

Empowering
through
creativity!

Hear we Art

January 2019



Workshop and Activities report



A word from our students:

"The workshop gave us a rich and useful insight on animation and movie making, which inspires us in continuing experimenting and working on our newly discovered passion."

Tharindu, 18, school prefect

"Not only I liked the workshops, but through Niroshan's inspiring mentorship now I hope I'll be able to pursue a real career in animation-making"

Manushka, 16, student

In 2019 our Sri Lanka adventure returned!

This year, HearWeArt delivered three courses, in two schools: the Senkadagala School of Deaf and Blind children and Evelyn girls' orphanage.

The course in Senkadagala School comprised 40 lesson hours based around teaching the fundamentals of how to use a camera professionally, along with discovering and learning how to create videos as a visual art. The aim of the course was to expose deaf students, in particular, to a creative medium and set of processes which are in tune with their natural means of expression not dependent on their oral capabilities.

The prevailing cultural environment denies these children equal access to employment opportunities because of their being deaf. By developing professionally oriented creative skills we wanted to broaden their future work horizons far beyond the menial jobs they usually have to settle for. Just as important, by encouraging self-expression in a safe environment, also give a boost to their self-belief and self-confidence.

Art creates Links:

The 2019 programme saw a key change from the previous year in the form of our use local expertise. We were incredibly lucky to have as part of our team, locally born Niroshan Bandara, an internationally experienced, professional motion graphic artist. Niroshan has built a very successful career in spite of being born with no arms. He thus knows all about the need adapt and succeed in the face of major disability - he uses his toes to operate a critical tool of his trade, the keyboard.



Niroshan Bandara was born in a small village near by Kandy in 1983. His physical complications did not prevent him from fulfilling his dreams and becoming a creative and animator. Graduated from the University of Moratuwa as a Bachelor of design in visual communication, he worked as Motion Graphic Artist for different companies (Channel One MTV - pvt. Channel) and working as a freelance motion graphic artist for few international clients. He is currently a university lecturer and a foot painting artist.

How is to working in the creative industry in Sri Lanka?

In Sri Lanka the creative industry isn't widespread, but is evident that there is a growing shift, and many new firms are being created everyday. The most beautiful part of working in the creative industry is definitely the opportunity to be original and using your own ideas to succeed. This idea may scare some Sri Lankans that are still unaware of the many opportunities in the field and are afraid of stepping out of their comfort zones. Is important to remember that careers in the creative industry can span a diverse range of forms such as advertising and marketing, art& crafts/design industry/fashion/film, TV, video, radio and photography, 3D,GameDeveloping, Graphics, Animation & IT, publishing. And it's not all!

What would you suggest to students who want to start working in the industry?

In Sri Lanka is not impossible to work in the creative industry, but it might get more competitive later, so this is the best time to do it! First of all I would suggest that students should...be creative. It's very difficult to become a creative if you don't train yourself to be curious and develop a spirit of observation. Of course hard work is a necessary step to become a good professional, as it is the ability to develop a good network of collaborators. Always remember that you can learn more from failures than from successes and always remember to enjoy what you're doing.

What are the main factors that helped you establish your career despite your handicap?

I do believe that disability is not a problem at all if you develop the right attitude. Many people believe that disabled people aren't as productive as others, but that's false. In Sri Lanka, life is never easy for disabled people, but I always fought against the idea that you should expect less from disabled workers just because of their disability. In my experience, these sorts of biases, rather than any mental or physical impairment, have created the highest barriers for people with disabilities. Personally I always wanted to challenge myself, rather than depend on someone else, so I had to use my imagination to figure out what my strengths and weaknesses were.

Objectives & Outcomes:

Programme Objectives

- Give a good grounding in the basics of photography, video making and editing, plus provide the means of students continuing to develop their capabilities.
- Develop the student's creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills through playing, writing and acting, thereby enhancing their self-confidence and self-belief.
- Develop self-awareness of the student's capabilities and means of expression.
- Stimulate their creative abilities by means of a variety of workshops and fulfilling numerous roles: acting, directing, set design, styling, photography, directing etc. which the students were able to choose from, according to what suites them best.
- Instill belief in the orphan and deaf students' ability to pursue careers beyond their current, limited vision of what is possible and belief that it's possible for them to overcome disability and gender-related stereotypes.
- Develop links with members of the local community who can support, and mentor students wishing to further explore and pursue opportunities in creative fields.
- Improve the students' English language skills.

