

# Evaluation of the Complex Emergency Operation and Assessment of Unmet Needs in Sri Lanka

## Table of Contents

<b>Roadmap</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
Purpose	5
Scope	5
Objective	5
Background	6
Genesis of the Crisis	6
Nature and Scope of the SLRCS Response	6
Map of Humanitarian Intervention Areas by IFRC in Sri Lanka, 2022-2023	7
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Evaluation of SLRCS Interventions in Sri Lanka</b>	<b>9</b>
School Feeding Program	9
Multipurpose Cash Grant Assistance	12
Conditional Cash Grants for Livelihood and Social Protection	14
SLRCS's Conditional Grant Intervention	14
Learning and Adaptation	16
Reflections on Suitability	16
Enhancing Cash Grants Assistance in Sri Lanka: Insights from IFRC's Regional CVA Coordinator	18
Conditional vs. Unconditional Cash	18
Implementation Experience in Sri Lanka	19
Capacity Building and Preparedness	20
Strategic Planning and Future Initiatives	20
Challenges and Learning from Implementation	21
Reflections	21
<b>Unmet Needs Survey Outputs on Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods</b>	<b>21</b>
Access to food and nutrition	23
Indebtedness	25
Discussion: Food security, Livelihoods and Nutrition	27
<b>Health</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Evaluation of SLRCS Interventions in Sri Lanka</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Unmet Needs Assessment Output on Health</b>	<b>29</b>
Self-reported overall health	29
Access to healthcare services	29
Reason for not accessing service (selected indicators)	31
Reason for not accessing service (selected indicators)	32
Discussion: Health	32
<b>Protection, Gender, and Inclusion</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Evaluation of SLRCS Interventions in Sri Lanka</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Unmet Needs Assessment Output on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion</b>	<b>35</b>
Safety and security	35

Discussion: Protection, Gender, and Inclusion	36
<b>Partners and Stakeholders</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>World Vision</b>	<b>37</b>
Response to Economic Crisis	38
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>38</b>
UNICEF Key Areas of Focus	39
<b>Save the Children</b>	<b>39</b>
Response to the economic crisis	39
<b>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</b>	<b>40</b>
Immediate Humanitarian Assistance and Socio-Economic Recovery	41
Water Systems and Management	41
<b>World Food Program</b>	<b>42</b>
Operational Context and Focus Areas	42
WFP Strategic Plan (2023-2027)	43
Collaboration between SLRCS and WFP on Anticipatory Action	43
<b>Challenges and Plausible Areas for Future Collaboration</b>	<b>44</b>
Reflections	45
<b>Evaluating SLRCS Emergency Response through the Evaluating Humanitarian Action Criteria (EHA)</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Relevance/Appropriateness</b>	<b>47</b>
Understanding Community Needs	47
Cultural Sensitivity and Engagement	48
Feedback and Adaptability	48
Resource Allocation	48
Educational and Nutritional Support	48
Health Initiatives	48
Reflections	49
<b>Connectedness</b>	<b>49</b>
Connection to Long-Term Development Goals	49
Community Empowerment and Sustainability	49
Feedback and Community Engagement	49
Challenges and Strategic Adjustments	49
Future Strategic Directions	50
Collaborative Efforts for Broader Impact	50
Reflections	50
<b>Coherence</b>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Alignment with International Humanitarian Standards	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Coordination with International Bodies	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Strategic Partnerships for Enhanced Impact	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Reflections	52
<b>Coverage</b>	<b>52</b>
Geographic Reach	52
Sectoral Coverage	53
Challenges and Adaptations	53
Reflections	53
<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>53</b>
Cost-Effectiveness and Resource Utilization	54
Strategic Resource Allocation	54
Recommendations for Future Efficiency Improvements	54

Reflections	54
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>54</b>
Achievement of Planned Objectives	55
Challenges and Adaptations	55
Community Impact and Feedback	55
Strategic Recommendations and Future Directions	55
Reflections	55
<b>Impact</b>	<b>55</b>
Societal Stability and Community Resilience	56
Health and Nutrition	56
Economic Empowerment	56
Educational Support	56
Community Engagement and Feedback	56
Future Directions and Strategic Recommendations	56
Reflections	56
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>57</b>
Sustainability of Interventions	57
Building Resilience	57
<b>Evaluation Criteria Rating</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Challenges and Recommendations for Future Interventions</b>	<b>58</b>
Reflections	58
<b><i>A Triple Nexus Approach to Protracted Crisis</i></b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Triple Nexus Conceptual Framework</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Triple Nexus Framework Applied to the Unmet Needs in Sri Lanka</b>	<b>59</b>
Conceptual Framework Integration	60
<b>Triple Nexus Analytical Framework Implementation</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Moving Forward with Future Interventions</b>	<b>60</b>
<b><i>Theory of Change (ToC) - Triple Nexus Interventions</i></b>	<b>61</b>
<b><i>Lessons Learned</i></b>	<b>63</b>
Red Cross Awareness and Advocacy	63
Training and Capacity Building	63
Land Ownership Assistance	64
Advancement in Agriculture	64
Funding for Branches	64
Expanded Emphasis on Regular Programming	64
Multipurpose Cash Grant - Sustainable Financial Support	65
Expanded Youth Engagement Strategy	65
Expanded Partnerships	66
Leveraging Local Religious Institutions	66
Involvement Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	67
Sustainable Implementation and Outreach	67
Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT)	67
Beneficiary Selection Integrity	68
Long-term Development Focus	69
Climate Resilience	69
Post-Conflict and Peacebuilding	69
Implementing Clean Drinking Water Projects	70
Humanitarian Coordination Gaps	70
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>71</b>

Food security, nutrition, and livelihoods _____	71
Community engagement _____	71
Health _____	71
Community health _____	72
Protection _____	72
Physical safety and security _____	72
Child protection _____	72
Sexual and gender-based violence _____	73
People living with Disabilities _____	73
Recommendations for IFRC operational strategy _____	74
Food Security and Livelihoods _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Education _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Health and Care _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Protection, gender, and inclusion _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Migration _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Disaster Preparedness _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Triple Nexus Recommendations for Future Interventions in Sri Lanka _____	75
Food Security, Nutrition, and Livelihoods _____	75
Health _____	76
Protection _____	76
Operational Strategy for IFRC and SLRCS _____	77
Education and Youth Engagement _____	78
Youth Engagement _____	78
Monitoring and Evaluation, and Financial Strategies _____	79
<b>Strategic Recommendations for IFRC and SLRCS HQ _____</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Operational Recommendations for SLRCS Branches _____</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Recommendations for Donor Advocacy _____</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Recommendations for Protracted Crisis _____</b>	<b>81</b>
<b><i>Conclusion _____</i></b>	<b><i>82</i></b>
<b>Unmet Needs Assessment _____</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Targeting the Most Vulnerable _____</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Operational Capacity _____</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Preparedness _____</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Donor Engagement _____</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Integration with Social Security Systems _____</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Strategic and Technical Guidance _____</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Presence of the Federation _____</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Evaluating Response Effectiveness _____</b>	<b>87</b>
<b><i>Reflections on the Evaluation and Data Collection _____</i></b>	<b><i>87</i></b>
<b>Evaluation Methodology and Data Collection Approaches _____</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Insights from Case Studies _____</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Evaluation Criteria and Analytical Techniques _____</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Ethical Considerations _____</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Challenges and Recommendations _____</b>	<b>88</b>

# Roadmap

Section	Content
<b>Executive Summary</b>	Overview of the economic crisis and its impact. Summary of key findings from the evaluation. Main recommendations for future strategies.
<b>Introduction</b>	Background of the economic crisis in Sri Lanka. Purpose and scope of the evaluation.
<b>Background</b>	Objectives of the evaluation and assessment. Detailed genesis of the crisis. Overview of the SLRCS response.
<b>Methodology</b>	Nature and scope of interventions by SLRCS and IFRC. Description of the mixed-methods approach. Data collection techniques (field visits, interviews, focus groups, surveys).
<b>Unmet Needs Assessment</b>	Analytical framework and evaluation criteria. Findings on food security, nutrition, and livelihoods. Assessment of ongoing effects of the crisis. Analysis of household income changes and indebtedness.
<b>Sector-Specific Evaluations</b>	<b>Food Security, Nutrition, and Livelihoods</b> Short-term and long-term interventions. Impact of school feeding programs. <b>Health</b> Community health interventions. Access to healthcare services and medical needs. <b>Protection, Gender, and Inclusion</b> Safety and security issues. Impact on women, children, and vulnerable groups.
<b>Partners and Stakeholders</b>	Overview of strategic initiatives by key partners (World Vision, UNICEF, Save the Children). Collaborative efforts and coordination challenges.
<b>Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Criteria</b>	<b>Relevance/Appropriateness</b> Assessment of how well interventions addressed the needs. <b>Connectedness</b> Linkages to long-term development goals. <b>Coherence</b> Alignment with international standards and coordination. <b>Coverage</b> Geographic and sectoral reach of interventions. <b>Efficiency</b> Cost-effectiveness and resource utilization. <b>Effectiveness</b> Achievement of planned objectives. <b>Impact</b> Societal stability and community resilience. <b>Sustainability</b> Long-term viability of interventions.
<b>Triple Nexus</b>	Overview of the Triple Nexus conceptual framework. Integration of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. Application of the Triple Nexus approach in Sri Lanka.
<b>Theory of Change</b>	Detailed Theory of Change framework for Triple Nexus implementation. Inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and assumptions. Risks and mitigation strategies.
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	Community Involvement Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Building Resource Management Cultural Sensitivity Operational Challenges Strategic Planning Sustainability Education and Health Integration
<b>Recommendations</b>	Strategic recommendations for SLRCS and IFRC. Specific recommendations for different sectors (food security, health, protection). Operational recommendations for enhancing future interventions. Insights on integrating humanitarian response with social protection mechanisms. Recommendations for future operations and strategic planning.
<b>Conclusion</b>	Summary of key findings and recommendations. Final reflections on the evaluation process and outcomes.
<b>Annexes</b>	Annex I - Context of Sri Lanka Economic Crisis Annex II - Overview of the Emergency Operation Annex III - Literature Review Annex IV - Methodology Annex V - Case Studies Annex VI - KII Questions for SLRCS Branches Annex VII - FGD Questions Volunteers Annex VIII - KII Questions for SLRCS NHQ and IFRC Annex IX - KII Questions for External Agencies Annex X - Case Studies - Questions for Affected and Reached Population Groups Annex XI - Kobo Survey Needs Assessment 2024 Annex XII - Unmet Needs Focus Group Discussion Instructions Annex XIII - Unmet Needs KII Format 2024 Annex XIV - Participants Annex XV - Summary KIIs Needs Assessment

# Introduction

This report presents the final evaluation and assessment of the Complex Emergency Operation and the Humanitarian Needs in Sri Lanka following the economic crisis of 2022. The economic collapse in Sri Lanka has led to severe challenges, including widespread poverty, food insecurity, and significant disruptions to public services. Firstly, this report evaluates the humanitarian response initiated by the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), aimed at addressing these challenges. Secondly, the report examines, through a humanitarian needs assessment, the unmet needs of Sri Lanka's protracted economic crisis.

The overall aim is to capture lessons learned and recommendations that will inform the strategic direction and longer-term programmes of the SLRCS and IFRC, identify opportunities to link with social protection mechanisms of the government, as well as guide future operations and network arising from similar economic crisis contexts and protracted crisis.

## Purpose

The primary purpose of this evaluation is twofold. Firstly, it aims to assess the relevance, appropriateness, and outcomes of the humanitarian interventions carried out under the MDRLK014 Sri Lanka Complex Emergency operation. Secondly, it seeks to evaluate the ongoing and unmet humanitarian needs arising from Sri Lanka's prolonged economic crisis. This dual-purpose approach ensures that both the effectiveness of past interventions and the current needs of the population are comprehensively understood.

## Scope

The scope of the evaluation encompasses several key areas:

- **Performance Evaluation:** This involves assessing the response strategies and implementation by the SLRCS. The evaluation examines how effectively SLRCS has responded to the crisis and the impact of their interventions on the affected populations. The emergency response to the economic crisis will be evaluated against the Evaluating Humanitarian Action Criteria (EHA).
- **Needs Assessment:** This aspect focuses on identifying populations that continue to be marginalized by the crisis and beyond. The evaluation aims to highlight areas where ongoing assistance is required and to identify probable future interventions suitable for protracted crisis within the framework of the Triple Nexus linking humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts to better cope with resilience of the population to crisis as well as implement sustainable mechanisms.
- **Geographic and Demographic Coverage:** The evaluation and assessment cover across various regions and communities within Sri Lanka, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the crisis's impact on different population groups, including urban, rural, and estate households. Gender considerations are also included as part of the literature review included as annex.

## Objective

The objectives of the evaluation and assessment are multifaceted:

- **Strategic Recommendations:** To capture lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the strategic direction and long-term operations and programs of the SLRCS and IFRC. These insights are intended to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of future interventions.

- **Linkages with Social Protection Mechanisms:** To identify opportunities for integrating the humanitarian response with government social protection mechanisms. This aims to create synergies that can enhance the overall impact of both humanitarian and government-led initiatives.
- **Guidance for Future Operations:** To offer clear recommendations for future operations of the National Society and the IFRC network, particularly in contexts like the current economic crisis. The evaluation seeks to improve the quality and accountability of humanitarian efforts by documenting best practices and lessons learned.
- **Comprehensive Understanding:** To provide a thorough analysis of both past interventions and current needs, ensuring that the evaluation serves as a robust basis for strategic improvement and sustained humanitarian engagement.

## Background

The economic collapse in Sri Lanka in 2022 triggered a complex crisis characterized by severe challenges, including widespread poverty, food insecurity, and significant disruptions to public services. The situation was marked by prohibitive costs for essential goods, doubled poverty rates, and ongoing debt restructuring efforts. Although some stabilization has occurred, such as increased remittances and tourism, the country's most vulnerable populations continue to suffer.

### *Genesis of the Crisis*

The crisis in Sri Lanka was precipitated by long-standing economic mismanagement, a significant external debt burden, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors culminated in severe shortages of essential commodities, hyperinflation, and a sharp increase in poverty levels. The government's response included measures such as direct cash transfer programs and structural reforms aimed at regaining macroeconomic stability. Despite these efforts, the economic challenges remain profound, particularly for daily wage earners and marginalized communities.

### *Nature and Scope of the SLRCS Response*

In response to the economic crisis, SLRCS launched an emergency appeal targeting 500,000 people across 100,000 households. The initiative, supported by the IFRC, aimed to mitigate the severe impacts of civil unrest and food insecurity exacerbated by the crisis.

The SLRCS branches utilized a multi-faceted approach to emergency aid, encompassing monetary assistance, food security initiatives, and essential supplies distribution. This approach provided some immediate relief but also aimed to stabilize the affected communities in the short term. The inclusion of sanitary products and school supplies was particularly noteworthy, as these items are often overlooked in traditional aid programs but are essential for maintaining health and education continuity during crises.

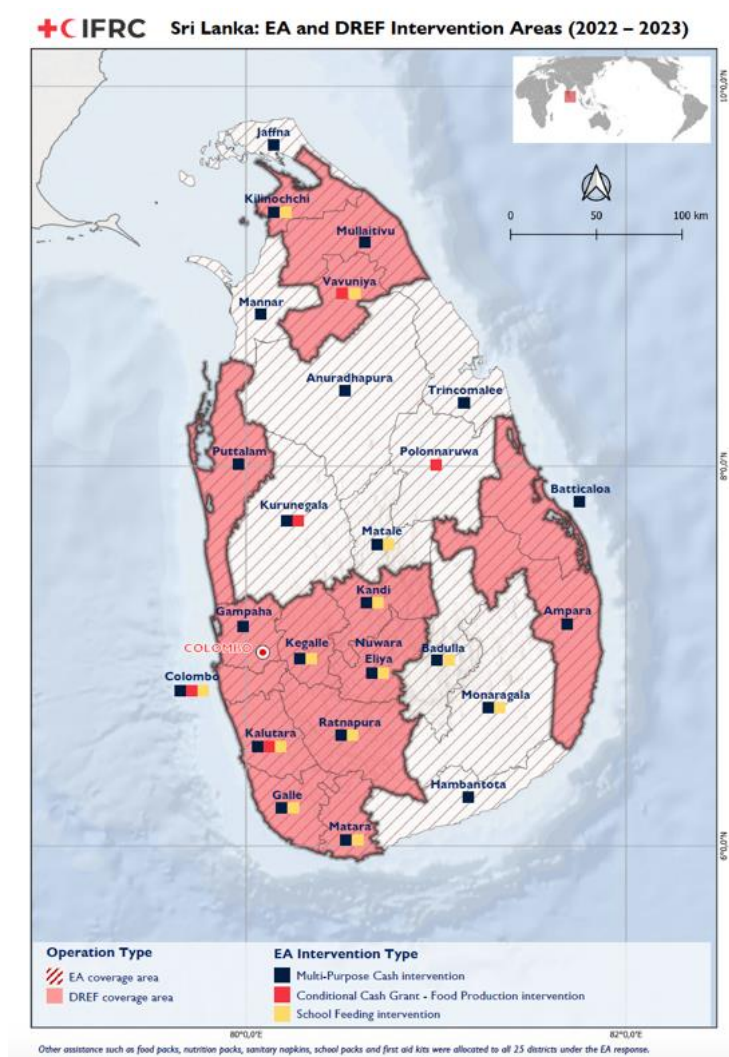
Across various regions, volunteers participated in distributing cash grants, food kits, sanitary products, and educational support materials. These initiatives were addressing immediate needs and alleviating the effects of the economic crisis on vulnerable populations.

The direct aid provided immediate relief and was critical during peak crisis periods, as evidenced by the positive feedback on health and education programs, although a common request for continuation of the efforts. The initiatives provided a lifeline during economic hardships, as seen in the e.g., improved school attendance. The immediate impact of the interventions was primarily positive, with communities expressing appreciation for the aid provided. However, the feedback also pointed to areas needing improvement, particularly in terms of reach and the adequacy of aid. The feedback from communities highlighted a critical demand for long-term solutions that address the root causes of their vulnerabilities.

This includes economic empowerment programs, educational opportunities, and sustainable healthcare initiatives that go beyond immediate disaster response.

There is a clear need for future emergency response strategies to consider how interventions can smoothly transition to recovery and building resilience. This involves establishing clear linkages between the required short-term relief with long-term developmental goals – of not only the SLRCS, but also the government, ensuring that emergency responses lay the groundwork for sustainable recovery and resilience against future crises.

### *Map of Humanitarian Intervention Areas by IFRC in Sri Lanka, 2022-2023*



## Methodology

The evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, appropriateness, and outcomes of SLRCS humanitarian interventions under the MDRLK014 Sri Lanka Complex Emergency operation. Additionally, it sought to identify ongoing and unmet humanitarian needs resulting from Sri Lanka's prolonged economic crisis.



The evaluation utilized a mixed-methods approach integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive analysis of intervention outcomes and ongoing needs. Data collection included field visits, interviews with stakeholders, focus group discussions, surveys, and case studies. This methodological framework ensured a robust analysis of the intervention outcomes and the identification of ongoing unmet needs.

Aspect	Component	Description
<b>Evaluation Objectives and Scope</b>	<i>Performance Evaluation</i>	Assessing the response strategies and implementation by the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) and the IFRC.
	<i>Needs Assessment</i>	Identifying populations still marginalized by the crisis and areas requiring continued assistance.
<b>Methodological Approach</b>	<i>Field Visits and Observations</i>	Conducted at intervention locations.
	<i>Interviews</i>	Engaged with stakeholders including government officials, partner organizations, and affected populations.
	<i>Focus Groups and Surveys</i>	Gathered data from community households.
	<i>Case Studies</i>	Documented personal narratives and intervention impacts.
<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<i>Relevance and Appropriateness</i>	Addressing the needs and conditions of affected populations.
	<i>Outcomes</i>	Impact on target populations.
	<i>Adherence to Principles</i>	Aligning actions with ethical standards.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<i>Reports</i>	Inception report, draft, and final report.
	<i>Workshops</i>	To discuss preliminary findings and lessons learned.
<b>Timeline</b>	<i>Timeline</i>	The evaluation spanned 60 working days from March to June 2024, informing the strategic direction and long-term programs of the SLRCS and IFRC.
<b>Research Questions</b>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	How effective were the interventions in addressing immediate needs?
	<i>Sustainability</i>	Long-term impact on community resilience.
	<i>Community Engagement</i>	Inclusion of affected communities in intervention planning and execution.
<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<i>Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)</i>	Interviews with stakeholders for insights on execution and impacts.
	<i>Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)</i>	Group discussions with affected communities.
	<i>Case Studies</i>	Detailed documentation of specific intervention stories.
<b>Data Analysis</b>	<i>Integration</i>	Combining qualitative and quantitative data.
	<i>Software Tools</i>	SPSS, R for quantitative analysis; NVivo for qualitative data.
	<i>Analytical Techniques</i>	Statistical and thematic analysis for meaningful conclusions.
<b>Ethical Considerations</b>	<i>Informed Consent</i>	Voluntary and confidential participation.
	<i>Privacy</i>	Ensuring data confidentiality and security.
	<i>Cultural Sensitivity</i>	Respecting local customs and sensitivities.
<b>Reporting and Dissemination</b>	<i>Preliminary Findings</i>	Workshops to validate and gather feedback.
	<i>Final Report</i>	Comprehensive findings and recommendations shared with stakeholders.
<b>Advanced Methodological Strategies</b>	<i>Triple Nexus Approach</i>	Integrating humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts.
	<i>Gender Mainstreaming</i>	Ensuring gender-specific impacts are central to analysis.
	<i>Digital Data Collection Tools</i>	Utilizing tools like Kobo and NVivo.
	<i>Feedback Mechanisms</i>	Ensuring continuous stakeholder input.
	<i>Enhanced Sampling Methods</i>	Comprehensive and representative data collection.

