

ANNUAL REPORT

2022 / 2023



April 2022 - March 2023

The Emerge Mission

Emerge works to empower girls who have survived abuse to heal and celebrate their personal strength, develop their self-sufficiency, and become leaders in their own communities.

Since working with our very first girl in 2005, Emerge has supported 1514 courageous young women who have survived trauma and abuse. They are the foundation of all we do. This report, and the work we do every day, is dedicated to them.



About Us

The Emerge Lanka Foundation (ELF) was established in 2009 as a Voluntary Services Organization (VSO), incorporated under the Companies Act (Registration Number GA2271). We work closely with our sister entity, Emerge Global, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the United States (EIN 26-3230131).



The Beginning

During the summer of 2005, MIT student Alia Whitney-Johnson arrived in Sri Lanka as a tsunami-relief volunteer. During this trip, she encountered a heart-breaking reality: Girls as young as 11, pregnant or parenting from rape or incest, had been cast out of their own families, denied the right to formal education, and placed in state-run care for their own protection. A jewelry maker since age 7, Alia decided to host a beading workshop to better acquaint herself with the girls. The act of creating jewelry soon became a tool for transformation, uplifting the girls' spirits and ultimately helping them to overcome the emotional, social, and economic obstacles they faced. The Emerge Beads-to-Business Programme was born as a way to sustain the girls' work, connecting the young women to supplies and business training, a global market, and a global community of support.

After piloting her project in Sri Lanka for three years, Alia founded Emerge Global in 2008 with the goal of empowering girls around the world who have survived sexual abuse to rediscover a sense of hope, build a strong community, and fulfill their own visions of the future.

Emerge Lanka Foundation was registered as a charitable organization in July 2009 as the implementing partner of Emerge Global in Sri Lanka.



A Note from Our Team

Dear Emerge Champion,

We have been amazed by our participants as they learn and thrive in challenging circumstances. Over the past year, we have seen Emerge grow in new and innovative ways to keep supporting survivors across our island. Our team has come together in strength and hope to ensure that every participant we come across is benefited with our power-packed curriculum and trauma-sensitive approach.

We are so excited to share with you a few of our highlights from the 2022/23 fiscal year (April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023). With your support, we:

- Continued to adapt our programmes to be delivered remotely – Our Online Shelter Programme for participants under the age of 18 reached 323 participants across 05 provinces in Sri Lanka!
- Conducted capacity building, sensitization, and mental health workshops for 21 Probation Officers and 112 shelter care workers within the Uva Province
- Conducted a workshop on Trauma-Informed Lawyering for 8 lawyers at Oxbridge Associates
- Traveled over 3,000 kilometers around the island to speak to Provincial Commissioners of the Department of Probation and Childcare Services to understand their challenges, capacities, and the ways in which Emerge can support them
- Created and distributed a resource booklet for every participant in our programmes that will support them as they reintegrate into society
- Raised awareness on Childhood Sexual Abuse and mental health through livestreams and static social media posts
- Continued to engage with our alumni, some who were in our programmes as much as 15 years ago!
- Kept our programmes running during a time of uncertainty, funding challenges, and even a national economic crisis

None of this would have been possible without your support.

Thank you for believing in Emerge, our work, and in the potential of each of our programme participants. We are grateful to see how much passion we share with our community – and we hope you continue to work with us to transform more lives moving forward.

Team Emerge

Words From Our Partner, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives

“Emerge is a truly impressive organization. Their team’s dedication to help youthful survivors of abuse successfully transition into adulthood outside of institutionalized care is inspiring. Through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, we are proud to have supported their efforts to expand online programming and increase access to their services.”

-Daniel Bood, Counsellor (Political and Trade), High Commission of Canada to Sri Lanka and Maldives

