

Venesa Matram Symposium

An invitation to Sri Lankan community workers to network, share skills and exchange culture.



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

(Fill in this document participate in the 2015 Symposium in Negombo, Sri Lanka)



contents

section one: About the Symposium	3
section two: Why you want to participate	8
section three: Details of your attendance	10
section four: Financial contributions	11
section five: Your personal information	12



section one: **About the Symposium**

What is the Symposium?

The Venesa Matram Symposium is a networking, skill building and collaboration supporting event for arts, cultural and community workers in Sri Lanka.

The annual event aims to create a space for dialogue, exchange and experience sharing that can support more connected and effective community building by creative practitioners. The Symposium encourages practitioners to learn new skills, share their own practice and discuss needs and approaches related to the communities they work with. Ferment Collaborate, an Australian-based community cultural development agency, produces the Symposium in collaboration with community agencies based in Sri Lanka.

Our focus in delivering the event is to connect practitioners from around the island and in the process break down geographic, cultural and religious boundaries that have been reinforced through over 30 years of conflict and over 500 years of colonisation. We aim to create an event structure and space for local community workers to empower themselves and each other by supporting them to share their stories and skills, personal, professional and cultural, toward developing more effective, collaborative and inclusive approaches to community building.

When and where will it happen?

28 April to 4 May, 2015

@ Fr. Tissabalasuriye Centre, Adiambalame, Katunayake

Who is invited to participate?

Up to 100 participants are invited to attend, either by staying with us at the Symposium venue, or by attending on a daily basis. The Symposium is designed for participation by:

- Community facilitators and project managers
- Arts and cultural development facilitators
- Community educators, teachers and facilitators
- Environmentalists, permaculturists & agriculturalists
- Community health workers
- Farmers and producers
- Social entrepreneurs and philanthropists

How does this complement my community work?

The Symposium aims to assist community workers to develop broader and stronger networks, share and showcase their own work, learn from others in the field and better understand the various cultural, geographic, religious, gender, age and other considerations associated with their own and others work in Sri Lanka and internationally.

History of the Venesa Matram Symposium

The inaugural 2012 Symposium focused on these needs and incorporated them into the way the event was designed and produced. The event was highly successful and valued by participants, creating new collaborations, strengthening skills in facilitating community projects and generating discussions about broad, cultural issues of particular relevance to communities around Sri Lanka.

In 2012, in collaboration with the Centre for Social Concern, we produced the first Symposium in Hatton based on the findings of our engagement with arts, cultural and community facilitators in 2010 and 2011. The second Venesa Matram Symposium was hosted by the Kaveri Kala Manram Cultural Organisation in Jaffna in 2014.

What are some of the objectives of the Symposium?

The Symposium aims to create much needed spaces for dialogue, networking, cultural awareness and professional skill sharing to support more connected and effective community building by creative practitioners in Sri Lanka.

The findings of our engagement shows that community workers require greater capacity and support to:

- identify, learn and use creative approaches that respond to social, economic & cultural needs;
- training in participatory arts facilitation, group management and workshop delivery;
- training in arts management practices including artswoker coordination, gallery development, curation and outcome showcasing;
- create opportunities for discussion and collaboration across geographic, cultural, religious and sectoral boundaries;
- build practical and active community cultural development networks locally, nationally and internationally; and
- access to leading practice methodologies and locally specific ways of using them.

The Symposium aims to meet these needs. As such the main focus in producing the Symposium is to:

- connect practitioners from around the island to empower them to in turn work with communities to address cultural, social, environmental and economic needs;
- empower grass roots responses to community need
- encourage the active participation of participants in building the event rather than spectating

What is the schedule for the event?

Tuesday 28 April 2014	Arrival, welcome, introductions & photos
Wednesday 29 April 2014	Symposium explanation and training day
Thursday 30 April 2014	Open Space Workshop Program
Friday 1 May 2014	Open Space Workshop Program
Saturday 2 May 2014	Open Space Workshops and Cultural Tour
Sunday 3 May 2014	Evaluation and future planning
Monday 4 May 2014	Departure

What is this year's Symposium theme?

