

Report on “How to engage in broadband policy and regulatory processes,” a four-day residential course

September 25- 28, 2015

Hotel Club Palm Bay, Marawila, Sri Lanka



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Introduction

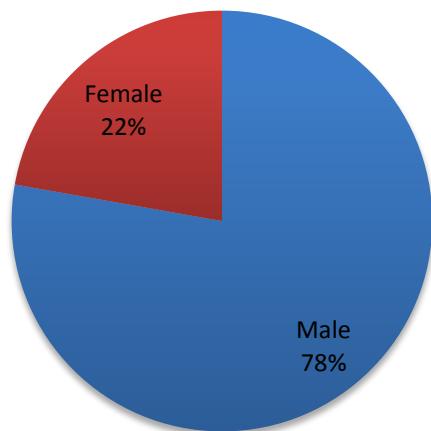
LIRNEasia is undertaking a multi-phase, research- and documentation-based initiative funded by the Ford Foundation to inform and engage decision makers and stakeholders in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka (Telecom Regulatory Authorities, Ministries of broadband and telecommunication, senior executives from operators, senior academics and civil-society leaders) about good practices in policy and regulatory issues affecting broadband access. The intention is to promote learning among the stakeholders and the facilitation of a policy discourse that takes into account the interests of the poor. The project is assisted by a web-based Broadband Policy Resource Repository (<http://broadbandasia.info/>) and a series of short courses and structured conversations among policy makers and stakeholders.

The four-day residential course on ‘How to engage in Broadband Policy and Regulatory Processes’ held on 25- 28 September 2015 in Sri Lanka was the fifth of a series of short courses funded by Ford Foundation. LIRNEasia organized this in collaboration with Sarvodaya fusion, Sri Lanka. This course was conducted in all official languages. Details about the courses are at: <http://lirneasia.net/capacity-building/ford-broadband-policy-course/>. The main goal is to enable members of civil-society groups to marshal available research and evidence for effective participation in broadband policy and regulatory processes, thereby facilitating and enriching policy discourse on means of increasing broadband access by the poor.

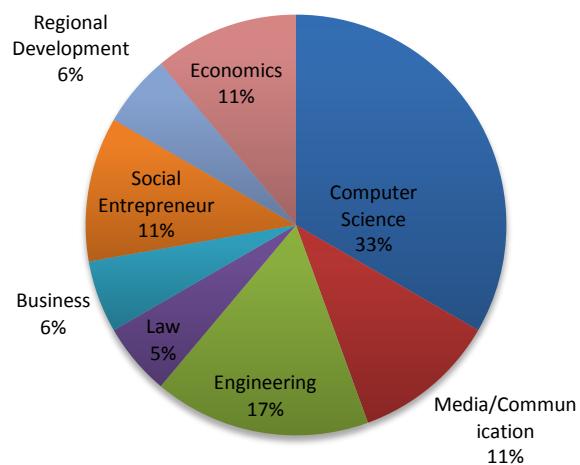
Participants

Out of 38 applicants, 18 participants were selected based on their potential to engage in broadband policy discourse, interest in the subject and previous experience. Diversity was also a factor that was taken into account as this course is an interactive course where participants are expected to learn from each other. The following charts show the participants according to their gender, disciplines and region.