Needs Assessment Methodology:

Method	Description
<b>Survey Methodology</b>	Multi-stage stratified survey and 'estates' case study. Stratification based on ethnicity and urban/rural split.
<b>Sampling</b>	Purposeful selection of six districts; random/systemic/convenience sampling at DS/GN/HH levels.
<b>Data Analysis</b>	Data analyzed with R software using multilevel regression models. Comparative analysis with the 2022 needs assessment survey.
<b>Data Collection</b>	Questionnaires developed, translated, and formatted (Kobo platform). Surveyed 550 urban, 829 rural HHs, and 113 estates HHs. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted.
<b>Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)</b>	Four FGDs conducted with purposeful sampling to ensure diverse participation. Semi-structured moderation focusing on food security, livelihoods, health, and protection.
<b>Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)</b>	Eleven KIIs with individuals having informed perspectives on the crisis, including government officials and trade union representatives. Thematic approach with flexibility for spontaneous probing.
<b>Limitations</b>	Not statistically representative of the entire nation. Higher margin of error due to smaller sample sizes. Excludes broader macroeconomic or political considerations.

## Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods

### Evaluation of SLRCS Interventions in Sri Lanka

SLRCS's focus on school feeding programs and educational support was critical, as these interventions directly affected outcomes for children. By ensuring that children remain in school and receive adequate nutrition, these programs help mitigate the socio-economic effects of the crisis. This is particularly significant in regions where educational disruption has lasting impacts on community development and individual economic opportunities.

Multipurpose cash grants were a generic form of aid across multiple regions, providing immediate relief for essential needs such as healthcare, household repairs, as well as agricultural inputs. This assistance was crucial during events like flooding and economic downturns, as it offered flexibility for targeted populations to address their most pressing needs. For instance, in Vavuniya and Puttalam, cash grants helped families quickly recover from flood damages by purchasing necessary supplies to resume farming, which is central to their livelihoods.

Conditional cash grants are financial aid programs aimed at helping individuals and families in low-income situations by providing monetary assistance. These grants are "conditional" because they are given only if recipients meet certain pre-defined criteria or engage in specific behaviors.

### School Feeding Program

The economic crisis in Sri Lanka has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of low-income communities, particularly affecting the nutritional status of children in the estate sectors. In response, SLRCS implemented a school feeding program across 11 districts. This intervention aimed to address immediate food security issues and improve the health outcomes and educational outcomes attendances for children in these regions.

Intervention Details	Description
Geographical Scope	The program targeted 11 districts with significant populations living in estate sectors, including Colombo, Monaragala, and Nuwara Eliya.
Beneficiaries	The program was designed to assist 900 students from the most vulnerable schools in each district, identified through assessments by the SLRCS and local educational authorities.

Implementation Phases	Description
Assessment and Selection	Schools were assessed on various vulnerability criteria, including economic indicators and nutritional needs of students.
Menu Planning and Supplier Engagement	Menus were developed by nutrition experts at the National Headquarters and shared with local branches. Local suppliers, preferably parents or Samurdhi beneficiaries, were engaged to provide meals ensuring community involvement and economic benefit to the families.
Monitoring and Evaluation	A robust monitoring framework was established, involving SLRCS community mobilizers, parents, and teachers to oversee the quality and appropriateness of the meals provided.

1

•

Implementation Challenges	Description
Logistical Challenges	Ensuring timely food delivery and maintaining the quality of meals across diverse and sometimes remote locations posed significant logistical challenges.
Community Engagement	Initially, there was hesitation from some schools and communities due to a lack of understanding of the program's benefits, which required additional outreach and engagement efforts.

---

<sup>1</sup> Samurdhi: The Samurdhi program is a key poverty alleviation initiative in Sri Lanka, aimed at improving the living standards of low-income families through financial assistance, social development programs, and income-generating opportunities. Established in 1995, it focuses on providing welfare payments, community development projects, and support for small-scale enterprises to uplift the socio-economic status of marginalized communities.

Outcomes and Impact	Description
Nutritional Benefits	There was a marked improvement in the nutritional intake among the students, as evidenced by health screenings and improvements in school attendance and performance.
Economic Impact	Engaging local suppliers provided an economic boost to the community, creating a dual benefit of feeding children and supporting local economies.

Lessons Learned	Description
Community Involvement is Crucial	The success of the program was significantly enhanced by involving community members not only as beneficiaries but also as suppliers and monitors of the program.
Regular Monitoring is Key	Continuous monitoring helped identify and rectify issues related to food quality and supplier performance, ensuring that a program's objectives are met effectively.

Future Recommendations	Description
Sustainability Plans	Develop strategies for the sustainability of feeding programs, possibly integrating them with governmental or local business support to continue beyond the initial funding phase.
Expansion to Other Regions	Considering the positive feedback from beneficiaries of the program, a similar model could be replicated in other regions with adjustments based on local needs and resources.

## Multipurpose Unconditional Cash Grants for Immediate Household Needs

Multipurpose cash grants (MPCGs) are a versatile and efficient tool for humanitarian response in emergency situations. These grants provide affected individuals and families with cash assistance that can be used to meet a variety of immediate needs, depending on their specific circumstances. Unlike earmarked funds, which are designated for specific uses such as food or shelter, MPCGs offer the flexibility for targeted populations to allocate funds according to their most pressing needs, whether it be for food, rent, medical expenses, or other critical requirements.

The primary advantage of multipurpose cash grants is their ability to empower recipients, giving them the agency to make their own purchasing decisions based on their priorities and local market conditions. This approach not only respects the dignity of those affected by crises but also supports local economies and reduces logistical challenges associated with the distribution of in-kind aid.

In emergency contexts, where conditions change rapidly and needs are complex and varied, MPCGs can provide a lifeline to those in critical situations by ensuring that assistance is timely and relevant. By simplifying the aid delivery process and reducing overhead costs, these grants help humanitarian organizations to respond more effectively and efficiently, maximizing the impact of their interventions.

Overall, multipurpose cash grants represent a shift towards more holistic and responsive approaches in humanitarian assistance, ensuring that aid supports not only the survival but also the resilience and self-sufficiency of affected populations in times of crisis.

## Multipurpose Cash Grant Assistance

The multi-purpose cash assistance program executed by SLRCS has played a pivotal role in addressing the acute needs arising from Sri Lanka's severe economic crisis. This initiative distributed across 25 districts to 18,249 vulnerable households, significantly helping them cover essential needs such as food, health care, and education.

The program's funds were primarily used to purchase food, pay for utilities, cover health-related expenses, settle debts, and manage transportation costs. A notable portion of the cash, especially in the Central Province, was directed toward health expenses and children's education, demonstrating the program's flexibility to allow targeted populations to prioritize expenses based on their most pressing needs (SLRCS, 2023a).

The delivery of services under this program was well-received, with 96% of respondents describing the cash support as timely. The SLRCS established feedback mechanisms, such as complaint boxes and hotlines, which played a crucial role in maintaining transparency and accountability. These tools enabled targeted populations to report issues and seek clarifications regarding the aid distribution, enhancing trust and participation between the community and the organization (SLRCS, 2023a, 2023b).

The feedback collected was instrumental in refining program operations. For instance, the SLRCS addressed community concerns regarding the selection process and the adequacy of the funds provided. This active engagement helped identify gaps in service delivery and areas requiring immediate attention, such as the need for increased fund allocation due to the rising cost of living and inflation (SLRCS, 2023a).

Despite its successes, the program faced challenges related to the sufficiency of the cash transfers and the transparency of the beneficiary selection criteria. Some targeted populations expressed concerns about not being included in the selection list and the adequacy of the cash given the escalating prices (SLRCS, 2023a). Recommendations for future programs include improving the clarity of selection criteria, enhancing community engagement practices, and continuing robust market monitoring to ensure the cash assistance aligns with current market dynamics and needs (SLRCS, 2023a).

While the cash assistance helped in the short term by enabling households to purchase necessities, there was a clear indication from the feedback that these interventions are not sufficient to pull people out of the cycle of poverty. Many recipients expressed the need for more sustainable solutions, such as job creation or further financial assistance, to make a lasting impact.

Other targeted populations that spent the cash transfers on child education (school bags, school uniforms) indicate that more direct support for education, through scholarships or direct school funding, might be more effective.

The feedback also points to the need for more structured support in areas like healthcare, education, and disaster recovery to ensure sustainable benefits. Future programs might need to incorporate these insights to enhance the effectiveness of the aid multipurpose cash grants provided.

## Intervention Details

Intervention Details	Description
Program Scope	Executed across 25 districts in Sri Lanka
Target Beneficiaries	18,249 vulnerable households
Program Goals	Address immediate household needs including food, healthcare, education, and utilities

## Implementation Phases

Implementation Phases	Description
Assessment and Selection	Selection based on vulnerability criteria with feedback mechanisms to ensure transparency
Distribution of Funds	Over LKR 364 million distributed to meet various immediate needs
Monitoring and Feedback	Feedback mechanisms such as complaint boxes and hotlines to refine operations and address community concerns

## Implementation Challenges

Implementation Challenges	Description
Sufficiency of Cash Transfers	Concerns about adequacy of cash given the rising cost of living and inflation
Transparency in Selection	Issues with clarity of beneficiary selection criteria

## Outcomes and Impact

Outcomes and Impact	Description
Immediate Relief	Cash used for food, utilities, health expenses, and education
Community Feedback	96% of respondents described the cash support as timely, enhancing trust and participation

## Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned	Description
Community Engagement	Essential for transparency and effectiveness; feedback mechanisms are crucial
Adaptability	Need for continuous market monitoring to ensure cash assistance aligns with current needs

## Future Recommendations

Future Recommendations	Description
Sustainability Plans	More sustainable solutions like job creation or further financial assistance needed
Enhanced Support	More direct support for education and structured support in healthcare, education, and disaster recovery

## Conditional Cash Grants for Food Production, Livelihood and Social Protection

Conditional cash grants are financial aid programs specifically designed to support individuals and families in low-income situations by providing them with monetary assistance. These grants are "conditional" in that they are disbursed because recipients meet certain pre-defined criteria or engage in specific behaviors.

The primary goal of these programs is twofold: to alleviate immediate financial hardships and to foster long-term improvements in the socioeconomic status of recipients. By linking financial support to constructive behaviors, these grants not only provide a safety net but also encourage actions that contribute to both individual and community development.

In the context of livelihood and social protection, conditional cash grants are particularly significant. They are designed to enhance vulnerable populations' resilience by enabling access to essential resources. This strategic approach helps break the cycle of poverty by equipping individuals with the tools they need to improve their living conditions and achieve economic independence.

Overall, conditional cash grants are a pivotal element in social protection strategies, offering a blend of immediate relief and long-term developmental support.

### *SLRCS's Conditional Grant Intervention*

The conditional cash grant programs implemented in various districts in Sri Lanka aim to address the urgent needs arising from the economic and social crises, such as malnutrition, loss of livelihood due to natural and economic disasters, and to enhance the agricultural and livestock production capabilities of local communities. Sri Lanka has been facing significant economic and social challenges, including high inflation, unemployment, and an agricultural sector that is vulnerable to both economic policy shifts and environmental crises. Conditional cash grants are designed to address these issues by providing targeted financial support to stimulate local economies and enhance food security.

Efforts included providing cash grants and support for food production, specifically targeting low-income farmers and households affected by the crisis. These grants are "conditional" because they are

given only if recipients meet certain pre-defined criteria or engage in specific behaviors. This approach ensures that the assistance is used effectively and reaches those who need it the most.

The pre-criteria for these grants focused on targeting low-income farmers and households impacted by the crisis, specifically those with the potential, ability, and willingness to participate in increasing food production within their communities. Priority was given to households consisting solely of women, recognizing their critical role in food security and the unique challenges they face.

Recipients were required to participate in agricultural training sessions or workshops to qualify for the first payment. This initial support was intended to help them start their agricultural activities effectively. The training covered essential topics such as sustainable farming practices, water-efficient irrigation methods, and crop diversification strategies.

The second payment was contingent upon monitoring the recipients' food production progress. This follow-up ensured that the grant conditions were being met and that the agricultural activities were on track. By linking the payments to specific milestones, the program aimed to foster accountability and encourage continuous engagement in productive activities. However, it is important to note that the extent and nature of the monitoring varied across different branches of the program. Some branches may have employed more frequent and rigorous monitoring techniques, while others may have had more lenient or periodic checks.

Despite the structured approach, the output of the food production also varied due to several factors. Pest infestations affected some crops, reducing yields and impacting the overall success of the agricultural initiatives. Additionally, the long-term nature of harvesting certain crops meant that some beneficiaries experienced delayed benefits from their efforts. These variations highlight the challenges inherent in agricultural production and underscore the need for continued support and adaptive strategies to mitigate such risks.

This conditional approach not only provided immediate financial relief but also promoted long-term resilience and self-sufficiency among beneficiaries. By equipping low-income farmers and households, especially women-led households, with the necessary skills and resources, the program sought to enhance food security and create a more sustainable agricultural environment in the affected communities.

In areas with a strong agricultural focus, SLRCS's interventions included specific support for farming activities. Targeted populations used cash grants to buy seeds, livestock, and farming equipment, which not only helped sustain individual households but also contributed to stabilizing local food markets and economies.

For communities involved in agriculture, the cash transfers were crucial in helping them recover by allowing them to buy essential farming supplies. This highlights the need for financial aid that can help stabilize local economies quickly.

Implementation of Conditional Cash Grants	Description
<b>Geographical Scope</b>	The implementation of these programs spans multiple districts, prioritizing regions that depend heavily on agriculture and fishing, such as Kurunegala, Vavuniya, and Polonnaruwa. Each district is assessed to address its unique economic activities and vulnerabilities, ensuring that the program's approach is tailored to local conditions.
<b>Beneficiary Selection</b>	The process for selecting beneficiaries incorporates several criteria: economic vulnerability, involvement in agriculture or fishing sectors, and demographic factors including female-headed households and individuals with disabilities. To promote fairness and fit, community consultations play a crucial role in the selection process, ensuring that the criteria applied are transparent and appropriate for the local context.
<b>Grant Distribution and Usage</b>	Conditional cash grants are distributed through local branches of national bodies like the Red Cross or relevant government agencies. The grant amounts are carefully determined to align with the specific



	needs of the localities. These funds are primarily used by recipients to buy necessary agricultural inputs, livestock, tools, and to make infrastructural enhancements to their farms.
<b>Challenges and Preparedness</b>	Sri Lanka's limited prior experience with cash-based interventions meant there was a significant reliance on external expertise and lessons learned from other regions. The lack of a Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Preparedness Project in the country underscores a notable preparedness gap for deploying cash interventions efficiently.
<b>Operational and Strategic Challenges</b>	The implementation phase faced operational challenges, especially in coordinating with financial service providers. This required special approvals due to the absence of established national frameworks, illustrating potential obstacles that could hinder swift action in emergency scenarios.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	The monitoring and evaluation of these programs underscored their complexity, highlighting the importance of having explicit criteria and effective data collection mechanisms. These measures are essential to evaluate the impact of the grants and to verify compliance with the conditions set for receiving assistance, ensuring the program's objectives are met efficiently and transparently.

<b>Achievements of Conditional Cash Grants in Sri Lanka</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Economic Empowerment</b>	<b>Success:</b> Beneficiaries of the cash grants have seen an increase in their incomes, primarily due to enhanced production capabilities. This economic uplift has typically resulted in improved living standards. <b>Details:</b> Increased income has empowered recipients by providing more stable financial circumstances, enabling them to meet basic needs and invest in their futures.
<b>Community Resilience</b>	<b>Success:</b> The training provided alongside the grants has equipped communities with better resource management skills and preparedness for adverse conditions, thereby strengthening their overall resilience. <b>Details:</b> This educational component ensures that communities can sustain the benefits of the grants long-term, fostering a culture of self-reliance and proactive disaster management.
<b>Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups</b>	<b>Success:</b> The grants have specifically aided female-headed households and individuals with disabilities, helping to empower these often-marginalized groups within their communities. <b>Details:</b> By targeting support to these groups, the program helps ensure that aid reaches those who might otherwise be overlooked, promoting inclusivity and equity in assistance distribution.
<b>Target Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Focus:</b> The primary recipients of the grants are low-income families, small to medium-scale agricultural workers, fishing communities, female-headed households, and people with disabilities. <b>Objective:</b> This targeted approach ensures that the assistance reaches those who are most in need and can benefit most from the support, optimizing the impact of the program.
<b>Grant Usage</b>	<b>Utilization:</b> Beneficiaries utilize the grants for a variety of purposes, including purchasing livestock, enhancing agricultural infrastructure, and buying essential supplies like fertilizers and seeds. <b>Impact:</b> This flexibility allows recipients to apply the funds in ways that are most beneficial for their specific circumstances and needs, promoting sustainable growth and development.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>Process:</b> The implementation and impact of the grants are monitored by local volunteers and organizations such as the Red Cross. However, there have been some issues with the consistency and depth of reporting. <b>Improvement Focus:</b> Enhancing these monitoring efforts can help ensure that the program's objectives are being met and that the grants are used effectively and as intended.

These successes highlight the positive impacts of the conditional cash grants on individual, family, and community levels, demonstrating a multifaceted approach to development and empowerment in Sri Lanka.

### *Learning and Adaptation*

Experiences in Sri Lanka underscored the importance of learning from each deployment to refine and improve future cash interventions. This includes better preparatory measures, enhanced understanding of local economic impacts, and improved market analysis to support cash programming.

The experience gathered from conditional cash programs can be leveraged to influence broader social protection policies and mechanisms, potentially in collaboration with international partners like the World Bank and ADB.

### *Reflections on Suitability*

The conditional cash grants, while beneficial in specific contexts, may not always be suitable for immediate humanitarian response due to their complexity and the heavy demands on monitoring and enforcement of conditions. The flexibility and immediacy offered by unconditional cash may often be more appropriate, especially in situations where rapid response is critical and administrative capacities are stretched.

## Intervention Details

Intervention Details	Description
Program Scope	Implemented across various districts in Sri Lanka
Target Beneficiaries	Low-income farmers, households affected by crisis, and women-led households
Program Goals	Provide immediate financial relief and promote long-term resilience and self-sufficiency

## Implementation Phases

Implementation Phases	Description
Assessment and Selection	Target low-income farmers and households with the potential and willingness to participate in food production
Training and Initial Payment	Recipients participate in agricultural training sessions covering sustainable farming, irrigation, and crop diversification
Monitoring and Second Payment	Payment contingent on monitoring food production progress to ensure conditions are met

## Implementation Challenges

Implementation Challenges	Description
Logistical Challenges	Ensuring timely food delivery and quality maintenance across diverse and remote locations
Community Engagement	Initial hesitation from some schools and communities requiring additional outreach efforts

## Outcomes and Impact

Outcomes and Impact	Description
Nutritional Benefits	Marked improvement in nutritional intake among students evidenced by health screenings and improved school attendance and performance

## Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned	Description
Community Involvement is Crucial	Success enhanced by involving community members as both beneficiaries and suppliers/monitors of the program
Regular Monitoring is Key	Continuous monitoring helps identify and rectify issues, ensuring program objectives are met effectively

## Future Recommendations

Future Recommendations	Description
Sustainability Plans	Develop strategies for sustainability, integrating with government or local business support
Expansion to Other Regions	Replicate the model in other regions with adjustments based on local needs and resources

## Enhancing Cash Grants Assistance in Sri Lanka: Insights from IFRC's Regional CVA Coordinator

### *Conditional vs. Unconditional Cash*

There are significant challenges with conditional cash transfers, including the need for close monitoring to ensure conditions are met before disbursements. This adds a layer of complexity and resource demand, which may not be feasible in rapid-onset or severe emergencies.

Unconditional cash grants are viewed as more flexible and responsive to the immediate needs of affected populations. They allow targeted populations to prioritize their spending based on personal circumstances without the constraints imposed by conditions.

