranga was sent to an educational camp in Japan and also had the opportunity to live with a Japanese family and learn their culture.

My son and his best friend Yasas were both able to attend Royal College after passing the scholarship exam. From Grades 6 - 11, Viduranga played tennis and joined the cadet band. Due to extra-curricular activities, he understood that he had to work extra hard to prepare for his Ordinary Level exams. Viduranga did a fantastic job and we were all very proud when we discovered that he was ranked 6th in all-island rankings. He also received a scholarship for his outstanding performance. After Ordinary Level exam, our son wanted to do Commerce for Advanced Levels like most of his friends, however, we encouraged him to select Mathematics, as we knew he would be capable of it. After a while, Viduranga himself was sure that Mathematics was his preferred subject. He proved himself right when he got top notch results for his Advanced Levels by ranking 1st in Sri Lanka for Mathematics stream. He was also awarded a second scholarship for his outstanding efforts.

Ambitions change. When he was young, he wanted to be an artist. Following his success at Advanced Level exam, Viduranga wanted to become a college professor in Physics or Mathematics (perhaps,



inspired by us) and he was determined to make that a reality. He was very interested in physics and his teachers encouraged him to study engineering. He was selected by the University of Moratuwa and commenced his degree in Electronics and Telecommunications along with his friend Yasas, who has been his closest friend from primary school. During his university career, Viduranga stayed at a boarding house with eight of his peers and was having the time of his life. They loved hiking and went on trips regularly. There was a particularly funny but dangerous incident where he and his friends got lost in a jungle in Hantane and were eventually rescued after someone called the 119 emergency line. This adventure was broadly covered by the news and he got into a lot of trouble with his mother! After this incident, Viduranga focused on his studies again.

Viduranga competed at the International Mathematical Olympiad in 2011 and was chosen to go to Amsterdam along with six other students from Sri Lanka. His semester results were always consistent and he loved participating in university events. Just two months short of the final exams of his degree, Viduranga got into a terrible accident on his way back home from BMICH after attending a university forum. Our life was turned upside down when our son was hospitalized. He was unconscious for a week. He spent three weeks in the ICU and had to wear halo braces due to a fracture in the neck. To this day, he cannot remember the three months he spent recovering after the accident. Worried and afraid, my wife

retired early from her job as a teacher of English at Bhuvanekaba Vidyalaya in Maharagama to take care of our son.

After a few months, while still recovering, Viduranga completed his bachelor's degree despite his painful accident and graduated from the University of Moratuwa. Now fully recovered, Viduranga and his friend Yasas have both selected by Millennium IT for internships. He plans to work for a year or two in Sri Lanka and to migrate overseas where he can read for his PhD. specialising in Information Theory. After his PhD., he wants to return to Sri Lanka and teach Information Theory as a university lecturer. As a double Dialog Merit Scholar, our son decided to save for his further studies. He recalls meeting a senior manager Kavan Rathnayake of Dialog, who commended and encouraged him, which was very inspiring since he too was an old Royalist.

Even though some children are naturally intelligent, intelligence could be wasted unless you help that child focus, learn self-discipline and steer them in a certain path based on their talents. Even though we never pressurized our children to overachieve, we paved the way for their success by constant encouragement and by providing for their educational needs. My advice to parents is to never pressure your children unnecessarily. If your child has a natural talent in a certain field, foster and encourage that. Nurture them and let them be free to decide their own fate.



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# Commanding the Day, Achieving Results and Living His Dream



"I was never pressurized from home to study. If I lost marks in one term, my parents will only ask me to do better the next term. They never cajoled me into doing well or pushed me to study."

Tharindu from Matara

# Tharindu Nuwan Malawararachchi

"My parents have never asked me to take care of them; but seeing how my father treated his father who lived with us, it is naturally imbibed into me as to how I should take care of my parents. After all, they bore a great burden to see that I am well placed in life – and they have achieved their dream, as well as pushed me to this better place, where I am today" says Tharindu Nuwan Malawararachchi, currently a 3rd year undergraduate at the University of Moratuwa.

Tharindu hails from the picturesque village of Makandura in Matara. His reminiscences about his childhood in this idyllic village, where his humble home faced a lush green tea plantation. "What was more exciting was the paddy field right next to that, which generally filled to its brim when the rains came. I loved seeing this eye-catching sight, as I stepped outside our front door" he recalls.

Modernisation, however, as it should, has travelled to Makandura. New roads are built where greenery existed. "Yes, I understand that amenities and modernisation must come to the village, but the sadness I feel is that the village will never be the same again" he adds.

Makandura Primary school was Tharindu's first step into education. Success at the Grade 5 scholarship exam paved way for him to be admitted to Matara Maha Vidyalaya. "I was keen to join Rahula College, but I didn't obtain the required level to achieve that dream

at that point in time. I loved playing cricket with my village friends and the Grade 5 scholarship was not a priority for me. Still, I got enough to move schools" he says.

Tharindu's father is a Grama Niladhari and his mother, a teacher. A close-knit family, Tharindu still has sibling squabbles with his elder sister. "At the end of the day, I love my parents and sister a great deal. Even now, I look forward to going home to Matara, where all four of us can be together under the same roof. It gives me great pleasure to spend my weekend there" says Tharindu, whose beloved grandfather passed away at the age of 93.

"My grandfather was an imposing figure. Well-built and quite the man about town. He loved me much, as I did in return. It was sad indeed, when he passed away. I have only a vague recollection of my grandmother who died much earlier on. All I remember is snow white hair and a beautiful face" he reminisces.

Talkative Tharindu often got into trouble, for chattering in class. He loved his friends and playing cricket. So much so, if there was a cricket match being telecast, Tharindu would report sick and stay at home! His teachers latched onto his ploy and advised his mother to refrain from allowing him to stay home. His kindly mother, who never used harsh words on him, quietly encouraged her son to do well in his studies.



"I was never pressurized from home to study. If I lost marks in one term, my parents will only ask me to do better the next term. They never cajoled me into doing well or pushed me to study" he recalls.

Tharindu moved to Rahula College while in Grade 10. GCE Ordinary Level was not a high point in Tharindu's life although he obtained eight A's and one B for English literature, which was quite an achievement for a boy from a non-English speaking background.

