



# OPEN MIND

JUNE 2026

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## Featuring a Scholar

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### Sajani Senadheera



*“MIND came at a moment when I was just beginning to understand what I was capable of. It was not only the financial support, but also the quiet signal that someone believed in my direction. That kind of recognition stays with you. It shapes how far you allow yourself to think, and how seriously you begin to take your own work”*

Brisbane, where she is now finishing her PhD at the Urban AI Hub, Queensland University of Technology. Her work brings together urban planning, public governance, and emerging technology, particularly on how local governments can use Artificial Intelligence responsibly while keeping public trust at the centre. In 2026, Sajani received the QUT High Achiever Award from the Faculty of Engineering.

She is currently working as a researcher for the Australian Research Council. Through this work, she has worked with and consulted local governments across Australia, the United States, Spain, Hong Kong, and Saudi Arabia. She and her team recently published a planner’s perspective on Brisbane’s upcoming 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, exploring how the city can turn a global event into a lasting urban benefit.

Alongside this, she remains connected to sustainable planning and design. She received an Honourable Mention in the UIA Great Green Wall Competition for a proposal on environmentally responsive housing in Djibouti, Africa.

Her journey continues to bring together planning, technology, and public service, with a focus on building cities that are not only smarter, but also more responsible and human-centred.

Sajani was awarded the MIND Scholarship in 2021/22 while completing her BSc (Honours) in Town and Country Planning at the University of Moratuwa. She graduated top of her batch with First Class Honours and received the Gold Medal.

Soon after graduation, she served as Chairperson-Elect of the Young Planners’ Forum of the Institute of Town Planners Sri Lanka, becoming the first woman to hold the position in the Forum’s history. It remains one of the roles closest to her heart, as it has allowed her to support young planners in finding research opportunities and in gaining the confidence to aim higher. Sajani later moved to

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# MIND's Undergraduate Scholarship for 2026/27 is now open for application

*Please share with your friends*

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## Beyond Environmentalism: the Sustainomics Framework Re-examines Sustainability using a Multi-Disciplinary lens

Sustainability belongs to everyone — that is why the Munasinghe Institute for Development continues its Scholarship Programme for the 26th consecutive year, encouraging young minds across disciplines to become future leaders in sustainable development. To facilitate this process, for over 3 decades, MIND has developed Sustainomics as a framework for making development more sustainable, using a multi-disciplinary approach.

Sustainability is often misunderstood as a field limited to environmental science. In reality, it is one of the most complex challenges humanity faces, requiring knowledge and collaboration across many disciplines. Climate change, biodiversity loss, inequality, food insecurity, energy transitions, public health crises, urbanisation, and economic instability are all deeply interconnected. No single profession can solve these issues alone.

This is why students from every field have a role to play as ambassadors of sustainability. Engineers design resilient infrastructure and cleaner technologies. Economists explore development pathways and long-term incentives. Lawyers shape governance and environmental policy. Social scientists and anthropologists help us understand communities, culture, and human behaviour.

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<sup>1</sup> If you need to know more details, see: M. Munasinghe (2019). *Sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Applying Sustainomics to implement the SDG*. Cambridge University Press, London, UK.



## Munasinghe Institute for Development (MIND)

### MIND Undergraduate (Any Field) Scholarship Program 2026/27

**Why should you Apply?**

- Join a network of sustainability ambassadors, and become part of a community influencing sustainability.

**Eligibility**

- Full-time 3rd Year Undergraduates (Any Field)
- Sri Lankan Citizens

**Key Information**

- You will be shortlisted based on application details. So, make sure to fill completely and clearly.

**DEADLINE**  
30 July  
2026



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Journalists and communicators translate complex ideas into public understanding, while artists and storytellers shape social imagination and values. Data scientists and AI specialists help process

complexity at scales previously impossible. Health professionals, educators, architects, agricultural experts, political scientists, and business leaders all contribute essential insights.

Sustainability is not simply an environmental issue — it is a systems challenge. A flood, for example, is connected not only to climate, but also to governance, infrastructure, economics, urban planning, and social vulnerability. Likewise, energy transitions involve technology, politics, finance, livelihoods, and equity.

At Munasinghe Institute for Development, we believe the future needs not only experts within disciplines but also bridge-builders across disciplines. That is why we developed the Sustainomics Framework at MIND<sup>1</sup>. The challenges of the 21st century demand collective thinking, collaboration, and long-term solutions that safeguard both people and nature.

That is why sustainability belongs to everyone.