PhD student, Department of Geography, Virginia Tech
295 West Campus Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24061, USA
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PROFILE

Areas of research: Human-wildlife interactions | Community-based participatory research | Climate adaptation | Governance | Indigenous peoples | Food systems | Indigenous knowledge systems | Research co-planning | Systematic reviews
Community: Ongoing collaborative research partnerships with Inuit community in the Canadian Arctic and six Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka
Global research networks: IPON—Indigenous Peoples Observatory Network (17 countries & >100 Indigenous communities)

EDUCATION

PhD in Geospatial and Environmental Analysis
Department of Geography, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), USA
01/2025-Present
GPA: 4.00/4.00

Graduate Certificate in Geospatial Information Technology
Department of Geography, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), USA
01/2024-05/2025

MSc in Geography
Department of Geography, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), USA
01/2023-12/2024
GPA: 4.00/4.00

Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Agricultural Technology & Management
Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
Majoring module: Applied Economics and Business Management
01/2017-08/2021
GPA: 3.74/4.00 (First-Class Honors)

PUBLICATIONS

JOURNAL ARTICLES (PEER-REVIEWED)

1. Garbutt, H. E., Galappaththi, E. K., Jayasekara, S. M., Elizabeth Bell, S., & Crawford, T. W. (2026). Limits and barriers to climate adaptation among Indigenous women: Insights from Vedda communities in Sri Lanka. Environmental Science & Policy, 183, 104478.

2. Jayasekara, S. M., Kodithuwakku, S. S., Jayaweera, V. W., & Galappaththi, E. K. (2026). Determinants of Succession Planning in Sri Lankan Family Businesses: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Owner, Family, and Business Attributes. Journal of Sustainability, 2(1).

3. Jayasekara, S. M., Galappaththi, E. K., Niewolny, K. L., & Rijal, S. (2026). Governance of Indigenous Food Systems: Linking Global Patterns with Local Realities. Sustainability, 18(11), 5763.

4. Galappaththi, E. K., Ilangarathna, G. A., & Jayasekara, S. M. (2026). Co-planning community-based research: evidence, steps, and strategies. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, 80, 101624.

5. Galappaththi, E. K., Russell, J. D., Dolby, M., Newsome, T., & Jayasekara, S. M. (2025). Status of global accumulation of marine debris. Global Environmental Change, 95, 103058.

6. Galappaththi, E. K., Ayesu-Danso, B., Jayasekara, S. M., Baird, T. D., Bukvic, A., & Rijal, S. (2025). Voices from Akplabanya: Community adaptation and social-ecological changes in coastal Ghana. Cambridge Prisms: Coastal Futures, 3, e19.

7. Carlos Bezerra, J., Nqowana, T., Oosthuizen, R., Canca, M., ... Jayasekara, S.M., ... & Arotoma-Rojas, I. (2025). Addressing Food Insecurity Through Community Kitchens During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study from the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Urban Science, 9(2), 37.

8. Galappaththi, E. K., Jayasekara, S. M., Perera, C. D., Ilangarathna, G. A., & Garbutt, H. (2025). Solvable constraints and unsolvable limits to global climate adaptation in coastal Indigenous food security. Cambridge Prisms: Coastal Futures, 3, e3.

9. Galappaththi, E. K., Perera, C. D., Illangarathna, G. A., Jayasekara, S. M., & Garbutt, H. (2024). Food security policy and coastal climate adaptation among Indigenous and Local Communities. Marine Policy, 170, 106408.

10. Weerahewa, J., Timsina, J., Wickramasinghe, C., Jayasekara, S. M., Dayananda, D., & Puspakumara, G. (2023). Ancient irrigation systems in Asia and Africa: Typologies, degradation and ecosystem services. Agricultural Systems, 205, 103580.

THESIS/DISSERTATION

1. Governing Indigenous food systems: Global practices and local realities in Sri Lanka. MSc Thesis. Department of Geography, Virginia Tech, USA. 2024.

2. Family Business Succession Planning and its Determinants. B.Sc. Thesis. Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. 2021.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

1. Garbutt, H., Galappaththi, E., & Jayasekara, S. M. (2026). Climate change impacts and experiences: The voices of Vedda women. Figshare. https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.32660895
2. Galappaththi, E., Jayasekara, S. M., & Indigenous Peoples Observatory Network (IPON). (2026). 2025 IPON country profile – Sri Lanka. https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.31953408
3. Jayasekara, S. M. (2021). The clock is Ticking, Start Planning Your Family Business Succession Today! *Hanthana Blossoms*, Volume V, Issue 01, August 2021.
4. De Alwis D.T. & Jayasekara, S. M. (2022). Gender Division of Labor in Export Industries of Sri Lanka. 31st Asian Economic Symposium (AES), 11th November 2022.

5. Jayasekara, S. M., Kodithuwakku K.A.S.S. & Jayaweera V.W., (2021). Family Business Succession Planning and its Determinants. Abstract. In: Proceedings of the seventh Faculty of Agriculture undergraduate Research Symposium, University of Peradeniya, 13th August 2021.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER-REVIEW

1. Jayasekara S.M., Galappaththi E.K, & Bell S.E. (2026). Slow Violence, Cultural Rupture, and Structural Genocide in Indigenous Communities: Killing Without Killing. *Environmental Sociology.* (Under review)

2. Galappaththi, E.K., Perera, C., Dharmasiri, E.P., Jayasekara, S.M., et al., (2026). Indigenous communities and COVID-19: determinant-policy interactions, resilience, and implications for planetary health governance. *Lancet Planetary Health*. (Revisions received)

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

1. Jayasekara S.M., Galappaththi E.K. & Jolly H. (2026). Indigenous–wildlife interactions and lived coexistence among Sri Lankan Indigenous Vedda. (Submitted to the People and Nature Journal)

AWARDS

1. Spotlight Award, Virginia Tech Office of GIS and Remote Sensing (OGIS) Research Symposium, USA, April 10th, 2026 ($ 100)

2. Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Department of Geography, Virginia Tech (12/2024)

3. University prize for academic excellence at the final examination, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya (08/2021)

4. Merit award for undergraduate research under the thematic area Community, Environment and Management, 07th Faculty of Agriculture undergraduate Research Symposium, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (08/2021)

5. Global University BioQuest Championship; Member of the champion team representing the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (2019/2020)

GRANTS

1. Graduate School Travel Fund Program at Virginia Tech (300$) (12/2025)

2. ISCE Scholars, Virginia Tech ($30,000), Eranga K. Galappaththi (PI), Markus Wilcke, Sithuni M. Jayasekara, Gayanthi A. Ilangarathna (03/2025)

3. CNRE Graduate Travel Grant Award, Virginia Tech (400$) (09/2024)

4. The Sidman P. Poole Endowment in Geography, Virginia Tech (1500$) (04/2024)

5. ICAT SEAD grant, Virginia Tech, Eranga K. Galappaththi, Kim Niewolny, Sithuni M. Jayasekara, Chrishma D. Perera (20000$) (03/2024)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

Year (Duration)	Fieldwork
2026/07 (4 weeks)	**Communities:** 6 Vedda communities in Sri Lanka **Data:** Climate-health emergencies and adaptation responses in the Vedda communities, Human-wildlife interactions **Contributions:** Insights collection of how to enhance resilience under the context of climate-health emergencies **IRB:** 25-709 and 26-619 (Virginia Tech) **Funding:** U.S. National Science Foundation **Results:** 2 manuscripts, Videos **Advisor:** Prof. Eranga K. Galappaththi
2026/03 (2 weeks)	**Communities:** Inuit community, Pangnirtung, Canadian Arctic **Data:** Enhancing climate-food-health resilience among Inuit in the Arctic **Contributions:** Insights collection of how to enhance climate-food-health resilience among Inuit in the Arctic **IRB:** 26-221 (Virginia Tech) **Funding:** ISCE Scholler Seed Grant, Virginia Tech **Results:** 1 manuscript, Videos, Building connections with Inuit **Advisor:** Prof. Eranga K. Galappaththi
2025/05 (5 weeks)	**Communities:** 6 Vedda communities in Sri Lanka **Data:** Gender and climate change, human–wildlife coexistence, socio-economic **Contributions:** Conducted 200 Semi-structured interviews and 10 Key informant interviews, served as a Sinhalese-English translator **IRB:** 25-099 and 24-593 (Virginia Tech) **Funding:** U.S. National Science Foundation **Results:** 3 manuscripts, a country profile, YouTube videos, a concept note **Advisor:** Prof. Eranga K. Galappaththi
2024/07 (4 weeks)	**Communities:** 6 Vedda communities in Sri Lanka **Data:** Technological interventions, Indigenous health **Contributions:** Conducted 100 Semi-structured interviews and a Intercultural knowledge dialogues session **IRB:** 24-590 (Virginia Tech) **Funding:** ICAT SEAD Grant, Virginia Tech **Results:** MS thesis, a manuscript, 6 community tech profiles, and 2 Pecha Kucha sessions **Advisor:** Prof. Eranga K. Galappaththi
2023/05 (5 weeks)	**Communities:** 9 Vedda communities in Sri Lanka **Data:** Food security, community statistics, Indigenous entrepreneurship **Contributions:** Conducted 100 Semi-structured interviews, 10 Key informant interviews **IRB:** 23-388 (Virginia Tech) **Funding:** ISCE Scholar Program, Virginia Tech **Results:** 2 manuscripts and a country profile **Advisor:** Prof. Eranga K. Galappaththi