"My dream was to become a doctor. My greater strength, however, was in mathematics. I scored high for mathematics, all through my primary and ordinary level years. I naturally selected the math stream to pursue in my Advanced Level years. This was a winning choice, as in most tests conducted in school and classes, I scored either hundred or few marks less than hundred for the subject" he says.

He worked hard for his Advanced Level exam. "I always topped my classes and never had to subject myself to unnecessary pressure. While studying, I would always have time for cricket and extracurricular activities and never came up short where marks are concerned. I find this to be a great strength for anyone who is studying. If you do your work daily, there is such an ease and a peace of mind, you will never be rushed or stressed at an exam. Even today, I do my work on a daily basis" he notes.

Being placed 1st in the District at the Advanced Level and achieving the all island 2nd best result was quite a feather in the cap for Tharindu. This naturally helped him enroll at the University of Moratuwa.

During the lull period where Tharindu waited for his Advanced Level result, he followed CIMA, grudgingly. This changed when he was placed 7th in the world at the second level. This was his second turning point, as he realised in addition to an engineering degree from the University of Moratuwa, he could add on skills and knowledge that will propel him to be a CEO of a company, if he engaged his heart and soul to do so.

"I had dreams and so did my parents for me. The Dialog Merit Scholarship that I received post my A/L results allowed me to take on further studies with a greater flexibility to add on to my chosen path. Obviously, it also reduced the burden on my parents to a great degree. Personally, knowing that their burden had lessened helped me to fully concentrate on my studies" he adds.

"What I would like to place before the youngsters today is, study well – daily. That way, you will always be on top of your studies. It will give you a great sense of ease when the examination looms ahead, simply because you were always well-prepared to face it" he advises.





# The Heart Carries the Feet



“It is the people of my country who have helped me attain all this.”

Nadee from Galle

# Nadee Seneviratne



Nadee Seneviratne hails from the maritime city of Galle, famed for having produced some of Sri Lanka's most illustrious entrepreneurs, instrumental in shaping the business hub of Colombo. A natural born achiever, Nadee, who studied at the Galle Sangamitta Balika Vidyalaya is now poised to embark on a successful career. As a precocious four-year old, Nadee devoured books, a habit inculcated by her father when she was just starting nursery. She fondly remembers him bringing books printed in large type, of him taking her to book fairs, at which he bought her countless books which Nadee keenly absorbed and thus the passion for reading blossomed in her. She attributes her love of reading as the secret to her success.

At Sangamitta Balika Vidyalaya, Nadee competed with peers in areas such as drama and music and managed to secure a spot in the performing arts. With her determination and pride intact, Nadee was now in the school band! She beams with pride as she declares it an achievement, remaining a member throughout her primary, and secondary years. She has no misgivings though, about giving priority to playing in the band over her studies. Needless to say, her parents didn't exactly share her enthusiasm. Both being technical officers at Sri Lanka Telecom, they were keen that Nadee took her academics just as seriously as she did the band. So after a firm warning from her mother as the Ordinary

Level Examinations approached, Nadee did a final spurt of studying, assuring them she would achieve 10 A's. Seemingly without much effort on her part, Nadee kept her promise to her parents and achieve 10 A's she did!

To her further delight, she received a Dialog Merit Scholarship, bringing her closer to her dream of following her parents' footsteps in the Telecommunication Industry. As a little girl, Nadee had marveled at her parents using walkie-talkies and pagers and she thought they seemed to have fun jobs. She also visited Telecommunication towers throughout the country and this, suffice to say, helped Nadee make up her mind to pursue the same field.

Nadee was now determined to shine at the Advanced Level Examinations. This proved to be a huge challenge as she chose the Physical Sciences. It seemed as though everyone discouraged her, telling her that being a female, her chances at Mathematics were very slim. Yet, being the determined girl she was, this was probably the trigger she needed. She strove harder than before to prove everyone wrong and her results proved it when she came 1st in the District. What's more, as if to add another feather to her cap, Nadee was also the first female student in the district to have achieved this feat in Mathematics. This achievement came with an opportunity to visit Malaysia, her first trip to a foreign country. True to her father's challenge to aim for another Scholarship at



the Advanced Levels, once again Nadee received a Dialog Merit Scholarship, which helped her immensely, in financial terms. By this time, her parents had retired and both Nadee and her sister had to follow a strict budget. "She took great care to use this funding wisely, ever mindful of the great responsibility she had." Nadee's mother says quietly. Nadee's sister recalls how cautious she had been, buying a book a month that would help her in the Advanced Levels, and she was sure nothing would tempt her away from that resolve this time around too.

"My two daughters are like best friends" Nadee's father confides. "In their studies, they complemented each other, knowing that both should excel in their chosen field. By the time my second daughter was reaching her higher studies, my wife and I retired. I'm proud to say that during this same time, Nadee began studying CIMA and used her scholarship money wisely to pay for her CIMA exams." Entering university, what Nadee discovered was a whole new ball game. She felt overwhelmed and realised that every decision held her future in the balance. Nadee managed to make it into her dream department, Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering. By the 2nd year at University she completed CIMA too. Constantly challenging herself, Nadee wanted to impart her knowledge to help other students too. She became part of the Women in Engineering Group of the IEEE Institute. This not only afforded her the chance to become a mentor but also to visit other universities in Sri Lanka to promote the Institute.

Nadee also fondly remembers being picked to receive an opportunity to visit Japan in recognition of efforts as Financial Director of a student company which raised the University website to world ranking.

With her spirit of constantly working toward being an achiever, she completed her internship at Dialog, and now armed with her First-class degree in Engineering will be leaving for the USA, having been selected for a fully-funded PhD. program at the University of Maryland, College Park, USA.

She pledges to return to serve her country as "... it is the people of my country who have helped me attain all this" she says gratefully. Despite her admirable achievements, Nadee remains humble. Her wise words to fellow students: "Treasure the support and guidance of your parents. The importance of their prodding will only be felt later in life, follow it, before it's too late."



# Uncovering Gifted Individuals



Jerome won the University President's Award for the most outstanding student of his batch – which was the first time an international student was awarded such honours in the history of MMU.

