



Joint Programme for Resilience
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 – 31 DECEMBER 2023

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Joint Programme for Resilience • Programme Number: 00123973 • MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</p> <p><i>(if applicable)</i> Country/Region: Sri Lanka</p> <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results</i></p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Food Programme • UNICEF • UNFPA 	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <p>Disaster Management Division -Ministry of Defense; Disaster Management Center, National Disaster Relief Services Center, Department of Meteorology, National Building Research Organization, Ministry of Public Administration; Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration, District, and Divisional Secretariats, Ministry of Urban Development & Housing ; Marine Environment Protection Authority, Ministry of Health; National Dengue Control Unit, Disaster Preparedness, and Response Unit Eastern University Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics Department of Samurdhi Development</p>
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: USD 1,320,000</p> <p>MPTF /JP Contribution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF: USD 500,000 • WFP: USD 528,086 • UNFPA: USD 99,510 <p>Agency Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by Agency <i>(if applicable)</i> <p>Government Contribution <i>(if applicable)</i></p> <p>Other Contributions (donors) <i>(if applicable)</i></p> <p>TOTAL: USD 1,127,596</p>	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration <i>(36 months)</i></p> <p>Start Date 29/11/2020</p> <p>Original End Date 30 / 09 / 2023</p> <p>Current End date 31/12/2023</p>
<p align="center">Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: dd.mm.yyyy</p>	<p align="center">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Shreya Mukherjee ○ Title: External Partnerships Officer ○ Participating Organization: WFP Sri Lanka ○ Email address: shreya.mukherjee@wfp.org



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sri Lanka is vulnerable to a variety of hazards, including weather-related events such as cyclones, monsoonal rain, flooding and landslides. It was ranked as the sixth most vulnerable country to the impact of climate change in 2019. Inadequate investment in climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, combined with the economic shock of COVID-19, would leave the most climate-vulnerable groups even less likely to adopt mitigating measures or adapt to the effects of climate change on their lives and livelihoods. The UN Joint Programme for Resilience (JPR) in Sri Lanka brought together WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA to strengthen the capacity of government authorities and vulnerable communities on emergency preparedness and response. The programme also improves the use of risk-informed programme planning to strengthen the resilience of the Government and communities against climate-related hazards.

This initiative aligns with wider UN initiatives on Climate Risk Management, Strategic Development Framework (UNSDF) 2018 -2024 which identifies Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters and Strengthening Environmental Management as part of its main Strategic Outcomes (Outcome 4). Further, the initiative falls under the Australian Government’s Aid Policy Framework ‘Promoting Prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability’ which highlights the need to build resilience through humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction, and social protection.

UNFPA supported the development of a handbook and capacity building initiatives which played a vital role in shaping two national policies: National Disaster Management Plan of the Ministry of Disaster Management and the National Action Plan on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2024-2028) of the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment. These capacity building endeavors fostered a shift in institutional frameworks and attitudes/beliefs among officers and communities involved, ensuring the integration of Sexual health and reproductive rights and gender-based violence into disaster response.

UNICEF implemented key interventions aimed at empowering and building the capacities of children and adolescents as agents of change, while supporting duty-bearers at the grass-root level to create an enabling environment for these children and adolescents to reach their full potential and participate in decision-making platforms. UNICEF engaged and built the capacities of over 12,000 children and adolescents in rural and urban areas, 764 government officials at national and sub-national levels and 25 community-based organization members on emergency preparedness and response to promote community resilience and meaningful engagement in disaster preparedness and response.

UNICEF also led country-wide children and youth consultations through an online platform, U-Report, on various themes, including Sri Lanka Children’s Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation; Water Protection; and Conferences of Parties (COP) 28, to ensure their voices are heard in policy decision-making platforms. These engagements resulted in successful initiatives for policy change at national and provincial levels.



UNICEF improved the use of risk-informed programme planning and budgeting processes to strengthen community and sectoral resilience against climate-related hazards and increased climate variability.

UNICEF continued to strongly advocate for policy changes, resulting in the successful development of a provincial policy on Regularization, Protection, Conservation and Management of Watersheds, Water Sources, Reserves, and local level statues at the Pradeshiya Sabha level. A Gazette notification was introduced on the policies to be implemented as needed by the respective Municipal Council. This is to ensure water safety in relation to the drinking water sources located in each Municipal Council area identified by the Municipal Council, and to supervise the activities of the relevant Municipal Council (<http://documents.gov.lk/en/exgazette.php>). UNICEF's leadership resulted in the identification and prioritization of high-risk water sources in Uva and Central provinces for immediate protection based on the risk criteria index developed by technical experts. High-risk water sources were demarcated and protected through life fencing and concrete polls and community-based water source protection plans were developed by village development societies.

The lack of budget allocation for Disaster Management (DM) agencies, political and civil fluidity affected operations in the country. The innovations introduced by the JPR have the potential to significantly strengthen DRM/DRR and the DM agencies staff worked hard to produce a large number of outputs. They also facilitated a large number of training events. However, there were a range of issues relating to the institutional context including lack of consensus among counterparts over roles and responsibilities and issues with work planning and management as well as human resource, logistics and financial management and lack of an IT culture and communication bottlenecks. These affected the ability of the innovations to be fully absorbed into work practices.

The design of interventions in the future needs to give more strategic consideration to the effect that issues in the institutional context such as capacity for planning, management, HR, logistics, finance etc. are likely to have on the achievement of project outcomes.

PURPOSE

The JPR has been developed to enable participating UN organizations to i) strengthen the capacity of government authorities, women, children and vulnerable communities on emergency preparedness and response and to promote community resilience and meaningful engagement in disaster preparedness and response and ii) to improve the use of risk-informed programme planning and budgeting processes to strengthen community and sectoral resilience against climate-related hazards and increased climate variability. The JP uses a versatile programming approach, focusing on national and sub-national preparedness on the one hand and community preparedness on the other.

The main objective of the UNFPA engagement within the broader project on Integrated Disaster risk management approach for a Climate Resilient Sri Lanka is to strengthen the capacity of government authorities, especially national and sub-national level decision makers, disaster response officers and women, children and vulnerable communities on emergency preparedness and response to promote community resilience and meaningful engagement in disaster preparedness and response. The project interventions contribute to outcome 1.1 (National and sub-national authorities involved in disaster risk management promote resilience and are able to effectively respond to disasters) and output 1.1.2 (Government institutions and systems at the national and sub-national level are strengthened to deliver universal Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and integrated gender-based violence prevention and response systems).

Moreover, the project is aligned with the Australian Government's Aid Policy Framework 'Promoting Prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability' which highlights the need to build resilience through



humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction, and social protection. The approach of supporting a One UN programme also aligns well with DFAT's commitment to supporting the UN Reform process.

Output 1.1.1 National and sub-national authorities involved in disaster risk management promote resilience and are able to effectively respond to disasters.

The project contributed noticeably to reshaping the policies, institutional frameworks and disaster response plans of the Disaster Management Center and Women Development Centers at the divisional level. These contributions were evident in the integration of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and integrated gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention and response systems into emergency response mechanisms and plans. Subsequently, project reflections revealed a considerable change in know-how, skills, attitudes, and behaviors of key stakeholders including policymakers, implementing officers and community leaders. These groups have demonstrated a commitment to incorporating SRRHR and SGV perspectives into their day-to-day activities.

Examples of achievements are:

The knowledge, skills and experiences acquired through project interventions have informed the National Disaster Management Plan of the Ministry of Disaster Management and the National Action Plan on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2024-2028) of the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment.

The development of a handbook supporting the implementation of the Policy Framework and National Plan of Action to address Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGBV) in Sri Lanka (2016- 2020), initiated by the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment.

In collaborative effort, key officials and community members have decided to actively involve Women Development officers in disaster management at the divisional level. Additionally, it has been agreed to allocate space for at least one female officer to be in the rescue team.

UNICEF, UNFPA, and WFP worked on and optimized synergies between existing programming tools, activities, and services to reinforce the benefits of the interventions.

Further, the Disaster Management agencies were supported in the contingency planning and emergency preparedness for both the South-West Monsoon (SWM) and Northeast Monsoon (NEM) during monsoon seasons. Technical support was provided for the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) to produce sub-national emergency plans for all the high-risk districts frequently affected by the monsoon. The support was extended to district secretaries to design their contingency plans and emergency response plans amidst the economic crisis/ dengue outbreak, health, and safety guidelines.

WFP has been working with various partners to enhance the disaster management capacities in the country.

- The ICT capacities of 25 regional level DoM Substations were enhanced, resulting in improved early warning systems, and coordinated emergency response at the local level.
 - A handbook was developed together with the MoH and Disaster Management agencies for the public health sector, which enables the sub-national level DMC to conduct multi-hazard scenario-based training.
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- The DMC was supported with the finalization of the National Disaster Management Plan for the period of 2023-2030 with the participation of all key stakeholders under the SFDRR. The DMC is in the process of obtaining cabinet approval.
- 90 public servant officers (55% female) were trained on DRM in collaboration with SLIDA. The development of a handbook on Disaster Risk Management for administrators is in progress.
- The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) received support to review the National Emergency Operation Plan (NEOP) and to organize a training workshop on impact-based early warning forecasting and simulation for DMC district officials. The workshop aimed to enhance the capacity of the district officials in disaster management activities and in operating the district Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs).
- The IOWAVE 2023/ Tsunami Early Warning Dissemination Testing Simulation Training and Simulations were carried out in 14 districts that are vulnerable to tsunamis. The training and simulations were conducted in collaboration with DMC and involved all the key stakeholders and private sector/ school and community members.
- WFP supported 5 high-risk divisions to develop risk profiles using PRA tools and GIS techniques. WFP – in partnership with technical agencies at district and divisional level, piloted 18 ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction measures to control identified risk and vulnerabilities. Gender-responsive DRR plans were also developed in the 5 targeted divisions.
- MEPA was supported to revise and update the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan with WFP's support, incorporating the chemical spills based on past experiences. Two national level workshops were conducted with the participation of the National Oil Spill Incident Command Team and key stakeholders.
- WFP has continued to strengthen the government's capacity, by providing technical support to build an improved, unified, and shock-responsive safety net system for the Department of Samurdhi Development (DSD). As an essential element of the preceding activities, digital preregistration in System of Cash Operation (SCOPE) proceeded according to the plan.

Output 1.1.2 Government institutions and systems at the national and sub-national level are strengthened to deliver universal Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and integrated gender-based violence prevention and response systems.

Key achievements include:

- The development of the Handbook on Gender, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) which aimed to serve as a foundational resource for capacity building of relevant officers and communities on universal Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and integrate gender-based violence in prevention and responses.
 - The finalized report, describing the identified gaps in integrating SGBV and SRHR within disaster risk reduction plans, frameworks, and systems, along with corresponding recommendations to overcome them was shared with the key officials of the Disaster management Centre. It serves as a
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reference for evidence-based decision-making process moving forward to ensure mainstreaming of SRHR and SGBV into disaster risks reduction plans.

- The project equipped 799 decisions makers, officials and community leaders at District and divisional levels to plan, coordinate, implement, monitor, and evaluate essential measures for achieving gender equitable disaster response. Further they were capacitated with the necessary skills to address SRHR and SGBV related issues across all stages of emergency response.
- Multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms to prevent and respond to GBV in times of disasters and emergencies were strengthened. A solid foundation facilitating the establishment of clear referral pathways and providing officials a platform to address GBV-related issues during disasters and emergencies was provided. As part of this initiative, Women Development officers (WDOs) were identified as key officials to get involved in disaster management efforts.

Progress against key interventions

Activity 1: Provide technical support and equipment to engage in remote referral and counseling and mapping of relevant SGBV prevention and response actors/ services providers and developing standard operating procedures for addressing GBV in Emergency affected areas including referral and reporting mechanisms, information sharing, coordination, and monitoring/evaluation.

