

Oorum Unavum: International Food Festival

Oorum Unavum, a two-day food festival, took place on the 24th and 25th of June 2023 at *Semmozhi Poonga, Chennai*. The event, organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with the Organisation for Eelam Refugees' Rehabilitation (OfERR), Advantage Foods (Writer's Café, Hot Breads), and other stakeholders, aimed to commemorate ***World Refugee Day*** under the theme of '***Hope away from Home.***' This report provides an overview of the festival, its objectives, notable participants, volunteer contributions, and the impact achieved.

The food festival showcased over fifty delicacies from Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and a pre-booked Sri Lankan unlimited meal. By offering a diverse range of cuisines, the festival aimed to foster a deeper understanding of refugee experiences and emphasize the importance of universal access to home and nourishment. The event was inaugurated by ***Kanimozhi Karunanidhi***, Member of Parliament from the DMK party, who not only inaugurated the festival but also tasted the food at various stalls and had lunch there.

Seventeen second-year students from the Department of International Relations, Loyola College volunteered for the event, assuming various roles. These roles, assigned during the briefing held on 23rd June, included billing counters, stall assistance, logistics support, kitchen-to-stall communication, and overseeing pre-booked lunch arrangements. While specific roles were assigned, all volunteers demonstrated flexibility by taking up additional responsibilities whenever and wherever required. The volunteers received continuous support from their fellow classmates and faculty members throughout the event. The dedicated volunteers actively contributed to the festival's success from assisting in cooking dishes with the refugees to providing visitors with insights into the history and preparation of each delicacy.