Jerome from Mannar

# Jerome Antonyraj



Jerome Antonyraj obtained his primary education first at St. John Bosco's School, Jaffna, and then at St. Xavier's College, Mannar. His family was fortunate to escape the conflict just in time to settle in Kandy, allowing him to peacefully start his teenage years. Jerome's outstanding performance at the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination helped his application to St. Sylvester's College, Kandy, where he completed his Ordinary Level studies, shining amongst the best achievers in school. His father's dream made him enter Trinity College, Kandy, to continue his Advanced Level studies and he left a legacy by engraving his name in the Trinity Main Hall for winning the Physics Prize for two consecutive years. Jerome topped the list in the Physical Science Stream at the 2005 Advanced Level examination in the Kandy district, securing a place to pursue his studies in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering at the University of Moratuwa. He finished his first year in the university among the top 100. He was awarded the Dialog Merit Scholarship upon completion of a series of successful interviews and examinations, to continue his education at Multimedia University (MMU) in Malaysia - opening up a world of possibilities and opportunities.

Glancing at Jerome's profile, it reveals a balanced combination of a multitude of academic merits and extracurricular activities. He prefers being an outdoor person, ardently engaged in sports and adventure, maintaining a fair balance of work and personal life. Being the school house captain of the Under 15, Under 17 and Under 19 teams, Jerome took part in several track and field events, frequently winning championships, school colours and gold med-

als. Apart from the prizes he bagged at every Annual Sports Meet and Prize Giving, he also showed extraordinary talent in drawing, acting and writing, which led him to win several awards at literary and drama competitions, held at both district and provincial levels. Jerome, who is also a profound Mathematics and Science fan, led the college quiz teams on many occasions, bringing glory to his school.

Jerome recalls his early life affectionately of living in his parents' village in Mannar. His world revolved mostly around his father's parental home in the middle of a large estate 'with a traditional water well – and a river flowing through the backyard', giving Jerome enough space to grow up freely with so much life and laughter. He also carries vivid memories of his father cycling all the way from Mannar to Jaffna for work, his mother devotedly making evening tea, and him playing with his 'village gang' running behind bullock carts, stealing mangoes from the neighborhood, hanging out in paddy fields - immersing himself well in the village farming community.

At one time, as a child, Jerome, inspired by Tamil movies wanted to be a Policeman - and later changed his mind and spent a few holidays in a seminary in Kandy, giving serious thoughts to becoming a priest. He gradually grew out of his childhood fantasies and aspired to become an Engineer, greatly admiring Albert Einstein for his Theory of Relativity and Stephen Hawking for his work on Black Holes. Being the eldest in the family, Jerome never failed to set his siblings a good example from a very young age. "My brother is



now a Senior Mechanical Engineer and my sister is studying for her Advanced Levels in the Biology stream with a set of clear goals" he says, speaking of his siblings with an air of pride.

According to Jerome, their family started life modestly, with his father working as a clerk in a state bank, earning a basic salary, eventually retiring as a bank manager. Being an employee of the state bank, his father's job required constant shifting of places due to routine transfers and Jerome grew up moving around quite a bit with his family. As a result, Jerome also made a lot of friends in every school he went to. "Building strong friendships was never a challenge. But when I was away in Malaysia for the first time, I found it challenging to become social in a completely new land of culture and people" says Jerome.

His achievements at MMU were numerous. Jerome was placed on the Dean's list every semester and he continued to partake in extracurricular activities and was chosen for an exchange programme in Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane for a semester. Eventually, he also won the University President's Award for the most outstanding student of his batch – which was the first time an international student was awarded such honours in the history of MMU. However, Jerome admits that the inter-personal achievements were hard-earned. While keeping a good balance between academic and extracurricular activities, Jerome invested heavily on engaging with diverse groups of people in and around MMU. By

the time he graduated from MMU with a Telecommunications Engineering major, he felt Malaysia was his second home full of friends. Before moving to Ireland for further studies, Jerome gained work experience first as a Trainee Engineer at the startup named IX Telecom Sdn Bhd in Malaysia, and then as a full-fledged Telecommunications Engineer at the Broadband Network Operations Centre of Dialog Axiata PLC. Jerome, who is now on the verge of completing his PhD. involving LTE advanced technology and Passive Optical Networks; he has bagged not only numerous awards at every phase of his life but also a multitude of tangible relationships and passionate memories that last for a lifetime. Being very social, outgoing and friendly, Jerome never failed to make good friends at work. "Friends are the families we chose for us" says Jerome, looking happily at the choices he has made and the path he has traveled so far in life.

At the time of writing, Jerome lives in the beautiful city of Cork in Ireland with his wife who is also an Electronic Engineer. They have just begun their life together and look forward to spending a few more adventurous years in Europe after completing his PhD.. Yet he always looks for the perfect excuse to bring him home in time to spend a few cheerful days with his parents, siblings and old friends – while contributing to the technical community in Sri Lanka by means of his expertise and experience.



# Future Without Boundaries



“Everybody faces academic and personal challenges. One needs to have focus and confidence as well as ability to withstand difficulties to face those challenges successfully.”

Charith from Colombo

# Charith Mendis

Those born brilliant tend to display their skills and talents at a very early stage in their life. With proper guidance and the right environment, they flourish and conquer all they want in life without much difficulty. Charith Mendis is one such individual, who displayed immense academic and personal strength at a very young age.

Charith is a true-blue city boy who grew up in Nugegoda amidst the hustle and bustle of city life. He spared most of his free time playing video games like The Legend of Zelda and Mario Bros where he built a small world of his own inside the computer games. For Charith, video games have been equally as exciting as arithmetic and multiplication tables. Contrary to the stereotypical views related to video games, Charith excelled in academics while fighting the bad guys in the digital world of games. It, in fact, helped him develop problem solving skills, spatial reasoning, memory, attention span and strategic planning – and most importantly, it increased his passion for computer science.

Even as a child, Charith did not require much handholding. He completed his primary education at D. S. Senanayake College,

Colombo, and moved to Royal College, Colombo for his secondary education on the strength of his Grade 5 scholarship marks. During school years, he won numerous awards and was honoured for his academic achievements. At the Ordinary Level examination, he was ranked 2nd in the island and received a Dialog Merit Scholarship for his high academic performance. At the Advanced Level examination, he was ranked 1st in the island without much effort and made his mark in Sri Lankan education history with the highest Z-Score record at the time. Amongst many other accolades, Charith received the Dialog Merit Scholarship, which recognised his outstanding talents and encouraged him to proceed with his higher studies at the University of Moratuwa.

