

# Ashani R. Abayasekara

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<b>Education</b>	<b>PhD in Economics</b> , Monash University <i>Advisors:</i> Liang Choon Wang, David Johnston, Rachel Knott, Sonja de New	2021-2025 (Expected)
	<b>Master of International and Development Economics</b> (With Distinction, Rank 1), Australian National University (ANU)	2015-2016
	<b>Bachelor of Arts in Economics</b> (First Class Honours, Rank 1), University of Peradeniya	2005-2009
<b>Research Interests</b>	Labour Economics, Health Economics, Economics of Education, Applied Microeconomics	
<b>Employment</b>	<b>Teaching Associate</b> , Department of Economics, Monash University Units taught: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Labour Economics (ECC3710)</li><li>• International Economics (ECF3121)</li><li>• Managerial Economics (ECF2731)</li><li>• Principles of Microeconomics (ECC1000)</li></ul>	2022-Present
	<b>Research Economist</b> , Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka	2019-2022
	<b>Research Officer</b> , Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka	2013-2014; 2017-2019
	<b>Research Assistant</b> , Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka	2011-2013
	<b>Temporary Lecturer</b> , University of Peradeniya Units taught: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Statistics, International Trade	2010-2011
	<b>Tutor</b> , Bachelor of Business Administration (Online) Degree Programme, University of Peradeniya	Feb-Aug 2010
	<b>Project Intern</b> , Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka	Aug-Nov 2009

- Journal Publications** **Abayasekara, Ashani** and Gunasekara, Neluka. 2019. Determinants of youth not in education, employment or training: Evidence from Sri Lanka. *Review of Development Economics*, 23(4), 1840–1862.
- Abayasekara, Ashani** and Arunatilake, Nisha. 2018. School-level resource allocation and education outcomes in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 61, 127–141.
- Burke, Paul J. and **Abayasekara, Ashani**. 2018. The price elasticity of electricity demand in the United States: A three-dimensional analysis. *The Energy Journal*, 39(2), 123–145.
- Abayasekara, Ashani** and Gunewardena Dileni. 2015. A cohort analysis of gender wage differentials in Sri Lanka: 1996-2004. *Modern Sri Lanka Studies*, V(1), 1-35.
- Abayasekara, Ashani. 2013. GSP+ removal and the apparel industry in Sri Lanka: Implications and way forward. *South Asia Economic Journal*, 14(2), pp. 293–316.
- Other Selected Publications** **Abayasekara, Ashani**, de Silva, Thisali and Arunatilake, Nisha. 2022. “Non-state actors in education: A Case Study of Sri Lanka”, Background Paper prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO.
- Arunatilake, Nisha, **Abayasekara, Ashani** and Karunanayake, Chathurga. 2021. “Repositioning social security systems for private sector employment in Sri Lanka”, Colombo: International Labour Organization.
- Karunaratne, Chandana and **Abayasekara, Ashani**. 2014. “Impact of Export Processing Zones on poverty reduction and trade facilitation in Sri Lanka”, in Impacts of Trade Facilitation Measures on Poverty and Inclusive Growth: Case studies from Asia, Bangkok: United Nations.
- Kelegama, Saman and **Abayasekara, Ashani**. 2012. “Regional economic cooperation and connectivity in South and South-West Asia: Potential and challenges”, South and South-West Asia Development Papers 1205. UNESCAP: South and South-West Asia Office.
- Working Papers** Impacts of housing costs on health and satisfaction with life circumstances: Evidence from Australia (with Jun Sung Kim and Liang Choon Wang)  
Revise and Resubmit, *Health Economics*
- Work in Progress** Impacts on workers from the shutdown of a national automotive manufacturing industry (with David Johnston and Sonja de New)
- Mental health and differential belief updating: Evidence from unemployment shocks (with David Johnston and Rachel Knott)
- Conference Presentations** European Health Economics Association (EuHEA) Conference 2024 (Vienna, 2024); 4th Meeting of the Asian Workshop on Econometrics and Health Economics (Manila, 2023); The Australian Labour Market Research Workshop 2023 (Canberra, 2023);

HILDA Survey Research Conference 2023 (Melbourne, 2023); 44th Australia Health Economics Society Conference (Adelaide, 2023); INFORMAS E-symposia 2021: Regional Food Environment Research Series (virtual, 2021); Policy Dialogue on Planning for Universal Health Coverage amidst the 4Ds of Health Transitions in Sri Lanka (virtual, 2021); 4th South Asia Economic Network Conference on Subnational Finance and Local Service Delivery in South Asia (Dhaka, 2019); 14th Pension Experts Meeting (South Korea, 2019); 5th International Conference on South Asian Economic Development (New Delhi, 2019); International Conference on Economic Development in South Asia (Kalutara, 2019); Australasian Development Economics Workshop 2018 (Canberra, 2018); International Conference on Changing Scenario in South Asia: Leveraging Economic Growth for Collective Prosperity (Chandigarh, March 2013); Sri Lanka Economic Research Conference (Colombo, Nov 2012); International Conference on Value Chains for Inclusive Development – Lessons and Policies for South Asia (Dhaka, Nov 2012); International Conference on Facilitating Trade in South Asia and the Way Forward (Delhi, May 2012); International Conference on Building Bridges: Strengthening Physical, Emotional and Economic Linkages in South Asia (Kathmandu, April 2012); Conference on India’s Free Trade Agreements and MSMEs (Delhi, Oct 2011); Conference on Economic Freedom and Business Environment (Dhaka, May 2011); 11th National Convention on Women’s Studies (Colombo, July 2010).

