

Disaster Resilient City Development Strategies for four Cities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka – Phase II

Funded by	: Government of Australia
Duration	: 12 months (April 2013 – March 2014)
Budget	: US\$ 1,100,000
Locations	: Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu in the Northern Province and Akkaraipattu in the Eastern Province
Implemented by	: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
Project partners	: Selected four Municipal Councils/Local Authorities (MC/LA), University of Moratuwa, Urban Development Authority, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Disaster Management and local communities.

Project Background

With the end of the three decades of conflict in Sri Lanka, the Northern and Eastern Provinces are now undergoing rapid economic development, especially in terms of infrastructure and housing. The communities affected by the conflict have returned to their places of origin and are beginning to rebuild their lives. Housing reconstruction and infrastructure development initiatives are currently in progress in these townships, with more programmes planned during the next 2-3 years with Government of Sri Lanka and donor support.

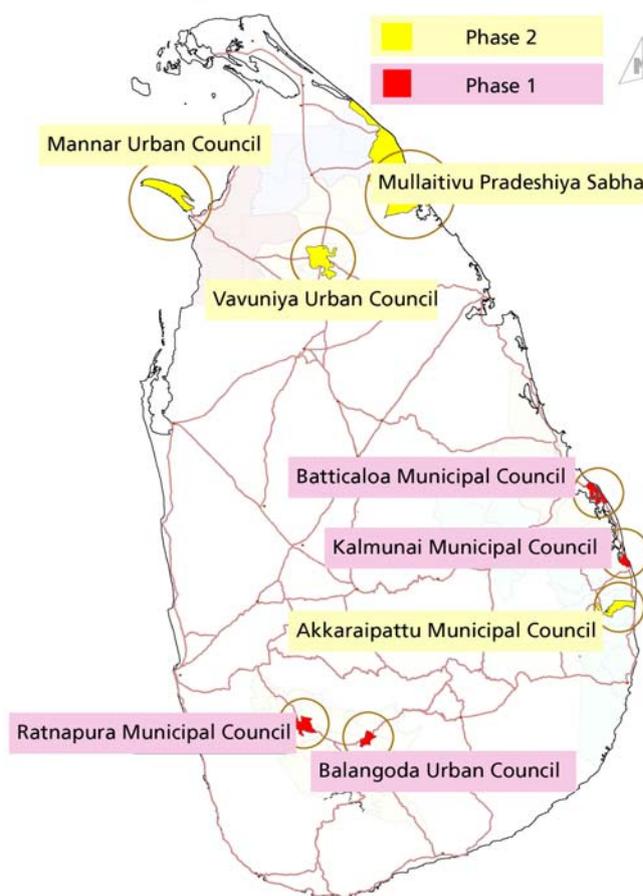
The Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka are also highly vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly cyclones, floods, lightning strikes and strong wind events. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) at city level is based on the principle that the adverse impacts of hazards can be managed, reduced, and sometimes even prevented at local level. In particular, in the context of rapid urbanization, DRR needs to ensure that development does not increase vulnerability and communities are not exposed to hazards. Also, weak institutional structures and archaic management systems of Local Authorities (LAs) are major observable contributing factors for poor response to disasters at the local level. This is exacerbated by the inadequate capacity and knowledge of DRR concepts and planning by LA personnel.



Project Description

Funded by AusAID, the project aims to replicate and scale-up the outputs of the ongoing “Disaster Resilient City Development Strategies for Sri Lankan Cities” which has been successfully implemented in the cities of Balangoda, Batticaloa, Kalmunai and Ratnapura. The new project is specifically focused on improving disaster preparedness in the cities of Mullaitivu,

Project Location Map



Vavuniya, Mannar and Akkaraipattu and will influence policy change at the local government level.

These cities have been declared as “Urban Development Areas” under the Urban Development Act No.41 of 1978. The four cities have also been identified as “proposed major towns” in their respective districts by the National Physical Planning Policy and Plan. Following the end of the conflict, the populations of the four cities have been steadily increasing with the influx of families to their places of origin, after years of displacement. As the war had destroyed vital infrastructure in these cities, the LAs are currently struggling to regain their former prosperity.



Project Approach

UN-Habitat is implementing this project in close partnership with the Urban Development Authority, Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils and Disaster Management Center to prepare land use plans and development plans incorporating DRR features.

UN-Habitat will support the selected Municipal Council/LAs to embark on assessing the vulnerability, preparing Disaster Preparedness Plans and developing building guidelines. A Project unit will be set up in each city to anchor the project activities at the local level and to provide necessary facilities and infrastructure to the LAs to carry out their responsibilities.

Communities of the selected LAs will be empowered through better awareness and will be linked to LAs through a well-defined structure. Trained community based Disaster Response Teams will closely work with LAs to implement the Disaster Preparedness Plans.

Key Project Outputs

1. Vulnerability assessments conducted to promote disaster resilient Local Development Plans.
2. Preparation of Disaster Preparedness Plans for LAs.
3. Capacity building of LAs to promote disaster resilient human settlements (i.e. housing, community infrastructure).
4. DRR features incorporated into Local Authorities' building guidelines and regulations.
5. Creating awareness and building capacity of the community on disaster resilient construction methods.
6. Community partnerships with LAs on disaster response activities promoted in lagging regions.
7. Guidelines for the incorporation of DRR aspects in housing construction introduced to LAs, local house builders and communities.
8. Guidelines and methodology for retrofitting to reduce disaster risk introduced to LAs, local house builders and communities.
9. Lessons learned and good practices in selected Municipal Councils/LAs are well captured, documented and disseminated in local and international forums.



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