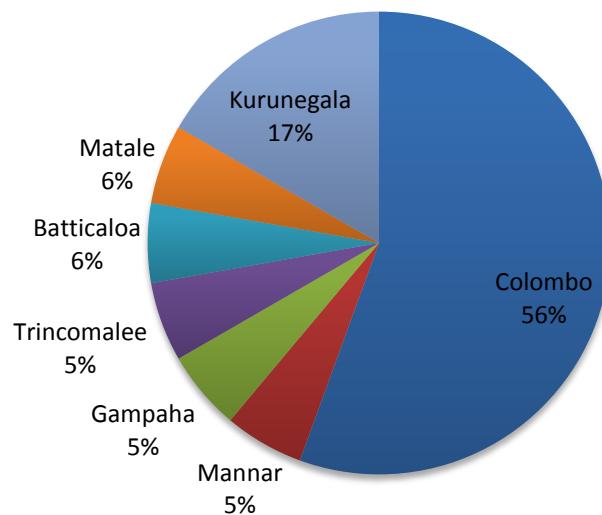
Gender



Discipline



Geographical Representation



Course Format and Assignments

A combination of teaching formats was used to enhance collaboration, open discussion. Lectures, panel discussions and team work were utilized as teaching tools. Following is the Course Schedule and a brief summary of the 4-day course.

Course Schedule

0900-1030	S1 Introduction (Rohan Samarajiva RS)	S5 Baseline knowledge about Sri Lanka ICT (RS)	S8 National Broadband Networks of India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia: Comparative study (VI & RS)	A4 Preparation for presentation
1030-1100	Break	Break	Break	Break
1100-1200	S2 Finding research (Nilusha Kapugama NK)	A2 Assessing & summarizing research (NK)	S9 Demand-side stimulation (RS)	S13 Panel discussion on making policy & doing regulation (Wasantha Deshapriya (WD), Ministry Secretary and Muhunthan Canagey (MC), ICTA CEO; moderated by RS)
1200-1300	S3 Introduction to demand-side research (NK)	A3 Continuation of legal research exercise (RS)	S10 Why and how of ICT policy, strategy and plans (RS)	A5 Preparation for presentation
1300-1400	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1400-1500	A1 Group formation; Assignments explained and introduction of Broadband Website (NK & Laleema Senanayake LS)	S6 Interrogating supply-side indicators (HG)	S11 Broadband quality of service: Regulatory approaches (RS)	A6 Mock public hearing (WD, MC, HG, & Sujata Gamage)
1500-1530	Break	Break	Break	Break
1530-1700	S4 Introduction to legal research, incl. in-class exercise with Right to Information Bill (RS) ¹	S7 Introduction to quantitative research (Vigneswara Ilavarasan VI)	S12 Net neutrality, zero rating and their applicability in conditions of low Internet access (HG)	A6 Mock public hearing & critique (RS & panel)
1700-	Group work	Group work	Group work	Certificate dinner

¹ Participants were required to have looked through 19th Amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution and the RTI Bill beforehand. Sinhala and Tamil versions were available on web; in addition English versions were being supplied.

Day 1

The course commenced with an introductory session by Rohan Samarajiva (Director of the project and Chair of LIRNEasia) on the objectives of the course, methods of teaching, introduction of faculty and effective communication techniques. The intention was to provide the context on the first day so that the activities of the next few days can build on the first day's sessions. Therefore, the importance of Broadband/Internet to a country, basic research skills such as how to find relevant research, introduction to demand side research and an introduction to legal research with a class room assignment on interpreting different sections of RTI bill were covered in the first day.

Five groups were formed with 3-4 members in each group. The assignment had been circulated among them a week before the course. These assignments were explained and the online repository on broadband policy and regulation in Asia (www.broadbandinfo.com) was introduced in the afternoon session.

Assignments

As it appears time for **the Sri Lankan government** to develop a new ICT policy, the assignment centered on a new policy. The National Telecom Policy (NTP) of India was used as the base for assignments. The participants were specifically instructed that the Indian language as the floor or the minimum. Excerpts were provided from the Indian policy for guidance. As Sri Lanka has a high level of socio economic development and is a small Island, the participants were made aware that Sri Lanka should strive to do better than India.

The assignment was to make evidence-based team presentations that could form the basis for a public consultation organized by the Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure. The three to four person teams were assigned following different aspects:

Affordable broadband of adequate quality throughout Sri Lanka

Assess the likelihood of achieving affordable broadband of adequate quality in Sri Lanka as per the policy recommendations below based on past experiences.

