

Federating Women Entrepreneur Associations in SL

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Women entrepreneurs are not represented nor do they have a collective voice.

CATEGORY

[Civic Participation](#)

LOCATION

[Sri Lanka](#)

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE OR NEED YOUR PROJECT WILL ADDRESS AND WHAT INNOVATIVE METHODS WILL YOU EMPLOY?

Describe the specific need or challenge that your team will address with this project

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Briefly describe the specific solution or approach to address the need or challenge and explain why it is innovative

Federation of Women Entrepreneur Associations of Sri Lanka (FWEASL) will create a platform for regional women associations to come together to raise a collective voice for the development of women entrepreneurs in the country.

FWEASL will be unique as it will work with its members in the area of advocacy at the national level and do capacity building of member organizations to become effective advocates in their regions. This will be the very first apex women's body in Sri Lanka that will represent the voice of women SME's.

How will the project impact your community? What changes (in people, institutions, attitudes, practices) do you think you will see?

Sri Lanka has altogether 12 women's chambers of commerce/women's wings of regional mainstream. Some of them are established and active (Central Province, Hambantota) but most in the regions are weak because of a [gap in not having access to and not being in the loop of mainstream business activity](#) that the national chambers in Colombo enjoy. Furthermore they are never represented or considered a focal point as representing businesses from their district. Hence a huge disconnect exists with the membership not evolving beyond a micro enterprise level.

Together, these organisations have a membership of over 2,000 women in enterprises.

MEET THE TEAM

Project owner

[Rezani Aziz](#)
[Sri Lanka](#)
[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

Project members

[Manage members](#)
[Fathima Musthapha](#)
[Sri Lanka](#)
[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Vidyani Hettigoda](#)

[Sri Lanka](#)
[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Pooja Navaratnam](#)

[Sri Lanka](#)
[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)
[\[remove from project\]](#)

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[Sri Lanka](#)
[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Mahmoud Suliman](#)

[Israel](#)
[Fulbright Student Program](#)
[\[remove from project\]](#)

FWEASL will **be the national body of women entrepreneurs of Sri Lanka representing women entrepreneur associations, chambers, councils nation-wide towards creating a common platform to help benefit women entrepreneurs and women businesses in Sri Lanka and through that, help build the national economy**

WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

Beneficiaries: who are your target groups (or communities) and how many people will directly benefit from your project?

The 12 women's chambers across the Country, 2 from Jaffna in the North, Hambantota Development Women's Forum (South), Galle & Matara Women's Chambers of Commerce, Mannar Development Women's Forum, Central Province Women's Chamber of Commerce, Kurunegala Women's Chamber of Commerce, Matale District Chamber of Commerce, Women's Chamber of Industry & Commerce (Colombo), Trincomalee Women's Development Forum. These Chambers together have a membership of over 2,000 women across all segments of business.

Local partners

The Women's Chamber of Industry & Commerce of which I am a member and of which there are 4 other IVL Alumni, to play a lead role in establishing the federation and play a 'champion catalyst' role by training other chambers and being an inspiration and mentor. They could become privileged partners for specific interventions and lead forward the rest of the chambers.

The Federation will comprise of 11 Board members from 10 member associations with each member association having 2 nominees as accredited members, one of whom will be present at each Board meeting. These founding members will sign an MOU.

Alumni team

The convenor: Rezani Aziz (IVL 2006, SAWES 2012) I have been a member of WCIC since 1988, a past chairperson and founder honorary secretary of the SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneur Council (SCWEC) and have been involved in conducting entrepreneur skills development programmes for members of the Jaffna Women's Chamber of Commerce & Industry as well as for university students of Jaffna, Batticaloa and South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. As the Sri Lanka member on the steering committee of SAWES (South Asia Women Entrepreneur Symposium), I realized the need for an apex body that represents the interests of women business association members for policy advocacy as well as to strengthen capacity of the regional women's chambers for the better promotion of women entrepreneurs.

Other alumni members in the team are: Ms Rifa Musthapha (Chairperson, WCIC IVL 2012), Ms Anuradhi Navaratnam (IVL 2011), Ms Vidyani Hettigoda (IVL 2012), Ms Thevaranchany Sivaskaran (IVL 2011).

Proposed Project Dates: March 08, 2015 - February 26, 2016

HOW AND WHEN WILL YOU IMPLEMENT YOUR PROJECT?

Implementing Plan and Timeline

1. March 2015: 1st week Register the organisation
2. March 2015:- convene the first Board/Executive Committee meeting at a location in Colombo in the presence of key stakeholders in Government and private sector to launch the Federation. Sign an MOU
3. Simultaneously conduct a 1/2 day session to for Board members to capacity build in understanding the vision/mission of the Federation, roles and responsibilities and to carry the message to their membership
4. May 2015: Board meeting in Kandy - hosted by Central Province Women's Chamber of

Industry & Commerce together with a training and skills development workshop

5. August : Board meeting in Hambantota - hosted by Hambantota Women's Development Forum with a networking forum plus mentoring workshop

6. October: Board meeting in Jaffna - jointly hosted by the 2 Women's Chambers plus 1/2 day capacity building workshop for members

7. January 2016 : Board meeting in Galle - hosted by Galle Women's Chamber of Commerce plus workshop, networking lunch and mini trade fair for members.

At every meeting, 2 to 3 alumni will be present as members of the Board and will drive the Federation, its goals and objectives while enabling networking as well as mentoring.

Communication Plan

1. A press release will be disseminated in all local languages and in English to all mainstream newspapers to announce the launch of the Federation.

Regular media releases will be disseminated to the newspapers for visibility of the Federation.

A spokesperson will also be trained to participate in the macro-economic dialogue of the Country - opinion on national budgets, policies etc

2. A Facebook page will be created for members of the Federation, to post all updates of regional meetings, trade fairs, member news and general Country policies and updates that are useful for the membership. This will be in Sinhala, Tamil and English.

3. An administrative Secretary will have to be employed to co-ordinate all these activities.

Evaluation

We will have focus group evaluation among the membership of all member associations. A questionnaire will be sent to the entire membership which are represented by their respective Chambers, to ascertain the value that such an apex body brings to them, if the networking/mentoring has helped, how trade fairs and business lunches have helped them and their needs going forwards.

Sustainability

Through membership fees and projects. Fees will also be charged for training seminars, networking lunches/teas etc. Once off the ground, the Federation hopes to become self-sustaining like a normal functioning Apex Chamber of Commerce.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED

\$25,000.00

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT:

[Download budget](#)