OTHER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Year	Details
2022	**Project:** Food Losses in International Trade of Agricultural Commodities: A Case Study in Sri Lanka **Location/ People:** Studying the causes of food losses in international trade and potential solutions with Sri Lankan food trading firms and government official involved in regulating international food trade in Sri Lanka. **Contribution:** Analyzing the data collected from traders and government officials related to international food trade and reporting the possible causes for food losses in international trade. **Results:** Identification of causes of food loss such as poor quality control, time consuming documentation processes and lack of access to key information in trade. Formation of recommendations for reducing food loss through process digitalization and streamline information dissemination. **Advisor/ Supervisor:** Prof. Jeevika Weerahewa
2022	**Title:** Community Managed Ancient Irrigation Systems in Asia and Africa: Typologies, Degradation and Ecosystem Services **Contribution:** Categorization, Analyzing, Cross-tabulation and Reporting **Results:** Conducted a systematic review using 54 research studies and categorized the irrigation systems into three categories as rainwater based, groundwater based and flood based irrigation systems. Investigated how ecosystem services and degradation of irrigation systems differed with countries and typologies. **Advisor/ Supervisor:** Prof. Jeevika Weerahewa
2021	**Project:** Undergraduate Research on "Family Business Succession Planning and its Determinants". **Location/ People:** Family businesses located in the Gampaha Municipal Council area in Sri Lanka area were selected and collected primary data. **Contribution:** Conceptualizing the research and referring relevant literature, creating the questionnaire, data collection and conducting quantitative and qualitative data analysis, interpretation of data, writing the thesis **Results:** Investigated that majority of the family business owners have taken at least a single step towards succession planning. Inquired the qualitative and quantitative aspects and identified owner's education level, family involvement, family cohesion, family commitment, business size and business age as the determinants of family business succession planning. **Supervisor:** Prof. Sarath S. Kodithuwakku; Co-supervisor: Ms. Viraji Jayaweera

CONFERENCE & SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

PAPER AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS

1. Jayasekara S.M., Galande N., Galappaththi E.K., & Toy E.B. (2026). Beyond "Open Data": Rethinking the Ethical Training of AI through Indigenous Governance, Playdate of the Institute for Creativity, Arts and Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech, September 11th, 2026.

2. Jayasekara S.M., Rijal, S. & Galappaththi, E.K. (2026). Spatiotemporal Analysis of Vegetation Dynamics in Sri Lankan Indigenous Villages Using NDVI (1988-2025). Virginia Tech Office of GIS and Remote Sensing (OGIS) Research Symposium, USA, April 10th, 2026.

3. Jayasekara S.M., Galappaththi, E.K. & Jolly, H. (2026). We Share This World: Understanding Human-Wildlife Interactions and Lived Coexistence among Sri Lankan Indigenous Peoples, American Association of Geographers (AAG) 2026. | San Francisco, California, March 17th, 2026.

4. Toy E.B., Galappaththi E.K., Jayasekara S.M. & Galande N. (2026). Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Rethinking Ethical Training of Large Language Models, Pecha Kucha presentation of the Institute for Creativity, Arts and Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech, February 6th, 2026.