The project mapped relevant actors and service providers in SGBV prevention and response across 5 disaster-prone districts: Gampaha, Kalutara, Kegalle, Anuradhapura and Kandy, using tools developed by UNFPA. Following this mapping exercise, the project initiated an online directory of SGBV prevention and response service providers for convenient access. This initiative will be further supported through other UNFPA projects in the coming years. Furthermore, the project concluded district-level consultations on referral and coordination procedures during disasters in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment for 799 officers from five targeted districts. The Officers participated from various institutions including District secretaries and service providers from sectors such as health, legal, justice, social, economic development, police, etc.

Through this programme the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment distributed 15 laptops among Women Development Units (WDUs) across District and divisional Secretariats. These laptops were intended for various purposes such as remote case management, referrals, GBV counselling, and maintaining a database of service providers for referral and coordination etc.

Standard operating procedures (SOP) for addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) were developed and field tested in the districts of (Hambantota and Mannar). The SOPs consisted of referral and reporting mechanisms, information sharing, coordination, and monitoring/evaluation. The finalized SOP was disseminated among Women Development Officers (WDOs) and GBV service providers for adaptation to their specific subnational contexts.

Activity 2: Conduct capacity building programmes at all levels and across all sectors of interventions to effectively address SRHR and SGBV during emergencies.

In collaboration with the Disaster Management Center (DMC), a Handbook on Gender, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Disasters was launched in 2022. Following the launch, a national level capacity building



programme for 43 DMC officials and key government officials was conducted to strengthen their capacities to deliver universal Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and integrate gender-based violence in prevention and response. The participants included representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, National Disaster Management Centre, Institute of Health Policy, National Child Protection Authority (NCPA), Tri Forces, Police, and Special Task Force (STF) etc.

A total of 18 sub national-level capacity building programmes were conducted in selected disaster-prone districts of Kalutara, Ratnapura, Kegalle, Galle, Badulla, and Kandy districts, and trained 714 officials. In collaboration with WDC, three training programmes per district were conducted targeting three different target groups: decision makers, response staff, and the community, to enhance their skills and knowledge to address SRHR and SGBV related issues effectively in all phases of emergencies. Almost all the participants mentioned that this was the first time they received training on gender equality and understood the importance of addressing GBV in emergencies. During the training, participants reviewed their district and divisional disaster management plans and identified the gaps and areas to be improved concerning SRHR and GBV. As a result, discussion was initiated to mainstream gender equality into the disaster management plans in 2024.

In 2023, UNFPA conducted a refresher training programme for selected representatives from the above mentioned six districts and found that all districts integrated gender equality into their plans and programmes.

Activity 3: Provide technical support to review and integrate SGBV and SRHR in disaster risk reduction plans and systems.

With the aim of strengthening the inclusion of SGBV and SRHR in the national disaster risk reduction strategies, the current policies, plans, and systems related to disaster risk reduction were reviewed and consulted with relevant government officials and service providers. Based on the findings, recommendations were provided to integrate SGBV and SRHR into the national policy frameworks. A report was shared with DMC officials, which will enable evidence-based decision making of the higher officials engaged in disaster risk reduction. The knowledge, skills and the experiences gained through the programme were reinforced to develop national level policy frameworks including the National Disaster Management Plan, and the National Action Plan on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2024-2028).

Outcome 1.2: Children and adolescents demonstrate improved understanding of and the skills to mitigate disaster-related risks affecting their lives by engaging meaningfully in disaster preparedness and response in the four provinces.

Output 1.2.1: Children and adolescents have the skills and knowledge to contribute to the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction, emergency response preparedness including health emergencies and climate change adaptation initiatives.

UNICEF empowered adolescent girls and boys to become change agents for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) through the Child-Centered Disaster Risk Reduction (CC-DRR) programme implemented in the districts of Batticaloa, Kilinochchi, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla and Kandy.

Through trained government officers, 4,812 children were equipped with the skills and knowledge on CC-DRR enabling them to engage in the development of 32 DRR and CCA plans in the targeted districts UNICEF also implemented targeted CC-DRR training programmes for children living in childcare institutions due to the vulnerabilities they face in an emergency without the protection of family-based care and support. Through these programmes, 388 children in 15 childcare institutions were trained on the conduct of child-centered risk assessments and development of risk mitigation plans in childcare institutions. This resulted in the

development of risk mitigation plans to improve the safety and security of children in the 15 targeted institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis led to long periods of lockdown in the country, for more than two years. As an alternative to the physical gathering of Children’s Club members, UNICEF introduced virtual platforms for the divisional level Children’s Clubs to operate. These platforms enabled the divisional authorities to connect with the community better. Eight virtual meetings were organized with the participation of divisional government officers to assess the feasibility and challenges of running virtual Children's Clubs. The meetings also provided solutions for the most vulnerable children in the village, such as data support, and psychosocial first aid sessions for children and families who were struggling with the crises. Around 86 children took part and benefited from these virtual sessions.

UNICEF introduced an innovative climate education programme, titled “Weather Kids climate education programme, for Children’s Clubs in the District of Kalutara. This engagement ensured a tripartite partnership between UNICEF, Gavasha Labs (Pvt) Ltd and the Department of Probation and Childcare Services (DPCCS) on the use of technology and robotics for climate education. The programme introduced the theory of climate change, through expert resource persons- the weather was monitored to understand the theory of climate change using practical experiences and data collection, analysis and sharing. Sessions on data science and its impact on society were also organized for children. Over 100 children and 17 officers from the DPCCS participated in these sessions across all 14 divisional secretariats in the District of Kalutara.



Children participating in the WeatherKids programme

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Output 1.2.2: Children and adolescents have increased opportunities to participate in sub-national disaster preparedness mechanisms and in designing related knowledge products in the four targeted provinces.

In 2018, child-centered risk assessment facilitator guidelines were developed to launch the CC-DRR programme in Sri Lanka. They were then field tested and shared for stakeholder inputs to improve its structure, content and child-friendly games and tools that help convey difficult DRR concepts to children. During the project period, these guidelines were finalized and rolled out at the district level in the local languages. The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs declared its strong commitment to mainstream this training curriculum into the on-the-job training of Child Rights Promotion Officer (CRPO) and ensure nationwide rollout of the CC-DRR programme.

