

SALFORD RESEARCH CONTRIBUTING TO CONFLICT MITIGATION AND POST-DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION IN SRI LANKA



A team of researchers from the Research Institute for the Built & Human Environment are working on a range of activities that will contribute to conflict mitigation and recovery in Sri Lanka.

These activities are planned in support of the European Commission, UK Department for International Development and the World Bank's objective of supporting conflict affected communities in Sri Lanka, in particular helping Internally Displaced People (IDPs), returnees and host communities. Infrastructure in the North and East of Sri Lanka has suffered from damage and neglect during the war, and from an absence of new investment.

When massive development projects are launched there is a great demand for technically trained manpower. The University of Salford research team is promoting a community-based approach to acquiring construction skills, assisting the process of social reintegration while alleviating poverty.



The problems that the team have encountered in Sri Lanka are manifold, including:

- > Ineffective, inadequate and conflict insensitive community infrastructure development and reconstruction
- > Inadequate representation of vulnerable groups in the infrastructure development process (e.g., women, IDPs, ethnic minorities)
- > Lack of integration of gender considerations into conflict prevention
- > Need to empower women during post-conflict recovery and mainstreaming women into decision-making and vulnerability reduction
- > Need to promote ethnically sensitive reconstruction that encourages inter-ethnic coexistence within communities
- > Informal non-state actors with inadequate construction skills and knowledge to support and deliver infrastructure development and reconstruction



- > Inability of non-state actors to influence policies and plans that affect local infrastructure development and reconstruction
- > Inadequate capacity and understanding among state actors on community infrastructure development and reconstruction requirements and
- > Inadequate inter-community participation in infrastructure development and reconstruction activities

Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga and Dr. Richard Haigh, leaders of the University research team, recently launched and are the editors of The International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment (www.emeraldinsight.com/ijdrbe.htm), to capture and disseminate knowledge pertaining to the reconstruction of conflict affected communities.

This journal (the only one of its kind) aims to develop the skills and knowledge of the built environment professions in strategic and practical aspects of disaster (both natural and man-made, including conflicts) preparedness, rehabilitation and reconstruction to mitigate the effects of disasters nationally and internationally.

The journal provides a unique forum for novel enquiries into the development and application of new and emerging practices as a source of innovation to challenge current practices, promote the exchange of ideas between researchers, educators, practitioners and policy makers, and to influence disaster prevention, mitigation, response and reconstruction policies and practices.

In addition to these specific activities, the Salford team, which includes academic staff, researchers and PhD candidates, is engaged in a range of other disaster management related research initiatives with partners in Nepal, Bangladesh, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, Japan and the USA.

If you require further information about the team and its research, please contact Richard at: r.p.haigh@salford.ac.uk or Dilanthi at: r.d.g.amaratunga@salford.ac.uk