Challenges for Conditional Cash Grants in Sri Lanka	Description
Monitoring and Reporting	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Inconsistent monitoring has been a notable issue, impacting the overall assessment of program efficacy and the allocation of resources.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> Enhance these processes by implementing regular check-ins, offering more comprehensive training for volunteers, and establishing clearer reporting guidelines. This will improve the accountability and effectiveness of the programs.</p>
Wildlife Threats	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Agricultural areas face significant risks from wildlife such as elephants and wild boars, which can devastate crops and livestock, undermining the livelihoods of farmers.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> Develop community-based strategies to mitigate these threats, such as implementing collective fencing solutions or organizing locally managed wildlife patrols to safeguard agricultural assets.</p>
Sustainability Concerns	<p><b>Challenges:</b> While the cash grants provide immediate financial relief, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the benefits remains a concern.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> Link the cash grant programs with broader developmental initiatives, such as improving market access, adopting advanced agricultural technologies, and introducing climate-adaptive farming practices. This approach will help integrate immediate relief efforts with sustainable development goals.</p>
Program Administration	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Issues like inadequate monitoring mechanisms and the impact of wildlife have highlighted areas for administrative improvements.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> Enhance monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure funds are used effectively and to gather detailed feedback from beneficiaries. Expand training programs to cover more aspects of agricultural and business management to foster sustainable development. Implement community-based approaches to address local challenges such as wildlife threats, ensuring these solutions are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the communities involved.</p>

These targeted improvements will not only address the immediate challenges but also enhance the resilience and sustainability of the communities benefiting from the conditional cash grants.

Conditional cash grants in Sri Lanka have demonstrated potential in providing prompt financial support and fostering livelihood improvements among vulnerable groups. However, to ensure these benefits are both sustainable and expansive, it is crucial that the programs evolve in response to new challenges and actively incorporate feedback from the communities they serve. This study intervention approach has detailed the multifaceted impact of conditional cash grants, emphasizing both their potential to enhance livelihoods and the need for ongoing adjustments to optimize their effectiveness.

While conditional cash transfers have proven valuable in encouraging specific behaviors and participation in recovery initiatives, their deployment in emergency contexts requires careful consideration. Factors such as the operational capacity of implementing agencies, the immediacy of the community's needs, and the potential strain on resources must all be weighed. The insights provided by the IFRC coordinator advocate for a refined strategy that integrates a mix of approaches, specifically tailored to fit the local context and the capabilities of response teams. This nuanced strategy ensures that conditional cash programs not only meet immediate needs but also contribute to long-term recovery and resilience-building.

### *Implementation Experience in Sri Lanka*

In Sri Lanka, the lack of experience with cash interventions has been acknowledged, with an emphasis on learning from past regional implementations. The IFRC has navigated these challenges by leveraging framework agreements with financial service providers, enabling exceptional approvals for expedited project implementation. This process underlines the necessity for developing national frameworks to solidify financial agreements and ensure more streamlined operations during emergencies.

A feedback mechanism was established via the 'complaint and comments' line, allowing beneficiaries to voice their concerns and suggestions. Monitoring was primarily focused on the conditional cash transfers, with the branches overseeing the projects. However, the approach to monitoring was inconsistent, with some branches conducting more detailed and thorough evaluations than others. This inconsistency highlights the need for the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) to provide training on monitoring practices to ensure a consistent system across all branches.

For the multipurpose cash transfers, monitoring mainly consisted of volunteers reporting back on how their communities spent the grants, which were primarily used for medical expenses and food. This method relied heavily on the accuracy and diligence of the volunteers, underscoring the importance of proper training and support for these individuals to enhance the quality of monitoring.

The analysis indicates a need for a more consistent and thorough approach to monitoring, particularly in terms of post-distribution monitoring. While some branches have demonstrated robust monitoring practices, others have not been as detailed, leading to variability in the quality of data collected. This inconsistency affects the ability to accurately assess the impact of the cash transfers and identify areas for improvement.

In addition to the 'complaint and comments' line, other feedback mechanisms should be explored and implemented. These could include regular community meetings, anonymous surveys, and the establishment of local committees to gather and address beneficiary feedback. Ensuring a variety of feedback channels can help capture a broader range of perspectives and improve the overall effectiveness of the cash transfer programs.

### *Capacity Building and Preparedness*

The discourse on capacity building in Sri Lanka underscores a critical gap: the absence of a formal CVA Preparedness Project. This gap highlights the need for strategic initiatives to enhance national capabilities for managing cash-based interventions. Preparing through self-assessments and tailored projects could significantly bolster the local infrastructure for future crises, ensuring readiness and more effective response mechanisms.

### *Strategic Planning and Future Initiatives*

Future planning involves leveraging past experiences to refine social protection mechanisms, with potential collaborations with international partners such as the World Bank and ADB. This strategy aims not only to improve immediate cash transfer responses but also to influence broader policy reforms that could institutionalize stronger social safety nets in Sri Lanka.

The integration of government social protection mechanisms is crucial in this endeavour. One notable area for potential synergy is the school feeding program. This initiative, which provides nutritional support to children, can serve as a complementary measure to existing social safety nets. By ensuring that children receive adequate nutrition, the program not only addresses immediate hunger but also promotes long-term educational and health outcomes, thereby contributing to the overall well-being of communities.

Collaboration between government initiatives and international partners could enhance the effectiveness of these programs. For example, integrating data and resources from cash transfer schemes with school feeding programs could create a more cohesive social protection network. This approach ensures that vulnerable populations, particularly children, benefit from multiple layers of support, thereby reducing the risk of poverty and improving social equity.

Furthermore, the strategic alignment of these initiatives could lead to more comprehensive policy reforms. By working closely with international partners, Sri Lanka can adopt best practices and innovative solutions that have been successful in other contexts. These collaborations can provide technical expertise, funding, and strategic guidance, thereby enhancing the overall impact of social protection programs.

In summary, future planning for social protection in Sri Lanka involves a multi-faceted approach that leverages past experiences and international collaborations. By integrating government mechanisms such as the school feeding program with broader social safety nets, Sri Lanka can create a more resilient and inclusive social protection system. This strategy not only addresses immediate needs but also lays the foundation for long-term social and economic development.

## Challenges and Learning from Implementation

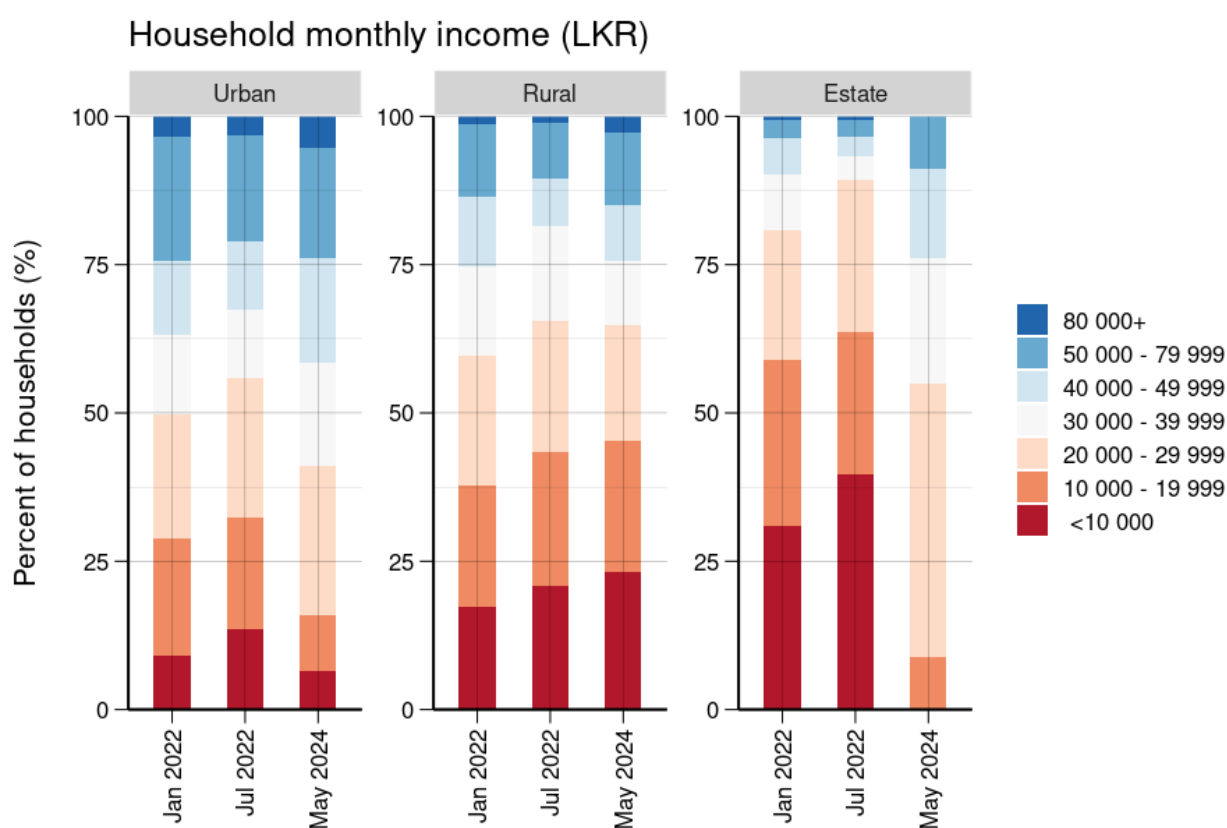
The implementation of cash interventions has surfaced several challenges, including effective data collection, activation of cash working groups, and the clear articulation of conditions for conditional cash transfers. These challenges stress the importance of clarity in project conditions and objectives, ensuring that all stakeholders have a mutual understanding and that interventions are executed with transparency and accountability.

## Reflections

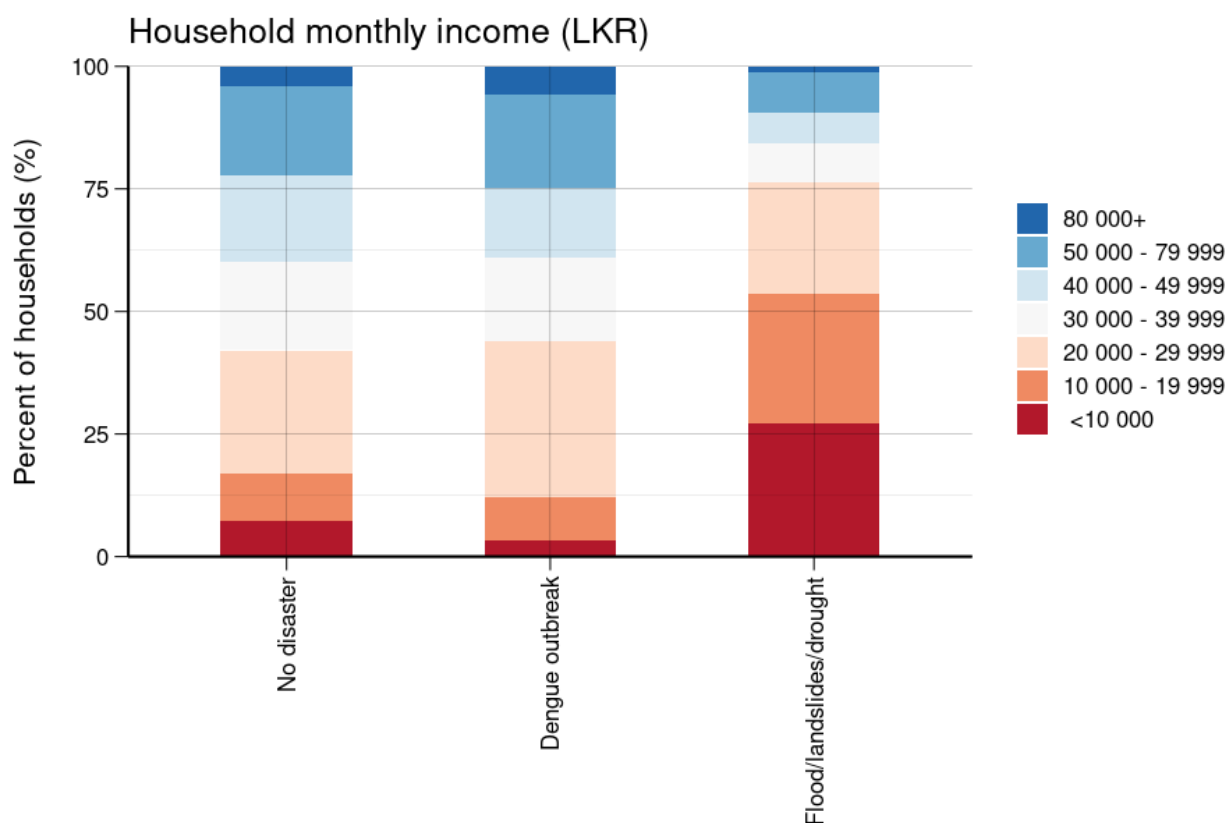
The IFRC's regional insights suggest that while cash and voucher assistance programs are crucial, they must be continuously adapted to meet changing needs and contexts. This adaptability, coupled with a deeper market analysis and economic impact assessment, will ensure that cash interventions not only address immediate needs but also contribute to long-term economic stability and resilience in Sri Lanka. The ongoing dialogue and feedback mechanisms from all project phases are vital for refining strategies and enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

## Unmet Needs Survey Outputs on Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods

The economic crisis continues to have direct, primary, measurable effects on food security and livelihoods for large sections of the population. The effects on food security and livelihoods are uniform across geographic and demographic categories. The consequences of food insecurity and disruption of livelihoods are seen in health and protection and other fields.



1 Change in household monthly income (LKR)



*Household monthly income for households affected by concurrent crises (LKR)*

Income Trends and Disasters Impact	Description
<b>Urban Areas</b>	<b>Trend:</b> Increasing shift towards higher income brackets with a notable reduction in lower-income households by 2024. <b>Details:</b> In January 2022, 29% of urban households were in the bottom two income brackets. This figure rose to 33% in July 2022 but fell to 15% by May 2024.
<b>Rural Areas</b>	<b>Trend:</b> Stability in the middle-income brackets but an increase in lower-income households in 2024. <b>Details:</b> Income below 10,000 LKR increased from 17% in January 2022 to 23% in May 2024, indicating worsening conditions for the poorest households.
<b>Estate Areas</b>	<b>Trend:</b> Substantial increase in middle-income brackets, particularly in the 20,000 - 29,999 LKR range in 2024, when compared with 2022.
<b>Disasters</b>	<b>Impact:</b> Concurrent natural disaster events have drastically reduced household incomes. <b>Details:</b> Of those experiencing floods, landslides, and droughts, 27% of households earned below 10,000 LKR, and only 1% earned above 80,000 LKR in 2024.

<sup>2</sup>

According to FGDs, rising costs of essentials like food, water (including potable water), and electricity have continued to strain household budgets. In real terms, inflation has risen faster than household income (which has often been quite stagnant), and purchasing power has decreased, particularly for those who are in the lower income brackets and who are otherwise vulnerable. Focus group discussions suggest that middle-income group families are continuing to fall into poverty.

During 2022 and 2023, floods, landslides, and droughts have caused significant crop damage and income loss in certain areas, exacerbated by insufficient government support. Job losses among daily workers and shifts in the employment landscape have further impacted families. Those involved in production and business, particularly in agriculture, are earning lower profits, leading to capital loss,

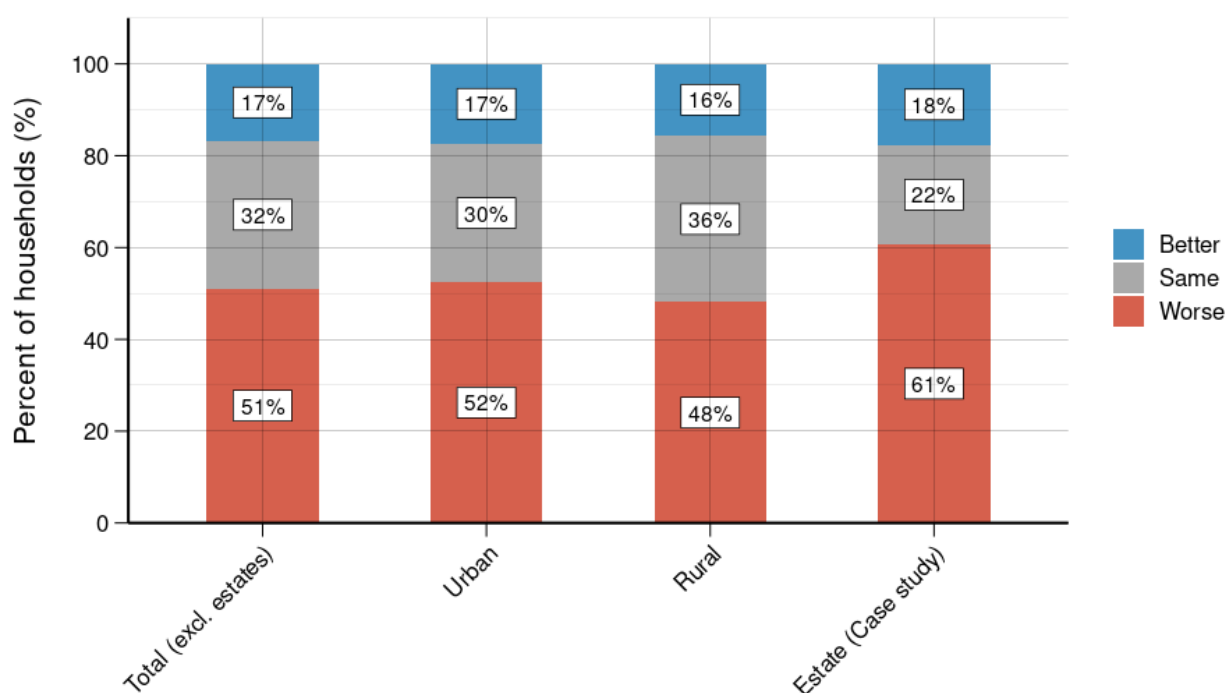
<sup>2</sup> The income situation for rural households has worsened significantly compared to other groups.

with many abandoning local family businesses, cottage industries, and smallholdings due to prohibitive costs.

An interesting point is that these issues highlight potential groups for the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) to focus future development interventions on. Specifically, rural households that have experienced these disasters could benefit greatly from targeted support. By spotlighting this group, SLRCS can address the compounded challenges they face and develop programs to enhance their resilience and economic stability.

## Access to food and nutrition

In May 2024, 52 % of urban, 48 % of rural and 61 % of estate households perceived that they had continued to have worsened access to food because of the crisis.

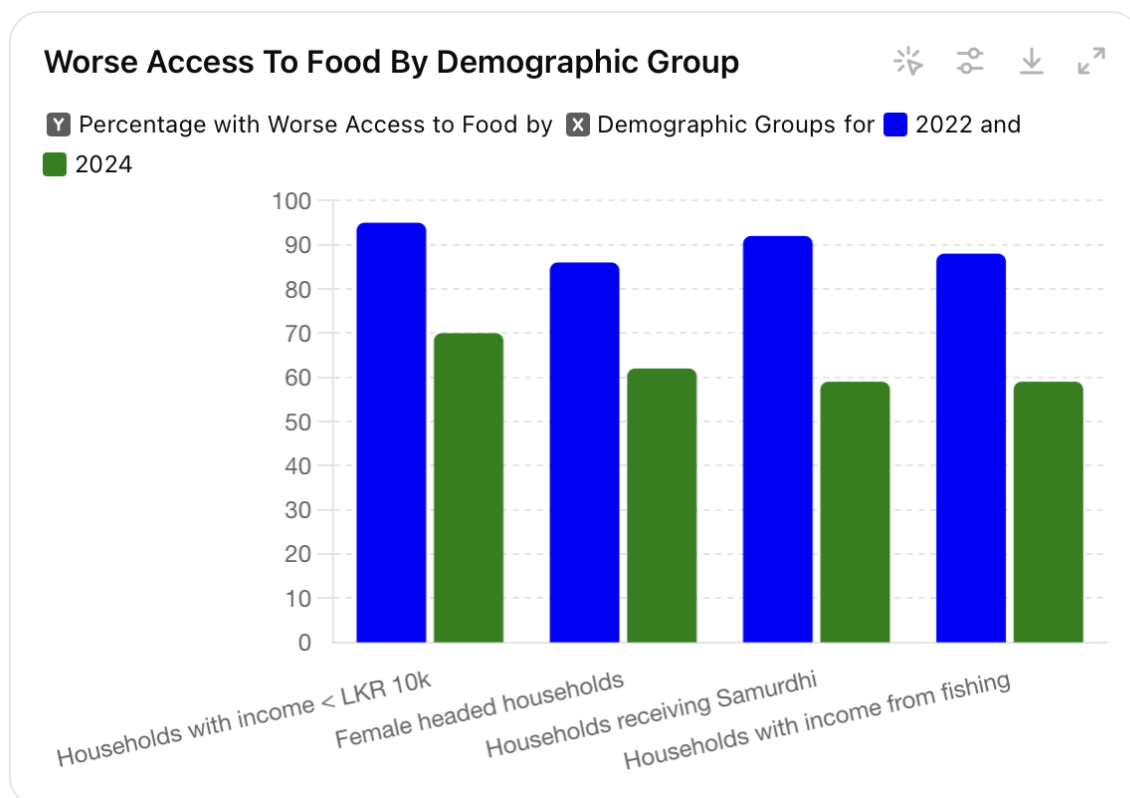


Margin of error at 95% confidence: Total =  $\pm 10\%$ , Urban =  $\pm 9\%$ , Rural =  $\pm 12\%$ , Estate =  $\pm 16\%$

### 2Households with access to food significantly changed since 2022-2023 peak

Of those with worse access to food in 2024, the most affected demographic groups were households with a monthly income of less than LKR 10k.