5. Jayasekara S.M. & Galappaththi, E.K. (2025). Governing Indigenous food systems: Global practices and local realities in Sri Lanka, Indigenous Peoples Observatory Network (IPON) Annual Scientific Meeting, Big Ada, Ghana | November 24th, 2025.

6. Jayasekara S.M. & Galappaththi, E.K. (2025) Current Research Approaches for Studying the Climate–Food–Health Nexus of Sri Lankan Indigenous Communities, Indigenous Peoples Observatory Network (IPON) Annual Scientific Meeting, Big Ada, Ghana, November 23rd, 2025.

7. Galappaththi, E.K., & Jayasekara. S.M. (2025) Uplifting livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples in Sri Lanka through technological interventions. Playdate of the Institute for Creativity, Arts and Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech, September 19th, 2025.

8. Galappaththi, E.K., & Jayasekara. S.M. (2025) Uplifting livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples in Sri Lanka through technological interventions. Pecha Kucha presentation of the Institute for Creativity, Arts and Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech, August 8th, 2025.

9. Jayasekara S.M. & Galappaththi, E.K. (2025). Analyzing Land Use and Land Cover Changes in Sri Lankan Indigenous Villages Using GIS and Remote Sensing, Virginia Tech Office of GIS and Remote Sensing (OGIS) Research Symposium, USA, April 11th, 2025.

10. Galappaththi, E.K., & Jayasekara. S.M. (2025) Uplifting livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples in Sri Lanka through technological interventions. Mid-Pecha Kucha presentation of the Institute for Creativity, Arts and Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech, February 13th, 2025.

11. Jayasekara, S.M., Galappaththi, E.K., Niewolny, K. & Rijal, S. (2024) What is on Indigenous menu? Exploring Indigenous food system governance from global to local. 79th Southeastern Division of the American Association of Geographers (SEDAAG) Meeting, Greenville, South Carolina, USA | November 23rd -25th, 2024.

12. Mimasha J.P.S., Kodithuwakku S.S. & Jayaweera V.W., (2021). A Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry into Family Business Succession Planning. 18th International Conference on Business Management (ICBM), University of Sri Jayawardenapura, Sri Lanka, December 10th 2021.

13. Mimasha J.P.S., Kodithuwakku S.S. & Jayaweera V.W., (2021). Family Business Succession Planning and its Determinants. 07th Faculty of Agriculture undergraduate Research Symposium, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, August 13th 2021.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE IN CONFERENCES

1. Proceedings of the 31st Asian Economic Symposium, Organized by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (2022).

2. Proceedings of the 10th Sri Lanka Economic Research Conference, Organized by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (2022).

3. Felicitation Volume for Dr. Nimal Sanderatne (Sri Lanka's Social and Economic Development and Agrarian Policies: Selected Writings of Nimal Sanderatne), 10th Sri Lanka Economic Research Conference, Organized by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (2022).

WORKSHOPS & PANEL DISCUSSIONS

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS

1. IPON In Person Workshop in Accra, Ghana

Participated in a five-day workshop with researchers from 17 countries, Co-organized activities for Working Group 4 (Gender), and presented the Master's thesis work with Sri Lankan Indigenous peoples. Visited to farming communities in Anloga region in Ghana.

2. **IPON In Person Workshop in Central Amazon, Peru**

Participated in a five-day workshop with researchers from 14 countries, facilitated activities for Working Group 4 (Gender) and Working Group 6 (Evidence and Synthesis), and shared findings on issues facing Sri Lankan Indigenous peoples with members from 14 countries. Visited two Ashaninka Indigenous communities in the Central Amazon to explore their issues related to climate-food-health.

3.Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Workshop | Online

Participated in a three-day workshop on implementing a new data collection tool "Intercultural Knowledge Dialogues" developed by PAHO.

OTHER WORKSHOPS

1. NVivo workshop series

Organized three NVivo workshops for the students who are taking the course Advanced Qualitative Methods and Ethics in Geography (GEOG 5984) at Virginia Tech (2025/ 2026).

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

1. **Graduate School panel discussion**

This panel discussion was conducted in new graduate student orientation at Virginia Tech about how to get involved in VT, and how to find funding (2025).