During the reporting period, 472 government officers at sub-national levels were trained on CC-DRR concepts and tools, enabling them to mainstream children’s needs into divisional development and Emergency



Response and Preparedness (ERP) plans. Divisional-level DRR mechanisms were strengthened to provide opportunities for Children's Club members to participate in divisional-level DRR meetings, which has facilitated the integration of children's needs into divisional development plans and a space for children to actively participate and engage in decision-making platforms. In addition, over 3,000 adolescents and 1,000 government officials were supported with capacity building on child protection in emergencies and child-friendly camp management during the 3-year period.

On Children's Day (1 October 2023), the 'Sri Lanka Children's Declaration on Climate Action and Disaster Risk Reduction', which was developed during Phase I of this programme, was presented to the Minister of Women and Child Affairs to advocate for child-centered climate action. UNICEF ensured the participation of 175 children during this commemoration, where the Children's Declaration was presented to the Minister to be tabled at the Cabinet as legislation. UNICEF continues to follow-up on this through sustained advocacy for and awareness creation on the importance of this Declaration.

Objective 2: To improve the use of risk-informed programme planning and budgeting processes to strengthen community and sectoral resilience against climate-related hazards and increased climate variability.

Outcome 2.1: Sub-national level authorities have the capacity for risk informed programming through mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction and climate risk management into their planning.

The launch of the Platform for Real-Time Impact and Situation Monitoring (PRISM) for Sri Lanka was completed in collaboration with the Department of Meteorology (DoM) and with the support of WFP- RBB & HQ.

The DoM was supported to enhance numerical weather forecasting and data assimilation and blended data approach.

WFP partnered with the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) and the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) and (UNESCAP), to deliver three training sessions on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for disaster risk management (DRM). The trainings aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of 110 participants from various disaster management agencies and mid-level public administration officers on how to apply ICT tools and solutions for effective DRM.

The DMC received technical assistance to conduct a basic Geographic Information System (GIS) training course for 48 DMC staff members. The objective of the training was to strengthen the DMC's skills and knowledge in using GIS tools for effective and efficient disaster risk management and planning.



Output 2.1.1: Strengthened local government capacity to effectively develop risk analysis considering exposure and vulnerability to various climate-related hazards, including health emergencies, and multi-sectoral impact analysis, as well as risk-informed theories of change for strategic planning and budgeting for local development.

Provincial level policy development for water source protection

UNICEF conducted awareness sessions for the relevant government agencies in Uva and Central provinces on the effects of climate change on rural water supply, government actions towards climate change, climate resilient interventions at the ground level, and recommendations for integrating climate resilience into WASH.

Furthermore, stakeholder consultations were held with relevant government agencies in these provinces to develop provincial level by-laws with local authorities to protect the catchment areas of drinking water sources to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. The consultations were led by the Chief Secretaries of Uva and Central provinces and identified key agencies for the provincial level Technical Working Group (TWG). The members of the TWG are expected to coordinate to draft the by-law for the protection of water sources, taking into consideration the adverse effects of climate change and future risks.

The constitution of the rural development societies of the Uva province was amended to appoint a water resource management sub-committee. Responsibilities of the committee include; promoting community participation, including women, youth, and children, in the protection and monitoring of water sources and to create awareness on environmental issues, such as climate change and water management.

With the leadership of the Chief Secretaries and relevant local authorities in the Uva and Central provinces, UNICEF led the development of a provincial-level policy on Regularization, Protection, Conservation, and Management of Watersheds, Water Sources, and Reserves and local level statutes at the Pradeshiya Sabha level. This initiative included the appointment of a technical working group for policy review and implementation through a Gazette Notification. The provincial policy of the Uva province was approved by the governor and printed for wider dissemination.

development; facilitating youth consultations for policy development; and participating in government-led policy development, implementation, and review meetings.

Piloting Groundwater Recharging Models in Urban and Rural Water Supply Schemes

Several assessments were conducted to generate evidence, data and knowledge for the development of groundwater recharging models, this includes: an initial assessment to identify high groundwater abstractions and present and future groundwater demands; analysis of real-time monitoring data and information to interpret the present aquifer stress and future forecast; assessment of the safe abstraction of existing water sources; assessment of groundwater chemistry; assessment of subsurface hydro stratigraphy; and feasibility assessment of applying Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR).

Following those assessments, two costed MAR models were designed for rural and urban water supply schemes. As a climate-resilient initiative, these model projects on groundwater recharging in rural and urban water supply schemes in dry areas assisted the water suppliers to combat water scarcity issues during climate change induced drought periods. The Development Officers (50) and engineers (25) of the National Department of Community Water Supply were trained on groundwater recharging based on the "National



Guideline for Groundwater Management in Drinking Water Supply Schemes” developed by UNICEF and the Ministry of Water Supply at the national level. UNICEF also supported a comprehensive policy analysis on ground water resources, with a focus on the promotion of groundwater recharging. The groundwater management guideline was developed in both local languages to train technical staff of the Ministry of Water Supply on groundwater management and development in rural water supply schemes.

Building climate resilient capacities in urban underserved settlements in Sri Lanka

Climate change has serious consequences for people living in poor urban housing schemes, but they often lack the knowledge and resources to adapt and cope. To address this gap, UNICEF conducted a Training of Trainer (ToT) for the Development Officers of the Urban Settlement Development Authority (USDA) covering the topics of impact of climate change in urban settings, waste segregation, energy consumption, urban heating and implementing awareness programmes for children and youth. The participants received training and guidance on how to establish Climate Change Task Forces at the settlement level, with young persons as change agents. They also learned how to conduct tree planting campaigns within settlements and its surroundings, switch to solar energy for lighting r, introduce an innovative waste management system to reduce open burning, conduct video competitions, and develop a booklet on climate change for children. The trained officials built the capacities of nearly 7,000 children and youth in 22 vulnerable urban housing schemes.