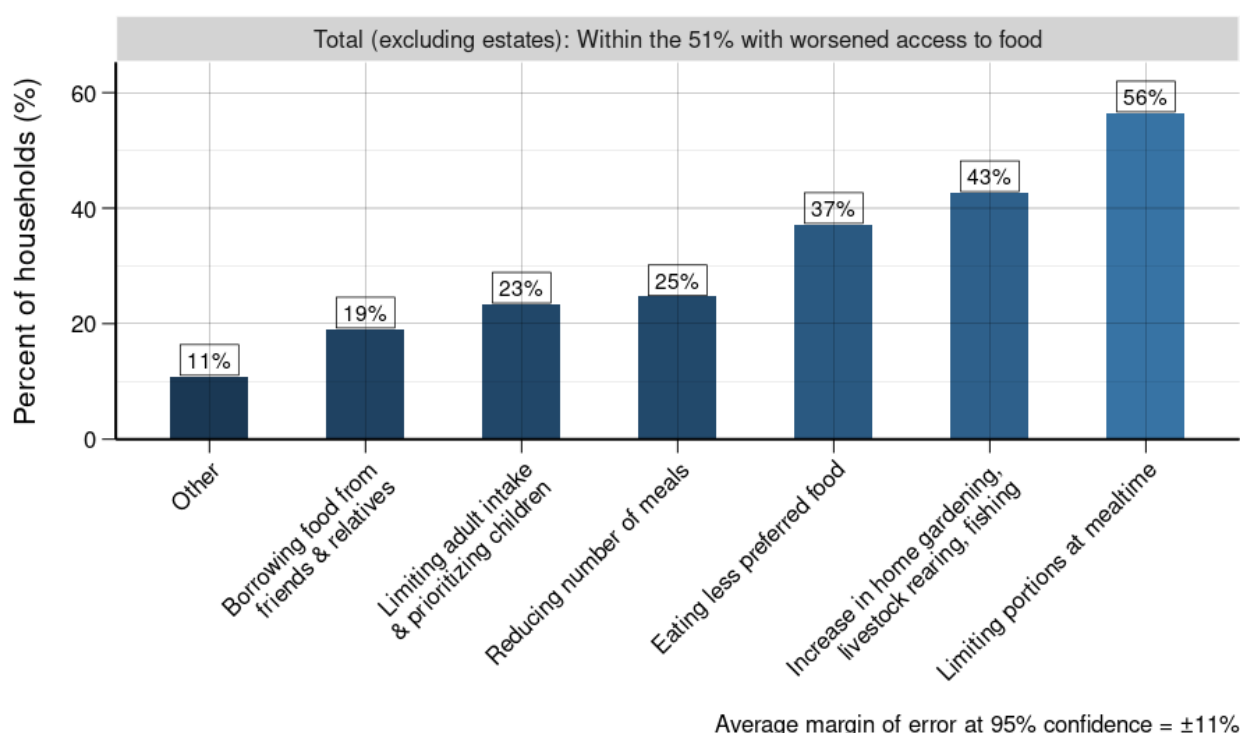




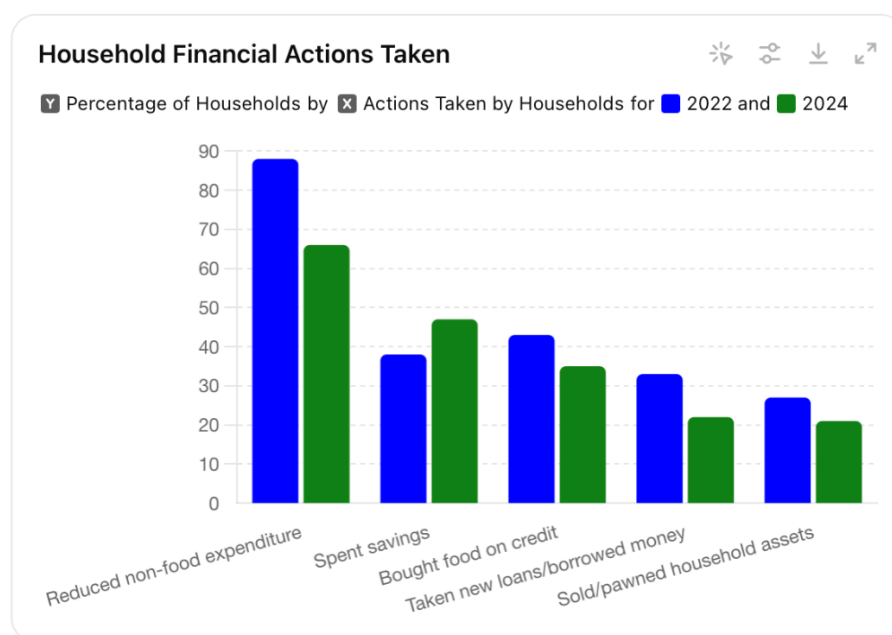
Other demographic groups experienced broadly similar reductions compared with 2022.

Of those households with worse access to food in 2024, 96 % mentioned the increased cost of food, 79 % mentioned reduced income and 10 % mentioned a lack of food available in the local market.

For those households with worse access to food in 2024, coping strategies were typically negative, although the increase in home gardening, livestock rearing and fishing was positive.



### 3 Within households with worse access to food: Coping strategies

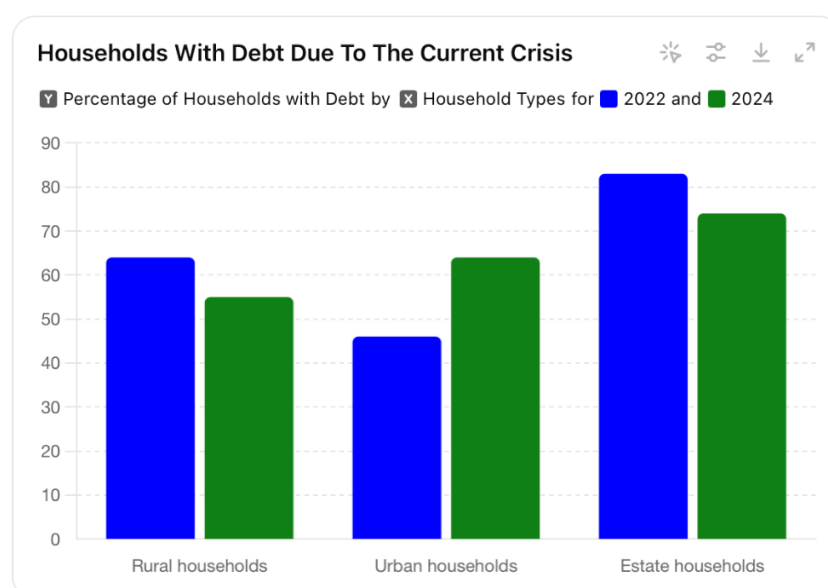


Additionally, 39% of urban, 46 percent of rural and 63 percent of estate households state that children's nutrition has continued to worsen since the peak of the crisis. This is particularly so for households with income of less than LKR 10k per month (70 %), households that experienced flood/landslide/drought (57 %), households with their main income from fishing (56 %), households with Samurdhi (55 %) and female headed households (53 %).

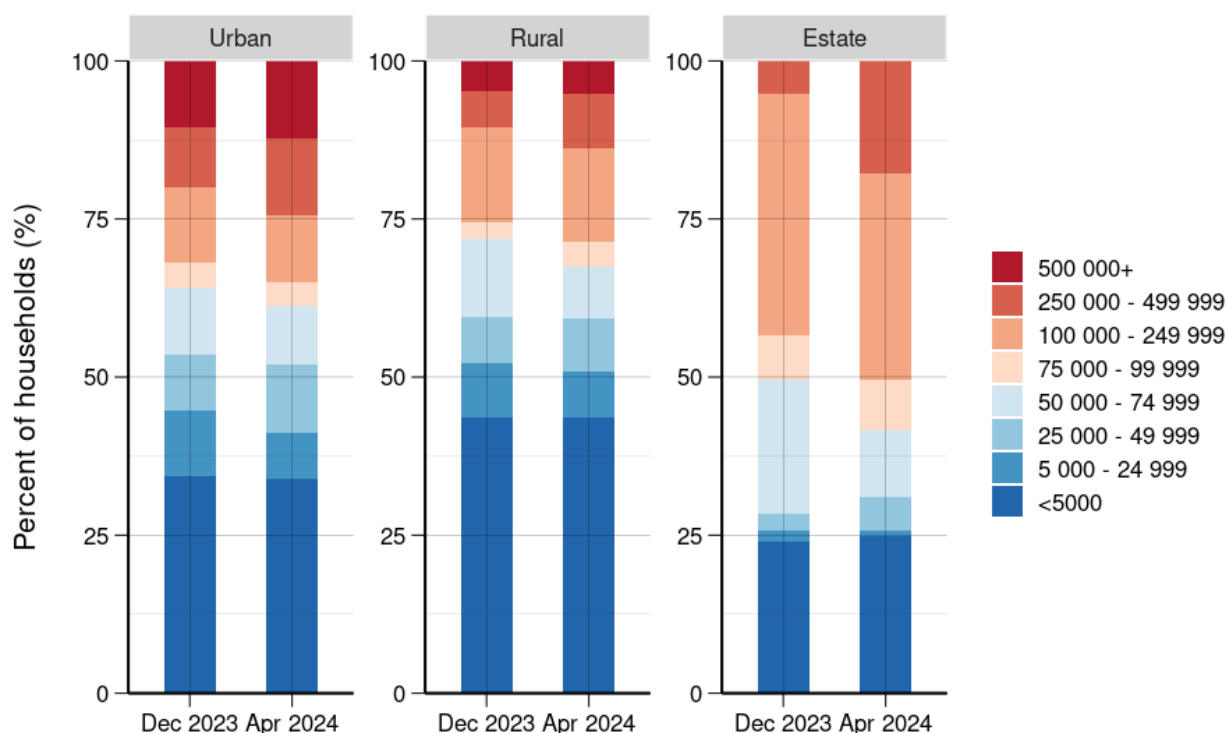
Focus group discussions suggest that despite the availability of goods, soaring prices make purchases difficult, affecting general access to nutritious food and other necessities. The affordability of nutritious foods like fish, eggs, and meat has decreased, leading to unbalanced diets, with many people only able to afford rice and vegetables, with little protein.

### Indebtedness

In 2024, 55 % of rural, 64 % of urban and 74 % of estate households stated that they have debt due to the current crisis. Respective percentages for 2022 were 64, 46 and 83.



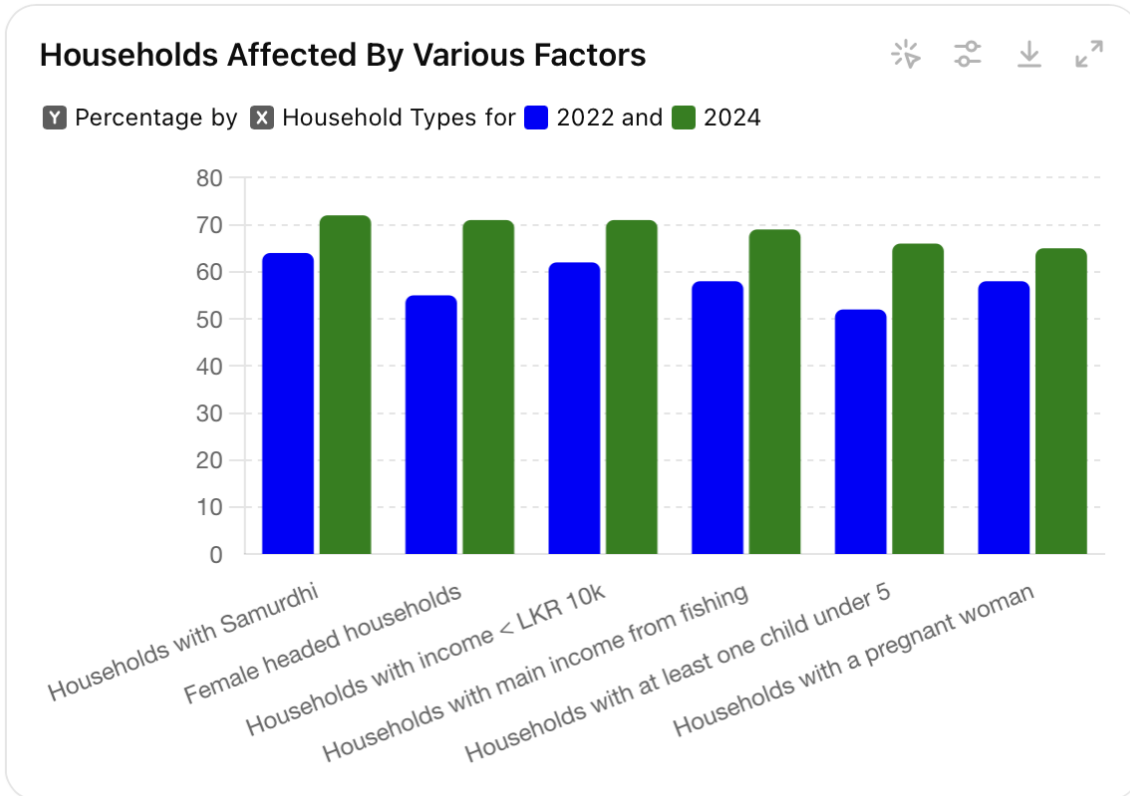
Worryingly, there has been an increase in the proportion of *urban households* in debt because of the crisis since 2022. Additionally, the level of borrowing has increased slightly since December 2023, particularly in estates.



4Within households that have debt because of the 2022-2023 crisis: Amount of debt (LKR)

Demographic groups with the highest proportion of households in debt were households that experienced concurrent flood/landslide/drought (72 %)<sup>3</sup>; households with a person who migrated for employment in 2023/2024 because of the crisis (69 %); and additionally:

<sup>3</sup> Of those households in debt because of floods/landslides/drought, the burden of debt was also typically higher than households not affected by such disasters.



It is of particular concern that the proportion of indebted households in these groups has increased since 2022.

In 2024, among those that have current debt because of the crisis, 59 % have pawned assets (37 % in 2022); 52 % have borrowed through banks (47 % in 2022); and 31 % have taken loans from family and friends (27 % in 2022). Smaller proportions of households have borrowed through local money lenders, micro loan institutions and savings groups. Twenty % have unpaid utility bills or rent (14 % in 2022).

Correspondingly, FGDs suggest that economic pressures have forced changes in borrowing reasons from long-term investments like homes and businesses to immediate needs like basic household items. Lower wages for laborers have led to increased borrowing and reliance on micro-loans. Many families pawned their jewelry and other assets during 2023 and are not able to buy them back. High-interest rates and additional penalties for delayed repayments push more people towards informal loans and local money lenders, increasing financial instability.

## Discussion: Food security, Livelihoods and Nutrition

The 2022-2023 crisis has continued to exacerbate financial vulnerabilities and debt levels across multiple demographic groups, with ongoing negative impacts on food security and livelihoods. The increase in living costs, reduced incomes, and insufficient social support have increasingly strained many households, particularly those already disadvantaged or reliant on unstable income sources. However, KIIs suggest that economic stability has improved – agricultural and fisheries sectors have seen improvements in resource availability, particularly fuel and fertilizers. Increased government support through subsidies, loans, and quotas has helped stabilize production and livelihoods.

In 2024, in rural locations, 22 % of households had a monthly income of less than LKR 10,000, and 62 % had a monthly income of less than LKR 30,000. In urban areas, six % of households had a monthly income of less than LKR 10,000, and 40 % had a monthly income of less than LKR 30,000. It is these households in lower income brackets that still endure most of the crisis.

These conditions have led to a rise in indebtedness across most sectors, with low-income households, those affected by natural disasters, female-headed households, and other vulnerable groups bearing the heaviest debt burdens. This debt is particularly unsustainable as it falls on those least able to repay, perpetuating a cycle of financial instability and hardship.

Significantly in 2024, 32 % of households with an income of at least 80,000 LKR per month (30 % in 2022), and 51 % of households with a university-educated person (35 % in 2022) are in debt because of the crisis. This suggests that the effects continue to be pervasive and affect all categories of households.

Worsening nutrition among the most vulnerable is also a cause for concern, with food insecurity still impacting a significant minority of households. Food insecurity can lead to malnutrition, which is particularly detrimental for children. When children do not receive adequate nutrients, their growth and development are severely impacted. Over time, this leads to wasting (acute malnutrition), stunting (chronic malnutrition), being underweight and micronutrient deficiencies. [66]

Estate households already went into the crisis at a disadvantage, but remained in a precarious situation in 2024, and fare poorer than other survey householders in most survey questions related to livelihoods and food security.

Focus group discussions noted that mental stress from economic uncertainty and shifts in livelihood strategies contribute to broader community challenges. Economic pressures cause desperate actions like theft, with items stolen and sold cheaply to meet financial needs. Hardships were said to push some youths into minor crimes to afford things like mobile phones and internet data, and families under economic pressure may engage in illegal activities to supplement their income, further destabilizing the community.

## Health

### Evaluation of SLRCS Interventions in Sri Lanka

Health-oriented interventions, such as the distribution of first aid kits and the implementation of health and hygiene awareness programs, addressed immediate health needs and contributed to more long-term public health goals. These initiatives are crucial in preventing secondary crises, such as outbreaks of disease, which can compound the original impact of the economic crisis.

Health-related initiatives included the distribution of first aid kits and conducting medical camps, as seen in Colombo and Mullaitivu. These programs were designed to address malnutrition, provide essential medical services, and enhance overall community health during the crisis.

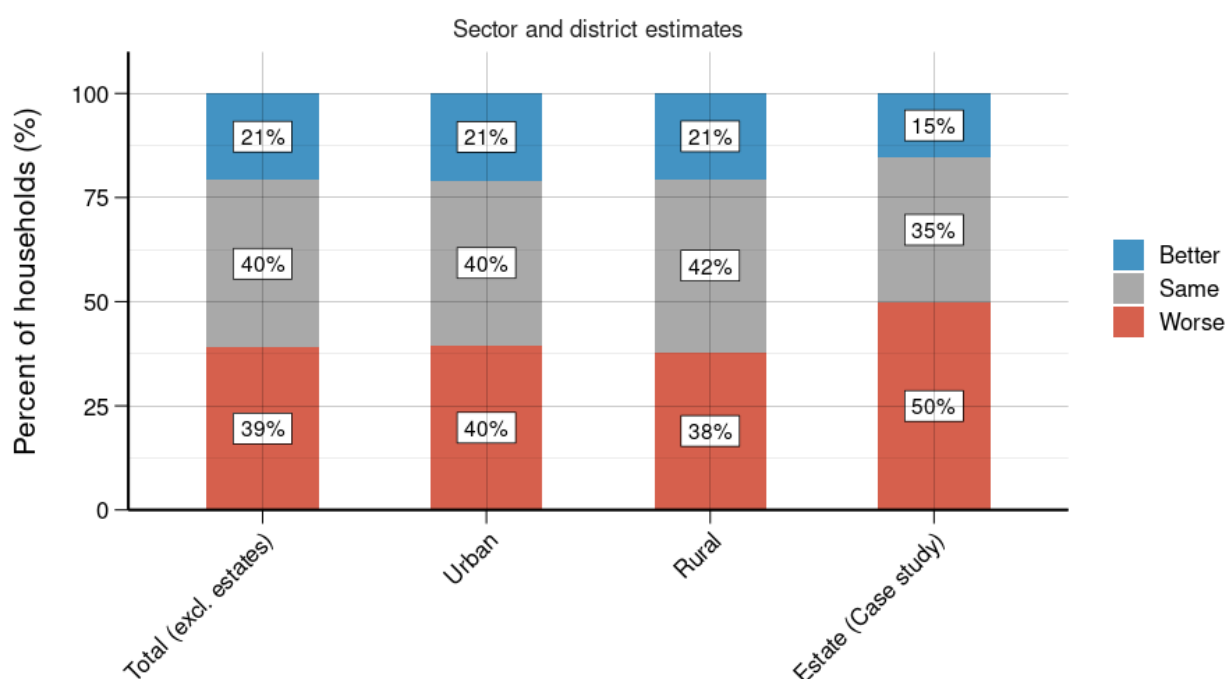
Additionally, SLRCS branches supported other organizations in providing essential food supplies to malnourished children. During the evaluation fieldwork, a child health clinic was visited where nutrition items were supplied by UNICEF. SLRCS branches facilitated transportation to the clinic for patients who lived hours away but required regular screenings. This is a common issue in Sri Lanka's estate areas, where children under the age of five frequently experience critical malnutrition. This is due not only to economic poverty and lack of access to food but also to insufficient advocacy and knowledge among the state population regarding children's nutritional needs.