TEACHING

COURSES TAUGHT

1. Qualitative Methods and Ethics in Geography, Virginia Tech, USA (GEOG 4984/5984)

Co-instructor for advanced undergraduate and graduate-level course focusing on qualitative research design, ethical frameworks, data collection (interviews, coding), and applied software training. Led instructional sessions on qualitative analysis, facilitated hands-on computer labs, and provided detailed feedback on research assignments and literature reviews. Received consistently strong teaching evaluations (Mean scores ranging from 5.14–5.71/6.00), with students highlighting clarity of presentations, patience in explaining complex concepts, constructive feedback, and fostering an inclusive and respectful learning environment. Students reported increased understanding of qualitative methodologies and greater awareness of multiple perspectives in the field.

TRAINING

1. Compassionate STEM Education Program, building a culture of Compassion in STEM Education, Virginia Tech, Spring 2026
   - Workshop #1: Shift to positive thoughts and powerful results
   - Workshop #2: Building a culture of Compassion in STEM Education (Part 1)
   - Workshop #3: Building a culture of Compassion in STEM Education (Part 2)
   - Workshop #4: Synthesis of Compassionate STEM Education Program

2. Current State of AI Technologies Impacting Education: Online Workshop, 4 March 2026
3. Teaching With, Against, and Around AI: Pedagogical Strategies for Faculty: Online Workshop, 11 March 2026

INVITED TALKS AND GUST LECTURES

Type	Event	Topic delivered	Date
Guest speaker	Seeking Sustainability I (GEOG 1115), Virginia Tech, 91 students participated	My Research journey with Sri Lankan Indigenous communities	11/12/2024
Guest lecture	Co-training workshop on NVivo software, Qualitative Methods and Ethics in Geography (GEOG 5984)	How to use NVivo in your research	11/15/2024 & 11/18/2024
Guest lecture	Qualitative Methods and Ethics in Geography (GEOG 5984)	Data Presentation and Results Dissemination	11/20/2024
Guest lecture	Qualitative Methods and Ethics in Geography (GEOG 5984)	Community Based Participatory Research	12/09/2024
Guest speaker	IPON Inaugural Meeting in Lima, Peru	Intercultural Knowledge Dialogues workshop in Sri Lankan Indigenous village: Pollebadda	10/22/2024

Guest speaker	Blacksburg Presbyterian church, Blacksburg, VA	Indigenous peoples from Global north and south	04/07/2024

STUDENTS AND MENTEES

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ADVISEES:

1. Hayden Trexel (BSc-Geography)

Mentoring and training in conducting a systematic literature review, including database searching, screening procedures, and synthesis of findings. Holding weekly supervision meetings to guide research design, methodology, and academic writing. Supporting manuscript preparation with the goal of submitting the work for peer-reviewed publication.

EXPERT REVIEWS

1. Peer Reviewer in Climate Risk Management Journal, Cambridge Prisms: Coastal Futures

2. IPCC Expert Reviewer: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), First Order Draft (FOD) of the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities (SRCITIES), December 2025

3. Reviewer of the solutions-oriented seventh edition of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7), January 2025

SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

1. **Graduate student representative** of the CNRE Inclusive Excellence committee at Virginia Tech (2026 Feb-May)
2. **Lifetime Affiliate Member,** Sri Lanka Institute of Agriculture (SLIAg) (2026-Present)
3. **Team member** of IPON-Indigenous Peoples Observatories Network which brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers from 17 countries, working with more than 100 Indigenous communities worldwide. (2023-Present)
4. **Lifetime member**, Phi Kappa Phi, Virginia Tech Chapter (2025-Present)
5. **Vice President** and a **lifetime member**, The Omicron Delta Kappa Society, Virginia Tech Circle (2024-Present)
6. **Lab manager** of Indigenous Resilience and Innovation Lab, Department of Geography, Virginia Tech (2023-Present)
7. **Treasurer** at Sri Lankan Student Association at Virginia Tech (2023-Present)
8. **Member** of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) at Virginia Tech (2023-Present)
9. **Social Chair**, Geography Graduate Student Alliance 2020-2021 Secretary (2023-2024)
10. **Faculty Coordinator**, Rotaract Club of University of Peradeniya (UOP) (2019-2020)
11. **Member**, Official Media Society of University of Peradeniya (Perabeats) (2019-2020)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & SERVICES

1. Organized and participated the welcoming week celebration at the Blacksburg Library by the Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA) at Virgina Tech (2026)
2. Organized GobblerFest, Virginia Tech by Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA) at Virginia Tech (2024, 2025, 2026)
3. Participated in International Night, Kipps Elementary School organized by Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA) at Virginia Tech (2025)
4. Organized and participated International Street Fair, Virginia Tech by Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA) at Virginia Tech (2024, 2025, 2026)
5. Representation of Sri Lanka at Blacksburg Middle School International Night, organized by Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA) at Virginia Tech (2024)
6. Organized International Café Hour at Virginia Tech by Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA) at Virginia Tech (2024)
7. Vesak Celebrations at Virginia Tech organized by Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA) at Virginia Tech (2024)
8. Organized Sinhala and Hindu New Year celebrations by Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA) at Virginia Tech (2023, 2024, 2025, 2026)
9. Organized the ODK Initiation Ceremony by Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), Virginia Tech (2025)
10. Member of Project Sathkara by Rotaract Club of the University of Peradeniya: A community service initiative involving a day spent with homeless elders at an elders' home, focusing on care, companionship, and support.
11. Member of Project Prathibhana by Rotaract Club of the University of Peradeniya: An educational outreach program providing academic support to Sri Lankan students preparing for Ordinary Level (O/L) examinations.
12. Member of Project Captures by Rotaract Club of the University of Peradeniya: A photographic competition and exhibition aimed at encouraging creative expression and social awareness through visual storytelling.
13. Participated Project Reach for Water by Rotaract Club of the University of Peradeniya: A charity run organized to donate two water filters to a community in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, where residents are affected by arsenic-contaminated drinking water, supporting access to safe and clean water.

MEDIA ATTENTION (selected)

1. The Institute for Creativity, Arts and Technology at Virginia Tech (YouTube channel): ICAT Playdate — Beyond "Open Data": Rethinking the Ethical Training of AI through Indigenous Governance, 11th September 2026 [Link]
2. VT News, Research builds a cultural bridge across continents, 27th May 2026 [Link]
3. VT News, Graduate student's work connects life to environment, 7th January 2026 [Link]
4. VT News, Students help drive new research on global marine debris, 20th October 2025 [Link]
5. The Institute for Creativity, Arts and Technology at Virginia Tech (YouTube channel): ICAT Playdate — Uplifting livelihoods of Indigenous peoples in Sri Lanka through technology, 19th September 2025 [Link]
6. VT News, Students pack a lot in on summer trips to Asia, 11th August 2025 [Link]

7. VT News, Researchers join international environmental stewardship collaboration, 11th August 2025 [Link]

EMPLOYMENT

Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Geography, Virginia Tech, USA
01/2025-Present
Job description: Conducted comprehensive fieldwork in nine Indigenous villages, engaging directly with local communities. Facilitated semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, gathering qualitative data and insights from Indigenous populations.

Graduate Teaching Assistant
Department of Geography, Virginia Tech, USA
01/2023-12/2024
Job description: Teaching assistant to the courses Practicing Sustainability (GEOG 4444) under the supervision of Prof. Eranga Galappaththi, Geography of Wine (GEOG 4054) under the supervision of Prof. John Boyer and Introduction to Human Geography (GEOG 1004) under the supervision of Dr. Robert Oliver. Responsibilities included grading and preparing assignments, Engage in office hours.

Temporary Lecturer
Department of Agricultural Economics & Business Management, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
10/2021-12/2022
Job description: Contributed as a teaching assistant to the undergraduate courses offered by the department such as Socio-Economic aspects of Natural Resource Management, Marketing Management, Entrepreneurship, International Agribusiness, Financial Management, and Quantitative Techniques for Business & Economics; Responsibilities included conducting and assisting undergraduate coursework including lectures, practical sessions, tutorials, and assessments.

Academic Sub-Warden
Sangamitta Girls' Residence Hall, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
10/2021-12/2022
Job description: Supervised and supported over 500 undergraduate female students residing in the hall. Oversaw student welfare, including providing assistance during illness and emergencies. Managed and monitored student entry and exit procedures to ensure safety and compliance with hostel regulations. Supervised hostel operations, including the residence hall canteen and food services. Served as a liaison between students and university administration to address residential concerns.