

Below: Visit to a prosthetic clinic

Right: Signing of MOU with the University of Moratuwa Sri Lanka
VC Professor Martin Hall, University of Salford and VC Professor Aranda
Jaywardena



Research and education the Sri Lankan partnership

Professor Martin Hall Vice-Chancellor of the University made an inaugural visit to Sri Lanka in December 2011.

Martin led a delegation that included: Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga, Associate Head International for the School of the Built Environment and Head of Research Centre for Disaster Resilience (CDR); Dr Richard Haigh, Senior Lecturer CDR; Michael Lurie, Head of International Partnerships; Dr Chaminda Pathirage, Lecturer/Programme Director for MSc Project Management in Construction and Dr Kaushal Keraminiyage, Lecturer/Programme Director for BSc Quantity Surveying.

The December visit was aimed at providing support for the ongoing joint activities and research projects within Sri Lanka and to demonstrate the University's ongoing commitment to the multiple areas of activity that it is involved in within the country. Activities such as the joint deliverance of the degree course in Quantity Surveying and research projects such as the 'Conflict prevention through

infrastructure reconstruction' project which is funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office through the British High Commission. Michael, who co-ordinated the visit from Salford said: "The Salford Team visited several institutions on the trip including: Colombo School of Construction Technology; The British Council in Colombo; The University of Moratuwa; the University of Peradeniya (which is considered the most comprehensive University within the Sri Lankan Higher Education System) and the Meththa Foundation (a registered charity for disabled people in Sri Lanka). As well as high level visits with strategic key figures in the Sri Lankan Government and leading agencies, three Memorandum of Understanding were signed during the visit between the University of Salford and: the University of Peradeniya; University of Moratuwa and the Chamber of Construction Industry Sri Lanka.

A Gala dinner hosted by the University of Salford and the Chamber of Construction

Industry, Sri Lanka was held in Colombo. The dinner was attended by senior stakeholders from industry, government and academia, including representatives from; the German Embassy, Asian Development Bank, Bank of Ceylon, Office of the South African High Commission, Chamber of Construction Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan Ministry of Disaster Management and Ministry of Economic Affairs and the World University Service.

The high level of input from various sector representatives during this visit clearly indicates the necessity of the research that Dilanthi and Richard and the rest of the members are undertaking in CDR, and the drive for new fully accredited courses to be made available within Sri Lankan HE. The Vice-Chancellor's delegation to Sri Lanka met many interesting people and projects and would like to take this opportunity to thank once again those that they met for their warm welcome and productive discussions".



Above: Salford CSCT first cohort of Students 2011

Constructing educational partnerships

Good reconstruction and positive planning comes from professionals who have been trained by the best in their subject area and from a University which produces graduates with tried and tested qualifications.

As of September 2011 the University of Salford became the first foreign university to offer a full degree programme in quantity surveying in Sri Lanka, with the aim of doubling the number of professionally accredited graduates to come out of that country.

Currently, in Sri Lanka, only one public sector university in the country conducts a quantity surveying degree programme, yet there is a huge demand for construction professionals, including Quantity Surveyors, as the country rebuilds from the Boxing Day Tsunami and a decades-long civil war which recently came to an end. Having such a degree programme available within the country will enable local people from less well off backgrounds to gain qualifications since the programme will be priced at the local rate rather than the alternatives in Europe and Australia. In a partnership with the Colombo School of Construction Technology (CSCT), Salford's School of the Built Environment will offer a BSc in Quantity Surveying programme in

Sri Lanka. CSCT was established in 2009, after the end of Sri Lanka's civil war, and in accordance with the drive to expand the country's higher education system, both domestically and as a regional hub.

The School has ambitions to enrol students from across the regional cluster of countries: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan. CSCT is a private college associated with the University of Moratuwa (Moratuwa has a long association with Salford) which is one of Sri Lanka's leading public universities and leads the country in areas of architecture, quantity surveying and planning, and has a long association with Salford.

CSCT currently offers the University of Salford BSc in Quantity Surveying with RICS accreditation (this is the first course of its kind to receive this accreditation) full-time and in-country. An inaugural intake of about 15 students have completed their first semester of year one of this academic programme and established an unambiguous presence for the University of Salford within Sri Lanka.

The college intends to expand its intake for the degree course, which is taught by local experts and closely supervised by Salford academics, to 50 students per annum now that RICS accreditation has been achieved. The duration of the course is four years which will include a work placement year.

The University of Salford's expertise in this initiative isn't just in the classroom. As the UK's leading research centre for built environment with strong links to Sri Lanka through its UN-endorsed Centre for Disaster Resilience (which has worked closely with the government in the year's following the Boxing Day Tsunami) the University can bring richness to undergraduate teachings that will enhance their professional practice. Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga from Salford School of the Built Environment said: "This is a world first for Sri Lanka and part of Salford's ongoing long term relationship with the country. It also means that more Sri Lankans can study their chosen subject in their home country, making this chosen career pathway an affordable venture".