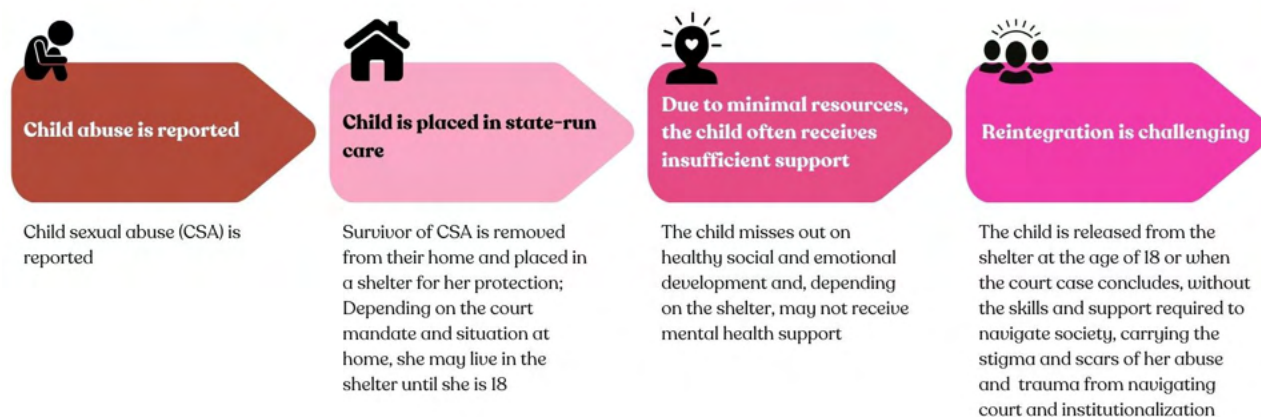
The Challenge

Child sexual abuse (CSA) goes largely unreported in Sri Lanka. However, research suggests that between 11-34% of Sri Lankan girls experience child sexual abuse.¹ A 2013 study by CARE International Sri Lanka found that 29.8% of men and 31.9% of women felt that if a woman was raped, she is “usually to blame for putting herself in that situation.”² Societal stigma can make it hard for known survivors of rape to find work, housing, educational opportunities, or even allies. When describing their own reality, survivors we have worked with use terms like “trapped,” “heartbroken,” “lonely,” and “left to die.”

Although widespread in Sri Lanka, child sexual abuse remains a hidden crisis. Survivors often face their trauma alone and, if they take legal action, experience additional challenges. A 2017 report by UNICEF suggests that, on average, it takes six years between investigating a child’s case and the start of the child’s trial.³ Our work echoes this finding, with girls in our programmes taking an average of five to eight years to complete their court cases. During this time, these courageous children lose access to the outside world for their protection, including many of the supports that are required for healthy social and emotional development, as well as understanding of how to navigate the world as an adult.

Many of these girls have endured incest their entire lives and often suffer from severe PTSD, struggling to overcome past trauma and believe in their own capacity to take control of their lives. Due to limited funding and resourcing, many shelters are unable to provide therapeutic support to survivors. Additionally, many shelters lack programming focused on the skills required to live independently beyond the shelter. This is where Emerge comes in.

Current Experience for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse



¹ Chandraratne, N.K., Fernando, A.D., & Gunawardena, N. (2018) Physical, sexual and emotional abuse during childhood: Experiences of a sample of Sri Lankan Young adults. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 81: 214-224.

Perera, Bilesha & Østbye, Truls. (2009). Prevalence and correlates of sexual abuse reported by late adolescent school children in Sri Lanka. *International journal of adolescent medicine and health*. 21. 203-11.

Fernando, A. D., & Karunasekera, W. (2009). Juvenile Victimization in a Group of Young Sri Lankan Adults. *Ceylon Medical Journal*, 54, 80-84.

² De Mel, N., Peiris, P., Gomez, S. (2013). Broadening gender: Why masculinities matter Attitudes, practices and gender-based violence in four districts in Sri Lanka. CARE International Sri Lanka.

³ Verité Research (Pvt) Ltd. (2017). A Legal And Institutional Assessment Of Sri Lanka’s Justice System For Children. UNICEF.

Who Does Emerge Work With?

Emerge supports survivors of childhood sexual abuse and trauma residing in shelters overseen by Sri Lanka's Department of Probation and Childcare Services. These courageous children live in shelters for their safety or due to family disownment resulting from cultural stigma. Many spend their formative years in shelters, released either upon completing their court cases or upon reaching adulthood at 18. Struggling without familial or community support, they become susceptible to various forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, financial, and emotional, as well as labor and sex trafficking. These survivors endure the lasting impact of abuse and heartbreaking rejection from their communities and families. Despite these challenges, we are honored to witness their resilience, bravery, and brilliance, and are proud to collaborate with them to build our work.