Programme Outcomes

- The students created four short movies, including two stop-motion animations. They are currently working independently on other videos.
- Ten cameras, along with professional equipment, including tripods, a studio spotlight, and reflector etc., were donated to the school so as to allow the students to progress working on their own.
- Thanks to the workshops, 16 students gained the skills to start on a career path in the visual creative field, if they wish.
- Niroshan Bandara not only mentored the children during the workshops but is continuing to tutor some of the more promising students to further develop their capabilities and opportunities. Niroshan is planning a series of lectures tailored for Senkadagala students and classes.
- The students work has been shown to and shared with teachers, friends and families, in order to create engagement with the local community.
- The children visibly grew in self-confidence, their English language skills improved significantly through writing and storytelling. Transferrable soft skills, such as team working and group problem solving were likewise enhanced.



Art for girls' empowerment

Despite the clear progresses of the past years, the situation for young girls from disadvantaged backgrounds in rural Sri Lanka is still difficult. In this context, one of our main aims remains to contribute to the personal development of the girls in the school where we worked. Through our workshops we helped them in fighting gender stereotypes and improve their self-confidence while expressing themselves.

Our Courses:

Photography

Digital camera and basic techniques such as composition and lighting; Rule of thirds, perspective and colouring. Practical exercises on portrait, people, landscapes and still life.

Movie making

Creative writing and concept for a short movie, making the storyboard. Roles in the industry: Movie Director, Cameraman, Set Designer, Light technician, Fashion and Make Up Artist. Practical exercises: making and editing a 5 minutes short movie.

Stop motion animation

Using photography, plasticine and 3D cut out paper.

Video editing

Colour composition, editing, green screen, OpenShot software

Working in the industry

Included how to approach the creative market through a 10-hour master class led by the very talented Sri Lankan professional animator and disabled designer, Niroshan Bandara.

Our sincerest thanks..

To the students and staff of Senkadagala School and Evelyn girls' orphanage, Niroshan Bandara, the other teachers, our patron Nigel Bartram and all donors whose generosity made such an enriching and rewarding series of workshops possible.

Senkadagala School

workshop report



This year, eighteen children aged 16-19, were chosen by their teachers as those most interested in pursuing studies in movie making, photography and animation. In contrast to last year, we opted for an intensive 40-hour class, as opposed to short workshops, to ensure we would closely follow the children in their learning.

The week started with the Photography workshop. After allowing the pupils to experiment with the cameras, we delivered a two-hour introduction to all basic techniques and history of photography. This was followed by practical exercises. During this three-day course, their improvement was substantial; their focus and interest kept them alert and sensitive to our suggestions and corrections. By the end of the course, students clearly understood the concepts of focus, lighting and composition.

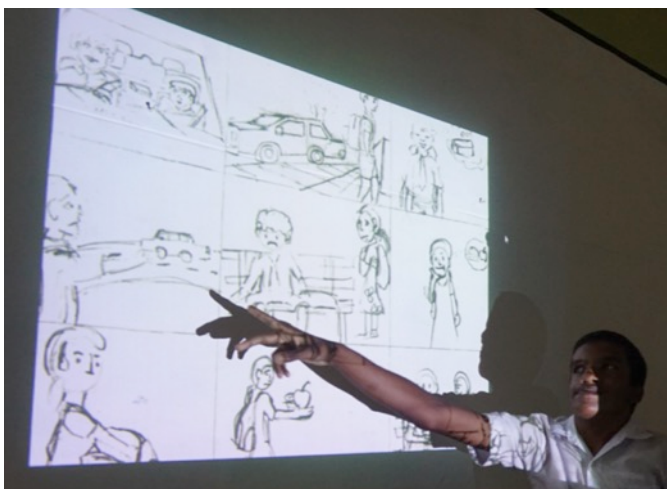
The next four days were dedicated to movie-making. To explain the tools and technicalities, we revisited what the kids had learned in the photography workshop.

The first day we explained the different roles one can have in the making of a movie. The second part of the workshop focused on the concept of the story and scripting the scenes. The class was divided into groups who were invited to present a short story to setting out the basis of our film. To help them structure the plot we suggested the following seven step procedure:

- 1) Think about a character...
- 2) Is in a situation...
- 3) With a problem...
- 4) They try to solve the problem...
- 5) But fail making it worse...
- 6) They make a final attempt which may succeed or fail...
- 7) The result is not as expected!