A sizable portion of the cash transfers was spent on healthcare, indicating either a lack of affordable medical services or an inadequate supply of medication. This usage underscores the importance of health in the targeted populations' spending priorities, suggesting that future aid could be more targeted towards healthcare support.

Financial assistance was particularly noted for its role in covering both medical expenses and educational costs. In Colombo, for example, the financial strain on families was alleviated by grants that covered school fees and medical costs, underscoring the intersection of economic aid with broader social welfare objectives. Educational support programs were intertwined with nutritional and health services, recognizing that educational outcomes are deeply connected to health and well-being. Programs that combined school feeding with educational supplies addressed both cognitive development and physical health, creating a foundation for better learning outcomes.

## Unmet Needs Assessment Output on Health

### *Self-reported overall health*



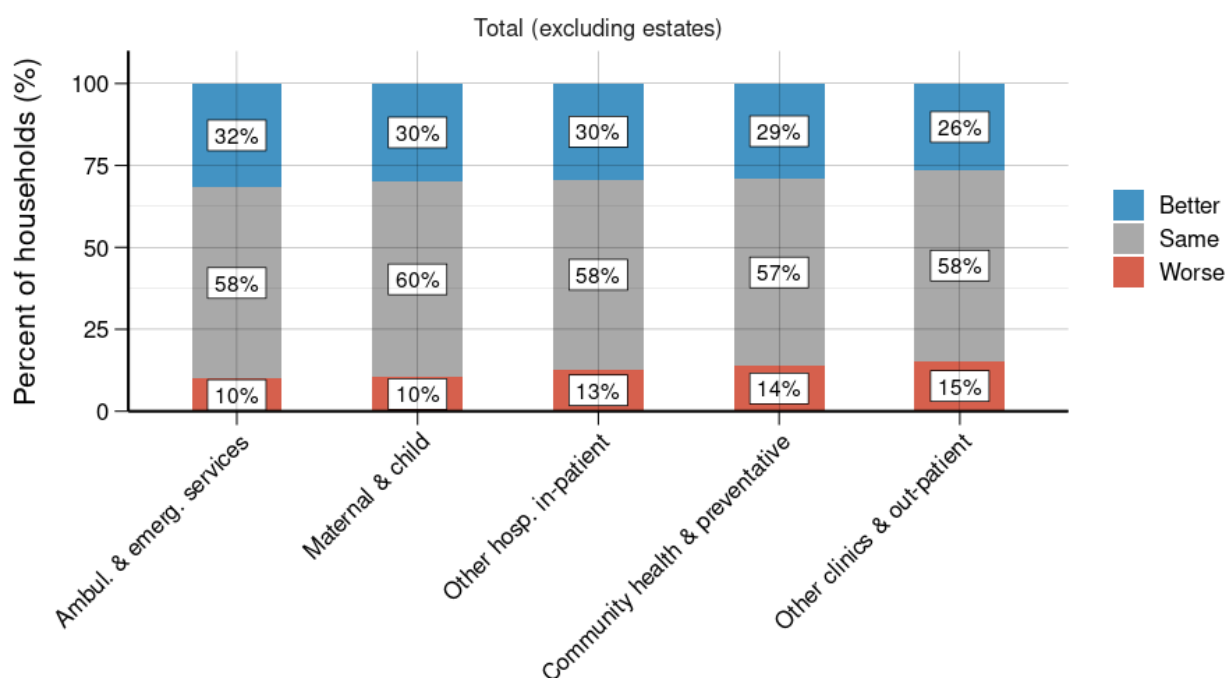
Margin of error at 95% confidence: Total =  $\pm 11\%$ , Urban =  $\pm 10\%$ , Rural =  $\pm 14\%$ , Estate =  $\pm 19\%$

### *5 Self-reported health compared to that at the peak of the crisis*

Health was considered the same or worse than at the peak of the crisis in 2022/2023 for most households in urban, rural and estate settings in 2024. Overall, 39 % of all respondents (excluding estates) and 50 % of estates respondents reported worse health. Of those reporting worse health, the most affected groups were households with a monthly income less than LKR 10k (60 %), households that experienced flood/landslide/drought (52 %), female headed households (50 %), households with Samurdhi (47 %), and households with a person with disability (44 %). In contrast, of households with a monthly income of LKR 80k or more, 16 % reported worse health in 2024.

### *Access to healthcare services*

Perceptions of availability of healthcare have improved or are the same, when compared to the peak of the crisis.

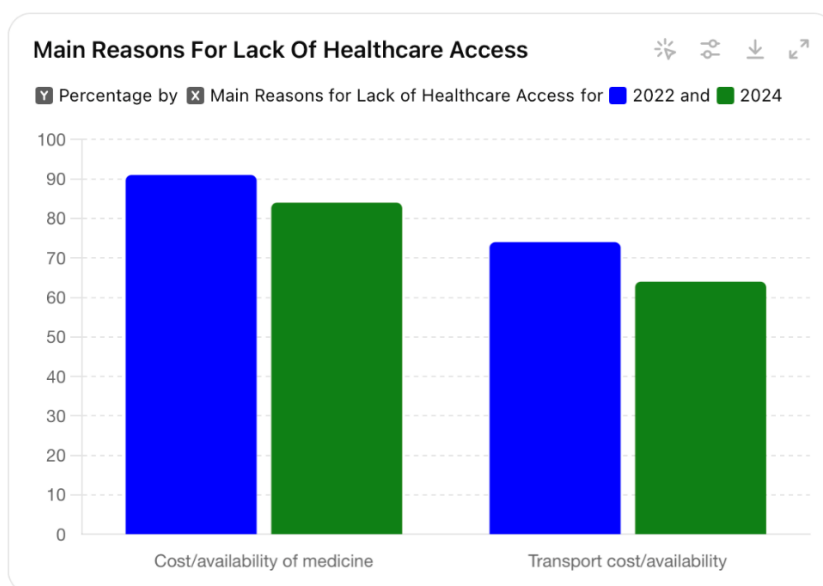


Average margin of error at 95% confidence =  $\pm 9\%$

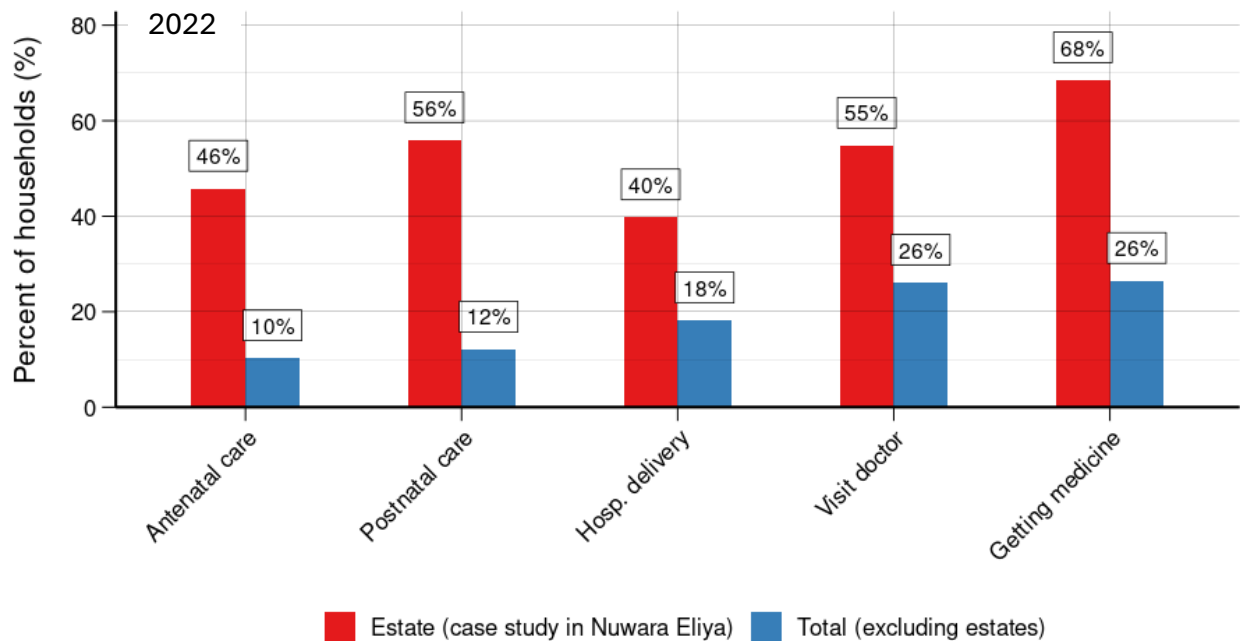
#### 6 Perceptions of availability of healthcare, compared to the peak of the 2022-2023 crisis

Among households that needed a healthcare service within the last three months, there has been an improvement compared to the situation in 2022. In 2024, 26 % of all households (excluding estates) and 12 % of estate households could not access healthcare services (33 and 61 % in 2022 respectively). Among affected demographic groups, households with a monthly income of LKR 80k or more were least affected in 2024 (19 %) and households with a monthly income less than LKR 10k in 2024 were most affected (55 %).

Among those households (excluding estates) that needed a healthcare service within the last three months that they could not access, 28 % cited services for mental illness; 27 % major surgery; 21 % getting medicine; and 21 % chronic illness. In contrast, services for child immunization, COVID-19 immunization, postnatal care, and antenatal care all fared better at 8 to 9 %. These patterns of accessibility of healthcare are broadly like those in 2022, although slightly better. In both 2024 and 2022, the main reasons that healthcare could not be accessed were:



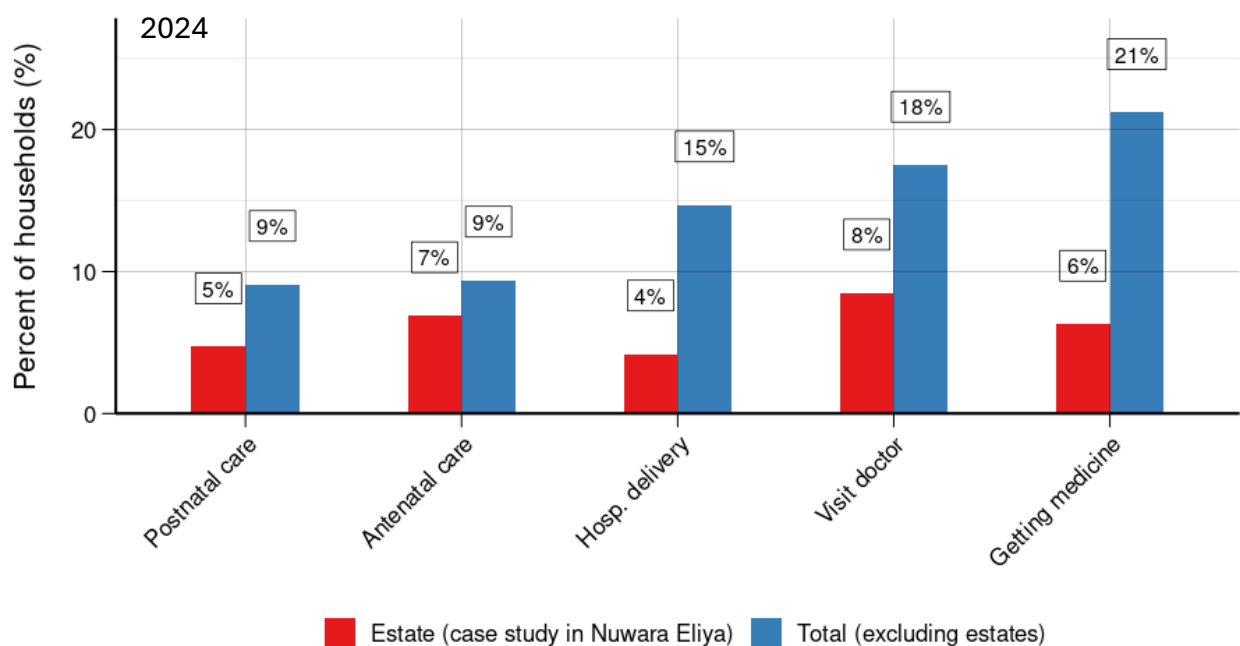
In 2022, estate households were less able to access healthcare compared to urban and rural households, but the situation in estates had much improved by 2024, as shown in the graphs below.



Average margin of error at 95% confidence: Total =  $\pm 11\%$ , Estate =  $\pm 23\%$

7 2022 needs assessment. Households that could not access a healthcare service within the last three months:

*Reason for not accessing service (selected indicators)*



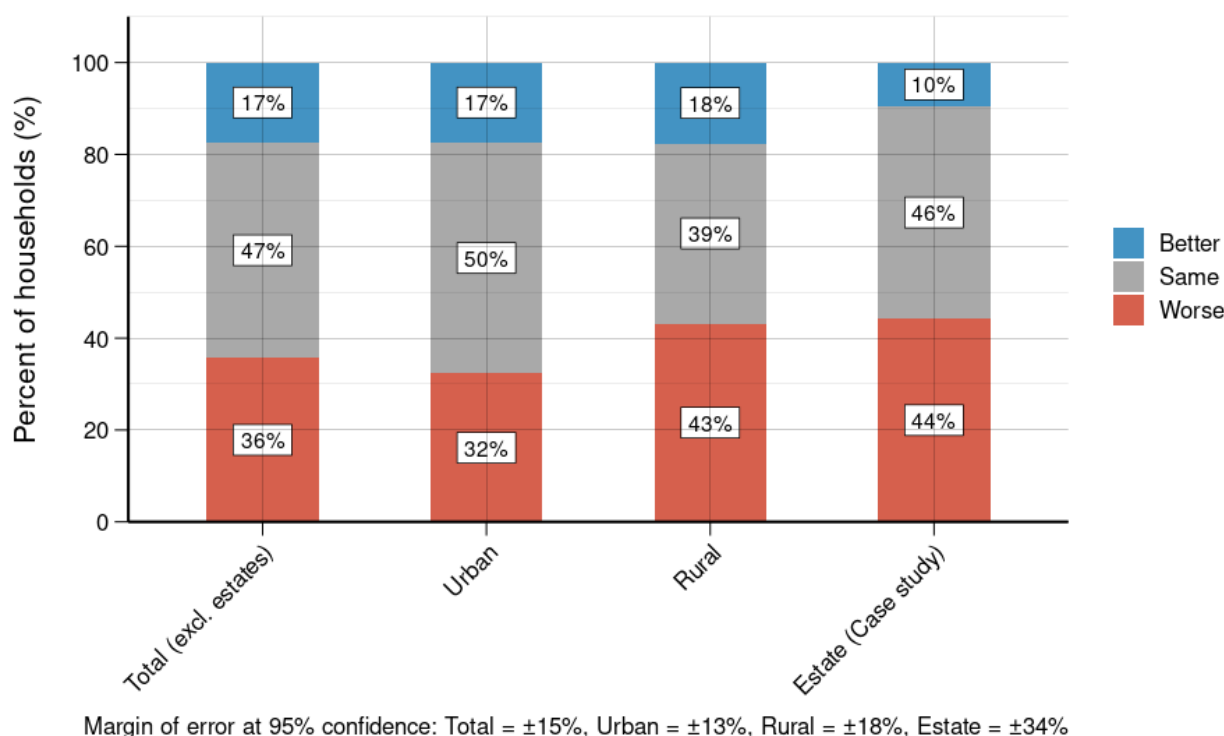
Average margin of error at 95% confidence: Total =  $\pm 10\%$ , Estate =  $\pm 22\%$

82024 needs assessment. Households that could not access a healthcare service within the last three months



### Reason for not accessing service (selected indicators)

According to the household survey, over one third perceived that access to and availability of menstrual hygiene management products has worsened compared to the peak of the crisis, although the majority in all sectors felt that there was no change. Similarly to some of the other indicators, the least affected group was households with a monthly income of LKR 80k or more (30 %) and the most affected group was households with an income less than LKR 10k (61 %).



9Household perception of access to and availability of menstrual hygiene products

## Discussion: Health

In contrast to 2022, where 79 % of farming households reported worse health due to the crisis, by 2024, this had dropped to 38 %, and estate households have seen major improvements in access to healthcare.

Although the wider health situation is undoubtedly better than in 2022 in many respects, some groups remain more severely affected (notably households with a monthly income less than LKR 10k, households that experienced flood/landslide/drought, female headed households, households with Samurdhi, households with a person with disability, and estates households).

Focus groups and key informants confirm that the health situation has improved in some respects with better access to medicines and normalization of essential services, although access to medical services remains constrained by multiple factors. Persistent shortages of essential drugs in government hospitals and clinics, coupled with inadequate facilities, have forced many individuals to purchase prescribed medications from commercial pharmacies, often at higher costs. Elderly individuals are particularly concerned about the inadequate availability of medicines in government hospitals and rising costs in pharmacies. Additionally, the migration of healthcare professionals has resulted in a significant shortage of specialists and general care providers in secondary and tertiary hospitals. This shortage of doctors and services severely impacts the functioning of day-to-day clinics, further exacerbating the healthcare situation and limiting access to necessary medical care.

Focus groups and key informants describe an increased incidence of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes, driven by ongoing mental stress, poor nutrition, and the prohibitive cost of medicines. Discussions also point to deteriorating mental health, a rise in domestic violence and

increased rates of suicide as a severe consequence of indebtedness and financial struggles. The misuse of locally produced drugs like homemade liquor and cannabis, along with prescription drugs used in high doses by youths seeking intoxication, is said to be on the rise. Psychological problems, including addiction to alcohol and smoking, are compounded by unemployment, further contributing to domestic violence. Additionally, the rising prices of personal hygiene items have created further difficulties for families with more children, particularly adolescent girls. The cost of a pack of sanitary napkins continues to be elevated, making it less affordable to low-income groups, and Sri Lanka's absolute household 'period poverty'<sup>4</sup> rate remains high.

## Protection, Gender, and Inclusion

### Evaluation of SLRCS Interventions in Sri Lanka

One of the most significant challenges highlighted across branches was the scarcity of resources and the complexities involved in their allocation. Efficient resource management is critical in crises, where the needs are great, and the supplies limited. Challenges include logistical issues, such as transportation and distribution, and financial constraints that limit purchasing power and aid reach. Resource limitations were a recurrent theme, affecting the scale and a pricing team of interventions. Challenges in resource distribution were exacerbated by logistical constraints and the need to manage complex beneficiary expectations, which required transparent and equitable allocation practices.

Addressing cultural sensitivities and engaging effectively with diverse communities is crucial for the success of any intervention. The branches faced challenges in implementing culturally appropriate programs accepted by all segments of the population. This included sensitivities around gender, such as the distribution of sanitary napkins, and ethnic diversities, which can affect how aid is perceived and received. Addressing cultural sensitivities and managing community perceptions were critical in ensuring the acceptance and effectiveness of programs. Efforts to engage community leaders and use culturally appropriate communication strategies are essential in mitigating issues of perceived favoritism and enhancing community trust.

Cultural sensitivities and socio-economic barriers often influenced how aid is perceived and its effectiveness. Issues such as land ownership disputes in Kalutara and traditional practices affecting beneficiary engagement needed careful navigation to ensure that interventions were culturally appropriate and effectively targeted.

Volunteers were involved in a broad spectrum of initiatives, ranging from direct aid (cash grants, food kits) to capacity-building activities that empower economic self-sufficiency. For instance, in Kurunegala, efforts to enhance agricultural and entrepreneurial skills were not just about immediate economic relief but were aimed at fostering long-term economic resilience.

Continuous feedback from targeted populations helped shape more responsive and tailored programs. Such engagement is crucial for refining intervention strategies and ensuring that they align with actual community needs, thus enhancing the overall impact of the efforts.. targeted populations frequently expressed gratitude for the aid received, which provided crucial support during peak crisis periods. The flexibility of cash grants was particularly appreciated as it allowed communities to address diverse needs ranging from rebuilding efforts post-flooding to purchasing essential medicines during economic hardships.

---

<sup>4</sup> The term 'period poverty' refers to difficulties faced by low-income women and girls in accessing menstrual products. Period poverty has many negative consequences for women and girls in addition to the health risks associated with poor menstrual hygiene. It severely limits the participation women in accessing services and their involvement income generating activities and prevents girls from attending school on a regular basis.

In regions like Kurunegala, volunteers focused on enhancing local farming practices and entrepreneurial skills through workshops, significantly impacting agricultural productivity and local business operations.

Additionally, there was a notable shift toward sustainability in volunteer activities, with initiatives designed to create enduring benefits. This included training in self-employment and the development of local industries, which are crucial initiatives for reducing long-term dependency on external aid.

Community feedback also highlighted a significant desire for more sustainable and long-term solutions. There was a strong call for initiatives that go beyond immediate relief, such as programs aimed at economic empowerment, sustainable agriculture practices, improved healthcare access, and enhanced educational opportunities. These suggestions reflect a broader need for interventions that build resilience and reduce future dependency on aid.