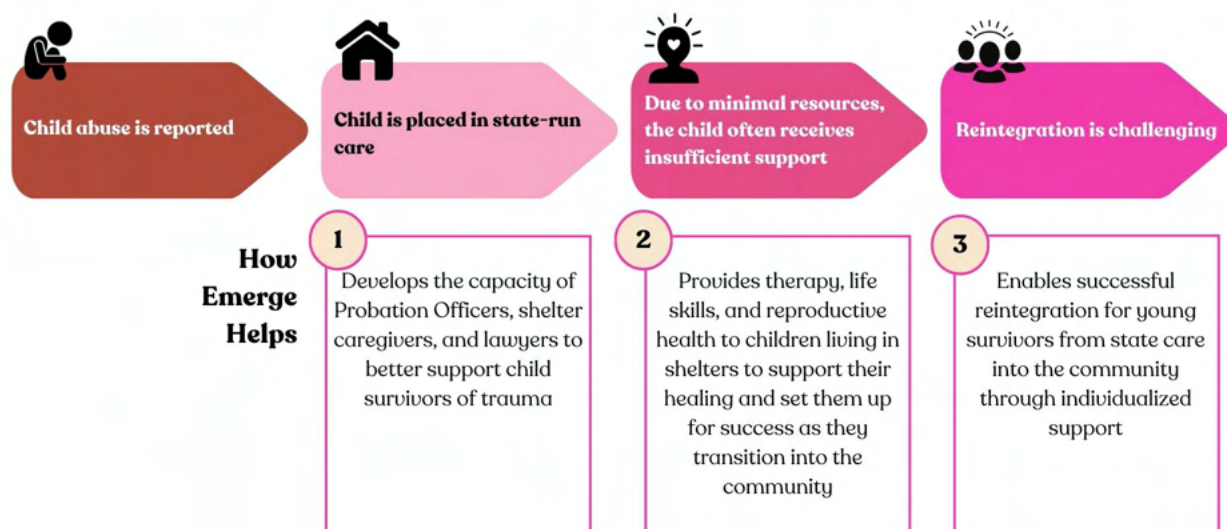
The Intervention

Emerge believes that every survivor deserves a healthy, self-sufficient life, free from abuse. Our work at Emerge supports participants' unique healing journeys, and offers them the knowledge, tools, and confidence so that, once reintegrated, they can become agents of change in their own communities. Emerge's programmes have been developed by knowledge experts to enable each survivor to develop at their own pace. At Emerge, we honor that healing and learning are often not linear. We support each participant in achieving success on her own terms.

Emerge uses a holistic approach, including mental health support and key learning modules to ensure that survivors who are approaching the reintegration period have access to a well-rounded programme that allows them a greater chance of an independent, abuse-free life.

Emerge also works closely with the Department of Probation and Child Care Services to reach Probation Officers and Shelter Care Workers across Sri Lanka to conduct sensitization and capacity building workshops. In doing so, we are working to improve the system overall, ultimately improving outcomes for more survivors across Sri Lanka.

Emerge's Intervention



Finally, Emerge raises awareness on childhood sexual abuse in Sri Lanka through online and offline platforms with the goal that every Sri Lankan will be able to identify child sexual abuse, know how to report it, and understand its impact and how to support survivors.

Emerge Programmes

During the 2022/23 fiscal year, EmERGE provided programming to children online across 14 shelters, visited probation departments across the country to understand their needs, conducted trainings for frontline staff, and continued to serve our alumni with individualized support.

Where EmERGE conducted Life Skills, Reproductive Health, and Mental Health programmes

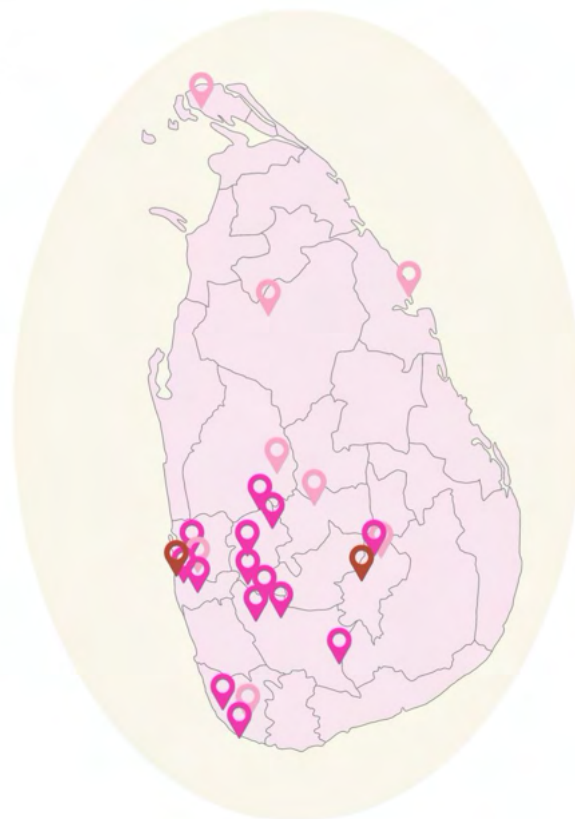
Ambilipitiya, Baddegama, Badulla, Galle, Kadawatha, Kegalle (x2 homes), Kirulapone, Nawala, Rathnapura (x3 homes), Viyalagoda, Yatiyanthota

Where EmERGE conducted trainings

Bandarawela, Colombo

Provincial Probation Departments EmERGE visited

Southern Province, Western Province, Central Province, Eastern Province, Uva Province, North Western Province, North Central Province, Northern Province (did not visit Sabaragamuwa Province)



The above map shows approximate locations of where EmERGE conducted work in 2022/23. To protect children's safety and privacy, exact locations will never be disclosed.

Online Programmes

EmERGE's trauma sensitive programmes promote crucial skills for participants' healthy reintegration into society. During the pandemic, we shifted our programmes online per government mandate. This shift allowed us to reach 14 different homes across the Western, Southern, and Sabaragamuwa provinces in Sri Lanka. During the 2022/23 fiscal year, we delivered life skills, reproductive health, and mental health to 323 participants.

