

# 20 YEARS AFTER: THEN AND NOW

## AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF THE STATUS OF COMMUNITIES RELOCATED IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2004 INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI IN SRI LANKA

### BACKGROUND

The 26<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, which killed at least 225,000 people across a dozen countries. Many more people were displaced due to the massive damage sustained on buildings and infrastructure, and a need to relocate people away from tsunami prone areas. Since 2004, relocated communities in Sri Lanka have lived their lives in relocation sites and have encountered and coped with many socio-economic, political and psychological challenges. Studies revealed that some have managed to flourish in the new settlements by employing various adaptation and enhancement measures, while some have failed to survive, prompting them to leave the relocation settlements in search of a better life. Nevertheless, longitudinal studies regarding the relocated communities are limited. As a result, there exists a significant gap in our understanding of the status of the relocated and regarding the manner in which their lives have progressed. This 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary is an important opportunity to delve into the lives of relocated communities and learn from their experiences to inform future relocation policy and practice.

### OBJECTIVES

- (a) To explore the status of community formation and social cohesion amongst the relocated communities
- (b) To understand the status of livelihoods and social infrastructure restoration initiatives
- (c) To comprehend the gender related impacts of post-tsunami relocation
- (d) To examine the impact exerted by the relocation process on vulnerable groups such as children, disabled and elderly
- (e) To ascertain the status of Tsunami Early Warning Mechanisms and preparedness in Sri Lanka
- (f) To understand the long-term impacts of post-Indian Ocean Tsunami reconstruction
- (g) To comprehend the issues and challenges that have emerged from the relocation process a long time after relocation
- (h) To understand the coping and adaptation strategies employed by the relocated communities to overcome the challenges



### PROJECT TEAM

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### STUDY POPULATION

The study aims to collect data from four groups who have been closely involved in the relocation process:

1. Original tsunami settlers
2. Original settlers who moved back to the coast
3. New settlers
4. Host communities

### PLANNED OUTPUTS

- 2 high quality journal papers
- 2 presentations at internationally recognized conferences
- Policy brief / position paper
- Dissemination round table with government officials and policy makers, NGO and INGO sector, and relevant UN agencies

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