With the right support and guidance, combined with his talents, Charith also performed extraordinarily well at the University of Moratuwa and completed his degree with a GPA of 4.17 out of 4.2, topping his batch. It is also the best result that the university has produced to-date.

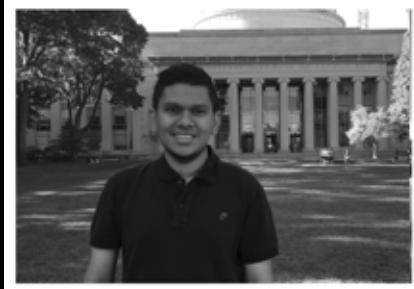
Charith's father is a mechanical engineer who is also a graduate from the University of Moratuwa, Faculty of Engineering. From a



well academically. His mother, on the other hand, stood as the corner stone of the family, giving him, his brother and sister the love and affection they needed to flourish, creating an environment conducive for education.

In that environment, Charith and his younger siblings grew up courageous and confident. "My brother is now an undergraduate at Monash University, Melbourne, specialising in Civil Engineering – and my sister is sitting for her A/Ls in the Biology stream next year. My parents are clearly the strength behind our academic success" he says gratefully.

Charith graduated from the University of Moratuwa, majoring in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering – and received a full scholarship from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA, and is now a PhD. candidate, studying in his third year with a focus on Computer Software. At MIT, Charith has maintained a perfect GPA of 5 out of 5, showing outstanding brilliance. Amongst his most significant achievements, Charith takes great pride in receiving the William A. Martin Memorial Thesis Prize, awarded for the best Master's thesis in computer science at MIT – the first time a Sri Lankan can boast of winning this award.



Apart from his academic profile, Charith has already built a good work profile. He has worked as a Research Intern at Microsoft, Redmond, WA, and as an Associate Electronics Engineer in a project under Esign prior to joining his current job at MIT as a Research Assistant.

Charith, who is only 27-years-old at the time of writing, considers entering MIT a real privilege – because it is a prestigious university in the world and only a very few students from this part of the world succeed in getting in. Charith humbly says, "Everybody faces academic and personal challenges. One needs to have focus and confidence as well as ability to withstand difficulties to face those challenges successfully."

He insists that from an early age, he always had it in mind to pursue a career in which he would be free to do what he likes. Upon completing his PhD. at MIT, Charith aims for a successful career in computer science which he believes would give him all the time in the world to do what he likes - while contributing to the advancement of technology, helping the world to progress.

# Dialog Merit Scholar Directory

General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level Exam 2003 -2014

# 2003

01. W. K. Arunodi Prabashini Abeyrathne
02. D. Asanka Bandara Amarakoon
03. Perinparajah Anojan
04. B. M. Mohan Buddika
05. Thusitha Niroshana Chandrapala
06. A. G. Upul Madhusanka Chandraratne
07. K. Chathurani Chandrasiri
08. M. Suvinda Kalhara Cooray
09. U. Dona Chammi Dilhari
10. B. Prasad Priyadharshana Fernando
11. Manudha Thiunuwan Herath
12. W. R. S. M. Rakitha Atheendra Higgoda
13. D. Nishani Ayola Jayamaha
14. B. Thushan Rajeendra Jayasundara
15. K. H. Anuththara Kalyani
16. Selvarathnam Mathuranthagaa
17. G. Dulini Chathurika Mendis
18. Yasith Asiri Nupearachchi
19. M. A. Sachindra Mahesh Perera
20. Kuganathan Rajeevan
21. S. M. Kosala Bandara Samarakoon
22. W. Manodya Lakmal Samaraweera
23. Manikkavasakar Saranraj
24. Ramanathan Sasitharan
25. D. M. Dinuka Sandaruwan Senevirathne
26. Sri Sooriyakanthan Sivasuthan
27. Aathiththan Sugarniya
28. T. A. Iresha Nadeeshani Thelasinghe
29. Thanabalasingam Thubeeshan
30. W. M. Buddhi Sachith Wijerathne

# 2004

01. M. N. Mohamed Aashiq
02. T. Ajanthan
03. K. Hasanga Amarathunga
04. J. M. A. Madhushanka Bandara
05. B. M. S. Dumindi Bandaranayake
06. B. M. K. Chathuranga Basnayake
07. K. A. Lakshitha Chathuranga
08. H. R. Kasun Dhananjaya
09. D. K. A. Sanjeewa Dharmasena
10. Y. Haslanka Dheerasuriya
11. M. D. Mevan Gunatilake
12. K. A. E. Umayangani Abeysiri Gunawardana
13. Prabath Priyadharshana Hewagama
14. T. Thiruraaj Kannah
15. K. P. Dimuthu Karunananayake
16. E. P. Nuwan Karunarathna
17. S. M. Dilini Kaushalya
18. M. A. A. S. Dilshani Kularathna
19. T. Charith Yasendra Mendis
20. M. P. K. Chinthaka Nandapala
21. S. Nareshkumar
22. P. Niruththika
23. K. Suranga Padmakumara
24. Shavindra Priyanath Premaratne
25. B. W. Hemal Akbo Rupsinghe
26. S. T. Dinidu Thiwanka
27. I. Vithiya
28. W. M. A. Shandini Weerasuriya
29. W. S. M. Harshani Nayomi Kumari Wijerathna
30. M. N. Mohamed Aashiq

# 2005

01. A. M. Tharindu Salinda Bandara Adikari
02. B. M. Amila Nuwan Balasooriya
03. Thavaneswaran Brinthan
04. R. M. Thilini Madhushika Dhanapala
05. Buddhima Kasun Fernando
06. Balasundaram Hamsayini
07. H. Kanishka Lidrovin Hettiarachchi
08. P. D. Chathuranga Udara Jayaratnha
09. Vishwa Ranganath Jayaratnha
10. K. H. Thilina Subashana Jayasinghe
11. Mahesha Jayani Jayathilake
12. Chathura Asanka Kankanamge
13. Hirushi Pramuditha Karunathilake
14. W. Ghamani Pabasara Kumari
15. K. Pavithra Madhubashini
16. Manulika Dilhani Munaweera
17. Agampodi Dilupa Nilanga
18. Lasindu Charith Vidana Pathiranage
19. Ahgeeginee Pathmanathan
20. D. Umeha Isurinda Perera
21. W. A. Chanaka Prabhath
22. N. Niroshani Sriyanthi Ranaweera
23. S. G. R. Prabath Samarakoon
24. Savini Manthila Samarasinghe
25. Sachythanandha Roamesh Shanker
26. Balachandran Thanatheeban
27. Kanapathippillai Vaheesan
28. Daksiya Velajuthan
29. D. M. Pasan Wijsinghe
30. Abdhul Majeed Zarafath Zimar