Output 2.1.2: Strengthened capacities of local government and local communities/community-based water committees (CBOs) in better planning and management of community managed water schemes to ensure drinking water supply in rural areas, particularly in disaster prone areas to build resilience against the adverse effects of climate change.

Capacity building for the implementation of climate resilient water safety plans

During the reporting period, 300 Development Officers and 25 Officers-In-Charge (OICs), attached to the National Department of Community Water Supply, responsible for community-managed water supply schemes at district level in the Northern, Eastern and Central provinces, were trained on evidence-based risk informed programme planning and budgeting. The training aimed to enhance their Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) response to COVID-19 by applying the ‘build back better’ concept. These trained officers commenced building the capacities of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to develop and implement water safety plans for rural water supply schemes with clear monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and engagement of communities, including youth and children.

Selected CBOs in different climatic zones were guided to implement Climate Resilient Water Safety and Security Plans. The development of climate-resilient water safety plans considers the differences of geographical, climatic, and environmental factors in various climatic zones. The models included climate-resilient actions, such as water recharging, catchment protection and demarcation, tree planting, community-level awareness raising, development of behavior change communication to promote water efficiency at the household level, and water quality monitoring. These models were developed as pilot projects to generate evidence for learning, sharing and scale up to other vulnerable rural water supply schemes to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Capacity building of government officers, Village Development Societies and communities on water source protection and climate change

UNICEF ensured capacity building of community-level government officers (youth officers, social service officers, land officers, Development Officers, and Child Rights Promotion Officers) to develop water source protection plans and implement child and youth-led climate change programmes in urban settlements and



communication and documentation process was crucial and complementary for addressing the gaps in the long term. The key official also confirmed the importance of this process during the reflection discussion.

Key Partnerships

UNFPA collaborated with the DMC, the MoWCD and WDC along with their policy makers and implementing officers, to execute the project. Further, the project actively engaged with all levels of these entities. Given the significant government authority held by these partners, sustainability is assured by integrating recommendations into their action plans, conducting capacity -building initiatives, and replicating them in other areas. In parallel, the project engaged with the community, recognizing their role in effective emergency response.

Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned & best practices:

Coordination across different government departments was challenging, causing an initial delay in implementing the eco-based DRR initiatives at the local level. To streamline efforts and approvals, WFP established a DRR steering committee chaired by the divisional secretary at the divisional level. The steering committee consisted of representatives of government technical agencies and community-based organizations. The steering committee was found to be very useful in linking community-level efforts to government ownership at various levels.

Qualitative assessment:

The World Food Programme (WFP) partnered with the Scaling Up Nutrition People’s Forum (SUNPF) to conduct nutrition education sessions for 637 households with young children in the District of Kalutara, an area vulnerable to floods. The sessions covered topics such as food-based dietary guidelines, child feeding practices, gender and domestic cash management. A total of 36 sessions were held at different levels (divisional and Public Health Midwife), involving the staff of the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Divisional Secretariat Department (DSD) as facilitators and resource persons.

Although delays were experienced due to the economic crisis, the implementation of activities were accelerated in collaboration with the respective government agencies. WFP supported the DMC to finalize the National Disaster Management Plan (2023-2030) under the SFFDRR, which will guide all agencies to implement DRM/ DRR program in Sri Lanka. The Project helped improve communication channels between communities the DMC/ DoM and government entities with regard to early warning contingency planning and response through the facilitation of Tsunami simulation exercises for representatives across a range of government and other organizations. The simulation exercises helped improve the understanding of the Disaster Risk Management Policy and to further define and consolidate roles and relationships.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1.1: National and sub-national authorities involved in disaster risk management promote resilience and are able to effectively respond to disasters			
Output 1.1 Indicator 1.1.1 Baseline: Planned Target: Indicator 1.1.2 Baseline: 0 Planned Target:03			
<p><i>Output 1.1.1 Government authorities involved in disaster management have systems in place to effectively prepare, manage and respond to disasters, including the compounding effects of other shocks, through improved coordination.</i></p> <p><i>Indicator 1.1. # of national-level consultation events and forums conducted on risk-sensitive planning approach</i> <i># of national and sub-national forums on emergency planning and response</i> <i># of trainings conducted on disaster risk management</i></p> <p><i>DRR policy paper and emergency planning guidelines developed</i></p>	<p>National level SFDRR mid-report sharing meeting conducted</p> <p>Two monsoon forums were organized by the DoM with technical agencies.</p> <p>Four national level response coordination and planning meeting with technical agencies and all stakeholders.</p> <p>Technical assistance was provided to conduct national IOWAVE 2023 tsunami simulation exercise nationally and in 14 districts</p>		<p>DoM websites. Minutes of the meeting held List of participants. Meeting agenda DMC,</p> <p>Simex report DMC websites</p> <p>Training completion report DMC, DMC websites</p>



Baseline: *Strengthening Local Authorities on DRM activities need to be priority and there was no comprehensive guiding document for Local Authorities for undertaking activities related to disaster risk management and Risk-sensitive planning.*

Planned Targets: *Development and implementation of guidelines to strengthen emergency management planning and coordination amongst key government agencies; Facilitate a process on risk-sensitive planning and prioritization of public investment in risk reduction projects.*

WFP supported the DMC to conduct impact base EW forecasting training for 70 DMC officials engaged in disaster management activities at districts level.

Technical assistance was provided to DMC with all stakeholders to develop the Handbook on Gender, Sexual Gender Based Violence in Disasters, to fill the gaps in practical guidance in gender mainstreaming in disaster risk management, at the local and community level.

Developed risk profiles in five divisions. in collaboration with other technical agencies at District and divisional level.

Piloted 18 Eco System based Disaster Risk Reduction measures to control identified risk and vulnerabilities in five divisional secretariats in Sri Lanka.