EmERGE's Shelter Programmes

1 Life Skills

Participants learn skills to support healthy lifestyles and navigate independent living. They prepare for the world of work and society, and they learn to engage as active citizens of their communities.



2 Reproductive Health

Participants learn about healthy relationships, making informed decisions on sexual and reproductive health rights, as well as practice personal autonomy. They define their personal values and explore topics such as hygiene, puberty and healthy communication.

3 Mental Health

Participants learn tools for emotional regulation and maintaining a healthy mind and body.

Visits to Probation Departments Across Sri Lanka

Throughout the year, Emerge conducted visits to eight provincial probation departments, where we introduced our programs to the respective province Commissioners. These engagements provided valuable insights into the daily challenges faced by Sri Lanka's childcare system across provinces, including issues like insufficient resources, staffing shortages, and inadequate mental health care. These meetings paved the way for Emerge to explore capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing the skills and awareness of state care workers, thereby improving the overall childcare system in Sri Lanka.

Numerous provincial commissioners expressed keen interest in integrating Emerge's expertise to create more opportunities for children in institutional care, benefitting the community as a whole and enhancing the capabilities of state care workers. As an initial step in this direction, our latest curriculum is currently undergoing translation into Tamil, ensuring inclusivity for participants of diverse ethnicities within the institutions in which we work.

Training for Frontline Staff

The 2022/23 fiscal year marked a significant increase in Emerge's training capacity. Throughout the year, Emerge trained 141 frontline staff. In October 2022, Emerge hosted a Trauma-Informed Lawyering workshop for eight lawyers at Oxbridge Associates. In December 2022, Emerge organized a two-day staff capacity-building and sensitization program in Bandarawela, Uva province. The Uva Probation Department covered the expenses of the activity, while CFLI funded the staff meal allowance. The first workshop, attended by 21 Probation officers, focused on reintegration challenges, self-reflection, and empathy building through role plays and case studies. The second workshop targeted 55 Shelter staff, providing them with Mental Health Sensitization and Self-care training. Shelter staff gained insights into mental health and trauma-sensitive care, emphasizing the importance of maintaining their own mental well-being. Practical tools and activities were provided to support them on their self-care journey.



In February 2023, Emerge organized two one-day staff capacity-building and sensitization programs in Bandarawela, Uva province, engaging 57 shelter staff participants. The sessions focused on enhancing trauma-sensitive counseling skills and dispelling myths surrounding mental health, trauma, and childhood sexual abuse.

Mental Health

The Mental Health Programme consists of trauma-informed group therapy and individual therapy to girls living in shelters across Sri Lanka, as well as on-call support for our alumni. A trauma-sensitive approach understands the physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma on an individual. This approach works to create a physically and emotionally safe environment, establish trust and boundaries, support autonomy and choice, and create collaborative relationships and participation opportunities by taking an empowerment-focused perspective to promote resilience and healing.

Responses to childhood sexual abuse and/or violence are complex and vary across individuals. Individuals may experience multiple short-term and long-term psychological impacts from abuse such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, relationship challenges, and other mental health difficulties. Therefore, our work addresses these short-term and long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse by helping participants address and process trauma. Emerge's model of group therapy conducted for shelters is drawn

from evidence-based therapeutic intervention models such as Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Somatic Experiencing which includes body related exercises to release trauma.

These models help explore the impact of trauma and emotional distress and understands the paths for recovery through emotional regulation and distress tolerance. It allows for the development of healthy coping strategies via therapeutic interventions and support. All interventions focus on offering a safe validating space to reflect, identifying strengths and values, and building resilience individually and as a group.

Alumni⁴ Support

Our alumni are an integral part of the Emerge family, staying connected during both challenging times and moments of celebration. Despite the country's financial crisis, our former participants have worked hard to meet their daily needs. Over the past year, they have reached out to us for assistance with mental health support, employment connections, coaching, scholarship opportunities, and to share updates on their lives and accomplishments.

Through our partnership with CFLI, Emerge designed and printed a resource booklet that was distributed to all programme participants in February of 2023 and is now available to alumni. The booklet includes contact information of emergency services, mental health services and government adjacent services, all in a small, colorful printed booklet so that each participant can carry it with them if they transfer in between shelters or exit the system.

Raising Awareness

The Emerge digital community has grown over the past year, now reaching over 7,000 accounts through its social media platforms.

Our main social media messaging from April 2022 to March 2023 included:

- Acknowledging the impact of the economic downturn on child protection and mental health
- Livestreams to discuss important topics such as “survivor responses to child sexual abuse”, “mental health and crisis management tips” and “gender-based violence and its impact on the girl child” along with summary points in Tamil and Sinhala
- Mental health tips, insights, and facts on childhood sexual abuse
- Programme insights, progress updates, and impact stories of our programme participants
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and collaborative work to commemorate this campaign

Our website (www.emergelanka.org) turned 2 this year - packed with programme insight. One of its main features is the Information Hub (emergelanka.org/information-hub) where our audience is able to learn more about mental health, supporting survivors, and Childhood Sexual Abuse. This page acts as an easily accessible awareness tool.

Finally, we continued to raise awareness about our work in the media. A big thank you to the High Commission of Canada to Sri Lanka and the Maldives for featuring our work online during 16 Days of Activism (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=5587605544657802>), We are for Good for featuring us on their podcast with a focus on the superpower of listening and centering community (<https://www.weareforgood.com/episode/403>), and Ceylon Today for their full-pay spread on our work (<https://ceylontoday.lk/2022/11/19/stringing-lives-together-bead-by-bead/>)!

⁴ Emerge uses the gender neutral “alumni” as some of our former participants do not identify as female

Our Impact



Overall Impact

We have served 1,545 programme participants since our inception in 2005 through our programmes (inception to March 2023)



Expanding our reach

Shifting to online programmes gave us the opportunity to expand our reach to 03 Provinces in Sri Lanka, and to work in 14 shelters across the island



Shelter workshops

Over this year, we conducted 88 workshops on Life Skills, Reproductive Health, and Group Therapy - and completed 170 teaching hours



Sensitization Workshops

We conducted a sensitization and capacity building workshop series for 133 Probation Officers and shelter careworkers in the Uva Province as well as a Trauma Informed Lawyering workshop for 08 lawyers



Donors and Support

We received LKR 19,475,020.75 in contributions from our generous community in the 2022/2023 fiscal year

Life Skills

The Emerge Life Skills Programme equips participants with knowledge and skills to navigate the outside world by:

- Meeting new people through online classes and developing interaction skills and understanding about different professions.
- Skills development leading to employment placements for a chosen number of participants.
- Understanding the outside world and being up to date about the changes that are happening on a daily basis.
- Improved communication and interaction patterns through in-class activities that simulate real life experiences.
- Building on compulsory knowledge of healthy and unhealthy relationships and understanding how to prevent/secure oneself from abuse.
- Achieving a healthy and balanced mindset where they are able to practice emotional regulation.
- Providing knowledge on how to create and retain safe income-generation and efficient financial independence.
- Providing knowledge and skills around entrepreneurship and supporting participants to understand the fundamentals of money management.

Reproductive Health

The Emerge Reproductive Health Programme equips participants with knowledge and skills to gain autonomy by:

- Making informed decisions on reproduction and sexual initiation grounded by intrapersonal values, confidence and self-worth.
- Building on compulsory knowledge of healthy and unhealthy relationships and understanding how to prevent/secure oneself from abuse.
- Providing an understanding of communication skills, body language, and boundaries in personal and professional relationships.
- Forming the initiative to transfer curriculum knowledge to their peers.
- Developing the capacity and resourcefulness to influence their own community.

Mental Health

The Emerge Mental Health Programme equips participants with knowledge and awareness to maintain a balanced physical and mental status by:

- Providing knowledge and awareness on their mental health, trauma reactions/symptoms and building an understanding of the long term and short-term impacts of experiencing trauma.
- Improving the ability to identify and pay attention to emotions, label them when experienced and gain skills to regulate their emotions.
- Providing knowledge on cognitive vulnerability, identifying negative thoughts and learning to navigate them.
- Improving the ability to tune in to bodily sensations and link them to emotions and navigate them.
- Providing knowledge on crisis survival skills and distress tolerance.
- Improving skills on paying mindful attention skills to interpersonal relationships.

Success Stories*



SHAHI is one of the first girls that Alia (Emerge's Founder) met 15 years ago, in one of her first Emerge cohorts. Through challenges and changes in life, SHAHI has always made the effort to keep in touch with Alia and Emerge. In October, during one of Alia's visits to Sri Lanka, SHAHI chose to come into the Emerge office to meet with her and update her about her life. SHAHI radiated with joy. She is a proud mum with a little one on the way. She shared her dreams of caring for her family and living a beautiful life with her children. SHAHI understands the importance of maintaining her mental health, and keeps in touch with the Emerge psychologist regularly for check-ins.

KESI and **SHIRA** graduated from their dental care programme that Emerge placed them in. Despite the stressful days studying for their exams and struggling with the programme being conducted in English, both these young ladies were able to complete the programme successfully. They are currently working in the dental field. In fact, one of them is now working in the Dental Care International Institution as a trainer! Both these young ladies are examples of determination and strength - never giving up on their goals and chosen career paths.

ASLI had her wedding in January. She couldn't wait to share the good news with the Emerge team, explaining by phone that getting married was one of her many dreams to come true. She took up planning her wedding –

a big process! – along with her partner. She also spoke about plans after her marriage, where she wanted to start her own business, building on the skills she gained from her current job. ASLI has come a long way in her life; she has had many ups and downs and always emerged through these moments victorious. To see her happy about getting married and starting her own family life and defining her own success makes the entire Emerge team proud of her!