“Provide high speed and high quality broadband access to all Gram Panchayats (GP) through a combination of technologies by the year 2017 and progressively to all villages and habitations by 2022”

“Deliver high quality seamless voice, data, multimedia and broadcasting services on converged networks for enhanced service delivery to provide superior experience to users”

Services and applications that are of value to Sri Lankan users

Assess the feasibility of making government services available to citizens electronically and recommend services and applications that are of value to Sri Lankan users.

“Governance and Services on Demand: Single window access to all persons by seamlessly integrating departments or jurisdictions; availability of government services in online and mobile platforms; All citizen entitlements to be available on the Cloud to ensure easy access; Government services to be digitally transformed for improving ease of doing business; Making financial transactions above a threshold, electronic and cashless; and Leveraging GIS for decision support systems and development.”

Source: <http://www.cmai.asia/digitalindia/>

Trust and security

The policy document proposes a sharable private space on public cloud. Either argue for or against this policy direction in terms of trust and security.

“Infrastructure as a utility to every citizen: High speed Internet shall be made available in all villages; Cradle to grave digital identity; Mobile and Bank account would enable participation in digital and financial space at individual level; Easy access to common service centre within their locality; Shareable private space on a public cloud; and Safe and secure cyber space in the country”

Affordable terminal devices that all can use, with special attention being paid the elderly and the differently abled

There are many options of terminals at present. Smartphones, e readers, tablets are a few of these. NTP of India provides a direction to make all government websites to be differently abled friendly. Identify the underlying challenges of making affordable terminal devices that all can use and provide recommendations to overcome these challenges.

Skilled users

The rollout of digital infrastructure is of no use if the country does not have sufficient amounts of skilled users. Identify the digital literacy level in Sri Lanka using indices and recommend methods/ provide guidelines to improve the digital literacy in Sri Lanka.

“Digital empowerment of citizens: Universal digital literacy; All digital resources universally accessible; All government documents/certificates to be available on the Cloud; Availability of digital resources/services in all official languages; Collaborative digital platforms for participative governance; Portability of all entitlements for individuals through the cloud.”

Day 2

Building from the previous day, supply-side data and quantitative research were examined, and the importance of assessing and summarizing research was discussed. Baseline knowledge about Sri Lanka ICT and discussion of different interpretation of the RTI bill was also covered in day 2.

Day 3

Day 3 started with an introduction of the National Broadband initiatives of India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia. The session on demand side stimulation was followed by why and how ICT policies, strategies and plans and regulatory approaches of broadband quality of service.

Helani Galpaya, CEO of LIRNEasia, conducted the final session on Net Neutrality, zero rating and their applicability in conditions of low Internet access.

Day 4

Day four started with an engaging panel discussion on making policy and doing regulation in Sri Lanka. The panel consisted of Wasantha Deshapriya, Secretary to the Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure and Muhunthan Canagey, CEO of ICTA. Rohan Samarajiva, Chair of LIRNEasia moderated this session and opened with a few questions. A fruitful discussion on digital infrastructure, trust and security, digital literacy, right to information, use of government funds, and employment generation followed.

During the panel discussion Muhunthan Canagey mentioned that the cabinet of Sri Lanka approved action to improve infrastructure related to information technology and communication in the public sector on Thursday, 24th of September. This infrastructure consists Wi-Fi in every location, 1-million tab strategy and a common government network. He stressed that ICTA is looking at building an ecosystem where employees can work remotely. One participant suggested the panel to provide Business Process Management/ Business Process Outsourcing (BPM/ BPO) model at rural level. He stated that they are willing to take risk and adapt this model for employment generation. Wasantha Deshapriya mentioned that the government aims to create 1 million jobs in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Muhunthan Canagey described Project Loon as a tool adapted by the government to make sure that whole country has connectivity. He answered a question on universal digital literacy saying Sri Lanka has no programs to improve digital literacy of rural women yet.