This years theme for the Symposium is:

“Cultural approaches to celebrate diversity and community building”

This theme is intended to guide workshop/presentation design and discussions at the Symposium by participants. The theme emerged from evaluation of last years Symposium by participants, suggesting that there needed to be focus on cultural/traditional practices that are being used for community building. Celebrating diversity includes approaches to community development that celebrate rather than merely tolerate cultural, ethnic, gender, religious and other forms of diversity within Sri Lanka.

What is Open Space?

Open Space is a simple process for self-organising, that relies on participation of people who have a passion to share and learn from each other. There will be no pre-planned list of topics presented at the Symposium, only time slots and spaces around the centre where people can facilitate their workshops. It will be up to all the participants to co-create the agenda or outline of the Symposium,.

Open Space is based on the idea that, given the opportunity, people are capable of leading, following, initiating and joining the activities and discussions that will allow them to most effectively learn, teach and reflect.

We use Open Space because it empowers participants to design the program themselves based on their requirements around learning, teaching and showcasing.

The process means that not only are the discussions potentially transformational, so too is the process of designing, facilitating, documenting and evaluating the event.

It's social change in action. Open Space embodies the idea of real participation, not as a spectator, but as someone who can influence the agenda, and specifically engage with what's relevant and meaningful to them and to others.

Participants at the Symposium will be supported to brainstorm workshop topics that they can deliver as part of the program. Once sufficient workshop topics have been developed, the group then collaborates to form the schedule, organising these workshops into a program.

What are some examples of previous workshop topics?

- Women empowerment approaches
- Cartoons for social change
- Revival of traditional practices
- Organic farming and community building
- Growing produce in dry climates
- Maintaining traditional Koothu
- Creative problem solving on a village level
- Beautiful life with a balanced mind
- Exploring ethnic issues
- Early warning systems for community development
- Social enterprise ideas in Sri Lanka
- Energetic movement for vitality
- History of the plantation sector
- Collective approaches to local enterprise

Who is the organisation hosting the 2015 Symposium?

The 2015 Symposium will be hosted by **Janawaboda Kendraya**, a cultural development agency based in Negombo, Sri Lanka.

While engaged in resisting the imperialist invasions of the poor countries through the process of globalization, together with other organizations, JK is also building alternatives. For instance our members are involved in a number of eco-agricultural activities in the districts of Gampaha and Puttalam as a concrete. We also engage in political fora to oppose economic globalization whilst also building alternatives. To this end we take an active part the National Alliance for the Protection of Natural Resources and Human Rights. This is a national network in Sri Lanka committed to oppose the government's attempts at privatization of national resources.

(From JK website – <http://janawobodakendraya.blogspot.com.au/>)

Who is Ferment Collaborate and what is the organisation's role?

Ferment Collaborate is a cultural planning agency working to develop creative, place-based approaches to the way communities function. We work with government, industry and community agencies to develop responses to planning and development issues, to connect this with local priorities, and to conduct projects with creative approaches that reflect cultural diversity and inspire shared celebration.

Ferment Collaborate uses inclusionary engagement practice to connect people with decision making, and decision makers with people, to acknowledge that communities are constantly organising themselves in ways that don't always directly correlate with formal governance approaches. Ferment Collaborate delivers the Venesa Matram Symposium in Sri Lanka in conjunction with community agencies and workers.

www.fermentcollaborate.org / steph@fermentcollaborate.org
PO Box 5464 West End 4101 Brisbane Qld Australia
Registered ABN 87 649651806

What do I need to bring?

Each participant will need to bring with them: towel + single sheets + pillow cases + personal clothes and toiletries

Other items you are welcome to bring along include: musical instruments + any resources that showcase your work + art materials.

What does it cost?

There is no cost for participants to attend. However, if you have capacity to contribute funds for your involvement, or your organisation is interested in paying for you to attend or donating to the program, please indicate this in your application.

How do I complete this Expression of Interest application to attend?

This is an Expression of Interest for you to tell us about your participation in the Venesa Matram Symposium being held in Negombo Sri Lanka through local organisation Janawaboda Kendraya.

Options for completing this Expression of Interest include:

1) Complete this document in WORD format

Download the Word document from our website –

www.fermentcollaborate.org/project/venesa-matram-symposium-2015/

Open and fill in the document using Microsoft Word.

Save with your last name in the document name.

Email to info@fermentcollaborate.org

2) Complete this document as a PDF FORM

Download the PDF form from our website –

www.fermentcollaborate.org/project/venesa-matram-symposium-2015/

Open and fill in the form with the free Adobe Reader. If you don't have it, download it from get.adobe.com/reader/

Save the PDF form with your **last name** in the document name.

Email to info@fermentcollaborate.org

3) Print the file

Download the PDF form from our website –

www.fermentcollaborate.org/project/venesa-matram-symposium-2015/

Print and complete the form.

Scan or photograph the completed form.

Email to info@fermentcollaborate.org

Expressions of Interest to be received by 20 March 2015

section two: **Why you want to participate**

Q1: Have you attended a similar event before?

Q2: What are your areas of interest related to the objectives of this event?

Q3: What do you hope to achieve by participating in this event?

Q4: What skills and knowledge would you like to gain from this event?

Q5: How would this training help you in your work?

Q6: What are the main issues you would like to discuss at the event?

Q7: What topics or presentations are you interested in?

Q8: How can you be supported to participate in this event effectively?

Q9: How did you find out about the Symposium?

section three: **Details of your attendance**

When do you want to attend the Symposium?

- Casual - I will be attending for the days marked below**
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday 28 April | <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday 29 April |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday 30 April | <input type="checkbox"/> Friday 1 May |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday 2 May | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday 3 May |

(Please indicate days you will be attending)

- All 6 days**
- Other (please indicate)**
-
-

Do you require accommodation?

- I'd like to stay at the Symposium venue please**
- I would prefer to stay with a local accommodation provider**
- I will make my own accommodation arrangements**

Do you require transport assistance?

e.g., pickup from train station (please provide details of your requirements)

Other special requirements

Such as dietary, access or medical

section four: Financial contributions

Attendance at the Venesa Matram Symposium is **free for all participants**.

However, contributions by organisations and individuals are gratefully accepted. Your contributions enable us to extend the budget we have available for ongoing communications, networking and planning after the Symposium. Our aim is to grow the Symposium into a year round program that supports participants to develop collaborative project and program ideas.

The Symposium costs are listed below.

Please advise if you are able to contribute to our production fund and indicate how much you can contribute in the table below.

YES I would like to contribute to the Symposium Production Fund

This contribution is: PERSONAL
 THROUGH MY ORGANISATION

SOURCED FROM ELSEWHERE

NO I am unable to contribute anything at this time

Item	Cost per participant (SLR)	Your contribution (SLR)
Venue hire	1,000	
Accommodation	4,250	
Catering – per person	4,000	
Transport – general	540	
Equipment hire	450	
Workshop materials	450	
Printing	720	
Translators	900	
TOTALS	12,310	

section five: **Your personal information**

Personal details

Your full name _____

Date of birth _____ / _____ / _____

Organisation

The organisation you work with or are associated with (including contact details):

Will you be representing this organisation at the Symposium? YES NO

Are there other people from this organisation wanting to attend? YES NO

Occupation

What is your main occupation? Include all paid and unpaid social/community/environmental work you may be involved with.

Community interests

What interests you about community work? Why are you involved?

Languages (Fluent)

What languages are you fluent in?

Sinhala Tamil

English Other _____

Contact details

Phone numbers _____

Email address _____

Home address _____

Other details _____

Do you have any medical complaints we should know about?

No

Yes

Is there any other information you'd like to share with us?

Applicants who complete this Expression of Interest and send to us by 20 March 2015 will be notified by 31 March 2015 as to whether your application has been successful.

Please visit our website for more information and photographs from previous Symposiums –

www.fermentcollaborate.org