



- Approximately one in 20 Sri Lankans has received USAID assistance to meet basic needs after conflict and natural disasters.
- USAID catalyzed the expansion of private sector investment in Sri Lanka's former conflict zones, leveraging over \$35 million from the private sector in support of economic revival.
- Thanks to USAID assistance, local authorities in the former Eastern conflict zone developed and secured donor funding for more than 150 road, water and community infrastructure projects in 2011 and 2012.

Photo Credit: USAID/Sri Lanka

Country Profile

Following decades of conflict and a devastating tsunami, Sri Lanka is in a period of transition that will determine the sustainability of the country's peace for years to come. In the former conflict areas of the North and East, the main focus is rebuilding communities and livelihoods. The United States is a strong supporter of reconciliation and long-term stability in Sri Lanka, an island nation located along major maritime trade routes in the Indian Ocean.

As the country moves from focusing on postwar and humanitarian relief to longer-term development, key USAID priorities are to facilitate peace and reconciliation, give all Sri Lankans an equitable stake in the island's economic growth, and foster a more democratic and inclusive society.

OUR WORK

Located off the southeast tip of India, Sri Lanka is an island nation roughly the size of West Virginia with a population of about 20 million. Following the 2004 tsunami and the end of a 26-year internal civil conflict in 2009, the country is now in a period of transition. These disasters left the country in crisis, with tens of thousands displaced from their homes, communities torn apart by conflict, a large number of the population disabled, damaged infrastructure and a paralyzed economy.

Today, the bulk of the displaced populations have returned to their communities in the former conflict areas of the North and East of the country and are trying to rebuild their lives. Post-conflict issues such as gender-based violence and child abuse threaten the social fabric of the country. Some of the areas worst affected by the conflict are still affected by land mines, which delays the resettlement process. Against this backdrop, maintaining the hard-won peace remains a challenge for Sri Lanka.

USAID is assisting the country and people of Sri Lanka by supporting reconciliation efforts focused on reintegrating internally displaced families, individuals and ex-combatants into society and productive livelihoods.

WORKING IN CRISES AND CONFLICT

The Sri Lankan government has resettled more than 447,000 people in former conflict regions. USAID provided food and relief assistance to these families, supporting shelter, water and sanitation, and livelihood needs.

USAID also continues to provide assistance for a variety of post-conflict social services, such as psychosocial support to address mental health needs, assistance to minimize institutionalization of children, rehabilitative services for people with disabilities, awareness-raising on mine risks, and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable groups with a special focus on female-headed households.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

During the conflict, government services, including justice and legal services and civil society's ability to advocate for citizens' needs, were paralyzed, especially in the Northern and Eastern regions of the country where conflict was ongoing. Since the conflict ended in 2009, there is an urgent need to reestablish and strengthen these critical sectors.

USAID works with the Government of Sri Lanka and civil society partners to train local government officials, community leaders, non-governmental organizations and aspiring journalists to better respond to citizen needs. USAID is also providing legal aid to vulnerable populations and registering those populations to vote, as well as working to bridge the judicial skills gap among attorneys-at-law, judges and other judicial operators in order to strengthen their ability to administer court cases in a fair and equitable manner.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TRADE

Sri Lanka is a middle-income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of over 7 percent in 2011. However, the country's growth is not evenly distributed among the island's nine provinces, resulting in regional inequalities. For example, the capital, Colombo, and its suburban areas in the Western Province accounted for 44 percent of GDP in 2011, while the former Northern and Eastern conflict zones and contiguous conflict-affected areas accounted for less than 5 percent of GDP.

USAID provides financial support, training and materials to boost economic growth in recovering regions, which helps to improve livelihoods for more than 40,000 families. Working with the private sector, USAID helps recovering communities to be economically stable and financially secure by linking them to value chains, particularly in dairy, poultry and horticulture. USAID also promotes investments and improves the business climate in recovering regions through its work with small-, medium- and large-scale private companies.

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A young girl smiles as she gets back on her feet thanks to USAID-supported physical rehabilitation services. Photo credit: Handicap International



Thanks to USAID-supported rain water harvesting systems in the water-scarce North, students now have safe drinking water. Photo credit: Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum