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SUNDAY TIMES

APPOINTMENTS

MAKING OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR

# Lifelong learning is kind of another business



When people ask me what business I'm in, I often say, "I'm in the learning business." It sounds intriguing, and it is certainly true. But, truth be told, we are all in the learning business.

Why?

Because as humans, we are learning machines. We are most alive and

functioning closest to our potential when we are learning, adapting, adjusting, and finding new ways, approaches and techniques to improve our lives (or the lives of others) in some way.

I believe in the above statements. They are as true as any other statement I could write here. But rather than talking about the philosophy of

humankind, let me get much more pragmatic.

Change and Learning

Change is all around us. Some say the rate of change is increasing, but whether that is true or not, this is definitely a fact in our business lives. Products change, customers change, process and policies

change. We are put on a new team, we are entering new markets, and we have set new goals. In all parts of our daily professional lives change surrounds us.

In order for us to cope with that change, we need to be willing and able to change. And learning is a key component in developing that ability.

Learning requires change, so continuous learners realize that they must be willing to adapt and change if they want to grow.

Are always learning something. Continuous learners learn new things "just because." They've always wanted to play guitar; so they take lessons.

They want to ride a unicycle, so they try it. They learn how to quilt. They learn a new language. These people don't invest the time required just so they can play "Love Me Tender" or say "good morning" in Chinese. They also do it because they realize that our brains are like muscles. The more we exercise them the stronger they will be.

Are continuously curious. One of the most powerful learning questions we use is "Why?" Why is the question of the curious. Continuous learners remain curious about people, places, important and mundane things as well.

By cultivating their curiosity they are adding to their knowledge and perspective, while exercising an important part of our learning brain at the same time.

Learn in multiple ways. In school we learned in a relatively limited number of ways, which unfortunately leaves some people with a limited view of learning. Continuous learns know that they can learn by reading, by listening, by trying, through others, with a mentor, etc. (etc.)

Teach others. Something magical happens when you teach someone something - you suddenly understand it better yourself. Continuous learners teach others not just to help the other person (or to show them how much they know) but because they know it helps them deepen their mastery of their own learning.

How to Use This List

Now that you have read this far I hope you are convinced of how valuable it can be to be a more active learner. You have also read a list of characteristics. Now that you have read that list of characteristics, I'd like you to read it again. As you read it ask yourself these questions:

How well do I stack up against these behaviors?

Which ones would I like to get better at?

Who do I know that is exceptionally good at each of these characteristics?

How can I learn these traits and habits from those I know who are better at them than I?

Your answers to these four questions (and the action that you take) will put you on the road to being a more continuous and life-long learner.

Enjoy your journey - sideroad.com

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

### UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

**Post Title: Secretary ICS5 (G5)**  
**Duty Station: Colombo**  
**Duration: Initially for one year with possibility of extension**

**Job Description**  
Under the guidance and direct supervision of the senior secretary, the secretary ensures the effective functioning of administrative operations and provides secretarial support to the programme staff.

**The Secretary:**

- Provide secretarial assistance to the country office programme staff, arrange appointments, schedule meetings, receive visitors, screen phone calls, make travel arrangements and respond to requests for information.
- Assist in coordinating the visits and programmes for national and international missions, including collection and collation of briefing materials.
- Handle logistical arrangements for conferences and meetings and taking minutes and/or notes at meetings.
- Take dictation for critical correspondence and ensure their proper recording.
- Access and retrieve all incoming and outgoing mail and ensure proper recording.
- Maintain and update files and retrieve relevant information as and when required.
- Assist programme staff in preparation of power-point presentations and other programme reports.
- Perform other duties as required.

**We are looking for candidates who have:**

- The necessary business acumen
- A strong client oriented attitude
- Strong planning, organizing and multi-tasking skills
- Integrity, commitment and respect for diversity
- Skills to manage relationships, communicate and teamwork

**Job Requirements:**

- GCE Advanced Level (Secondary Education) with specialized certification in secretarial practices and office management. University degree would be preferable.
- 3-5 years experience in administrative and secretarial work.
- Good knowledge of secretarial practice including proficiency in typing
- Fluency in oral and written English and working knowledge of Sinhala and/or Tamil is desirable.
- Proficiency in current office software applications.