Wasantha Deshapriya added to the conversation stating Sri Lanka needs a comprehensive National Telecommunication Policy, which consists of a wide range of activities including digital literacy, infrastructure, access etc.

Rohan Samarajiva concluded the session suggesting the government to conduct this type of public consultations. He emphasized the value of public consultation. By using this method, government can take input from different parts of the community. Muhunthan Canagey said that ICTA is starting a social circle to gain input from community on grass root level decision-making.

The judges of the mock public hearing were Muhunthan Canagey, Wasantha Deshapriya, Helani Galpaya and Sujata Gamage. All four groups were given twelve minutes to present their findings. Thirteen minutes of questions by the judges followed.

Overall comments by the judges for the group were: place greater focus on the question, think of a vision, mission and objectives for the national policy, introduce realistic goals and targets based on country context and international experience and focus more on important issues related to broadband and connectivity in Sri Lanka.

Wasantha Deshapriya concluded the mock public hearing saying that they would consider some of the suggestions from the participants for incorporation into the national policy of Sri Lanka.

LIRNEasia organized the certificate distribution in Ranweli Holiday Village in 28th afternoon. Wasantha Deshapriya and Muhunthan Canagey distributed certificates to the participants.

Faculty

Rohan Samarajiva

Rohan Samarajiva, PhD was the founding CEO (2004 - 2012) and is Chair (2004 –) of LIRNEasia. Previously he was the Team Leader at the Sri Lanka Ministry for Economic Reform, Science and Technology (2002-04) responsible for infrastructure reforms, including participation in the design of the USD 83 million e Sri Lanka Initiative. He was Director General of Telecommunications in Sri Lanka (1998-99), a founder director of the ICT Agency of Sri Lanka (2003-05), Honorary Professor at the University of Moratuwa in Sri Lanka (2003-04), Visiting Professor of Economics of Infrastructures at the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands (2000-03) and Associate Professor of Communication and Public Policy at the Ohio State University in the US (1987-2000). He was Policy Advisor to the Ministry of Post and Telecom in Bangladesh (2007-09). He serves as Senior Advisor to Sarvodaya (Sri Lanka's largest community based organization) on ICT matters. Samarajiva is a Board Member of Communication Policy Research south, an initiative to identify and foster policy intellectuals in emerging Asia. He serves on the editorial boards of five academic journals. Download full curriculum vitae: [Rohan Samarajiva \(Revised 27 June 2015\)](#)

Muhunthan Canagey

Muhunthan Canagey is the Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer of the Information Communication & Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA). He has been in the ICT industry for over two decades and is one of the country's youngest entrepreneurs. He stepped into the field of IT at a very young age of 16. Canagey holds a Master's Degree in Information Technology from the University of Keele (UK) and has extensive knowledge of the industry. He was the founder and CEO of multiple technology enterprises and was the founder and CEO of a highly successful enterprise in the area of satellite communication and media: a first of this nature to be formed in Sri Lanka. He has been very successful in productising software applications developed in Sri Lanka and in formulating strategies and policies for taking local products to the international market.

Wasantha Deshapriya

Wasantha Deshapriya is the newly appointed Secretary of the Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure. Previously, he was the Director General of the Sri Lanka Institute for Development Administration (SLIDA). From the inception of the ICT Agency to 2015, he was deeply involved in the promotion of e gov initiatives, being the head of the program for most of the period. His most significant achievement was the advancement in the UN e gov ranking by 41 places by Sri Lanka in 2014.

Helani Galpaya

Helani Galpaya is CEO of LIRNEasia. Her recent research and consulting work has been on issues related to e-Government, net neutrality, broadband quality of service, and how knowledge and information disseminated via ICTs can improve inclusiveness of micro entrepreneurs in the electricity sector and in agriculture markets. She has been working in Myanmar since 2013, and is currently carrying out an impact analysis of the mobile phone roll-out that is taking place. Prior to LIRNEasia, she worked at the ICT Agency of Sri Lanka implementing e-Government projects. She was a management consultant at Booz&Co (now Strategy&) in New York and has also worked at Citibank and Merrill Lynch in USA. She has a MS in Technology & Policy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA and a BA in Computer Science from Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts, USA.