Future strategies should increasingly focus on long-term community engagement and development by re-evaluating and enhancing the role of volunteers. By focusing on specific strategies, the SLRCS can enhance the effectiveness of their community engagement efforts, thereby improving service delivery and fostering sustainable development within the communities they serve. Specifically, SLRCS should consider:

Initiative Category	Action Item	Description
<b>Revisiting Volunteer Expectations</b>	<i>Defining Clear Roles</i>	Establish clear and specific roles for volunteers in community engagement to ensure they understand their responsibilities and the impact of their contributions.
	<i>Training and Capacity Building</i>	Invest in regular training programs to equip volunteers with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective community engagement. This includes training in communication, conflict resolution, and leadership.
	<i>Support and Supervision</i>	Provide continuous support and supervision to volunteers to maintain motivation and ensure adherence to community engagement strategies.
<b>Empowerment Through Education, Health, and Economic Initiatives</b>	<i>Educational Programs</i>	Implement educational initiatives that focus on building local capacity and knowledge, such as literacy programs, vocational training, and awareness campaigns on health and hygiene.
	<i>Health Initiatives</i>	Promote health initiatives that encourage community participation, such as local health workshops, vaccination drives, and nutritional support programs.
	<i>Economic Empowerment</i>	Facilitate economic empowerment through microfinance projects, skill development workshops, and support for local entrepreneurship.
<b>Enhancing Service Delivery Through Community Feedback</b>	<i>Feedback Mechanisms</i>	Establish robust feedback mechanisms to regularly gather insights from community members regarding the effectiveness of the services provided.
	<i>Adaptive Strategies</i>	Use the feedback to adapt and improve service delivery, ensuring that the services remain relevant and meet the evolving needs of the community.
<b>Building Resilience Mechanisms</b>	<i>Resilience Training</i>	Organize resilience training sessions focusing on disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and recovery strategies.
	<i>Resource Allocation</i>	Ensure continuous support in terms of resources, such as providing necessary tools and materials for community-led initiatives.
	<i>Collaborative Projects</i>	Encourage collaborative projects that involve both volunteers and community members, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility.

To effectively engage with communities, it is essential for the SLRCS to develop and implement strategies that build trust during peacetime. Given that many branches did not have an active presence prior to this operation and lack plans for ongoing engagement, it is crucial to avoid one-off engagements, such as relief distributions, which do not foster long-term relationships. By focusing on the following strategies, SLRCS can build lasting trust with communities, ensuring a continuous and meaningful presence that extends beyond mere relief distribution during emergencies. This proactive engagement will foster stronger, more resilient communities capable of better withstanding future challenges.

Strategy	Description
<b>Regular Community Interaction</b>	Establish regular interaction points with the community through consistent activities and presence, even outside of crisis periods. This could include health workshops, educational programs, and social events.
<b>Local Partnership Development</b>	Forge partnerships with local organizations, schools, and businesses to integrate SLRCS activities into the fabric of the community. Collaborate on projects that address local needs and priorities.
<b>Volunteer Involvement</b>	Encourage volunteers from the community to take active roles in planning and executing programs. This approach ensures that initiatives are community-driven and culturally relevant.
<b>Feedback Mechanisms</b>	Implement mechanisms to gather continuous feedback from the community on their needs and perceptions. This can be done through surveys, town hall meetings, and suggestion boxes.
<b>Transparency and Accountability</b>	Maintain transparency in operations and decision-making processes. Regularly update the community on the progress of various initiatives and how resources are being utilized.
<b>Capacity Building</b>	Invest in capacity-building programs for community members, enabling them to take ownership of certain projects and sustain them independently over time.

Many communities experienced delays and inconsistencies in the distribution of aid, often exacerbated by the selection criteria process or bureaucratic delays in fund disbursement. These operational issues sometimes hindered the timely and effective reach of aid to the most vulnerable.

These problems were particularly problematic for several reasons. First, delays in aid distribution meant that urgent needs went unmet for extended periods, exacerbating suffering and potentially leading to preventable hardships or even fatalities. For example, in disaster-stricken areas, timely aid is critical for providing food, clean water, medical supplies, and shelter. When aid does not arrive promptly, the health and safety of affected individuals are at risk.

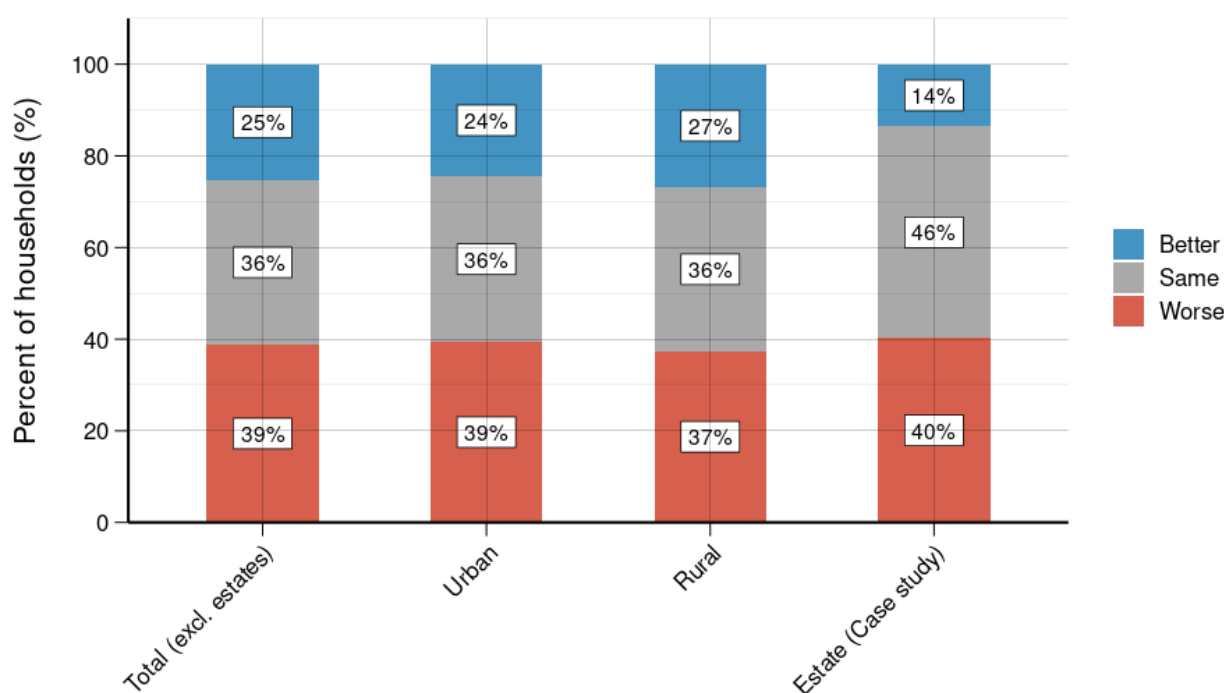
Second, inconsistencies in aid distribution led to unequal access, where some communities received aid while others did not. This disparity often resulted in increased tensions and dissatisfaction among affected populations, undermining the trust in aid organizations and government agencies responsible for the distribution.

The selection criteria process could also be a source of contention. When the criteria are not transparent or seem arbitrary, it can lead to perceptions of unfairness or favoritism. Communities that do not meet the often rigid and bureaucratic criteria may be unjustly excluded from receiving aid, despite having significant needs.

## Unmet Needs Assessment Output on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion

### Safety and security

Given the sensitivity of discussing protection, gender, and inclusion, these topics were addressed with household survey respondents under the broader terms of safety and security. The household survey considered violence against women and children using this terminology, and the issue was explored in greater detail during FGDs and KIIs.



Margin of error at 95% confidence: Total =  $\pm 11\%$ , Urban =  $\pm 9\%$ , Rural =  $\pm 12\%$ , Estate =  $\pm 16\%$

#### 10 Householders' perceptions about community safety and security compared with the peak of the crisis

In 2024, a majority of urban and rural households report that community safety and security have continued to worsen since the peak of the crisis, and although a substantial proportion of estate households also understand that the situation has worsened, a majority see no change. The situation in September 2022 was already dire, with 74 % of all households (excluding estates) stating that the safety and security situation was worse than in January 2022. In 2024, safety and security concerns were especially pronounced in households with a monthly income less than LKR 10k (54 %), households that experienced flood/landslide/drought (50 %) and female headed households (49 %).

For other associated indicators, all compared with the peak of the crisis, there are uniform patterns, with some trends, although with overlapping margins of error:

Category	Description
<b>Related Indicators</b>	Households' perception of rate of violence (physical and/or sexual) against children; Households' perception of access to medical and mental health services for survivors of SGBV; Households' perception of access to medical and mental health services for survivors of violence other than SGBV; Households' perception of risk of early marriage for girls (under the age of 18); Households' perception of risk of children dropping out of school to support their parents economically; Households' perception of quality of life of people living with disabilities; Households' perception of access to and availability of menstrual hygiene management products.
<b>Patterns and Trends</b>	Overall, the perception of households, based on these indicators and compared to the peak of the crisis, suggests that approximately 20% believe each of the listed conditions have improved, 39% see no change, and 42% feel conditions have worsened.
<b>Affected Groups</b>	Low-income households (below LKR 10k per month) and those affected by natural disasters (floods/landslides/droughts) are consistently among the most affected across the different indicators. Conversely, high-income households (LKR 80k or more per month) often report the least negative perceptions of these issues. For example, 78% of low-income households believe that the risk of early marriage for girls (under the age of 18) is now worse (vs. 47% of high-income households); 61% of low-income households perceive that access to and availability of menstrual hygiene management products is now worse (vs. 30% of high-income households).
<b>Other</b>	There was some variation between perceptions in urban, rural, and estate communities across different indicators, although no consistent patterns, with overlapping margins of error.

## Discussion: Protection, Gender, and Inclusion

According to FGDs, community and personal safety have become more significant concerns in the last two years, with an increase in thefts and robberies, including bag-snatching and jewelry-snatching, often driven by the need to secure necessities.

The migration of parents, particularly mothers, for work abroad has left children unprotected and more vulnerable to harmful behaviors. Although community and school monitoring systems have been implemented to track suspicious activities, safety concerns, especially for unsupervised children, remain high. Additionally, focus groups have considered the rise in family violence during the crisis, attributed to job loss, rising prices of goods, and increased drug use among daily workers. Increased violence against women was said to be an issue, often fueled by addiction and mental stress within families.

Focus groups also pointed to the rising costs of legal intoxicants, which have driven more individuals towards cheaper illegal alternatives like cannabis, homemade arrack, and the misuse of prescription drugs. There is also said to be an increase in drug use among youngsters, particularly in town areas, and has made the drug trade a more appealing alternative for income, especially among fishers and the youth. Consequently, issues of theft, violence, and general community insecurity have been exacerbated. Furthermore, drug dealers targeting school children with cheap, dangerous substances have heightened community safety risks.

Focus groups highlighted their concerns about young people, including children as young as 13 or 14, being drawn into commercial sex work to support their families or maintain their lifestyles. Due to inadequate funding, teenagers pursuing higher education may turn to commercial sex work to financially support their studies. Tourist destinations provide more opportunities for commercial exploitation, increasing the risks for vulnerable youth. Public awareness of these issues is high, with local newspapers frequently reporting on the exploitation and the challenges faced by those involved. The increased cost of school stationery and uniforms was said in focus groups to pose a significant burden on low-income families. This financial strain can force some children to miss classes, further widening the educational gap. Rising costs and reduced government support for higher education and free courses were also said to pose significant barriers to students. Students are sometimes forced to drop out and enter the job market prematurely due to economic pressures on their families. The shift towards online platforms since the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated issues such as lack of necessary equipment for online education, low connectivity, and frequent power outages. Poor digital infrastructure further disrupts learning, making it difficult for universities and schools to function effectively. Consequently, the reduction in educational opportunities and fewer placements offered by institutions pressure families economically.

Key informants concerned with child protection and disability say that while there have been improvements in service provision and a return to normal operations in some areas, the underlying economic challenges continue to affect services. They also confirm that vulnerable populations, particularly children, women, and people living with disability, still face significant hardships.

## Partners and Stakeholders

The key informant interviews with representatives from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and inter-governmental organizations offer vital insights into the broader humanitarian network's response to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka. These discussions highlight the diverse strategies, challenges, and vital opportunities for future collaborations in the sector.

### World Vision

World Vision in Sri Lanka operates with a mission to overcome poverty and injustice by working with children, families, and communities. World Vision's multifaceted approach in Sri Lanka addresses immediate humanitarian needs while also focusing on long-term development and resilience-building within communities.

World Vision Key Initiatives	Description
<b>Health and Nutrition</b>	Focus on maternal and child nutrition, especially in the first 1,000 days (about 2 and a half years) of life. Implementation of nutrition programs such as the Positive Deviance/Hearth (PD/Hearth) Project to rehabilitate underweight children. Strengthening community health structures like Mother Support Groups and ensuring access to primary health care (World Vision, 2022).
<b>Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)</b>	Development of safe water sources and promotion of lasting behavior change regarding sanitation and hygiene. Projects to improve school WASH, community WASH, and solid waste management. Focus on disaster resilience through WASH facilities during emergencies (World Vision, 2022).
<b>Livelihood and Enterprise Development</b>	Programs to build secure and resilient livelihoods by improving skills and knowledge in business management, savings, and climate-smart agriculture. Special focus on local value chain development and disaster-resilient livelihoods (World Vision, 2022).
<b>Child Protection and Participation</b>	Establishment of Child Friendly Spaces during disasters to ensure children's safety and psychosocial support. Life Skills Program to develop adolescents' psychosocial competencies. Engagement with community-based child protection mechanisms and advocacy for children's rights (World Vision, 2022).

## Response to Economic Crisis

World Vision Lanka declared a Category II National Response to the economic crisis in consultation with the Disaster Declaration Group (DDG). The response focused on food security, addressing child malnutrition, mental health, and psychosocial support, and supporting the health sector (World Vision, 2023). World Vision provided dry ration packs, home gardens, midday meals for preschool and school children, learning materials, and multi-purpose cash transfers to vulnerable households. Additionally, World Vision collaborated with the Ministry of Health on nutrition in estate areas and provided unconditional cash assistance and school feeding programs.

The RISE Lanka Project involved a mid-day meal program for preschoolers in response to food insecurity due to the economic crisis. This project is supported by the Australian Government and provides nutritional meals to 1,500 children in 100 preschools, along with strengthening agriculture and dairy farming systems (World Vision, 2023).

Key Points from KIIs with World Vision Representative	Description
<b>Collaborative Data Management System</b>	Emphasized the need for a collaborative data management system among humanitarian agencies. Highlighted the role of SLRCS in providing crucial data due to its extensive community reach.
<b>Cash Assistance Programs</b>	World Vision provides both unconditional and conditional cash assistance. Conditional cash was often tied to livelihood programs like home gardening and climate-smart agriculture training. Faced challenges with government skepticism about cash and voucher programs due to concerns about misuse.
<b>Strategic Plan Review</b>	World Vision is reviewing and potentially updating its strategic plan earlier than anticipated due to the evolving economic crisis. Continued school feeding programs and expanded efforts in nutrition awareness and support, particularly in estate areas.
<b>Collaboration with UN Agencies and NGOs</b>	Active collaboration with UN agencies like UNICEF, World Food Programme, and other NGOs such as Save the Children and LEADS. Participated in various working groups and forums to enhance coordination and response efforts.

## UNICEF

UNICEF's work in Sri Lanka is multifaceted, focusing on a range of areas to improve the wellbeing of children and women. Key areas of their work include social protection, child protection, education, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and climate resilience.

UNICEF's work in Sri Lanka is comprehensive, addressing immediate needs while also focusing on long-term improvements in social protection, child protection, education, WASH, and climate resilience. Their approach is adaptive, responding to both ongoing challenges and emerging crises to support the most vulnerable populations effectively.



## UNICEF Key Areas of Focus

UNICEF Key Areas of Focus	Description
<b>Social Protection</b>	<b>Lifecycle Social Protection System:</b> UNICEF is advocating for a universal lifecycle social protection system in Sri Lanka, including universal child benefits, disability benefits, and a pension-tested old age benefit to ensure comprehensive coverage for all citizens (UNICEF, 2023a, 2023b). <b>Economic Crisis Response:</b> UNICEF has provided unconditional cash transfers to pregnant women and advocated for the continuity of these programs despite economic challenges. They have also worked on improving social protection mechanisms to ensure better coverage and support for vulnerable populations (UNICEF, 2023b).
<b>Child Protection</b>	<b>Addressing Violence and Abuse:</b> UNICEF is actively involved in addressing violence against children, including corporal punishment and intimate partner violence. They work to strengthen child protection systems and promote positive parenting practices (UNICEF, 2024). <b>Justice for Children:</b> UNICEF focuses on improving the juvenile justice system, ensuring that children in conflict with the law are treated in a manner that respects their rights and promotes rehabilitation (UNICEF, 2024).
<b>Education</b>	<b>Improving Access and Quality:</b> UNICEF supports initiatives to enhance the quality of education and ensure regular school attendance, particularly in the wake of disruptions caused by the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. They advocate for increased parental engagement in children's education and address barriers such as the affordability of education materials and transportation (UNICEF, 2023c). <b>Climate Impact on Education:</b> Efforts are made to mitigate the impact of climate change on education, ensuring that children continue to have access to learning even during extreme weather events (UNICEF, 2023c).
<b>WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene)</b>	<b>Improving Facilities:</b> UNICEF works on improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in both households and schools. They promote good hygiene practices and ensure that communities are aware of proper water treatment methods (UNICEF, 2023c).
<b>Climate Resilience</b>	<b>Adapting to Climate Change:</b> UNICEF collaborates with other organizations like UNDP on projects aimed at building climate resilience. These projects focus on mitigating the effects of climate change on vulnerable communities, particularly those in tea-growing areas affected by extreme weather events (UNICEF, 2023c).

Key Points from KII with UNICEF	Description
<b>Emergency Response</b>	In response to the economic crisis, UNICEF has distributed water purification tablets and other WASH-related support to ensure safe drinking water availability.
<b>Program Implementation</b>	UNICEF prefers to implement programs rather than projects, ensuring sustainability and long-term impact.
<b>Health System Support</b>	Despite the economic crisis, UNICEF emphasizes the well-developed health system in Sri Lanka and continues to support it through various interventions, including providing nutritional supplements and pregnancy vouchers.
<b>Social Protection</b>	There is a focus on supporting and enhancing social protection mechanisms, including cash transfers and emergency nutritional support.
<b>Funding Challenges</b>	The economic crisis has necessitated adjustments to some programs due to funding constraints. UNICEF has advocated for more flexible donor funding arrangements to ensure continuous support.

## Save the Children

Save the Children has been actively involved in addressing various humanitarian and development needs in Sri Lanka, focusing on education, child protection, health and nutrition, vocational skills development, and child rights governance.

Save the Children Key Initiatives	Description
<b>Education and Nutrition Programs</b>	<b>PALAM/A Project:</b> This flagship initiative, supported by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), aims to enhance literacy and nutrition for primary grade children. The project, known as the Food for Education and Children Nutrition Programme, complements the National School Meal Programme (NSMP) and targets reducing short-term hunger among school-age children while improving student attendance, literacy, and attentiveness in classrooms. The program has reached over 95,000 children in 852 schools across seven districts and aims to impact over 200,000 school children and 20,000 preschoolers in eight districts (Save the Children, 2024, 2023a). <b>Literacy and Learning Environment:</b> Beyond providing meals, Save the Children's program also focuses on creating a conducive learning environment through literacy-focused interventions, helping children to thrive academically and socially (Save the Children, 2024).
<b>Child Protection and Rights Advocacy</b>	<b>Family-Friendly Tea Industry:</b> Save the Children collaborates with the Centre for Child Rights and Business to promote child rights in the tea industry. Initiatives include the "Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business" to help businesses address child rights risks and foster family-friendly supply chains (Save the Children, 2023b). <b>Climate Change Advocacy:</b> Through campaigns like the Red Alert on Climate, Save the Children empowers youth activists to raise awareness about climate change and its impacts on children. These efforts include educational programs and advocacy for sustainable practices (Save the Children, 2023c).

Save the Children works closely with various ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, to enhance the effectiveness of their programs. They also collaborate with other NGOs and international organizations to coordinate humanitarian efforts and share best practices (Save the Children, 2023a).

## Response to the economic crisis

In response to the 2022 economic crisis, Save the Children implemented a three-tiered humanitarian response, focusing on urban settings and providing multipurpose cash assistance to approximately 87,000 people (about the seating capacity of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum). The response included providing dry rations through the government school meal program, reaching around 100,000 children (about the seating capacity of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum) in seven districts.



