**Developing Skills and Knowledge through NIHR GHR SPARC Award**

Lathika Athauda, a post-doctoral researcher from the Faculty of Medicine University of Kelaniya undertook a placement under NIHR GHR SPARC Award at the Imperial College Business School.

*'The NIHR GHR SPARC award provided me with a once in a life time opportunity to boost my personal and professional growth. I was able to play a supportive role for the existing research collaboration between Imperial College and University of Kelaniya during my stay.'*

The *six week placement* provided an opportunity to network with researchers in health economics and environmental mapping at the Centre for Health Economics and Policy Innovation at Imperial College, South Kensington Campus.

*Following post graduate course content* at the Imperial College Business School provided a novel experience in both knowledge and skill development. The course content covered included Health Systems Development, Health Economics and Global Health Challenges and Governance and skill building included spatial mapping using ArcGIS.

*'I gained knowledge, skills and exposure during the various events, trainings and educational sessions I attended.'*

This placement brought exposure to conferences, workshops, lectures and webinars conducted by the Imperial College Business school and the opportunity to meet different researchers and scholars working in health economics and health systems.

*'I built networks with fellow researchers and like-minded scholars.'*

The collaboration and network developed during the placement will continue as Lathika is continuing to work with Prof Marisa Miraldo and the rest of the team. A research plan has been made to maximise skills acquired during the placement and interest areas of both the award recipient and the trainer.

*I strongly encourage all NIHR academy members to apply as this opportunity exposes LMIC researchers to a different setting and facilitates networking. This experience is bound to give your career a boost.'*