A story from a shelter we work with: When discussing the many cultures in Sri Lanka, the participants at one of the shelters where our online programmes were happening had strong knowledge of the topic, even before the lesson discussion started. At the end of the class, when asked about their views on ethnicities and cultures within a country, we found it inspiring when the participants mentioned that a country needs to have multiple cultures that will produce people with different talents and abilities. This showed inclusivity and acceptance. In a country deeply impacted by historical conflict, we will continue to weave these themes into our work.

“My safe space is a boat, it makes me feel like I'm floating and it calms me down.”
-Programme participant during a Group Therapy workshop exploring safe spaces

Usually, participants struggle to work through overwhelming emotions and this leads them to resort to unhealthy coping strategies. In our safe space exercise, we equipped participants to visualize their “safe space” in times of distress to calm down and pause. While identifying a safe and calming space can be challenging for many participants, after several prompts and discussions, the participants were able to find their safe place. For some, it was a memory, a person, a garden, or the sea. For this particular participant, her safe space was a boat and the feeling of floating.

***Privacy and anonymity guidelines**

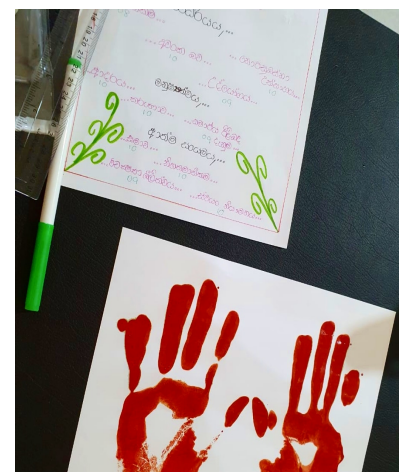
Emerge does not disclose the name, identifying photos or personal information, or the identifying details of any participant’s story. Protecting the anonymity, dignity and choice of each Emerge participant and alumni is prioritized and something we do not compromise on. For the same reasons, Emerge will only take, share and use photographs of programme participants that do not capture their face or any other identifiable features. It is an important part of the Emerge culture to ensure that the identity of each programme participant/alumni is protected in every way. It allows each survivor to have the choice of moving past being identified by their trauma. Each impact story carries a code name to relate their story of progress as a result of working alongside Emerge. The details of the story will be true and based on progress notes, insights and check-ins facilitated by the team and their expertise.

Honoring a Programme Participant We Lost

Nelum* was an intelligent, kind, empathetic and ambitious girl who had big dreams. She'd always volunteer to support her peers who found a task to be difficult. She did so in a way that made her peers feel that they could do anything they set their mind to. Her kindness and smile brightened every workshop we had together.

She was patient with those around her and loved her friends. She fostered dreams and worked hard. While in state-run care, Nelum focused on getting qualifications in vocational training. She was very creative, and very growth oriented.

In June 2022, we received the heartbreaking news that that Nelum had passed away. She was only 16 years old.



Our team will remember Nelum in every step we take forward in our journey to provide trauma sensitive programming for survivors. We will honor and miss Nelum's kindness and we will celebrate all that she graced our community with. Thank you for being in our community, Nelum.

*Nelum means lotus in Sinhala. It is the Emerge motif and it symbolizes strength, resilience, and hope that exists and grows despite the challenging environment it grows in. Please note that Nelum is a pseudonym Emerge has provided for this story to protect her identity and dignity.

Meet the Emerge Force

Board of Directors

Alia Whitney-Johnson

Chairperson

Alia is an experienced social entrepreneur with over fifteen years of experience working with children who've endured trauma, sexual abuse, and exploitation. She founded Emerge at the age of 19 after a tsunami relief trip to Sri Lanka and has remained deeply involved ever since. She is also the Co-Founder of Freedom Forward (www.Freedom-Forward.org), a non-profit that is working to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of youth in San Francisco through systems change. Alia has experience as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company and has served on several boards including the MIT Corporation (MIT's board of trustees), SERES Global, and Emerge Lanka Foundation. She holds a B.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Oxford, where she studied as a Rhodes Scholar.

Jehan Mubarak

Vice Chair

Jehan is a former international cricketer and water polo player. He has represented Sri Lanka at three Cricket World Cups and captained many teams throughout his career. Jehan is a qualified high performance cricket coach. He is currently the head coach of the Sri Lanka Under-19 cricket team. Jehan holds a degree in Physical Science from the University of Colombo. He also served as the Chairman of Colombo Round Table I, a charity and fellowship club which provided the Emerge Centre for Reintegration with its first funding in 2016. Jehan has since worked closely with Emerge and plays an active role of spreading awareness while providing his insight into Emerge strategies. He is passionate about Emerge and the cause we represent and is an active part of all our programmes and events.

Swasha Malalasekera

Treasurer and Secretary

Swasha holds a BSc in Accounting and Finance and ATCL, LLCM and FTCL in Speech and Drama. She is the owner and director of The Studio, Fine and Performing Arts Academy, and the T and T Villas (Pvt) Ltd. Swasha is also the Founder of Nama Sanctuary Foundation. A safe house in Sri Lanka, the only one of its kind which helps victims of Abuse and Domestic Violence heal and live empowered, independent lives. An accountant by profession, her love for the performing arts and humanity has changed her life's purpose. To fight for and on behalf of women and children that have been victimized for no fault of their own, and to make a difference, is her goal. Through this goal, Swasha joined Emerge Lanka Foundation and is currently part of the Board of Directors, where she empowers young women who have experienced sexual abuse.

Farzana Khan

Farzana has a Bachelor of Business Administration (Second Upper) from the University of Sri Jayawardenapura and an MBA from PIM, where she passed as a Merit student. Her research thesis on a comparative study of the Corporate Social Responsibility models was published in the PIM Journal. She is

also a member of the Association of Business Executives (UK) and the Australian Computer Society (ACS) and a trained Speech and Drama teacher from the Trinity College of London. She also serves as a Board Member and is a past president of the Rotary Club of Colombo Regency.

Priya Sivagananathan

Priya Sivagananathan is an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. She is a law graduate of the London School of Economics & Political Science, Barrister-at-law and a member of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn. She is a Partner at Julius & Creasy, Attorneys-at-Law & Notaries Public, since 2008. She specializes in the areas of Banking and Finance, and Aircraft Leasing. She is also a member of the Board for the Office for Reparations, which is an independent body established to manage Sri Lanka's reparations regime and grant reparation to victims of conflict.



Pictured above from left to right: Swasha, Jehan, Alia, Farzana, and Priya

Emerge Ambassadors

Russel Arnold

Russel represented the National Cricket Team of Sri Lanka from 1997 to 2007, and is currently an International Cricket Commentator. He brings in an aura of professionalism and positivity to our mission. His positive, upbeat and passionate attitude transcends from the commentary box into his life of representing Emerge. Russel is inspired by the resilience and strength of our programme participants, and has been very keen to learn more about child protection in Sri Lanka and of ways the community can get involved to support survivors. His focus continues to be on raising awareness through his platforms and networks. Russel is a great advocate for our resilient survivors, and holds great importance in their confidence and strong mental health as essential elements in the process of reintegrating into society as adults.

Chamari Athapaththu

Chamari is the Captain of the Sri Lanka Women's Cricket Team. Her philosophy of leading the team to play "freely, positively and with courage" has propelled the national team to be formidable. Chamari has been on several international tours in the past year, and has been taking women's cricketing to the next level with her talent and drive. Not only has she been dominating the cricket ground - she also inspires young girls everywhere to chase their dreams. As someone who has overcome many obstacles in her sporting life; Chamari understands and advocates for transformational impact with our participants. Chamari is a representation of hard work and she breaks through barriers and glass ceilings to navigate her journey as an international sports personality.

Indu and San Dharmasena

A renowned playwright and dramatist who has written over 60 plays, Indu and his extremely talented wife San are extremely passionate about the Emerge cause. Indu and San together use the magic of theater to bring forward “taboo” topics and create awareness through humor and thought-provoking art. The dynamic duo see theater as a medium that will help our participants express themselves and enhance their confidence and become unstoppable in their authentic selves. Indu and San believe that each of our programme participants should have the space to express themselves, and learn of their own potential through that expression.

Bhoomi Harendran

Best known for her activism and fight in achieving equality and accessibility for the local transgender community through the National Transgender Network, Bhoomi is fearless in her work and is a champion of empowerment. Bhoomi believes that our survivors deserve dignity and respect, and that independence is key to achieving a wholesome life, where they can live authentically. Bhoomi advocates for Emerge in the many spaces she enters. She looks forward to working closely with our Centre Participants; and puts an emphasis on "empowering" them to be the best versions of themselves. Bhoomi is a fountain of knowledge, and adds an edge, a confidence and wisdom to our journey.



Pictured above in back, left to right: Ashani and Hazel; in front, left to right: Theja, Amanda, and Kaavya

The Emerge Lanka Team

Hazel Rajiah-Tetteh	-	Country Manager
Uadaya Sivakumar	-	Chief Operations Officer
Amanda Piyaratne	-	Psychologist
Ashani Hans Ehaliyagoda	-	Programme Officer
Theja Jayasinghe	-	Programme Officer
Dhammika Wijeyaratne	-	Programme Trainer
Kaavya Pathirana	-	Communications Lead
Shehani Perera	-	Fundraising Officer
Sujeewa Dilrukshi	-	Admin Support

Our Year in Photographs



Emerge founder, Alia, poses with representatives from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)



Team Emerge poses with Emerge Brand Ambassador and Activist Bhoomi Harendran



A Mental Health capacity building workshop facilitated by Emerge for Shelter care workers in the Uva Province



Former Emerge participant, SHAHI, and Emerge Founder, Alia – an Emerge bond that has lasted over 15 years