Save the Children's Response to the Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka	Description
Cash and Livelihood Support	Save the Children's response included cash-for-work programs and home gardening initiatives, particularly in the northern and eastern regions, aiming to build resilience and food security at the household level. They also provided multipurpose cash assistance and conditional grants to support small businesses and subsistence farmers, enhancing their climate resilience and overall livelihoods.
Program Implementation	Interviews revealed that Save the Children's response to the economic crisis involved a multipronged approach, focusing on both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term resilience. Their programs included providing cash assistance, supporting school meal programs, and implementing livelihood support initiatives.
Disaster Risk Reduction	Save the Children engages in disaster risk reduction programs, working with local and national disaster management bodies to improve preparedness and response mechanisms. This includes supporting village disaster management committees and enhancing the capacity of local systems to handle future shocks.
Challenges and Coordination	The interviews highlighted challenges in coordination among various levels of disaster management and the need for better integration of different program components to maximize impact. Save the Children emphasized the importance of effective community sensitization and standardizing best practices across different sectors.
Lessons Learned	Key lessons from Save the Children's response include the need for integrating different project components, such as combining cash assistance with home gardening programs to enhance household food security. They also noted the importance of improving data collection and sharing mechanisms to better address protection needs during crises.

Overall, Save the Children's work in Sri Lanka encompasses a comprehensive approach to child welfare, focusing on education, nutrition, humanitarian assistance, and advocacy for child rights and climate action. Their efforts aim to provide immediate relief while building long-term resilience in vulnerable communities.

## United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP has been actively involved in addressing the economic crisis in Sri Lanka through a wide range of initiatives and policy recommendations. Overall, UNDP's comprehensive approach in Sri Lanka involves immediate humanitarian aid, economic stabilization, social protection, health and education support, long-term sustainable development, and significant contributions to water resource management. These efforts are aimed at helping Sri Lanka navigate through its economic crisis and build resilience for the future.

UNDP highlighted the critical need for Sri Lanka to address its sovereign debt crisis, exacerbated by policy missteps and a significant debt overhang built over two decades. The organization emphasized the importance of fiscal consolidation, expenditure switching from non-tradables to tradables, and export expansion to achieve economic recovery (UNDP, 2022a, 2023a).

UNDP proposed reforms to Sri Lanka's social protection programs, suggesting improvements in cash transfer mechanisms to better target vulnerable populations. They recommended expanding social safety nets to include newly vulnerable groups, estimating a need for \$75.8 million per month for nine months. The organization also highlighted the need for emergency food rationing during severe crises to ensure food security while long-term solutions are developed (UNDP, 2022a, 2023b).

In collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNDP developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for disaster recovery planning in the irrigation sector. These guidelines aim to enhance technical capacities for recovery planning and implementation, focusing on sustainable development and disaster resilience. The Disaster Recovery Framework (DRF) and Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) methodologies were introduced to guide recovery efforts and ensure comprehensive assessment and planning (UNDP, 2023c).

UNDP's initiatives include strengthening irrigation infrastructure, considering disaster impacts and recovery needs, integrating disaster recovery into irrigation sector planning to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience (UNDP, 2023c).

UNDP has advocated for the adoption of green energy solutions, particularly in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, to reduce dependence on non-renewable resources and enhance economic resilience. They support innovative financing models, such as impact-linked bonds and green finance, to facilitate sustainable development projects and attract investment (UNDP, 2023d, 2022b).

UNDP has stressed the importance of integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national policies and development plans. This includes promoting research, capacity building, and inter-sectoral

collaboration to address human development challenges exacerbated by the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic (UNDP, 2023d, 2023a).

### *Immediate Humanitarian Assistance and Socio-Economic Recovery*

UNDP supported vulnerable populations by enhancing food security and providing medical services. For instance, over 40,000 vulnerable farmers and 228,000 individuals in need of medical services were supported through the 'Individual, Donor and Private Sector Giving Facility for Emergency Relief' (UNDP, 2023b).

UNDP, along with other UN agencies, worked to expand and improve social protection schemes, targeting newly vulnerable populations. This includes expanding existing social protection programs to include lower-middle-income households that have fallen into poverty due to the crisis (UNDP, 2023b).

UNDP played a pivotal role in supporting the recovery of the tourism sector, crucial for Sri Lanka's economy. This included developing a Roadmap for a Resilient Tourism Sector and establishing a Tourism Advisory Unit within the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) (UNDP, 2023b).

**Health and Education** UNDP provided essential medical supplies and PPE, ensuring the health sector's effective response to ongoing challenges (UNDP, 2023b).

UNDP implemented initiatives to ensure continued learning and development opportunities for children, particularly in vulnerable communities (UNDP, 2023b).

UNDP invested in community infrastructure projects to support and restore the livelihoods of marginalized communities, including migrant returnees. This includes projects aimed at enhancing local agricultural productivity and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (UNDP, 2023b).

### *Water Systems and Management*

The Climate Resilient Integrated Water Management Project (CRIWMP) is a seven-year initiative funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka with UNDP's technical support. This project aims to enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers, particularly in the Dry Zone, by improving irrigation systems, drinking water systems, and early warning systems for flood response (SLRCS, 2021; UNDP, 2023e, 2023f, 2017).

UNDP focused on improving water access and quality, particularly in the Dry Zone where water scarcity is a significant issue. This includes initiatives to revitalize ancient irrigation systems and develop integrated water resource management strategies to ensure equitable access and sustainable use of water resources (SLRCS, 2021; UNDP, 2023e, 2023f, 2017).

Through initiatives like rainwater harvesting systems and groundwater recharging, UNDP aims to mitigate the impacts of climate change on water resources. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to build climate-resilient water systems that support sustainable development and reduce vulnerability to water-related risks (SLRCS, 2021; UNDP, 2023e, 2023f, 2017).

### **UNDP and Sri Lanka Red Cross Collaboration on Water Systems**

The UNDP and SLRCS have collaborated on a significant project aimed at providing sustainable drinking water solutions and enhancing community resilience to climate change in the Thalakolawewa Grama Niladhari Division in the Kurunegala District. This collaboration is part of the Climate Resilient Integrated Water Management Project (CRIWMP) (SLRCS, 2021).

Key Aspects of the UNDP - SLRCS Collaboration	Description
<b>Community Empowerment and Capacity Building</b>	The Nildiyawara Community Based Organization (CBO) was established to manage the drinking water infrastructure project. The community was actively involved in the planning and implementation process, ensuring the project's sustainability. Capacity building included

	training in construction supervision, maintenance, operations of water supply schemes, leadership, fiscal management, and auditing. The community's institutional setup was strengthened through exposure visits and cross-learning with other community-managed Rural Water Supply (RWS) schemes, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups (SLRCS, 2021).
<b>Project Implementation and Infrastructure Development</b>	The Thalakolawawa Community Managed RWS Scheme was planned, implemented, constructed, and commissioned with significant community involvement. The community contributed LKR 9.5 million (approximately USD 47,979), which accounted for 7.5% of the total project cost. The project was officially handed over to the community on March 30, 2021, benefiting 1,512 people (330 households) and various local institutions. The scheme includes climate-resilient and eco-friendly features such as a groundwater recharging system, solar lighting at the treatment plant, and a solar power system for the CBO office (SLRCS, 2021).
<b>Sustainability and Future Support</b>	The project is designed to last until 2039, aiming to provide water supply to 500 households with a capacity of 220,000 liters (about 58117.84 gal) per day from a dug well and a tube well. The Department of National Community Water Supply (DNCWS) and the National Water Supply & Drainage Board (NWSDB) will continue to support the community with social, community development, and technical assistance (SLRCS, 2021).
<b>Collaborative Effort and Outcomes</b>	The success of the Thalakolawawa RWS Scheme is attributed to the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Irrigation, NWSDB, DNCWS, UNDP, SLRCS, Ceywater Consultants (Pvt.) Ltd., and Puritas (Pvt) Ltd. The scheme has provided year-round access to quality drinking water, increased the community's adaptive capacity to climate variability and shocks, and empowered water users to manage water resources sustainably. This collaboration highlights a model of community-based adaptation to climate change, integrating sustainable water management practices and community empowerment to ensure long-term resilience and improved quality of life (SLRCS, 2021).



## World Food Program

WFP's extensive work in Sri Lanka focuses on emergency relief, nutrition, school feeding, resilience building, and anticipatory action. Their collaboration with SLRCS and other partners aims to enhance disaster preparedness and response, improving food security and nutrition for vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka.

### *Operational Context and Focus Areas*

WFP has been operating in Sri Lanka since 1968, focusing on food security, nutrition, and resilience building. The economic crisis in 2022 worsened food insecurity, affecting 6.2 million people (about twice the population of Nevada). WFP's response involves emergency relief, development initiatives, and capacity building to enhance food systems and nutrition standards (WFP, 2024a, 2022a, 2022b).

WFP Key Programs and Achievements	Description
<b>Emergency Relief and Food Assistance</b>	In response to the economic crisis, WFP provided food assistance through cash, vouchers, and in-kind support, reaching 3.4 million food-insecure people. This included distributing 4,814 metric tons of food to crisis-affected individuals (WFP, 2022b, 2022c).
<b>School Feeding Programs</b>	WFP supports the national school meal program, providing rice and other nutritious foods to over 1 million schoolchildren. This initiative aims to improve dietary practices and ensure food security for children (WFP, 2024b, 2023).
<b>Nutrition and Health</b>	WFP focuses on vulnerable populations, including pregnant and breastfeeding women. Programs like the distribution of fortified foods and food vouchers help address malnutrition and improve health outcomes (WFP, 2023).
<b>Resilience Building</b>	WFP implements resilience-building activities, including support for smallholder farmers, climate-smart agriculture, and cash-based transfers to enhance livelihoods and food security (WFP, 2023, 2022d).

Additionally, Gender empowerment is integral to WFP's activities. Initiatives are designed to promote equality and enhance food security for women and girls. Efforts include supporting women-led smallholder farms and integrating gender considerations into all programs (WFP, 2024b, 2023).

### *WFP Strategic Plan (2023-2027)*

WFP's Country Strategic Plan (2023-2027)	Description
<b>Immediate Food Assistance and Crisis Support</b>	Provide immediate food assistance and support during crises.
<b>Improving Nutrition</b>	Improve nutrition through targeted programs focusing on the first 8,000 days (about 22 years) of life.
<b>Building Community Resilience</b>	Build community resilience to natural hazards and climate change.
<b>Strengthening Institutions</b>	Strengthen national and subnational institutions for adaptive and resilient food systems.

### *Collaboration between SLRCS and WFP on Anticipatory Action*

In March 2024, WFP co-chaired the formation of the anticipatory action technical working group in Sri Lanka, alongside SLRCS, World Vision, and the International Water Management Institute. This group aims to develop a joint action plan for anticipatory action, focusing on early warning systems and emergency preparedness (WFP, 2023).

In September 2023, a national-level sensitization workshop on anticipatory action was held in Colombo, organized by SLRCS with support from IFRC and the Anticipation Hub. This workshop aimed to build a roadmap for implementing anticipatory action in Sri Lanka, addressing common hazards such as floods, landslides, and droughts.

The workshop emphasized the importance of anticipatory action in disaster management. It involved over 50 participants from various sectors, including government, UN agencies, NGOs, and academic



institutions. The immediate output was the establishment of a Technical Working Group and the development of a three-year roadmap for collective action.

**Anticipatory Action Benefits:** Studies presented during the workshop highlighted the benefits of anticipatory action, noting that every dollar invested can generate up to seven dollars in returns due to losses avoided and added benefits. This approach is crucial for Sri Lanka, which is striving for economic stability while dealing with frequent natural disasters.

## Challenges and Plausible Areas for Future Collaboration

Challenges Identified Through Collaborative Efforts	Description
<b>Coordination Among Agencies</b>	One of the recurrent themes across the interviews was the challenge of coordination among different humanitarian actors. There is a recognized need for more structured collaboration and communication to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure resources are utilized optimally.
<b>Data Sharing and Management</b>	Another significant issue highlighted was the need for a collaborative data management system. Such a system would enable better planning, implementation, and monitoring of humanitarian interventions by providing timely and accurate data to all stakeholders involved.
<b>Funding and Resource Allocation</b>	The interviews also reflected concerns regarding the sustainability of funding and resource allocation. There is a continuous need for flexible funding mechanisms that allow organizations to adapt their operations as crises evolve.

Plausible Areas for Future Collaboration	Description
<b>Integrated Service Delivery</b>	There's potential for creating more integrated service delivery models that combine health, nutrition, education, and economic support to provide holistic solutions to affected communities.
<b>Joint Capacity Building Initiatives</b>	Strengthening the local capacity for disaster preparedness and response is a crucial area where INGOs and NGOs can collaborate more closely, sharing knowledge, resources, and best practices.
<b>Advocacy and Policy Influence</b>	Together, these organizations can form a powerful advocacy group to influence policy changes related to disaster management, child protection, and social safety nets. This collaboration can be especially effective in lobbying for changes in school feeding programs and child welfare policies.
<b>Innovative Funding Models</b>	Develop innovative funding models that ensure sustained support for long-term development goals while also providing the flexibility needed to respond to immediate emergencies.



Several stakeholders can be identified as potential collaborators for future initiatives:

Category	Examples	Focus Areas
International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)	World Vision, Save the Children, World Food Program (WFP)	Humanitarian aid, food security, child protection, resilience building
Inter-Governmental Organizations	UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Social protection, health, education, climate resilience
Government Ministries	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education	Implementing and coordinating national response strategies
Local Partners	Community-based organizations	Effective program implementation, reaching vulnerable populations
Funding Bodies and Donor Agencies	Australian Government, Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Financial support for various projects and initiatives
Technical and Academic Institutions	Disaster management, agriculture, and water resource management institutions	Expertise and support for capacity-building and technical implementation

## Reflections

The interviews underscore the complex interdependencies among various humanitarian actors in Sri Lanka's response to the economic crisis. Notably, organizations such as the UN agencies, local NGOs, and international NGOs like the Red Cross and World Food Programme (WFP) have been instrumental. However, the landscape is evolving, with some partners maintaining active programming while others have phased out. For instance, UN agencies and the Red Cross continue to have a significant presence, whereas some international NGOs have scaled back their operations as immediate crisis needs diminish.

For future crises, enhancing collaboration, improving data sharing, and aligning strategic objectives across these organizations will be key to delivering more effective and sustainable humanitarian aid. These efforts will require committed partnerships, innovative thinking, and a concerted focus on both immediate relief and long-term resilience building. Identifying and leveraging the capacities of those still active in the region, such as local NGOs and ongoing international efforts, will be crucial in building a robust and coordinated response framework.

## Evaluating SLRCS Emergency Response through the Evaluating Humanitarian Action Criteria (EHA)

In the wake of Sri Lanka's economic crisis, the evaluation of SLRCS emergency response is crucial. This process will examine the organization's initiatives and interventions aimed at mitigating the impacts of the crisis on vulnerable populations.

Humanitarian assistance, particularly in crisis situations like that in Sri Lanka, requires tailored evaluations that consider the unique challenges posed by such emergencies. These include the multifaceted nature of the crises, which often involve layers of social, economic, and political instability, and the need for interventions that are both immediate and effective. Evaluating these responses helps ensure that humanitarian efforts are directed appropriately, resources are utilized efficiently, and the interventions are impactful.

The evaluation will focus on various critical areas, including the adequacy of the SLRCS's response in terms of reach and relevance, the efficiency of resource use, and the effectiveness of the interventions in meeting the urgent needs of the affected communities. It will also consider the broader implications of these efforts, including their sustainability and the extent to which they align with international humanitarian standards.

Through this evaluation, lessons learned will be documented to refine future response strategies and enhance the resilience of the SLRCS's operational frameworks. This not only aids in institutional learning but also ensures that the SLRCS can continue to respond adeptly in times of national distress.

An effective evaluation of humanitarian responses hinges on the utilization of well-defined criteria that ensure assessments are both comprehensive and actionable. The main criteria used for evaluating humanitarian interventions, particularly focusing on the revised and expanded set established by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (ALNAP, 2023, 2020; Beck et al., 2006; ODI, 2006). The guide discusses the importance of evaluations for humanitarian assistance, highlighting the need for better accountability and performance in international humanitarian operations.

The purpose of evaluations is to enhance accountability and contribute to learning within humanitarian organizations. Evaluations are intended to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance by institutionalizing lessons learned and identifying better monitoring methods (Bay Paludan et al., 2003; Sundberg et al., 2016).

Evaluating Humanitarian Action Criteria	Description
<b>Relevance/Appropriateness</b>	This criterion examines whether the humanitarian action aligns with the specific needs and priorities of the target population and the donor's policy. It questions whether the actions taken are the right ones for the context and if they correctly address the underlying needs of the affected community.
<b>Connectedness</b>	Connectedness ensures that short-term emergency responses consider the longer-term and interconnected challenges of the affected area. It emphasizes the importance of interventions that are sustainable and contribute to future resilience, beyond immediate relief.
<b>Coherence</b>	Coherence assesses how well the humanitarian intervention aligns with other initiatives in the same context. It looks for synergies and conflicts between different policies and actions, ensuring that all efforts are mutually reinforcing and not working at cross-purposes.
<b>Coverage</b>	Coverage evaluates the extent to which the intervention reaches the intended target population. It assesses the inclusivity of the action, ensuring all vulnerable groups are considered and helped.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Efficiency measures how economically resources are used to achieve desired outcomes. This criterion scrutinizes whether the outputs of humanitarian actions are achieved through the optimal use of resources, considering both time and cost.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Effectiveness examines the extent to which the intervention achieves its intended objectives. It involves looking at the results relative to the goals and assessing if the intervention's outcomes directly address the initial issues identified.
<b>Impact</b>	Impact explores the broader effects of the intervention, including unintended consequences. It goes beyond immediate results to evaluate longer-term changes brought about by the humanitarian actions, whether positive or negative.
<b>Sustainability</b>	This criterion looks at the likelihood of continued benefits after the humanitarian intervention has concluded. It considers the resilience of outcomes and the capacity of the local systems to sustain improvements made during the intervention.

Using these criteria in a thoughtful and context-sensitive manner allows evaluators to provide meaningful insights that can significantly enhance humanitarian actions' effectiveness and accountability. These criteria serve as a framework for assessment and a guide for designing interventions responsive to the complex dynamics of humanitarian emergencies.

Through a detailed analysis across these dimensions, this evaluation aims to discern the extent to which the SLRCS's efforts have met the immediate and long-term needs of the communities, aligned with international humanitarian standards, and prepared the communities for future resilience.

## Relevance/Appropriateness

In evaluating the relevance and appropriateness of SLRCS emergency response to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka, several factors are pivotal. This evaluation critically examines whether SLRCS interventions effectively addressed the actual needs of the affected populations.

### *Understanding Community Needs*

The SLRCS interventions were structured around comprehensive emergency aid, which included monetary assistance, food security initiatives, health interventions, and the provision of essential supplies such as sanitary products and school supplies. These efforts appear to align closely with the multifaceted needs arising from the crisis, emphasizing the importance of maintaining health and education continuity.

Community training initiatives were indeed conducted, specifically targeting individuals who received conditional cash transfers for food production. This aspect of the intervention was aimed at enhancing food security by equipping recipients with the necessary skills to effectively utilize the cash assistance for sustainable food production.

However, it is important to note that the livelihood training mentioned above was not a blanket initiative for all community members but was specifically tailored for those receiving the conditional cash transfers. This indicates that while some elements of livelihood training were integrated into the response, they were not uniformly applied across all branches or operations within the SLRCS interventions.

Given the expressed needs and requests from various community members, particularly those receiving multipurpose cash transfers, it is recommended to broaden the scope of training programs. By expanding the training programs to address these areas, SLRCS can better support the diverse needs of the communities they serve, fostering greater self-sufficiency and resilience in the face of ongoing challenges. This approach would not only address immediate needs but also contribute to the long-term recovery and development of the affected communities.

### Recommended Community Training Programs:

Training Type	Description	Purpose	Potential Topics
<b>Self-Employment Training</b>	To empower community members to create their own employment opportunities, leading to greater economic stability and resilience.	Empower community members to create their own employment opportunities.	Small business management, entrepreneurship, vocational skills, marketing, customer service.
<b>Financial Literacy Programs</b>	To help recipients manage their multipurpose cash transfers more effectively, ensuring they can meet immediate and future needs.	Help recipients manage their multipurpose cash transfers effectively.	Budgeting, savings, investment, debt management, financial planning.
<b>Diversified Livelihood Training</b>	To provide a wider range of skills that can help community members adapt to various economic opportunities.	Provide a wide range of skills for adapting to various economic opportunities.	Agriculture, crafts, service-based skills, carpentry, tailoring, food processing.
<b>Digital Literacy Training</b>	To equip community members with essential digital skills for modern employment and business opportunities.	Equip community members with essential digital skills.	Basic computer skills, internet usage, online marketing, social media management, e-commerce.
<b>Health and Nutrition Education</b>	To promote better health practices and nutrition awareness among community members.	Promote better health practices and nutrition awareness.	Basic healthcare, nutrition, hygiene practices, disease prevention, maternal and child health.