Developed gender responsive DRR plan in 5 DS Divisions



<p>Output 1.1.3 National and sub-national authorities involved in disaster management have the knowledge and skills to conduct hazard specific contingency planning with special attention on women, children and the most vulnerable population</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.3 Number of targeted sub national government authorities improved capacities in contingency planning</p> <p>Number of simulation exercises conducted</p> <p>Baseline: Hazard-focused emergency preparedness has not been properly developed and institutionalized at a subnational level in recent years.</p> <p>Hazard specific contingency planning needed for basic emergency support services and functions to respond effectively to the needs of the identified risks/scenarios.</p>	<p>WFP supported SLIDA to conduct 3 trainings on ‘Public administrator role’ in DRM</p> <p>Technical assistance was provided to the district-level coordination discussions for both SW and NE Monsoon preparation</p> <p>District-level resource maps were produced for all high-risk districts likely to be impacted by the South-West monsoon.</p> <p>3 of the targeted sub-national government authorities improved capacities in contingency planning. 1 simulation exercise was conducted.</p> <p>2 national level and workshops were conducted with the participation of National Oil Spill Incident</p>		<p>SLIDA website and reports</p> <p><i>DMC web site District and Divisional secretariat project reports, progress reports</i></p> <p>MEPA website and workshop report</p>



<p>Planned Target: Support the development and promotion of the use of divisional scenario-based contingency planning for humanitarian responses; Develop guidelines for contingency planning for public administrative agencies;</p>	<p>Command Team and key stakeholders to revise National Oil Spill Contingency Plan in cooperating the chemical spills based on past experiences.</p>		
<p>Planned Target: Facilitate stakeholder awareness sessions and consultations on emergency planning process; Coordinate simulation exercises to test the contingency plans with relevant stakeholders, and school community.</p> <p>Output 1.1.4 Horizontal and vertical expansion of current social safety net schemes to become more shock-responsive to address essential needs of the most vulnerable amongst disaster impacted populations</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.4 Digital system for Samurdhi bank network established in targeted districts Number of trained sub-national staff using digital devices for social safety fund transfer management Number of vulnerable people pre-registered</p>	<p>WFP technical support continues to the Department of Samurdhi Development to scale up to digitize the social safety fund transfer system, using the SCOPE system (automated system).</p>		



<p>of crisis-affected people provided with CBT assistance Number of policy forums on shock responsive safety net conducted</p> <p>Baseline: The country's largest social safety net program, at the Department of Samurdhi, operates as a decentralized manual system through the Samurdhi bank network. Establishment of national level shock responsive social safety net system is needed with a focus on strong policy approach to device government regulations.</p> <p>Planned Target strengthen the current social protection system, including by enabling the adaptation of the information management system; Train sub-national level staff on the use of digital devices for registration, updating and validation of records using beneficiary and transfer management platform; Scale-up the registration, verification and management of digital data of vulnerable and disaster-affected households while consolidating a coherent approach across national safety-nets programmes and system interoperability, including those used by the Government to provide support during the COVID-19 response.</p>	<p>Provided nutrition-sensitive CBTs (i.e., LKR 10,000 each) to 637 floods prone HHs with children under 5 in Kalutara district.</p>		
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	<p>A Handbook on Gender, Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Disasters was drafted, validated with the participation of the key stakeholders in June 2022 and launched in August 2022.</p> <p>District consultations conducted in Gampaha, Kalutara, Kegalle, Kandy and Anuradhapura with the participation of key stakeholders representing health, legal, justice, social services and police to map out the relevant SGBV prevention and response actors/ services providers.</p>	Completed	<p>Printed and soft copy of the A Handbook on Gender, Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Disasters</p> <p>List of participants at the book launch and validation workshop.</p> <p>Press release and media coverage</p> <p>Photos of the events</p> <p>Report of the district consultations</p> <p>List of participants</p>
	<p>Activity 2</p> <p>Capacity building programme for national and sub-national level officials were conducted to strength their capacities to deliver universal Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and integrate gender-based violence in prevention and response.</p>	Completed	<p>Report of capacity building programmes</p> <p>List of participants</p> <p>Photos</p>



	<p>Activity 3</p> <p>Disaster risk reduction plans and systems were reviewed and recommendations provide for the integration of dimensions of and implications on SGBV and SRHR.</p>	Completed	Reviewed Disaster risk reduction plans and systems report
<p>Outcome 1.2.2 Children and adolescents demonstrate improved understanding of and the skills to mitigate disaster-related risks affecting their lives by engaging meaningfully in disaster preparedness and response in the four provinces</p> <p>Indicator: # of targeted divisions that have child and adolescent representation on Disaster Management Coordination Committees Baseline: 5 Planned Target: 15 (cumulative)</p>	<p>Divisional level DRR mechanisms in 36 Divisional Secretariat Divisions were strengthened by providing opportunities for Children’s Club members to participate in divisional level DRR meetings. This ongoing development helped ensure that children’s needs are included in divisional development plans, while empowering children through their participation in decision-making platforms.</p>	Exceeded the target	Partners reports
<p>Output 1.2.1 Children and adolescents have the skills and knowledge to contribute to the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction, emergency response preparedness including health emergencies and climate change adaptation initiatives.</p>			
<p>Indicator 1.2.1 # of members of children’s clubs and councils that have been trained on child centered risk assessments, risk reduction planning and child protection in emergencies. Baseline: 300 Planned Target: 800 (cumulative)</p>	<p>4,812 children, including 388 children living in 15 childcare institutions, were trained on child centered risk assessments, risk reduction planning and child protection in emergencies. 32 DRR and climate change adaptation plans were developed in the targeted districts during the reporting period.</p>	Exceeded the target	<p>Partner reports and Probation reports</p> <p>Training participant lists</p> <p>Pre & post training evaluations</p>

² Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlined in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.