### Professional Activities

<b>Member</b> of the Economic Society of Australia, Victoria Branch	2024-Present
<b>Council Member</b> of the Sri Lankan Economic Association	2011-2013
<b>Participant</b> in the International Visitor Leadership Program organized by the United States State Department	May-June 2013

### Media pieces:

1. Reopening Schools in the New Normal: Key Focus Areas for Sri Lanka (with Usha Perera), *Talking Economics*, November 2021
2. Building a Crisis-Resilient Education System in Sri Lanka, *Development Asia*, June 2021
3. Mitigating Sri Lanka’s COVID-19 Education Crisis: Priority Areas for Action (with Thisali de Silva), *Talking Economics*, June 2021
4. Sri Lanka’s Health Financing Challenge: Why Smarter Spending is Key, *Talking Economics*, April 2021
5. An Appetite for Health: Regulating Sri Lanka’s Food Environments to Fight NCDs, *Talking Economics*, February 2021
6. Protecting Jobs and Enterprises during Crises: How can Sri Lanka Respond Better?, *Talking Economics*, December 2020
7. Lowering the Rate of NEETs in Sri Lanka, *Development Asia*, August 2020
8. Distance Education during and after COVID-19: Long Road Ahead for Sri Lanka, *Talking Economics*, July 2020
9. Girls in STEM: How is Sri Lanka Faring?, *Talking Economics*, February 2020
10. In the 4IR, are Smart Classrooms the Future of Sri Lanka’s Education?, *Talking Economics*, September 2019
11. Meeting Challenges in a New World of Work: How Prepared is South Asia for the Fourth Industrial Revolution?, *Talking Economics*, October 2019
12. Reducing Sri Lanka’s NEETs: Need for smoother school-to-work transitions, *Talking Economics*, January 2019
13. How disability-inclusive is education in Sri Lanka? A preliminary look, *Talking Economics*, December 2018
14. Improving Learning Outcomes in Sri Lanka: Get the ABCs Right before Following

- Others!, *Talking Economics*, August 2018
15. Building a more English-literate Sri Lanka: The need to combat inequities, *Talking Economics*, April 2018
  16. Improving the quality of Education in Sri Lanka (with Nisha Arunatilake), *GlobalDev*, March 2018
  17. Towards a knowledge based economy: Start with quality STEM teachers for every child! (with Nisha Arunatilake), *Talking Economics*, February 2018
  18. Improving education in Sri Lanka: Priority Areas for Action” (with Harini Weerasekera), *Talking Economics*, February 2018
  19. Is Sri Lanka’s grade five scholarship exam akin to a fool’s errand?, *Talking Economics*, October 2017
  20. Ending the test score horse race: Transforming Sri Lanka’s education, *Talking Economics*, August 2017
  21. Path to skills development: Helping Sri Lankan youth navigate the hurdle of O-Level (with Nisha Arunatilake), *Talking Economics*, July 2017
  22. Global trade protectionism is rising discreetly: Sri Lanka must stay alert, *Talking Economics*, October 2012
  23. Consumers voice missing in Sri Lanka’s debates on deeper regional integration, *Talking Economics*, March 2012

**Computer Skills** Microsoft Office (proficient); Stata (proficient); R (beginner); LaTeX (proficient)

<b>Awards and Scholarships</b>	P.D. Khan Gold Medal for Economics, University of Peradeniya	2010
	H.A.De S. Gunasekara Gold Medal for Economics, University of Peradeniya	2010
	Gate Mudaliyar N. Canaganayagam Birth Century (1992) Memorial Prize for Economics, University of Peradeniya	2010
	Australia Awards Scholar	2015-2016
	1st year Helen Hughes Prize for International and Development Economics, ANU	2015
	2nd year Helen Hughes Prize for International and Development Economics, ANU	2016
	Monash Graduate Scholarship and Monash International Tuition Scholarship	2021-2024
	Purple Letter for Teaching Excellence, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash Business School	2022 & 2023

**References**

**Liang Choon Wang**

*Associate Professor*, Department of Economics, Monash University  
liang.c.wang@monash.edu

**David Johnston**

*Professor*, Centre for Health Economics, Monash University  
david.johnston@monash.edu

**Paul Burke**

*Professor*, Arndt-Corden Department of Economics and Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University  
paul.j.burke@anu.edu.au