Sujata Gamage

Sujata Gamage, PhD MPA, specializes in the evaluation of organizational performance, capacity building through knowledge networks and planning and evaluation in education. She currently serves as a member of the (a) Standing committee on Tertiary and Technical Education at the National Education Commission of Sri Lanka (b) Human Resource Committee of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and (c) Advisory Board to the Ministry of Education in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. Previously she has served as (a) the Director General of the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission of Sri Lanka, revitalizing the implementation of an ADB funded project on a national vocational qualification framework for Sri Lanka (b) the Analytic Director of a team of consultants at QRC Macro International in Bethesda, Maryland, USA, responsible for conducting and reporting on science resources for the US National Science Foundation and (c) strategic planning specialist at the Ohio State University, USA, developing an academic quality scorecard for that university and (d) Administrator for research support programs at the Ohio Board of Regents. Download full curriculum vitae: [CV updated September, 2015](#)

Vigneswara Ilavarasan

Vigneswara Ilavarasan, PhD is Associate Professor at the Dept. of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. For the last ten years, he is researching and teaching production and consumption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) with a special focus on India. His specific research interests are Information and Communication Technologies & Development (ICTD) [Use of Mobiles & other ICTs by women micro-entrepreneurs in India]; Information Technology Industry in India [Labour, R&D Centers of MNCs, Inter-firm linkages, Clusters & Sub-national Policy]; and ICTs & Government [Electronic Governance]. Dr. Ilavarasan is a recipient of the Outstanding Young Faculty Fellowship Award at IIT Delhi and Prof. M.N. Srinivas Memorial Prize of the Indian Sociological Society. He is also a

recipient of research grants from IDRC (Canada), Ministry of Labour and Employment (India), Ministry of Science and Technology (India), Oxford Analytica (UK), and IdeaCorp. (Philippines).

Nilusha Kapugama

Nilusha Kapugama is Senior Research Manager at LIRNEasia and manages agriculture, electricity, systematic review and evaluation projects. She is also working on a systematic review looking at the economic impacts of mobile phones. Previously she managed the Knowledge Based Economy project at LIRNEasia, which looked at the information and knowledge gaps in agriculture supply chains. She also worked on [CPRsouth](#), LIRNEasia's capacity-building initiative to develop Asia-Pacific expertise and knowledge networks in ICT policy regulation. She has also done research on broadband quality indicators and national regulatory authority (NRA) website indicators. She has also worked on LIRNEasia's [Virtual Organization Project](#). She has experience organizing international conferences and training courses. She holds a master's degree in development economics and policy from the University of Manchester, UK.

