



- USAID partnerships with the private sector have created sources of income for over 30,000 people.
- USAID interventions have helped reunite 5,000 children with their families.
- Since September 2013, nearly 4,000 people have received legal assistance — including assistance for gender-based violence — through USAID support.

Photo Credit: ZOA

Country Profile

Sri Lanka, an island nation located along major maritime trade routes in the Indian Ocean, is currently experiencing steady economic growth following 26 years of conflict and a disastrous tsunami in 2004. USAID works with the Government and people of Sri Lanka to help the country sustain this growth while ensuring all citizens enjoy its benefits.

USAID prioritizes programs that bolster economic growth, extend critical social services to local communities, and strengthen the ability of local organizations to advocate for citizen needs and sustain these vital services.

OUR WORK

Located off the southeastern tip of India, Sri Lanka is roughly the size of West Virginia with a population of over 20 million. The United States has worked with Sri Lanka since 1956 to help all communities across the country improve their living conditions and reduce the impacts of natural and man-made disasters.

Years of war and a tsunami left the country in crisis. The war displaced over 300,000 people from their homes during the final phases alone, in addition to disabling many, damaging infrastructure and paralyzing the economy. Five years after the end of the war, post-war issues related to gender-based violence, child abuse, youth, war widows and female heads of households still pose a threat to the social fabric of the country. As such, USAID continues to support a variety of social services that address these issues.

Civil society plays a vital role in identifying and advocating for citizen needs in Sri Lanka — factors essential for long-term peace and development in the country. USAID initiatives are helping to build a robust civil society that can engage with local communities.

Sri Lanka achieved middle-income status in 2010 and a gross domestic product growth rate of over 7 percent. However, the country's growth is not evenly distributed among the island's nine provinces, resulting in regional inequalities. USAID works in these economically lagging regions to spark greater economic growth.

WORKING IN CRISES AND CONFLICT

Five years after the war ended in 2009, people have returned home to the former conflict areas in Sri Lanka's North and East to face post-war issues. USAID supports a variety of social services including psycho-social support, assistance reuniting children with their families, rehabilitation services for people with disabilities, skills training for youth, and employment opportunities for war widows and female heads of households. Whereas during the immediate aftermath of the war and tsunami USAID supported international and local partners that provided these services, USAID's strategy has evolved in this post-crisis and post-war era to focus on *sustainability* of these services. USAID, with its partner organizations, is in the process of transferring management of many of these services to the Government of Sri Lanka and strengthening local organizations' fundraising capabilities and management skills to ensure continued service delivery as donor funding decreases.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

USAID strengthens the ability of local organizations to extend much-needed services to communities, advocate for citizen needs and sustain these services long after donor resources are phased out of the country. To help ensure effective program implementation as well as the sustainability of local organizations, USAID provides management support, organizational development, proposal development, financial and project management, and monitoring and evaluation training. USAID also builds the capacity of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka and the national legal aid provider, the Legal Aid Commission, to further the efficacy of the legal system and the administration of justice. The program provides legal education to judges, lawyers and non-judicial court officials, links universities and civil society organizations to develop and propose policy and legal reforms that respond to citizens' needs in the current environment, and provides legal remedies to members of society who lack access to such services due to social and economic barriers.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TRADE

The country reports stark regional inequalities. For example, the capital, Colombo, and its suburban areas in the Western Province accounted for 43 percent of GDP in 2012, while the former Northern conflict zone and one of the country's largest provinces, Uva, accounted for less than 5 percent of GDP. To spark much-needed economic growth and promote stability, especially in economically lagging regions, USAID forges partnerships with the private sector. Partnerships with small-, medium- and large-scale private companies in the dairy, poultry, horticulture, leather products, handicraft, pottery and food sectors are creating employment opportunities, promoting investments and improving the business climate in these regions. USAID initiatives help bring economic stability to war widows, female heads of households, the disabled and resettled families by providing financial assistance, equipment, tools and training while promoting market access.

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U.S. assistance helps make it possible for children to be back home with their families. Photo credit: Save the Children



U.S.-supported rainwater harvesting systems help rural, drought-prone schools access water in Sri Lanka. Photo credit: Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum