



# The Open University of Sri Lanka Annual Sustainability Report 2021 - 22



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# THE CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CESSD)

The Centre for Environmental Studies and Sustainable Development (CESSD) at the Open University of Sri Lanka was established in 2015 with the goal of contributing intellectually to the creation of a sustainable university, country, and world. Since 2019, the CESSD has taken steps to expand her involvement in line with the broader framework provided by the Open University's Green Policy, which includes offering more programs, conducting research, and advocating for environmental studies and sustainable development.

In recent years, our planet has grappled with a broad array of sustainability challenges, each demanding urgent and innovative responses. At The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), we are deeply committed to addressing these issues head-on. Through our initiatives, we aspire to lead by example, demonstrating that meaningful change is possible when education and sustainability converge.

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# VISIT TO SINHARAJA RAIN FOREST 2019

The Sinharaja Forest Reserve, the largest lowland rainforest in Sri Lanka and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stands as a testament to the planet's rich biodiversity. Spanning just 21 km from east to west and 7 km from north to south, this compact yet vibrant reserve is a haven for a multitude of endemic species, including diverse trees, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. This unique ecosystem underscores the importance of preserving natural habitats, aligning with SDG 15: Life on Land, which emphasizes the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity.

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On July 31, 2019, the Green Committee of the Center for Environmental Studies and Sustainable Development (CESSD) visited the Sinharaja Forest Reserve. The group of 20 members embarked on this exploration to deepen their understanding of the rainforest's complex ecosystem and to uncover its hidden secrets of life. This visit highlights the university's commitment to SDG 14: Life Below Water, as maintaining forest health indirectly supports the health of adjacent aquatic environments by preserving water quality and preventing erosion. Through such initiatives, the university actively engages in promoting environmental stewardship and fostering greater awareness of the natural systems.



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# DOG STERILIZATION PROGRAMME 2018

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# TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME

## 2017

On August 12, 2017, the MSc in Environmental Science 2016/17 Batch organized a Tree Planting Programme at the Kahathuduwa Expressway Entrance in collaboration with the Road Development Authority (RDA). This initiative involved planting species recommended by the RDA, specifically Kumbuk (*Terminalia arjuna*) and Magul Karanda (*Pongamia pinnata*). The plants were sourced from the Department of Forestry Nursery in Battaramulla. This program contributes to SDG 13: Climate Action by enhancing urban green spaces and helping to absorb carbon dioxide, thereby mitigating the effects of climate change. It also supports SDG 15: Life on Land by fostering biodiversity and promoting the restoration of degraded land. The collaboration with the RDA highlights the importance of partnerships in achieving sustainable development goals and ensures that the selected plant species are well-suited for the local environment. Through this project, the students demonstrate their commitment to environmental sustainability and contribute to the creation of greener, healthier urban landscapes.





*“Let's go green together - Plant a tree for the Planet”*

# Tree Planting Programme

**Date:**

**12<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

**Venue:**

**Kottawa to Kadawatha  
Highway section**

Organized by Environment Science MSc 2016 - 17 batch @ CEESD - OUSL

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# TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME 2018

On June 22, 2018, the students from the MSc in Environmental Science 2017/18 Batch organized a Tree Planting Programme along the route from Battaramulla Koswatta Junction to Malabe Junction. This initiative, led by the students, plays a crucial role in advancing SDG 13: Climate Action by contributing to the reduction of carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere through increased tree cover. Additionally, it supports SDG 15: Life on Land by enhancing local biodiversity and promoting the health of terrestrial ecosystems. The tree planting effort not only helps in mitigating urban heat island effects but also improves air quality and provides green spaces that benefit the community. By actively participating in such projects, the students demonstrate their commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable urban development.



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