After an initial brainstorm, the children, supported by their teacher and translator, decided to present their ideas through drawings as they felt more confident with visual storytelling, as opposed to writing. Their work was truly astonishing, the plots were original, and the drawings enriched by intricate details.





Movie making

Once the stories were written, the class voted for which scenario should have been made into a movie and started work on their roles. They divided in groups: Directors, Cameraman, Actors, Set designers and Fashion stylists. The groups worked collaboratively and at the end of the three-day workshop, we managed to record a seven-minute short film.

The challenges we faced were mostly around communication difficulties. However, the students' imaginations and brilliant problem solving allowed them to progress through the movie autonomously and without undue effort.

To allow the student to become accustomed to the technical material, we decided to leave four cameras with them, for them to practice with during their free time, at home, or in their dormitories. Surprisingly, such was the students' dedication; they managed to make three short movies on their own. They then edited them with Open Shot, the editing software we installed on their school computers specifically for the project.

Animation

Finally, the last week was dedicated to an animation workshop. Niroshan gave the students a series of practical examples using plasticine, communicating with the help of the teachers and the projected slides. The animation workshop consisted of a first stop motion experiment, using photographs of the children moving through space.

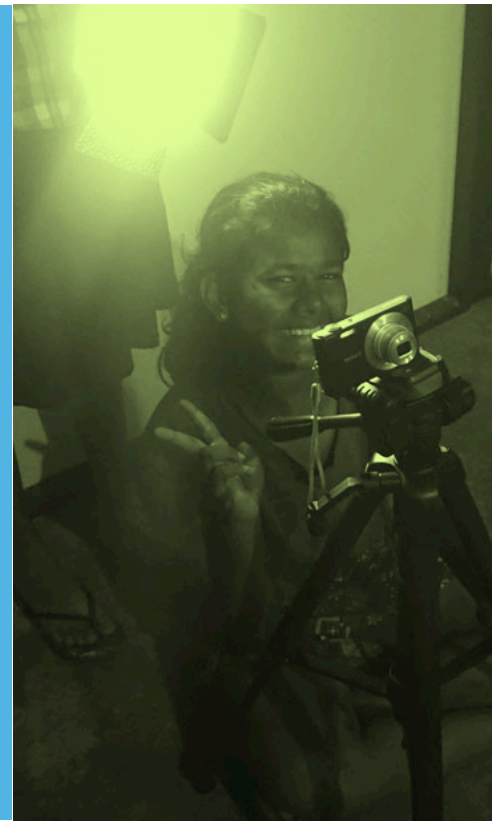
In the final project, students were asked to divide in groups and create four different settings, which they would be animating using a kite flying around. They showed outstanding skills in drawing and composition, as well as concept development and teamwork.

Although we had to rush through the last days (which were a lot of fun!) the outcome was successfully completed; the kids were very pleased and excited about what they had created. During our goodbye ceremony, the school prefect came to the stage to give a speech to the whole school, and talked about the benefits the workshops had brought to him and the class!



Evelyn Children Home.

Our second workshop took place in Evelyn Children Home, to a class of eight girls age from 15 to 18 years old. As it was the first time we had been in the children's home, we had to adapt to the students timetable, their routines and also expectations. Whilst they were very interested in the course and what it would bring them, they were not as fixed on the subject as a future career. Nevertheless, the students demonstrated commitment, great interest and intuitive abilities. Their communication and participation helped us shape our workshop for their specific needs and interests.



Evelyn Children Home Workshop report

We began with the three-hour photography workshop, split into two lessons. As the animation course was only planned with Niroshan in Senkadagala School, we could invest more time and energies in the making the movie. Firstly, we asked the girls to write their own short stories. This time they didn't divide into groups, rather, each of them wrote and produced their own plot. At the end of the two hours, the class voted for the plot that would become our movie-to-be. The class was again split into groups, this time, however, all the students had an opportunity to show off their acting as well as their visual skills.

During the two weeks, a short movie was filmed and edited. This time, some of the students who were interested in the process had a mini class on iMovie editing software. For us, this was an opportunity to get to know them individually and share beautiful moments, cooking together and talking about each other's cultures. Many were interested in the animation workshop that they asked us to propose in the years to come.

Olga Hendel, Project Director

**Hear
we
Art**



www.hearweart.org