

CSBM, WIF recognise excellence in women's entrepreneurship

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Colombo School of Business and Management (CSBM) together with Women's International Foundation (WIF) launched the first Women's Entrepreneurship Awards 2019 as part of the fourth chapter of ICSE 2019: International Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship, a two-day conference held on 3-4 December at the Marino Beach Hotel, Colombo 03 with the patronage of Conference Chief Guest US Ambassador in Sri Lanka and Maldives Alaina B. Teplitz and Award Ceremony Chief Guest Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Tanja Gonggrijp. Women and Child Affairs, Social Security, Health and Indigenous Medicine Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi graced the award ceremony as the Guest of Honour.



"Women have an essential added value to the sustainable economic development of a country. We need women to fully participate in society in order to reach the sustainable development goals. Society cannot succeed when half of its population is held back. This goes for business & entrepreneurship, but also for public representation"

Ambassador Tanja Gonggrijp Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The research partner for the awards was Survey Research Lanka (SRL) which is a veteran, locally-grown research firm with expertise running over two decades, which is also an extended research and media support arm of the Colombo School of Business and Management. The assurance partner for the award was KPMG, an international audit firm with experience and expertise with similar endeavors at both local and international level. Women's Entrepreneurship Awards 2019 saw a great enthusiasm among the women entrepreneurs across the country in applying for the award and a rigorous, systematic screening process and an interview sessions were conducted in the selection of the awardees. The panel of judges for the awards were, BDO Partners Managing Partner Sujeewa Rajapaksha, Media Services Limited (LMD) Director Krishani Hewavisenthi, University of Kelaniya Department of Marketing Management Senior Lecturer Dr. Renuka Herath, University of Sri Jayewardenepura Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce Department of Entrepreneurship Senior Lecturer Rukmal Weerasinghe, and WIF Deputy Chair K Gamage. The panel was also assisted by CSBM Director and former banker on financial insights and analysis Leonard M. Perera. The awards were presented under five categories of Micro- and Small-scale enterprises, Medium-scale enterprises, Large-scale enterprises, Innovative enterprises, and Social enterprises.



"It was a pleasure to address the ICSE 2019: International Conference on Women Entrepreneurship". We can all enable, encourage, and empower women in our spheres of influence. We must eliminate barriers, allow professional growth, and shape an inclusive future where no one is left behind"

Ambassador Alaina B. Teplitz US Embassy in Sri Lanka & Maldives

Women's Entrepreneurship Awards 2019 was flavored by Maggi and other than the mainstream five award categories, to highlight the partnership between Nestlé, CSBM and WIF, a special award was given away by CSBM and WIF for "Culinary Entrepreneurship".

"Women's Entrepreneurship Award 2019 will be an annual event and interested woman entrepreneurs across the country are encouraged to apply for next year's awards.

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for business and entrepreneurship, but also for public representation," said Award Ceremony Chief Guest Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Tanja Gonggrijp.

"It was a pleasure to address the ICSE 2019: International Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship". We can all enable, encourage, and empower women in our spheres of influence. We must eliminate barriers, allow professional growth, and shape an inclusive future where no one is left behind," said Conference Chief Guest US Ambassador in Sri Lanka and Maldives Alaina B. Teplitz. "SMEs contribute about 45% of Sri Lanka's gross domestic product (GDP) and provide about half of the country's jobs. Yet, among SMEs, only 25% of entrepreneurs are women. These gender inequalities represent a missed opportunity to boost growth in the context of a steadily aging population and expected future labor shortage," said International Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship Conference Chair Prof. Ranjith Bandara, who is also the Head of Colombo School of Business and Management.



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– "International Conference on Women Entrepreneurship Prof. Ranjith Bandara Head of Colombo School of Business and Management"

"Women's Entrepreneurship Awards 2019 is a national level platform created for Sri Lankan woman entrepreneurs to tell their stories, to celebrate their achievements and to be recognized. This will inspire a generation of women in championing a culture of entrepreneurship in broadening the horizons of economic development for Sri Lanka. This initiative will be continued as an annual event with much scope and opportunity for women across the country to advance together," said Women's International Foundation (WIF) Founder and Chairperson Seroshi Nandasiri.

"All women entrepreneurs applied for the awards were equally amazing and deserving. We had a tough time selecting the best from the best," said Survey Research Lanka (SRL) Chairman Neel De Silva,.

"As the 'Assurance Partner' KPMG assisted and guided 'the Organizers' to conduct an orderly and impartial evaluation process in selecting best women entrepreneurs for the year 2019," said KPMG Sri Lanka Managing Partner Reyaz Mihular.

"We heard stories of grit, glamour and rigour. These are stories to be shared and heard as they will craft generations to come," said K. Gamage, representing the Panel of Judges



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