# 2006

01. A M Hansadi Shashiprabha Abeykoon
02. Narmadha Anjalee Amarasinghe
03. A. M. Sachille Atapattu
04. Chathuranga Dilshan Saruwa Bandara
05. Malaka Prathiba Batuwanthudawa
06. D M S Priyadharshani Kumari Dawndasekare
07. Kanagasabei Erliliverl
08. Manawaduge Pradeepa Hansani
09. Suventhiny Jayapalan
10. Thurairaja Kankeyan
11. Nethmi Yasara Kasthuriarachchi
12. K. G. Don Nisal Menuka
13. Kajanthy Nadarajah
14. Thampirasa Nirushan
15. Sachinthani Thilinika Pathirana
16. Dombagaha Wattage Rushan Priyadharshana
17. Muthunayaka Pedige Nuwan Chamara Ranaweera
18. Kanchana Shamali Randall
19. K S E M Vimukthi Rashmika Randen
20. S A L Sarith Chathuranga Samarajeewa
21. K N M Dimuth Saranga Kumara
22. Jeyatharsini Sayalolibavan
23. Egoda Gedara Madhushanka Ranganath Senevirathna
24. Nadee Seneviratne
25. S R Randima Madhubashini Somathilaka
26. Vaikunthavasan Tharmaja
27. S D K Harsha Yashoman Arjuna Weerasinghe
28. W. A. Hasini Rathsara Weerathunge
29. Poorna Prathiba Witharana
30. Yapa Mudiyanselage Chamila Nuwan Bandara Yapa

# 2007

01. Jasenthu Kankanamlage Rasika Sandaruwan Bandara
02. Uda Kumburage Janaka Udayantha Bandara
03. Hewa Gamage Lahiru Dulanjana Chamain
04. Y G Indeewari Priyanwada Chandrarathna
05. Sothikkumar Dominic Anton Ciresi
06. A R M Amila Eranga
07. Aththanayake Mudiyanselage Malaka Gangananda
08. Bethmi Jayathma Gunasekara
09. Hewa Arachchige Sajani Maheesha Hewaarachchi
10. Hansika Pehesariani Hewamalage
11. Samarasinghe Tharushi Imalka
12. Hewa Geeganage Rajitha Anuruddha Jayasekara
13. P H R Samitha Subhashana Karunaratna
14. Ahangama Gallage Thilini Tharaka Madhushani
15. Kathirgamanathan Mahinthan
16. Thayaparan Mokanarangan
17. Chandana Maduranga Munasinghe
18. Kulendran Nithushan
19. Kuluni Madushika Perera
20. Wengappuli Arachchige Suranga Prasad
21. R M Subodani Dulari Rathnayaka
22. Abdul Razeek Mohamed Rikkas
23. Balasingam Sinthushan
24. H P Dilshan Sri Nandika Siriwardhana
25. Ahangama Gallage Isuru Sunimal
26. Narendran Thiruthanikan
27. Thiagarajah Vinojan
28. Wasala Mudiyanselage Purni Randima Wasala
29. W M Viduranga Bandara Wijekoon
30. Charithri Arunika Nanayakkara Yapa

# 2008

01. Sivakanesh Aravindh
02. S M Sriyanganie Ariyarathna
03. Amirthalingam Aruththiran
04. Ranaweera Gamachchige Gayan Buddhika
05. Merinnage Susiri Vidarshaka Costa
06. Thilini Nimeshika Dahanayaka
07. Abdul Careem Shatheela Farween
08. Jayalath Arachchige Dimal Kavindu Gamith
09. Wetthige Achini Hasintha Gimhani
10. Sivakumaran Gowthaman
11. L A Tharindu Dulantha Gunathilaka
12. Herath Mudiyanselage Anoj Sachindra Herath
13. Balasubramaniam Janagan
14. Hoole Elijah Jebashanthan
15. W A Samadhi Poornima Kumarasinghe
16. H P E R S Yashish Maduwantha
17. D G Prasad Randika Maithriepala
18. Hangili Gedara Nimala Muditha Nawaratne
19. R M Buddhimala Ranasinghe
20. Lochana Thathsrani Ranaweera
21. Isuru Madusanka Rathnayaka
22. Vivekaananthan Seralathan
23. Thayaparanathan Shabeshwaran
24. Maduwage Sachini Madhusha De Silva
25. Chanaka Manoj Singhabahu
26. P K D Gayal Shamane Siriwardana
27. W M T K G Isuru Sankapala Weerasooriya
28. Neshan Dulanjala Weerawardana
29. Kalpani Anuradha Welivita
30. Hetti Arachchige Ravi Tharaka Wijesekara

# 2009

01. Jamaldeen Akeel Ahmath
02. A Hasitha Maudushanka Algewaththa
03. Vithusha Arabhi Anantharajah
04. Attanayaka Mudiyanselage Dilshan Attanayake
05. Surath Pasindu Gajanayake
06. Shanaka Ramesh Gunasekara
07. Thilanka Gunasena
08. H M Kosala Sananthana Herath
09. Dimuthu Asiri Jayawardhane
10. Kumara Kassapa Kahatapitiya
11. Galawala Ramesha Samurdhi Karunasena
12. Reginold Rohanson Kulas
13. Then Kuttiyage Dilshan Sampath Kumarathunga
14. Kattadige Chamara Manoj Madarasinghe
15. Galukulasooriyage Vindhya Madushani
16. Vithursa Mahendarajah
17. Varatharajan Mathujeevana
18. M K Malithi Chamudika Munaweera
19. Ratnakumar Neethan
20. Athithan Nirojan
21. Gannoru Kankanamalage Sanuji Hasara Nishanika
22. Ranawaka Arachchige Chamodya Dulmini Perera
23. W M G Thilini Thusharika Ranaweera
24. Owitigamuwa Pathiranage Chameera Randil
25. R M Bathiya Eranda Bandara Rathnayake
26. Mahamalage Rochelle Udani Silva
27. Manikku Patabendige Kalindu Gayashan De Silva
28. Thanabalasingam Tharshan
29. S M Sanath Mahesh Upendra
30. Sajani Sunimalee Pallegoda Vithana