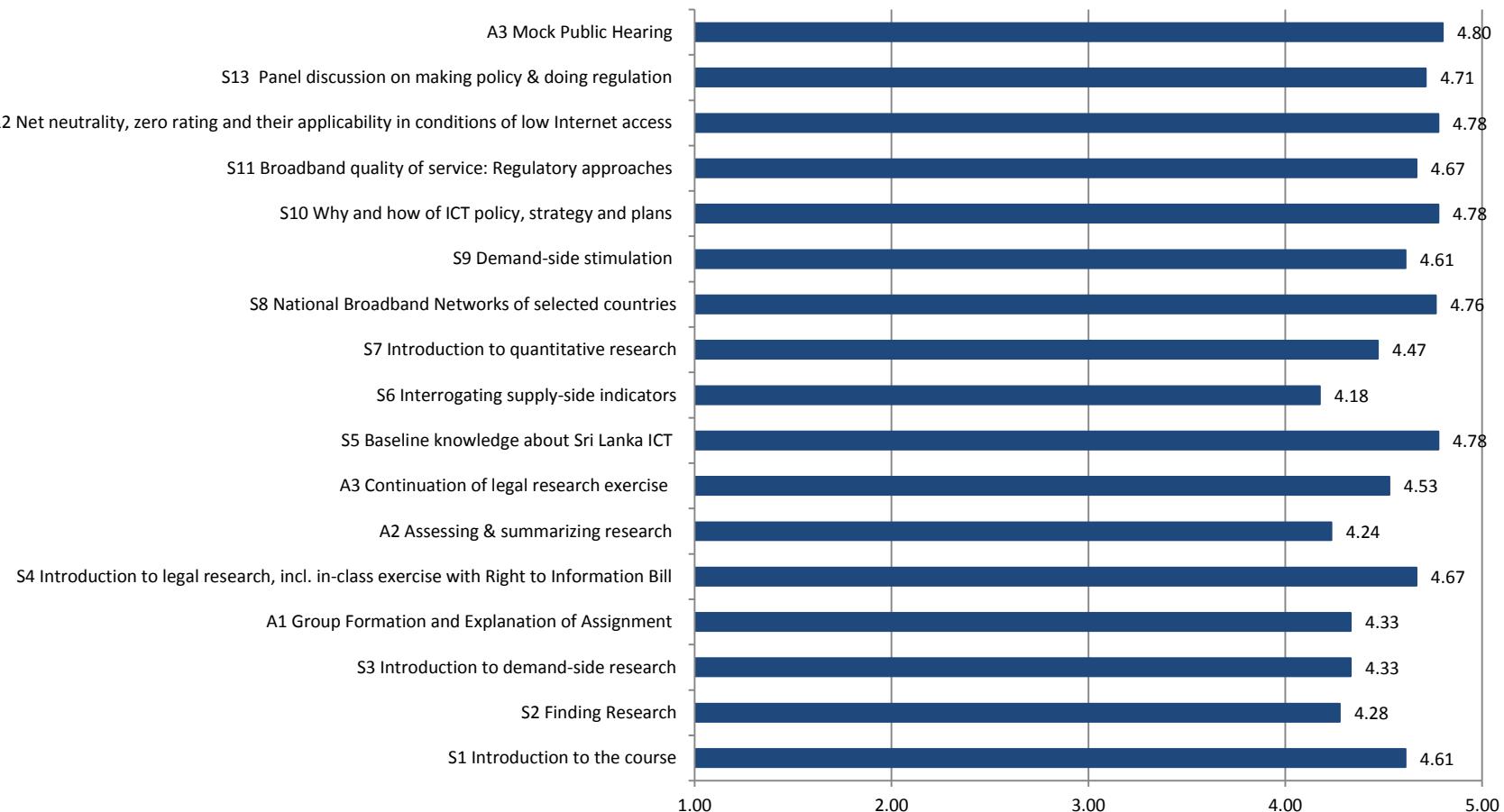
Laleema Senanayake

Laleema Senanayake is a Junior Research Manager at LIRNEasia and is the project manager of the Ford Funded Project on 'Increasing Broadband access to the poor in Asia'. Laleema's research interests are participatory planning, urban development, climate change and public policy. Prior to joining LIRNEasia she worked at International Water Management Institute as an intern and the [Project Consultancy Unit \(PCU\)](#) of the University of Moratuwa as a research assistant. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in [Town and Country Planning](#) from the University of Moratuwa and is an Associate member of the Institute of Town Planners Sri Lanka.