	10 divisional level Children’s Clubs gathered virtually during the reporting period with the participation of divisional Government officers. Around 132 children participated and benefitted through virtual Children’s Club activities.		
Indicator 1.2.2 # of adolescents that have been trained to support Government authorities with child-friendly camp management and establishment of child-friendly spaces Baseline: 126 Planned Target: 400 (cumulative)	3,000 adolescents and over 1,000 officials were trained in child-friendly camp management. UNICEF ensured the inclusion of child-friendly camp management guidelines in the <i>Management of Safety Centres Amidst COVID-19: Handbook for Safety Centre Managers</i> . Over 350 government officials at district and divisional levels were trained in these guidelines.	Exceeded the target	Management of Safety Centres Amidst COVID-19: Handbook for Safety Centre Managers Partner and reports from the Department of Probation and Child Care Services
Output 1.2.2 Children and adolescents have increased opportunities to participate in sub-national disaster preparedness mechanisms and in designing related knowledge products in the four targeted provinces.			
Indicator 1.2.2 # of district and divisional level officials with increased knowledge and skills to mainstream CC-DRR into development planning and emergency response preparedness Baseline: 250 Planned Target: 450 (cumulative)	472 government officers at sub-national levels were trained on CC-DRR enabling them to mainstream children’s needs into divisional development and Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) plans.	Exceeded the target	Partner and reports from the Department of Probation and Child Care Services Capacity building workshop participant lists. Pre and post training evaluations
Indicator 1.2.3 # of risk mitigation projects implemented through the	32 risk mitigation projects were developed and rolled out.	Exceeded the target	Project proposals & reports



<p>village/divisional Children’s Club/Councils. Baseline: 12 Planned Target: 30 (cumulative)</p>			<p>Finalized Sri Lanka Children’s Declaration for DRR & CCA</p> <p>Promotion campaigns conducted at national level</p>
<p>Outcome 2.1 Sub-national level authorities have the capacity for risk-informed programming through mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction and climate risk management into their planning</p>			
<p>Output 2.1.3: Availability of information products and tools to support timely planning for climate variabilities and to reduce disaster impacts</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.3: Implementation of automated situation monitoring and impact analyzing system for evidence-based planning # of district-level emergency units established</p> <p>Baseline: no situation monitoring and impact analysing system available for the country.</p> <p>Planned Target: Development of impact assessment tools and systems; Upgrade the impact assessment system; Support DMC to set-up District level emergency units; Provide capacity building for national and sub-national level staff.</p>	<p>PRISM platform for Sri lanka launched with DoM</p> <p>A training on numerical weather forecasting, data assimilation and blended data approach was conducted for the Department of Meteorology (DoM), with the technical assistance from WFP.</p> <p>Support to strengthen EW systems in with all 25 District level DoM Units, with ICT equipment</p>		<p>DOM website</p> <p>Training report</p> <p>No of local reports and donation certificate</p>



<p>Outcome 2.1³ Sub-national level authorities have the capacity for risk informed programming through mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction and climate risk management into their planning</p> <p>Indicator: Community based organizations managing 100 water supply schemes apply risk assessment tools Baseline: 0 Planned Target: Climate-resilient Water Safety Plans (WSP) developed and implemented for all 100 community-managed water supply systems including the risk assessment.</p>	<p>Availability of tested models on climate-resilient water supply systems that promote water safety and security.</p> <p>The CBO Guideline on water safety plan implementation was distributed among 2,000 CBOs under the guidance of development officers for the implementation of WSP at community level. As a result, 120 CBOs have implemented WSP, while 897 CBOs have completed the documentation of the WSP following the given guideline. Guideline was distributed among 2000 CBOs.</p> <p>The guideline for WSP auditing in the rural sector was developed with the technical guidance of a WSP advisory group and 50 development officers were trained on the implementation.</p> <p>Based on the research and fieldwork on water safety plan implementation, two knowledge products (case study and research paper) were developed, published and disseminated among local and international partners.</p>	<p>Exceeded the target</p>	<p>Printed copies of CBO Guideline on water safety plan implementation</p> <p>Completed CBO user manuals</p> <p>Meeting Minutes Progress review meetings and Progress reports</p>
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³ Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlined in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.



Output 2.1.1 Strengthened local government capacity to effectively develop risk analysis considering exposure and vulnerability to various climate-related hazards, including health emergencies, and multi-sectoral impact analysis, as well as risk-informed theories of change for strategic planning and budgeting for local development

<p>Indicator 2.2.1 Availability of training material on using risk assessment tools for water safety and security and disaster risk reduction Baseline: Training materials are available but need to be reviewed and updated Planned Target: Training material package updated and printed</p>	<p>Supported the National Water Supply and Drainage Board to develop and translate (into both local languages) a training guide on groundwater recharging in rural water supply schemes. 40 engineers, technical officers and development officers trained on the guide.</p>	<p>Achieved the target</p>	<p>Meeting Minute progress reports, workshop reports</p>
<p>Indicator 2.2.2 # of government officers/development officers that have received an advanced level training on using risk assessment tools for water safety and security and disaster risk reduction Baseline:0 Planned Target: 100 (cumulative)</p>	<p>330 Development Officers (270 Sinhala medium and 66 Tamil medium) attached to the Department of Community Water Supply have been trained on risk assessment tools for water safety and security and disaster risk reduction</p>	<p>Exceeded the target</p>	<p>Training records</p>

Output 2.1.2: Strengthened capacities of local government and local communities/community-based water committees (CBOs) in better planning and management of community managed water schemes to ensure drinking water supply in rural areas, particularly in disaster prone areas to build resilience against the adverse effects of climate change

<p>Indicator 2.1.2 Availability of tested models on climate-resilient water supply systems that promote water safety and security Baseline: Models on climate-resilient water supply systems not available Planned target (year 1): Consultative and stakeholder workshops to develop models on climate-resilient water safety plans Planned target (year 2): Development and implementation of models on climate-</p>	<p>Two model projects on Managed Aquifer Recharge for rural and urban water supply schemes were implemented in dry areas as a climate-resilient option. Solar-powered water pumping was tested with a scenario analysis of solar systems, development of design specifications and an operation and maintenance manual, and feasibility assessments.</p>	<p>Achieved the target</p>	<p>Documentation of Climate-resilient Water safety plans Policy review documents Stakeholder consultative workshops</p>
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<p>resilient water safety planning in different climatic zones Planned target (year 3): Development and implementation of the monitoring and auditing systems for climate-resilient water safety plans.</p>	<p>National guidelines for the auditing of rural water supply schemes was developed, validated, printed and disseminated among CBOs.</p>		
<p>Indicator 2.2.2: Government policies, strategies and national action plans include climate resilience and DRR aspects Baseline: Climate resilient WASH needs to be included in policies/strategies and action plans Planned target (year 1): Stakeholder workshops conducted. Planned target (year 2): Policy review and recommendations made to integrate climate resilience WASH into the Drinking Water policy. Planned target (year 3): Integration of climate resilience WASH into the Drinking Water policy.</p>	<p>A national level workshop to review the drinking water policy was conducted.</p> <p>A policy review was conducted for the groundwater section and provided recommendations related to Managed Aquifer Recharging, groundwater management to be included in the water policy, the water policy, and other multisectoral water related policies.</p> <p>Climate actions and climate resilient aspects of water supply systems aligned to the Nationally Determined Contributions of the drinking water sector were included in the draft policy.</p>		



iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned

This project contributed to strengthening the capacity of key government agencies in the rural sector and introducing model projects on climate-resilient water safety and security plans. This initiative provided opportunities for CBOs to take community-led actions to mitigate future risks and adapt to the adverse effects, mainly in addressing issues of water scarcity and water demand. Protection of catchments of drinking water sources has become challenging due to the absence of local definitions and land demarcations, gaps in law implementation and human intrusion. Reduction of catchment areas directly impact groundwater recharging and depletion of water sources during dry periods. The initiation of complementary interventions at multiple levels, such as through provincial level bylaws and community participation in rural development societies, are needed to sustain results achieved.

For water source protection, the establishment of the village development societies in the province enables stronger action to preserve the water sources in their communities. Development of provincial level policy on water source protection required sectoral (inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral) and inter-agency coordination within the sector.

The number of model projects (e.g., groundwater recharging and solarization of water pumping at community-based water supply schemes) and approaches tested with government partners at national and sub-national levels provided opportunities to integrate community-level perspectives and understand the challenges and opportunities for further development and scale up. A multisectoral approach for piloting ideas, approaches, and technologies is more appropriate. Further, the leadership of government agencies in such innovations and piloting contributes to system strengthening, evidence generation, efficiency, and capacity building at multiple levels for future scale up using government funds. These initiatives contributed to mobilizing government resources (human and financial resources) for the installation of solar systems, groundwater recharging and scale up. Further investment in these initiatives triggered relevant line ministries to allocate government funds and report on the progress towards achieving Nationally Determined Contributions.

To foster effective, inclusive, and participatory youth engagement in decision-making and policy development processes, it is essential to provide them with adequate education on the policy development process and relevant aspects to ensure meaningful participation. Moreover, it is important to involve youth from different ethnicities, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds to reflect the diversity and needs of the youth population.

Under the CC-DRR initiative, the strengthening of the coordination network between the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and the Disaster Management Center led to more coordinated CC-DRR programmes at national and divisional levels. The Ministry ensures child participation throughout the entire DRR process, while the Disaster Management Center provides technical expertise, including on child-centred risk assessment and development of risk mitigation programmes. Stronger coordination and collaboration resulted in the integration of nine child-led risk mitigation programmes in the Disaster Management Center action plan during 2023 and



demonstrated the importance of bringing together key partners in achieving results at-scale. The CC-DRR training manual for Child Rights Promotion Officers was finalised and approved in 2023 and will pave the way for increased sustainability of this programme in the longer term.

Through lessons learned on the importance of engaging children in DRR decision-making, UNICEF successfully advocated for and facilitated the integration of CC-DRR as a key approach in the National Disaster Management Plan 2023 – 2030, which was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 7 February 2024 to be tabled at Parliament for approval (link to the plan: https://www.dmc.gov.lk/images/pdfs/NDMP_V2_withCoverV2.pdf).

iv) A Specific Story

Link to the story: [WASH - Sri Lanka Children's engagement in water source protection in the UVA province - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Specific achievement:

The first handbook on ‘Gender, Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Disaster’ was launched by the Disaster Management Center (DMC) with the technical assistance of the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), financial support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia (DFAT). The handbook provides practical guidance to policymakers, response staff of the Disaster Management Centre and community groups to plan, coordinate, implement, monitor, and evaluate essential actions for a gender equitable disaster response.

Source:

- (1) <https://www.dailymirror.lk/print/caption-story/Handbook-on-Gender-Sexual-violence-launched/110-243366>
- (2) <https://island.lk/addressing-gender-based-violence-in-disasters-and-emergency-situations/>

Problem / Challenge faced: Describe the specific problem or challenge faced by the subject of your story (this could be a problem experienced by an individual, community or government).

A key hurdle encountered during the project implementation was the unexpected delay in the development of the handbook. This was mainly due to various mobility restrictions imposed by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the country’s economic crisis affected access to essential goods and services such as petrol and basic commodities. The community was not willing to participate in any other intervention besides their daily work, worsening delays. Consequently, the capacity-building programmes also suffered from setbacks.

Programme Interventions: How was the problem or challenge addressed through the Programme interventions?

The impact of the challenges was mitigated by using technology. The team communicated and consulted through online platforms such as Zoom, Google, and WhatsApp. The handbook's content was verified by experts and providers in the sector and tested by DMC officials in the field. The handbook became a vital training resource at the sub-national level.

Result (if applicable): Describe the observable *change* that has occurred so far because of the Programme interventions. For example, how did community life change or how was the government better able to deal with the initial problem?

Despite the challenges faced, the project team used different approaches to complete the resource guide, which was crucial for enhancing the abilities of the officers and community. The book supports the implementation of the Policy Framework and National Plan of Action to address Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) in Sri Lanka (2016- 2020), launched by the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment. Moreover, the project helped to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and experiences that were used to develop national-level policy frameworks such as the National Disaster Management Plan, National Action Plan on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2024-2028), and others.

Lessons Learned: What did you (and/or other partners) learn from this situation that has helped inform and/or improve Programme (or other) interventions?

The project faced several unforeseen challenges that required flexibility, perseverance, and creativity from the team. The team also had to communicate effectively with various stakeholders, including policymakers, to ensure the alignment and durability of the project outcomes.