# 2010

01. Ahamed Aslam Fathima Aqsha
02. Mohammdu Rizan Mohamed Athif
03. Gopoojitha Athmarajah
04. Chandrasekaran Banupriyan
05. Rathnayaka Mudiyanselage Nipun Dayananda
06. P L G Bhashitha Thuthimal Dharmasena
07. K M G D Adhitha Weerasiri Dias
08. Morawakkoralage Chamath Sanchintha Fonseka
09. Soori Mudiyanselage Induni Punsara Gnanarathna
10. Witharana Pandithage Samudi Hansani
11. Hewa Katuwandeniyyage Kavindi Hansika
12. R M Tishan Chanaka Sandakelum Harischandra
13. Erasanayagam Havisanth
14. I P Thejitha Dilshan Ilangakoon
15. Udagamasooriyage Dayan Indula
16. Bedde Kankanamge Shehan Ishanka
17. K M Lihini Dinushika Karunarathna
18. R M Chamara Indunil Kumara
19. Sivakumar Mehalathan
20. Lafir Naveeth Mohamed
21. Ruchira Thilan Munasinghe
22. T P Anuradha Punyawardhana
23. Rajapakshage Charuni Poornima Rajapaksha
24. Subaranjany Selvanayagam
25. Wijsinghe Hakmanage Nipuna Sudharaka
26. Thanabalasingham Tivakaran
27. Hiththetiya Edirisooriyage Jayani Umasha
28. Hasini Chinthani Weerasinghe
29. K W Ravindi Tharushika Wijsinghe
30. Shane Lahiru Sandeepa Wolff

# 2011

01. W A Charitha Nipun Wella Arachchi
02. B R Buddhika Sudarshana Bandara Baruwatta
03. Sehan Croos
04. K G G Laksman Ashwin De Silva
05. Aarukattu Patabedige Krishan De Silva
06. Galwaduge Vinura Dhananjaya
07. W G Diyanthaka Prajapal Jayantha Gamage
08. H M Dinuka Prabhashana Herath
09. Udeshika Madushani Hettiarachchi
10. Balasubramanyam Jananthanan
11. Hettiarachchige samurdhi Kanchana Jinaransi
12. Janani Madusha Kalupahana
13. Naveen Harshitha Karunananayaka
14. Suntharam Ketharan
15. Ramesh Kiroshkumar
16. M W G Charuka Kavinda Moremada
17. Raveendralingam Myurapavan
18. Balendrarasa Nitharsana
19. Manodara Gedara Isuru Maduranga Nuwanthilaka
20. Manoja Kaushali Perera
21. Jayasooriya Kuranage Malsha Vijini Perera
22. Udisha Dilhara de Silva Pinnaduwage
23. Bharatha Madushanka Rankotge
24. D A Dinika Prabhushi Senaratne
25. Edirisooriya Mohottige Ruwini Wathsala de Seram
26. Urugamuwa Hettiarachchige Rasanga Srimal
27. Sharani Dinethra Kumari Thalakiriyawa
28. Dumini Iresha Thennakoon
29. G A Ayeshan Malinda Bandara Wimalasena
30. Y K Maneesh Sashiprabhath Yatiwella

# 2012

01. Chandrasekaran Ajeeth
02. Melani Nimasha de Almedha
03. S. H. M. Uditha Anuranjana
04. M. D. Iresh Madhusanka Ariyawimala
05. H. M. V. Vathmal Ranaweera Bandara
06. Francis Bergini
07. R. M. Isuru Deshapriya
08. Nishangani Gowrikantan
09. Arulanathan Gowshikan
10. J. A. Dasun Oshadha Jayasinghe
11. H. A. D. Nimsara Madhuka Jayasinghe
12. J. Sandun Menaka Jayawardhane
13. S. Wasan Heshan Kumaradasa
14. Gayathri Mahendrakumaran
15. Kalamany Mathanaharan
16. Shamla Mariyam Nisthar
17. P. G. Supuni Salmini Palaketigamage
18. H. D. Mandapa Pandithage
19. Kamalakanthan Poorvegan
20. R. A. Ama Mandhasmitha Ranawake
21. P. A. Jude Ranidu
22. P. C. Pabasara Samarawickrama
23. G. L. Chanaka Ashan Sandeepa
24. T. S. Kaushalya Sarathchandra
25. K. D. Rumesh Madusanka Sirithunga
26. Harith Eranda Udawaththa
27. W. Ransi Udheshika
28. U. G. D. Charuka Tarindu Udupitiya
29. Sivakarunakaran Vithulgan
30. M Nizar Fathima Shabeen Zabnam

# 2013

01. Saumya Kumarihamy Aberathne
02. Sachini Deepasika Abeygunawardhana
03. Prabakaram Abiseban
04. Kalpani Supunsara Rekhani Bandara
05. Madusha Dilshani Dayarathne
06. Amaya Dharmasiri
07. Naduni Pamoda Erathna
08. Yogyta Tulip Gamage
09. Yasindu Viran Jayakody
10. Jesicca Rushmi Jayakrishna
11. Ravin Jayaratne
12. Vihanga Dimantha Jinadasa
13. Hasindu Piyumantha Kariyawasam
14. Hasini Punsara Kasturiarachchi
15. Nakenththiram Kesavarajh
16. Thayananthan Nekasiny
17. Bimsara Gayanga Pathiraja
18. Ruwanthi Thamali Perera
19. Abinayah Raguraam
20. Supun Hansa Kumara Samarakoon
21. Darshana Sandaruwan
22. Shivathurkka Sathianathan
23. Dasuni Tharushika Sembanayake
24. Anjalee Pabasara Sudasinghe
25. Roshana Tharindhi
26. Delosha Thayanithy
27. Gihan Viraj Thilakarathna
28. Yasasvin Warusawithana
29. Sarith Wasitha
30. Dinith Weerasinghe

# 2014

01. P. M. N. S. Bandara
02. G. S. M. N. Bimsara
03. K. M. C. K. Chandrasena
04. K. M. P. E. Danawardana
05. E. M. M. U. B. Ekanayake
06. W. M. U. Fernando
07. S. K. S. Vinura Fernando
08. N. Gowsigan
09. K. S. Gunarathna
10. H. K. R. L. Gunasekara
11. S. P. R. S. Jayasinghe
12. W. A. S. N. Jayawardana
13. M. I. M. Jazil
14. R. H. I. O. Karunachandra
15. A. Krishothman
16. R. M. S. Madumali
17. S. Mugunthan
18. H. M. H. T. Munasinghe
19. N. C. K. H. Nanayakkara
20. D. S. P. A. Niwarthana
21. L. M. Nimaya Perera
22. M. R. S. C. Samarakoon
23. F. M. Sarhan
24. K. Shanmugananthan
25. S. Shaseevarajan
26. A. Thieshanthan
27. A. Thirukkumaran
28. S. V. Vinusha
29. L. T. N. Wicramasinghe
30. W. M. N. Witharana

# Dialog Merit Scholar Directory

General Certificate of Education Advanced Level Exam 2003 - 2013

## 2003

01. I. I. A. Abdullah
02. S. Aingaran
03. A. M. S. S. Attanayake
04. R. Aynkaran
05. J. Denistan
06. W. T. S. De Silva
07. G. A. Dilruk
08. W. M. A. P. S. Fernando
09. R. H.S. De Ginige
10. G. Hamilan
11. N. Chandinee Ilangamge
12. G. P. Ishara
13. W. N. S. Karunaratne
14. M. D. D. U. Kulathunga
15. N. Kulothungasagaran
16. C. G. Nanayakkara
17. H. D. B. Piyaratne
18. R. A. H. Ranasinghe
19. R. M. A. P. Rathnayaka
20. K. Sekkumar
21. T. K. M. Silva
22. D. N. P. Thalakotuna
23. S. Umakanthan
24. D. C. Weerakkody
25. K. U. K. Weliwatta
26. W. M. D. L. Wijemanne
27. W. A. P. A. Wijesinghe

## 2004

01. K. C. Amarasinghe
02. K. M. M. Ansaf
03. T. S. Bandaranayake
04. S. G. J. Buddika
05. D. Cowzini
06. R. W. R. L. Gajasinghe
07. G. Gartheeban
08. T. Jathees
09. K. R. S. Koswatte
10. K. Krishanth
11. D. N. Kularatne
12. L. M. Liyanage
13. M. Mauran
14. O. H. R. Prasad
15. Chameera Prabhath Rajapaksha
16. S. S. Ramanan
17. D. G. Thilina Rangajeewa
18. M. I. Mohamed Rusthi
19. S. P. Samarakoon
20. C. Sapumohottti
21. W. M. D. Soysa
22. Vijayakaveseekaran Sugirithini
23. R. Sumanaraban
24. Sivanarulsundaram Tharunie
25. L. A. D. M. D. Thelisinghe
26. W. M. A. Weerasinghe
27. W. P. A. Wijenayake

## 2005

01. A. Jerome Anthonyraj
02. O. P. M. C. A. Ariyaratna
03. S. Arunprasath
04. Nagendram Banukobhan
05. M. E. De Costha
06. J. M. G. Indunil
07. H. M. K. G. Sadeep Jayasumana
08. D. U. Kadawithane
09. Sunil P. Krishantha
10. S. P. Kusaladharma
11. H. M. R. D. Lakshan
12. Sivapiragasham Mayoornan
13. M. L. H. Mohamed
14. K. Nirojan
15. N. V. Pathirana
16. K. L. N. Perera
17. P. L. Porabage
18. M. M. Rajkumar
19. S. Ramiyatharshan
20. M. Roobavannan
21. W. P. S. M. Ruparatne
22. M. A. D. Ruwanthilaka
23. T. S. Samarakoon
24. W. A. R. Sampath
25. H. S. Sitinamaluwa
26. T. M. U. A. S. Tennakoon

# 2006

01. H. H. Amarajeewa
02. A. J. Anpaz
03. T. R. Bandaragoda
04. K. K. P. P. De Alwis
05. B. P. P. Fernando
06. K. Ganeshanath
07. W. R. W. Jayasinghe
08. B. T. R. Jayasundara
09. H. M. R. Karunaratna
10. N. I. Katugampala
11. L. S. Kelum
12. Saranraj Manikkavasakar
13. G. D. C. Mendis
14. A. F. M. Nafeel
15. H. T. Nanayakkara
16. K. Rajeevan
17. R. A. D. S. C. Randeni
18. K. B. R. G. T. Samarasinghe
19. H. G. L. Sandaruwan
20. S. Sathyaram
21. T. P. Senanayaka
22. S. Sivasuthan
23. A. Sugarniya
24. V. Suthakar
25. W. J. C. Wagaarachchi
26. W. M. B. S. Wijerathna
27. M. K. K. D. Wimalasena

# 2007

01. K. A. R. A. Abeysekara
02. E. M. M. S. Bandara
03. K. A. L. Chathuranga
04. R. M. T. M. Dahigamuwa
05. D. P. G. S. R. Fernando
06. K. L. J. Jayaranga
07. P. Kamalaruban
08. U. S. N. Karunathilake
09. V. Manivasakan
10. T. C. Y. Mendis
11. K. H. S. Pathmakkumara
12. E. Pratheepan
13. R. G. C. A. Priyasad
14. V. Rajeevan
15. R. M. L. S. Rathnayake
16. M. M. M. Rismi
17. S. Robina
18. M. S. A. Rushdi
19. K. Saambavi
20. K. C. Sameera
21. J. M. S. S. Silva
22. W. A. A. D. Srimal
23. S. Sujeewan
24. S. Theepakumar
25. R. M. P. Thilakarathne
26. S. T. D. Thiwanka
27. N. Y. L. Udayakantha

# 2008

01. A. M. T. S. B. Adikari
02. K. R. Atapattu
03. A. G. N. Bandara
04. T. Brinthan
05. K. A. D. Chathuranga
06. N. U. Dakshitha
07. V. Daksiya
08. G. N. P. Fernando
09. M. P. Gallage
10. T. H. Godagedara
11. P. H. M. Jayawardena
12. L. Lajanugen
13. R. Mithun
14. T. Mugunthan
15. P. N. D. Panagoda
16. K. L. J. A. Perera
17. K. Rajkumar
18. R. M. P. N. Rathnayaka
19. M. Rokilan
20. A. C. A. Suja
21. Y. Thananchajan
22. N. G. H. O. Thathsarani
23. S. Warnakulasuriya
24. P. U. Wickramasinghe
25. W. V. D. Wijesingha
26. L. P. Wijesinghe
27. W. M. K. S. Wijesundara

