

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

Academics

help pave the way towards

reconstruction

and

rehabilitation

in

Sri Lanka





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The May/June issue of RISE reported on Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga and Dr Richard Haigh, leaders of the University’s Disaster Management Research Team, and their efforts on a range of activities that will contribute to conflict mitigation and recovery in war torn Sri Lanka.

Dilanthi and Richard have recently been back in Sri Lanka at a major seminar entitled ‘Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of the Northern and Eastern Provinces’ held in Colombo, where Dilanthi led a session on ‘Social Challenges of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction’ and Richard led a session on ‘Capacity building for rehabilitation and reconstruction’. Other presenters included the Minister of Rehabilitation and Development, Director General of National Physical Planning Department and Executive Director, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka.

The Chamber of Construction Industry (CCI), Sri Lanka, the Apex Body representing every stakeholder of the domestic construction industry, hosted the seminar to create a public dialogue on all aspects of rehabilitation and reconstruction laying emphasis on the social challenges and the obstacles that will be encountered in capacity building and encouraging community participation. The seminar was designed to initiate a broader dialogue on the subject of rehabilitation and reconstruction with a large number of highly respected individuals from different backgrounds coming together to enlighten those who are less informed, by bringing with them a wealth of exposure and experience. Sri Lanka’s almost 30 year old civil war has left desolation in its wake resulting in loss of life, human suffering, and mass displacement of people while bringing the economy virtually to its knees, not to mention the destruction caused to the environment. The industrial production apparatus has broken down. The social fabric has been torn to shreds and infrastructure networks have been wiped out while the precarious condition of its institutions makes it difficult to rapidly implement conventional long term development programs.

During their visit to Sri Lanka, Dilanthi and Richard created formal links with the Vice-Chancellor of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka, which is situated within affected areas and also conducted many training sessions and workshops. Several research initiatives in disaster management and conflict mitigation too were discussed along with major NGOs, government organisations and universities.

In particular, ‘Post-conflict Reconstruction for Ethnic Sri Lankan Communities Returning Innovative Beneficial Effects (PRESCRIBE)’ research initiative was launched to enhance the capacity of humanitarian agencies and higher education institutions to instil ethnic sensitivity within post-conflict reconstruction projects. The University of Salford’s Dr Chaminda Pathirage and David Baldry from the School of the Built Environment are also involved in this initiative. Richard and Dilanthi along with their colleagues in the School of the Built Environment at the University continue to work very closely with the Sri Lankan authorities in contributing towards the establishment of coherent and consistent links between relief, rehabilitation and development.

If you would like to know more about Dilanthi and Richard’s work contact them at: r.d.g.amaratunga@salford.ac.uk or r.p.haigh@salford.ac.uk