**UNFPA offers an attractive compensation package commensurate with experience.**  
**Please forward your resume with a covering letter under confidential cover to the UNFPA Representative with contact details of two-non related referees, at the following address: UNFPA, 202, Baudhhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7.**  
**Please note the post you are applying for at the top of the envelope.**  
**Deadline for application: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

### UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

**Post Title: National Programme Officer Reproductive Health (ICS9/NOC) Programme Post**  
**Duty Station: Colombo**  
**Duration: Initially for one year with possibility of extension**

Under the 7<sup>th</sup> UNFPA-Government of Sri Lanka Country Programme (2008-2012), the RH programme, in the context of the health sector, addresses family planning, maternal health, reproductive cancer screening; operationalization of RH interventions; mainstreaming of adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH) in RH programmes; convergence of RH and HIV interventions; RH interventions in emergencies; and gender based violence (GBV).

Under the supervision of the Representative, or his/her designated officer, the National Programme Officer (NPO) substantively contributes to the effective management of UNFPA programme activities in the area of reproductive health (RH). He/she will be primarily responsible for programme development and management and for providing technical assistance to UNFPA-supported programmes. He/she will contribute to national policy discussions to ensure that that RH related issues and concerns is given priority. He/she will coordinate with the relevant government entities, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and other relevant partners to ensure coordinated response.

**The National Programme Officer:**

- Provides overall substantive and strategic leadership in the formulation and design of the UNFPA programme within his/her technical area and portfolio, providing substantive inputs to project formulation and evaluation, joint programming initiatives and national development frameworks.
- Analyzes and interprets the political, social and economic environment and identifies opportunities for UNFPA assistance and interventions; prepares policy documents and position papers.
- Serves as expert on his/her area, keeping abreast with recent developments in his/her field.
- Leads the country programme implementation in the area of RH. Ensures results-oriented programme delivery by managing an assigned portfolio of project(s).
- Explores and expands strategic alliances and partnerships for advocacy purposes. Maintains collaborative relationships with implementing partners at national and district levels, experts, government counterparts and other UN agencies to ensure successful implementation of UNFPA supported interventions.
- Represents UNFPA in relevant external meetings, working groups, and coordination forums, including in context of UN Country Team and the UN Development Assistance Framework in Sri Lanka.
- Prepares knowledge assets based on analysis of programmes, projects, strategies, approaches and ongoing experience for lessons learned and best practices. Established databases and designs research as needed. Maintains a set of briefing notes on his/her portfolio. Facilitates exchange of information and best practices within/outside UNFPA.
- Takes the lead in advocacy initiatives and assists resource mobilization efforts of the Country Office by, inter alia, preparing project summaries, speeches, donor profiles and by participating in donor meetings and public information events.
- Ensures that a gender and rights perspective is reflected in UNFPA programming and identifies opportunities for mainstreaming of gender issues.
- In collaboration with other UNFPA colleagues, provides technical inputs to other areas within the UNFPA programme, particularly with regard to adolescent sexual and reproductive health; gender-based violence; HIV prevention; and emergencies.

**We are looking for candidates who have:**

- The ability for advocacy and advancing a policy oriented agenda
- A track record in innovation and marketing of new approaches
- Integrity, commitment and respect for diversity
- Skills to manage relationships, communicate and develop people
- An ability for analytical and strategic thinking and results orientation

**Job Requirements:**

- Masters degree in health, population, demography and/or other related social science field.
- Professional experience of 5-8 years, preferably in programme/project management in the public or private sector.
- Familiarity with UN procedures and working methods, particularly with UNFPA's agenda, policies and procedures is highly desirable.
- Full proficiency in English (including excellent writing and communication skills) with a working knowledge of Sinhala and Tamil.
- Proficiency in current office software applications

**UNFPA offers an attractive compensation package commensurate with experience.**  
**Please forward your resume with a covering letter under confidential cover to the UNFPA Representative with contact details of two-non related referees, at the following address: United Nations Population Fund, 202, Baudhhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7**  
**Please note the post you are applying for at the top of the envelope.**  
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## Confidentiality...

**Contd. from Pg 4**  
If no separation agreement is signed at the time an employee leaves, only the confidentiality provisions previously agreed upon will apply, together with any statutory protections such as the general trade secrets protection and the specific patent and copyright laws. In these cases, TriNet recommends that you at least remind the employee of these confidentiality provisions and of your company's intent to seek enforcement thereof in court, if necessary.

If you have questions

Preserving trade secrets is

an essential part of doing business and staying ahead of the competition. Have employees with access to vital company information enter into written restrictive agreements with regards to confidentiality, non-solicitation, and non-competition. Keep in mind that such restrictions must be reasonable enough so that the employee's ability to earn a living and use his or her expertise with another employer is not unduly hindered. Also, confidentiality agreements should specifically mention what information or activity is considered "off limits."

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