
Crystal Lecture 2024

Tuesday, 12th November 2024

Speaker biography

Sadham Zarjahan, CEO International Youth Council



Sadham Dhikran Zarjahan, the dynamic CEO of the International Youth Council (IYC), stands as a beacon of inspiration in the development sector. With over a decade of dedicated service, he has seamlessly integrated youth-led organisations, international NGOs, development partners, government bodies, private institutions, celebrities, and youth through IYC's strategic initiatives aimed at promoting inclusive and sustainable youth development. He is a qualified and trained Industrial Engineer and is known as a passionate youth advocate on a local, national, and international level for demonstrating a strong work ethic in a variety of social work settings. His enthusiasm has been immensely stimulated by the increased demand for successful public-private partnerships, leadership, relationship-building, and positive

change-making. He is also the World Muslim Communities Council's (UAE) youth representative and has gained widespread acclaim, respect, and recognition for his accomplishments made possible by his ceaseless efforts and for showing extraordinary competence.

An Industrial Engineer by training, Mr. Sadham's journey in social advocacy began as a volunteer with the International Red Cross in Sri Lanka. His passion for youth empowerment was ignited during his college years when he was selected from thousands of applicants to present his environment-friendly engineering project at the 6th World Youth Congress in Brazil. This pivotal experience laid the foundation for his involvement with the IYC, leading to the establishment of its Sri Lanka chapter in 2012.

Mr. Sadham's leadership prowess was further recognized when he was appointed the 1st Vice Chairperson for Partnerships and Resources of the Commonwealth Youth Council, an initiative by the Commonwealth Heads of Government. In this role, he successfully implemented a range of youth-led programs and conferences aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Commonwealth Charter, fostering youth engagement across Commonwealth nations. His tenure included memorable interactions with Former Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III of the United Kingdom.

In 2015, Mr. Sadham's visionary leadership earned him a position at the IYC headquarters in New York as a Global Executive Committee Member. Here, he spearheaded a comprehensive revamp of the organisation, enhancing its global outreach and collaboration with development partners. His strategic acumen has been instrumental in managing IYC branches across United Nations member countries.

Expanding his impact, Mr. Sadham joined the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in 2018, where he led the "EU Sri Lanka Trade Related Assistance for Enhancing Small and Medium Size Enterprise (SME) trade competitiveness in regional and EU markets" project. His efforts in providing technical and strategic assistance to SMEs, implementing geographical

indications for the Ceylon Cinnamon industry, and designing Sri Lanka's first Food Traceability System using AI and blockchain technology have been widely acclaimed.

In addition to his role at IYC, Mr. Sadham is the CEO of the Zara Group LCC, a family venture involved in B2B Trade Support Services, Textiles, Women's Sportswear, and Real Estate across the United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. He also serves as the CEO of Global Carbon Exchange and MyJacademica, an Education Consultancy Services company in the UK.

Mr. Sadham's academic credentials include a master's degree in international organisation management (Int. MBA) from Birmingham City University and a bachelor's degree in mechatronics engineering from the University of Wolverhampton in the UK. His relentless pursuit of excellence and unwavering commitment to youth development have earned him widespread respect and recognition on local, national, and international platforms.