# 2009

01. Balachander Ahilakumar
02. Mukadange Giyantha Binu Amaratunga
03. Jayamanne Mohottige Don Nimesh Asanka
04. Galappaththi Uditha Asiri
05. H M Samitha Prasad Bandara
06. Thelijjagoda Subodha Nadeeshan Charles
07. Fathima Fahima Doole
08. Beragama Vithanage Chamith Dulshan
09. P V Sameera Dushantha Hemachandra
10. Sithija Sugeeshwara Upulwan Hewavitharana
11. Anton Crises Johnnirajh
12. Ilangasingha Mudiyanselage Thilina Keshan
13. W G Kelum Prabash Kumara
14. Sebamalai Maxwell Meilan
15. M K Gamika Punsi Premarathne
16. Ganeshalingam Ramprasanna
17. Meera Mohideen Mohamed Ramsan
18. Rasik Fareed Mohammadu Ramsath
19. Godayalage Harsha Nuwan Rathnasiri
20. Nipuna Randunu Samarasekara
21. R M Aruna Upul Senarath
22. Nadee Seneviratne
23. Thamayanthi Siripalan
24. Santharasa Sugitharan
25. Rathnayaka Mudiyanselage Harith Thisura
26. Thevasigamane Thushanth
27. Aaraby Vigneswaranathan

# 2010

01. Siyard Ahamed Sarfan Ahamed
02. P D Dewmal Hasaranga Anicitus
03. Hewagamage Lahiru Dulanjana Chamain
04. A M Shehan Deshapriya
05. D M Pradeep Eranga Dissanayake
06. H D Rajitha Prabath Hathurusinghe
07. H M Sumudu Tharanga Herath
08. H M Kumudumal Anuruddha Herath
09. H W Dilum Hettiarachchi
10. Thivagara Sarma Janarthanan
11. Mahadurage Dileep Jayamal
12. Thangavadivelu Kabil
13. Kailasapillai Kandeepan
14. Dananjaya Prasad Liyanage
15. Kathiragaamanathan Mahinthan
16. M Lahiru Samith Malepathirana
17. Rrubaa Panchendarajan
18. Sachinthana Prabashini Pathirana
19. Theivendiram Pranavan
20. Harshana Prabath Rathnayaka
21. G R Chamath Ravindu Senevirathna
22. Ratnasingam Shahintha
23. Ms. Sumangali Sivakumaran
24. Parana Manage Kasun Tharaka
25. Gobalakirushnan Thinesh
26. Kanagalingam Umasangar
27. W M Viduranga Bandara Wijekoon

# 2011

01. H M Abhietha Deshapriya Wellasse Bandara
02. W A K Janith Chathuranga
03. W E P Sampath Ediriweera
04. Poologasingam Evansalin
05. Athmarajah Gopikrishna
06. Sivakumaran Gowthaman
07. Lakshan Madusanka Hettiarachchi
08. Amila Chandimal Jayawickrama
09. Kamalakkannan Kamalavasan
10. Hettiarachchige Prasad Maduranga
11. Dombagaha Gedara Prasad Maithriepala
12. Isuru Udara Meegahathenna
13. Hangili Gedara Nimala Muditha Navaratne
14. Balasunthararaja Nithesh
15. Sehan Nayanajith Rathnayake
16. Rupasinghe Arachchige Anuththara Rupasinghe
17. Karunaraj Sasikanth
18. Mohamed Haniffa Mohamed Sazni
19. H B M Danushka Damruwan Senarathna
20. Nushen Manithya Senevirathna
21. Dadallage Amila Ruwansiri Silva
22. M A Aravinda Srimantha Siriwardhana
23. Krishnakumar Thanirojan
24. Aarany Vigneswaranathan
25. Malavarayar Vijayanandan Vithulan
26. Dalotha Gedara Chathuranga Wickramasinghe
27. K D Saman Hemal Wickramathilaka

# 2012

01. A Hasitha Madushanka Algewaththa
02. Packkiakumaran Arunkumar
03. Sivalingam Ashok
04. B A Chanaka Dinesh Kumara Balasooriya
05. Pincha Dewage Nipuna Prageeth Cyril
06. Dammalage Nimash Dilanka
07. E M Ashen Shanuka Ekanayake
08. Boyagama Gamage Sasanka Tharaka Gamage
09. G A Damith Madushan Godagedara
10. Liyanage Achini Isanka
11. Delankage Buddhika Sampath Jayasooriya
12. H M Anjanaka Dilhara Jayasundara
13. Dimuthu Asiri Jayawardane
14. H V W Supun Aravinda Jayawardhane
15. Juli Jesus
16. Balagopalan Kapilan
17. T K Dilshan Sampath Kumarathunga
18. Tharindu Nuwan Malawaraachchi
19. Athithan Nirojan
20. Raveendran Nithypan
21. Nipuna Sampath Senarat Pathirana
22. R A Tharinda Priyamal Ranasinghe
23. Dissanayaka Mudiyanselage Danuka Ravishan
24. Hewawasam Halloluwage Nuhansi Sankalani
25. Selvanayagam Tharangan
26. J K Malith Manchana Thilakarathne
27. Y M P G Ridma Rasadari Yaparathna

# 2013

01. M. J. Anees
02. Shehan Cooray
03. P. L. G. B. T. Dharmasena
04. A. W. Dias
05. C. R. M. Disanayaka
06. V. I. Fazeeha
07. N. F. Fazla
08. S. M. I. P. Gnanarathne
09. H. K. K. Hansika
10. S. Harishanth
11. E. Havisanth
12. Anushka Idamekorala
13. R. Jathushan
14. W. H. H. A. Kariyawasam
15. B. Madhushan
16. M. M. I. D. Manchanayake
17. G. K. Nehru
18. K. L. M. N. Perera
19. M. Pirusanth
20. N. S. Ranasinghe
21. W. D. A. P. Ravinath
22. C. D. Samarajeewa
23. H. A. G. D. Saranga
24. S. V. I. R. V. Serasinghe
25. T. Shaganan
26. G. A. K. Somiruwan
27. Thanabalasingam Thivakaran





# ALUMNI JOURNEYS