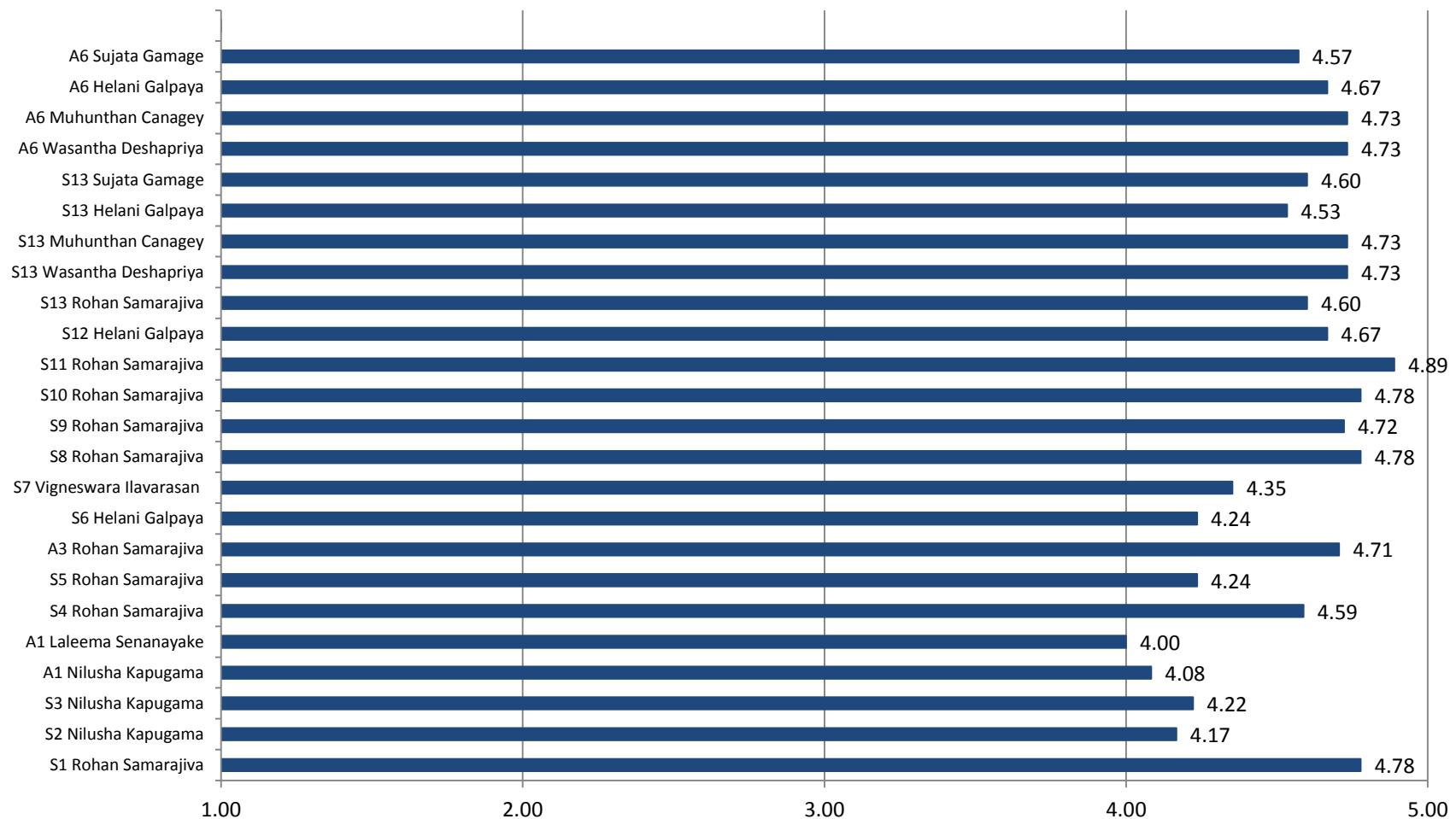
Evaluations

The course evaluations can be seen from the figures below. The rating was based on a 5 point scale ranging from 1-abysmal to 5-excellent. All the topics, speakers and logistical arrangements were rated as being satisfactory.

Session Ratings



Speaker Ratings



Logistical Ratings