The Programmes Team planning their Life Skills and Mental Health workshops together



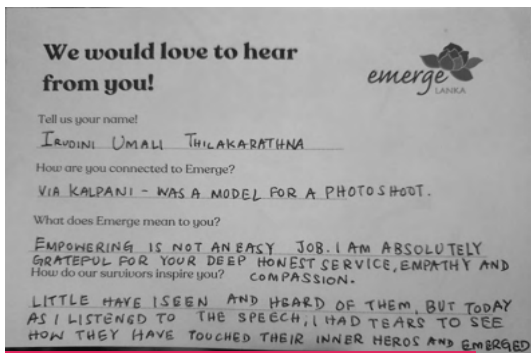
Theja and Ashani conducting Online Life Skills workshops from the Emerge office



A sensitization and capacity building workshop conducted for Probation Officers working in the Uva Province



A workshop on “Good Touch / Bad Touch” at a 16 Days of Activism hosted by Scope Sri Lanka funded by GIZ



Feedback written by Emerge friend, Actress and Performer Umali Thilakarathna



Alia strategizing with the Emerge Programmes Team



Back row, left to right: Amanda, Sujeewa, Hazel, Swasha, Uadaya, Ashani
Front row, left to right: Kaavya, Shehani, Alia, Jehan



A snapshot from the team visit to the Eastern Provincial Office under the Probation Department

Supporters

Emerge would not be possible without the generous support of many hearts and minds. We cannot thank all of you who have made this journey possible and would like to especially acknowledge the following organizations who supported our work in the 2022/23 fiscal year.

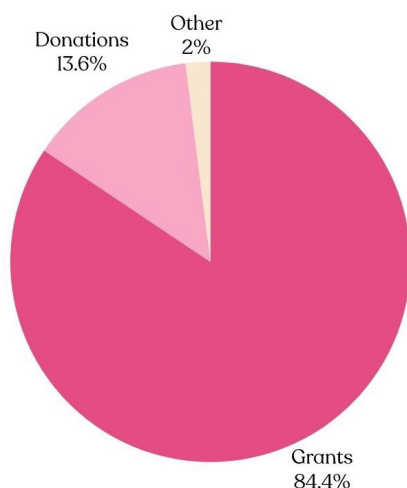


Financial Summary

Emerge Lanka Foundation is committed to financial transparency. Our finances are audited annually. For a copy of our audited financial reports, please contact info@emergelanka.org.

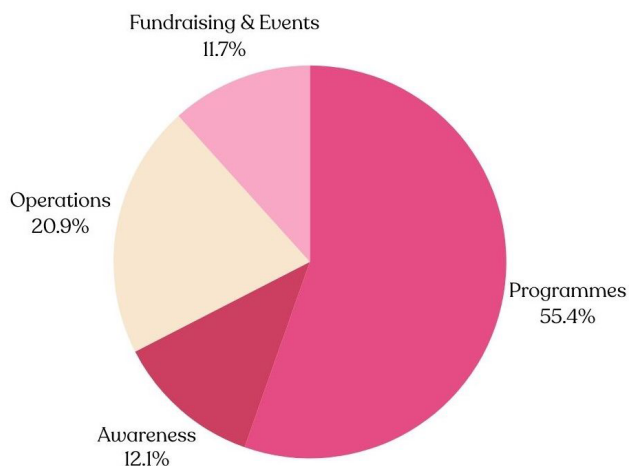
Emerge Lanka Income

Rs. 19,870,927.91 (LKR)



Emerge Lanka Expenses

Rs. 15,151,434.47 (LKR)



Looking to the Future

In 2023, we are looking forward to returning to in-person programming at shelters after a 3-year break due to the pandemic. This means that our trainers will be able to share the same learning space with our programme participants and double up on the engagement during our workshops.

Pre-COVID, EmERGE built long-lasting relationships with the Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS) and implemented programmes physically, where our team visited shelters within the Western Province and conducted workshops with our bespoke curriculum. However, with the emergence of COVID many shelters imposed restrictions for physical visits for the safety of the children, staff and external individuals. Additionally, with the recent turn of events in Sri Lanka coupled with the drastic economic crisis, it was not practical for EmERGE to visit shelters in its financial situation and the prevailing fuel shortages.

In 2023, we're delighted to say we were able to restart our programmes in person (stay tuned for our next annual report!) and could not be happier to be working with participants again face-to-face.

Staying Connected

Learn about the cause through our website on www.emergelanka.org. For questions or to get involved, email us at info@emergelanka.org or call, text, or WhatsApp us at +94 77 081 9113.

Follow our journey on social media @emergeglobal:

- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/emergeglobal>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EmergeGlobal/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJy4CJMSHN6Jam5YQtRS6aQ>



“I have no words to express what Emerge means to me.
When we were sad and alone in the shelter, it was only Emerge that I felt close to.
And, it was only because of Emerge that I could keep happiness in my heart...”

-APIL, Emerge Alumna