

Centre for Media and Information Literacy

Call for Mentors

to guide mobile journalists for a social media-based video magazine program

The Centre for Media and Information Literacy

The Centre for Media and Information Literacy (CMIL) is a non-profit organization committed to promoting Critical Information Consumption and Digital Media and Information Literacy amongst people of all ages. CMIL endeavours to empower citizens to creatively deal with all forms of information falsehoods and verify narratives to make informed and unbiased decisions in exercising their democratic rights.

Background

CMIL is looking for mentors to advise and guide tech-savvy mobile journalists with experience in covering social issues to provide content for the social media-based video magazine program (Reform Watch - RW). Mentors will host 8 mentoring sessions for the selected RW journalists.

Reform Watch

The government of Sri Lanka has requested input from the general public in relation to the new Constitution. In this context, RW will advocate for the rights of marginalized communities by highlighting their voices and promoting their participation in the Sri Lankan Constitutional reform process. The rights of women, LGBTQIA+ persons, youth and others who have been economically, socially & politically marginalized including the differently-abled and religious minorities will be highlighted through the program. RW will also promote issues pertaining to government accountability in this context.

CMIL will mentor 15 tech-savvy mobile journalists from all parts of Sri Lanka who will contribute towards the creation of 20 short videos (lasting around 15 minutes each) in the form of documentaries, investigative reports, discussions, media, and information literacy segments etc. All RW content will be unbiased, and evidence-based. RW will also publish articles and other written content alongside its videos, all of which will be disseminated online and via mainstream media.

Scope of RW

Reform Watch will focus on three specific areas - constitutional reform, inclusive governance and addressing information falsehood. The broader goal of RW is to create a platform for marginalised and excluded persons to actively participate in

- (i) The process of constitutional reform (by highlighting their voices)
- (ii) Advocating for inclusive and accountable governance
- (iii) Combating the increasing trend of disinformation.

CMIL anticipates that 20 RW video episodes (lasting an average of 15 minutes each) will be produced by the end of the program.

Proposed Program Design

Based on the scope of the program, CMIL intends to include at least three specific pillars in each RW episode. Each episode will contain all 3 pillars.

Pillar One

This pillar will focus on increasing the participation of the disadvantaged persons mentioned above. The main objective of this pillar will be to ensure that the fundamental rights and democratic aspirations of these persons are accommodated in the new Constitution and that discriminatory provisions are removed. Key issues such as discrimination, electoral reforms, language, inclusive economic development, the rights and aspirations of the differently-abled and religious & sexual minorities will be addressed.

Pillar one of RW will also stress that the new Constitution must accommodate the democratic rights and aspirations of every Sri Lankan irrespective of differences in faith, ethnicity, language, social status, culture etc.

Pillar Two

Civil society will be engaged through pillar two to advocate for more open, transparent, and accountable governance. Pillar two will include investigative stories, live discussion/debates, evidence-based conversations and media monitoring etc.

Potential issues include

- The lack of public responsiveness, transparency, and accountability
- Issues related to public finance and procurements at the local and national level
- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SBGV) in public and private spheres and issues affecting women
- Issues hindering the participation of women in local government bodies
- Discrimination against the LGBTQIA+, differently-abled and other marginalized groups
- Increase awareness regarding anti-corruption laws

Pillar Three

Pillar three will focus on promoting critical thinking among the general public to create responsible citizens who can successfully identify and counter all forms of disinformation and media manipulation. CMIL will establish a partnership with one of the leading professional fact-checkers such as Fact-check Crescendo, AFP Fact-checker, Fact-seekers etc. to produce short recorded practical sessions explaining how to identify, verify, counter and debunk the increasing disinformation being circulated online. CMIL will also produce short videos explaining how the “media” produces biased, manipulative, fabricated, misleading or outright false content, thus weakening the ability of the citizens to make rational and democratic decisions.

Dissemination plan

RW will be designed exclusively for social media and webcasting sites. CMIL will establish partnerships with well-established outlets of this nature so that RW content is shared by them either partially or in full. Similarly, CMIL will work with journalists from mainstream media to ensure that RW content is highlighted in print and online articles as well.

Expectations

Mentors will be expected to

1. Conduct at least 8 mentorship sessions with the selected mobile journalists
2. Provide guidance for CMIL's mobile journalists to identify story ideas reflecting the themes of the Reform Watch program -- constitutional reform, responsive governance and credible informal consumption
3. Provide story production assistance in terms of visual quality, shots, storylines, frames, verification, establishing story elements etc
4. Provide inputs to CMIL's journalist to come up with highly appealing stories following standards of journalism and attributes of a news story
5. Provide inputs for the journalists to identify strong sources and evidence bases for their stories
6. Any other assistance required by the mobile journalists

Who can apply

Journalists with at least 2 years of experience in mobile journalism and covering social issues are encouraged to apply. Applicants must be proficient in at least one local language (Sinhala or Tamil).

Selection Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated based on the following

Criteria	Marks
a. Professional Experience (A minimum of 2 years in mobile journalism)	50
b. Strength of portfolio/ sample work	30
c. General passion and relevance	20
Total Score	100

How to apply

Please submit a resume and **hourly rate**. Applications must be emailed to rw@cmil.lk with "Reform Watch Mentor" in the subject line.

Deadline

October 6, 2021

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