<b>Environmental Sustainability</b>	To encourage sustainable practices and awareness of environmental impact within the community.	Encourage sustainable practices and awareness of environmental impact.	Sustainable farming, waste management, recycling, water conservation, renewable energy sources.
<b>Disaster Preparedness Training</b>	To prepare communities for potential natural disasters, enhancing their resilience and response capabilities.	Prepare communities for potential natural disasters.	Emergency response, first aid, evacuation plans, risk assessment, community coordination.
<b>Education Support Programs</b>	To support ongoing education for children and adults, ensuring continuous learning opportunities.	Support ongoing education for children and adults.	Literacy and numeracy classes, after-school programs, adult education, vocational training for youth.
<b>Social Skills Development</b>	To enhance interpersonal and social skills, fostering a more cohesive and supportive community.	Enhance interpersonal and social skills.	Communication skills, conflict resolution, teamwork, leadership, community engagement.
<b>Mental Health Awareness</b>	To promote mental well-being and provide strategies for managing stress and mental health issues.	Promote mental well-being and provide strategies for managing stress and mental health issues.	Stress management, counseling, mental health first aid, mindfulness practices, support group facilitation.

### *Cultural Sensitivity and Engagement*

The interventions addressed cultural sensitivities and engaged effectively with diverse communities. This was crucial for ensuring the acceptance and effectiveness of the aid provided, particularly in a multicultural context like Sri Lanka. The inclusion of community-specific needs, such as sanitary products for women and school supplies for children, demonstrates a tailored approach to aid those respects and responds to cultural norms and values.

### *Feedback and Adaptability*

Community feedback indicated a positive reception to the immediate relief efforts but also highlighted a demand for long-term solutions to address the root causes of vulnerabilities. This feedback is instrumental in refining the SLRCS's future strategies, suggesting a need for more sustainable and resilience-building initiatives.

### *Resource Allocation*

The evaluation also touches on challenges related to resource scarcity and allocation efficiency. Effective management of these resources is crucial in crisis situations, where the needs are significant, and supplies are limited. This includes logistical challenges like transportation and distribution, as well as financial constraints impacting the reach and adequacy of aid. For example, financial constraints can significantly hinder the ability to provide timely and sufficient aid. Limited funding may restrict the procurement of essential supplies, reduce the number of aid personnel, and curtail the operation of critical infrastructure such as mobile clinics and temporary shelters. Additionally, fluctuating exchange rates and inflation can further erode the purchasing power of available funds, exacerbating the difficulty of maintaining a consistent and effective aid response.

### *Educational and Nutritional Support*

Programs like school feeding and educational support directly impacted long-term outcomes for children, which is particularly significant in regions where educational disruption has profound long-lasting impacts. This suggests that the interventions were not only relevant but also appropriate in addressing both immediate and future vulnerabilities.

### *Health Initiatives*

Health-oriented interventions such as distribution of first aid kits and health awareness programs were vital in addressing immediate health needs and contributed to longer-term public health goals. This

strategic inclusion helps prevent secondary crises like disease outbreaks, which can compound the impacts of economic crises.

### *Reflections*

The SLRCS's emergency response to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka demonstrates a significant alignment with the actual needs of the affected populations. The interventions were both relevant and appropriate, providing immediate relief while also considering long-term impacts on community resilience and development. However, continuous improvement in resource management, community engagement, and the integration of long-term developmental goals with immediate humanitarian responses will enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of future interventions.

## **Connectedness**

The evaluation of SLRCS emergency response in terms of its connectedness to long-term development goals reveals a strong alignment between immediate humanitarian interventions and broader developmental objectives.

### *Connection to Long-Term Development Goals*

The SLRCS interventions, including health initiatives, nutritional support, and comprehensive emergency aid, were designed not only to address immediate needs but also to contribute to long-term public health goals and socio-economic resilience. For instance, the focus on educational support and school feeding programs aimed at maintaining schooling continuity during crises directly impacts long-term outcomes for children, enhancing their future educational and economic opportunities.

### *Community Empowerment and Sustainability*

Programs such as capacity building and economic empowerment, particularly in regions like Kurunegala, were explicitly aimed at fostering long-term economic resilience. These interventions included enhancing local farming practices and entrepreneurial skills, which are critical for sustainable economic development and reducing long-term dependency on external aid.

### *Feedback and Community Engagement*

Continuous feedback from targeted populations has played a crucial role in shaping responsive and tailored programs. For example, in a community health initiative aimed at reducing diabetes prevalence, regular feedback from participants highlighted a significant barrier: many found it difficult to attend in-person workshops due to work and family commitments. In response, the program was adjusted to include flexible scheduling and online resources, making it more accessible. However, it is important to note that this feedback did not influence the SLRCS's response to the economic crisis. Nevertheless, some of the insights gathered can be instrumental in shaping future responses, ensuring that intervention strategies align more closely with actual community needs, thus enhancing the overall impact of efforts and sustainability.

### *Challenges and Strategic Adjustments*

The interventions encountered significant hurdles, primarily stemming from resource scarcity and inefficiencies in allocation. These issues underscored the critical need for improved logistical planning and resource management to foster sustainable outcomes. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that emergency responses not only meet immediate needs but also establish a foundation for long-term recovery and resilience. Effective strategies must be developed to optimize resource distribution, streamline logistics, and enhance coordination among stakeholders. By overcoming these obstacles, interventions can be more impactful, ensuring that efforts are both immediate and enduring in their positive effects.

### *Future Strategic Directions*

The SLRCS's future directions emphasize the need for strategies focusing on sustainability and building resilience. This involves integrating short-term relief with long-term developmental goals, which is essential for ensuring that emergency responses not only address immediate needs but also contribute to building a foundation for sustainable development.

### *Collaborative Efforts for Broader Impact*

Strengthening partnerships and engaging a broader range of stakeholders, including local governments, international donors, and private sector partners, are recommended to improve resource mobilization and program implementation. These collaborative efforts are vital for enhancing the connectedness between immediate actions and long-term developmental impacts.

### *Reflections*

The SLRCS's approach to linking short-term emergency responses with long-term development objectives demonstrates a robust strategy that incorporates immediate relief with sustainable development goals. By focusing on comprehensive program design, community empowerment, and strategic partnerships, SLRCS aims to ensure that its emergency interventions serve as a catalyst for long-term development and resilience building in affected communities. However, it is important to acknowledge areas where improvement is needed. However, there are concerns that the SLRCS has not done sufficiently in fostering strategic partnerships. For example, there was little collaboration even in crucial areas like the school feeding program. This highlights the need for the SLRCS to place greater emphasis on establishing and nurturing strategic partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of its programs and ensure more comprehensive support for those in need. To address these gaps, the SLRCS can:

Strategies for Addressing Gaps by SLRCS	Description
<b>Strengthen Strategic Partnerships</b>	Actively seek and cultivate partnerships with local governments, international organizations, and private sector entities to enhance resource mobilization and program implementation.
<b>Enhance Community Empowerment</b>	Implement strategies that not only involve community members in planning but also empower them with the skills and resources needed for sustainable development.
<b>Improve Program Design</b>	Continuously evaluate and refine program designs to ensure they are comprehensive, inclusive, and capable of addressing both immediate needs and long-term resilience.

By taking these steps, the SLRCS can more effectively leverage its efforts to support affected communities, ensuring that emergency interventions contribute to lasting positive impacts. This alignment is crucial for humanitarian actions, as it not only addresses the immediate impacts of crises but also fosters long-term stability and growth.

## **Coherence and Alignment with International and Local Policies**

In responding to Sri Lanka's economic crisis, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has demonstrated a significant commitment to ensuring coherence and alignment with both international actions and local policies. This dual focus not only underscores their adherence

to global humanitarian principles and standards but also highlights their collaboration with local government social protection mechanisms. By integrating these diverse strategies, the SLRCS has been able to provide a more comprehensive and effective response to the crisis.

#### *Alignment with International Humanitarian Standards*

The SLRCS's response was grounded in the core humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, humanity, and independence. Their programs aimed to provide aid based solely on need and without discrimination, aligning with the principles outlined by IFRC and other international humanitarian law standards.

Several of the SLRCS interventions align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), and economic growth (SDG 8). By focusing on school feeding programs, health initiatives, and economic empowerment through local agricultural development, the SLRCS has contributed to the pursuit of these international goals.

#### *Coordination with International Bodies*

The SLRCS worked alongside international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), intergovernmental organizations, and local NGOs to ensure a coordinated response. For example, their alignment with World Vision, UNICEF, and Save the Children on various projects helped to integrate their actions with larger, global initiatives that also focus on child nutrition, education, and health.

The response efforts were in line with the Sphere Humanitarian Standards, which dictate best practices in disaster response, particularly in the areas of shelter, food security, and health. The SLRCS's actions, such as the distribution of hygiene kits and implementation of health awareness programs, reflect these standards' emphasis on dignity, access to aid, and an integrated approach to health and well-being.

#### *Strategic Partnerships for Enhanced Impact: A Recommendation*

To further enhance the coherence of its actions with international efforts and ensure a more robust resource base for addressing the multifaceted aspects of the crisis, the SLRCS should consider developing strategic partnerships with international donors and networks. Mobilizing resources through these partnerships can underline SLRCS's strategic alignment with global humanitarian funding mechanisms.

Moreover, collaboration in data management and sharing with international partners could create more effective and evidence-based interventions. By aligning their monitoring and evaluation processes with international standards, SLRCS would ensure that its interventions are both accountable and effective, contributing to a global knowledge base on best practices in crisis response. These strategic partnerships could significantly bolster SLRCS's ability to respond to future crises with enhanced effectiveness and sustainability.

#### *Alignment with Local Government Social Protection Mechanisms*

In addition to international coherence, the SLRCS has worked closely with local government social protection mechanisms to ensure their interventions are well-integrated and supportive of national strategies. This collaboration is crucial for sustainability and effectiveness, as it leverages existing government structures and enhances the overall response capability.

The SLRCS coordinated with various government bodies to align their programs with national social protection policies, particularly those targeting vulnerable populations. This included working with local authorities to identify beneficiaries for their aid programs and ensuring that their interventions complemented government efforts in areas such as food security, health, and education.

Specifically, the SLRCS collaborated with government authorities in the selection criteria for all their programs. SLRCS branches presented the selection criteria to district authorities, who then helped to identify eligible individuals within communities. This collaboration ensured that the selection process was transparent, equitable, and aligned with local social protection mechanisms. Once the potential beneficiaries were identified, SLRCS volunteers visited these individuals to verify their eligibility, ensuring that the final list was accurate and reflective of those most in need.

For example, the school feeding programs and health initiatives were developed in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, ensuring that these efforts supported and enhanced the government's existing programs. Additionally, the SLRCS collaborated with local agricultural departments to promote economic empowerment through agricultural development, aligning with national strategies for economic recovery and resilience.

By integrating their efforts with local government initiatives, the SLRCS ensured that their interventions were not only responsive to immediate needs but also contributed to long-term development goals. This approach helped to create a more cohesive and comprehensive response to the economic crisis, maximizing the impact of both international and local efforts.

### *Reflections*

The coherence of the SLRCS's emergency response with international humanitarian actions and policies highlights its integration within a global framework of disaster response and development goals. Through strategic partnerships, adherence to humanitarian standards, and alignment with sustainable development aims, the SLRCS not only addresses immediate needs but also contributes to long-term recovery and resilience building in alignment with global efforts. This constructive collaboration enhances the effectiveness of their interventions and ensures that the humanitarian response is both comprehensive and globally connected.

### *Coverage*

The coverage of SLRCS emergency response to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka has been extensive, targeting a variety of sectors and geographic areas to address the diverse needs of affected populations.

### *Geographic Reach*

The interventions spanned multiple districts, including Colombo, Monaragala, Nuwara Eliya, Kurunegala, Vavuniya, and Puttalam. This wide geographic spread ensured that both urban and rural areas, including those that are often underserved, received attention.

Specific interventions were tailored to the unique needs of different regions. For example, in agricultural areas like Kurunegala and Puttalam, efforts focused on enhancing local farming practices and providing agricultural inputs through cash grants. This approach not only addressed immediate food security concerns but also aimed at sustaining local economies.

### *Sectoral Coverage*

Health-oriented programs included the distribution of first aid kits and conducting medical camps in areas like Colombo and Mullaitivu. School feeding programs in districts such as Nuwara Eliya addressed nutritional deficits among children, which are critical for their health and educational performance.

Economic interventions included conditional cash grants aimed at enhancing livelihoods through support for agricultural activities and small-scale entrepreneurship. This helped build economic resilience by providing the means for self-sufficiency.

Educational initiatives were significant, with school feeding programs designed to keep children in school and mitigate the socio-economic effects of the crisis on education. These programs were particularly impactful in regions where educational disruption could have long-term adverse effects on community development.

### *Challenges and Adaptations*

Despite extensive efforts, challenges such as resource scarcity and logistical issues affected the reach and effectiveness of the interventions. These issues were particularly pronounced in remote or disaster-struck areas where transportation and distribution posed significant hurdles. For instance, during the 2021 floods in the Northern Province, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) struggled to deliver essential supplies to isolated villages due to washed-out roads and ongoing landslides. Relief trucks were forced to detour for hours, and in some cases, supplies had to be airlifted, which significantly delayed the aid process and increased costs.

Moreover, the SLRCS faced challenges in ensuring that interventions were culturally appropriate and effectively engaged diverse communities. This included addressing gender sensitivities and ethnic diversities, which are crucial for the acceptance and success of aid programs. For example, in the aftermath of the disaster, the SLRCS implemented a water sanitation project in a predominantly Tamil-speaking region. They initially faced resistance due to the use of Sinhala-speaking volunteers who were not familiar with local customs and languages. To adapt, the SLRCS recruited local Tamil-speaking volunteers and trained them to lead the project, which improved communication and trust within the community. Additionally, they incorporated local customs into their health education sessions, such as separate workshops for men and women to respect cultural norms regarding gender interactions.

These examples highlight the complexity and necessity of adapting humanitarian interventions to overcome logistical challenges and ensure cultural sensitivity, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and acceptance of aid programs in diverse and difficult-to-reach communities.

### *Reflections*

The SLRCS's emergency response demonstrated a broad and inclusive approach, aiming to cover a wide range of geographic areas and sectors. By addressing immediate needs like health and nutrition and focusing on long-term impacts through economic and educational support, the SLRCS worked to ensure that their interventions not only provided relief but also contributed to sustainable development. The success of these efforts, however, depended on overcoming logistical challenges and improving resource allocation to enhance the coverage and effectiveness of future interventions.

### *Efficiency*

Evaluating the efficiency of SLRCS emergency response involves analyzing the cost-effectiveness and resource allocation of their operations during Sri Lanka's economic crisis.



### *Cost-Effectiveness and Resource Utilization*

The SLRCS implemented a range of interventions, including direct financial assistance, health and educational support, and nutritional programs. These programs were tailored to meet the immediate and varied needs of the affected populations, suggesting a strategic utilization of resources that maximized impact per dollar spent.

The document highlights significant challenges in resource scarcity and allocation. These challenges include logistical issues and financial constraints, impacting the reach and efficiency of aid distribution. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving cost-effectiveness in future interventions.

### *Strategic Resource Allocation*

By engaging local suppliers and community members in the implementation of programs like the school feeding initiative, SLRCS not only boosted local economies but also ensured that the interventions were culturally appropriate and widely accepted. This approach improved the efficiency of resource use by reducing overheads and enhancing program reach and impact.

Effective feedback mechanisms were established to monitor the adequacy and appropriateness of the interventions. This ongoing evaluation allows SLRCS to adapt their strategies to meet the evolving needs efficiently, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of resource allocation.

Collaborations with international donors and local stakeholders have been critical in augmenting the resources available for humanitarian response. These partnerships enhance the scale of interventions and improve their efficiency by pooling expertise and resources.

### *Recommendations for Future Efficiency Improvements*

Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks is recommended to assess intervention effectiveness continuously and refine strategies accordingly. This will ensure that resources are being used effectively and that programs are delivering the intended outcomes.

Focusing on solving logistical challenges that hinder efficient aid distribution, such as transportation issues in flood-affected areas, will be crucial. Better planning and investment in coordination can significantly improve the speed and efficiency of response.

Adapting resource allocation dynamically based on real-time data and community feedback can help SLRCS respond more effectively to changing needs, enhancing both the efficiency and impact of their interventions.

### *Reflections*

Overall, while the SLRCS faces challenges in resource scarcity and allocation, their strategic use of resources and commitment to integrating humanitarian action with long-term development goals demonstrate a focused approach to maximizing efficiency. Future efforts should continue to refine these strategies and address identified logistical and operational challenges to enhance the cost-effectiveness of their humanitarian responses.

## **Effectiveness**

To evaluate the effectiveness of SLRCS response to the economic crisis, we need to examine how their interventions matched up against the planned objectives, considering the impact and outcomes achieved.

### *Achievement of Planned Objectives*

The interventions were primarily designed to provide immediate relief and were well-received by the communities, indicating effectiveness in addressing acute needs. These included monetary assistance, food security initiatives, and essential supplies like sanitary products and school supplies, crucial for maintaining health and education continuity.

The focus on school feeding programs and educational support helped mitigate the long-term socio-economic effects of the crisis on children. This strategic approach aligns well with the objectives to support continued education and nutritional needs, essential for long-term community development and individual economic opportunities.

Health-oriented interventions aimed at addressing immediate health needs and preventing secondary crises, such as disease outbreaks. These efforts contribute to longer-term public health goals, highlighting an effective blend of immediate and sustainable impact.

### *Challenges and Adaptations*

Challenges in resource scarcity and allocation were significant, impacting the effectiveness of the interventions. The SLRCS faced logistical issues and financial constraints that limited reach and adequacy of aid. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving future effectiveness.

The success of interventions depended significantly on cultural appropriateness and community engagement. Efforts to address cultural sensitivities and effectively engage diverse communities were essential, especially in implementing programs that were accepted by all segments of the population.

### *Community Impact and Feedback*

Resource scarcity and allocation posed significant challenges, impacting the effectiveness of interventions. The SLRCS encountered logistical issues and financial constraints that limited the reach and adequacy of aid. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving future effectiveness.

The success of interventions also depended significantly on cultural appropriateness and community engagement. Efforts to address cultural sensitivities and effectively engage diverse communities were essential, particularly in implementing programs that were accepted by all segments of the population.

### *Strategic Recommendations and Future Directions*

Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks will be crucial for assessing the effectiveness of interventions and refining strategies accordingly. This will ensure that lessons learned from current responses inform future practices, leading to more adaptive and responsive strategies.

### *Reflections*

Overall, the effectiveness of the SLRCS's interventions can be seen in the positive immediate impacts and the alignment with long-term goals through strategic planning and community feedback. However, addressing challenges related to resource distribution, cultural sensitivity, and the demand for more sustainable solutions will be crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of future interventions.

## **Impact**

The broader impact of SLRCS interventions during the economic crisis in Sri Lanka can be assessed across several key areas: societal stability, health and nutrition, economic empowerment, and educational support. These interventions not only addressed immediate needs but also contributed to longer-term community resilience and development.



### *Societal Stability and Community Resilience*

The SLRCS's comprehensive emergency aid and capacity-building efforts significantly enhanced societal stability. By distributing monetary assistance, food security initiatives, and essential supplies, they helped stabilize affected communities. Particularly impactful were the cash grants that allowed families in regions like Vavuniya and Puttalam to recover from flood damage quickly and resume farming, which is central to their livelihoods and the local economy.

### *Health and Nutrition*

Health-oriented interventions, such as the distribution of first aid kits and health awareness programs, addressed immediate health needs and aimed at preventing secondary health crises. School feeding programs in districts like Nuwara Eliya and Monaragala improved nutritional intake among children, which is crucial for their physical and cognitive development, thus impacting long-term health outcomes positively.

### *Economic Empowerment*

Economic empowerment initiatives, particularly in agricultural communities like Kurunegala, focused on enhancing local farming practices and entrepreneurial skills. These initiatives not only provided immediate economic relief but were aimed at fostering long-term economic resilience. By investing in local capabilities and infrastructure, these programs helped reduce dependency on external aid and build a foundation for sustainable economic development.

### *Educational Support*

Educational support was a critical component of the SLRCS's response, with interventions aimed at ensuring that children remain in school and receive adequate nutrition. The integration of school feeding programs with educational supplies addressed both cognitive development and physical health, laying a foundation for improved learning outcomes. This is particularly significant as education is a critical determinant of individual economic opportunities and community development.

### *Community Engagement and Feedback*

Community feedback highlighted a significant appreciation for the immediate relief provided but also pointed out the need for long-term solutions that address the root causes of vulnerabilities. This includes demands for sustainable healthcare, educational opportunities, and economic empowerment programs that go beyond immediate disaster response.

### *Future Directions and Strategic Recommendations*

There is a clear need for strategies that focus on sustainability and resilience. This involves integrating short-term relief with long-term developmental goals, ensuring that emergency responses lay the groundwork for sustainable recovery. Strengthening partnerships and enhancing collaboration with local governments, international donors, and private sector partners can improve resource mobilization and program implementation.

### *Reflections*

The impact of SLRCS's interventions during the economic crisis in Sri Lanka has been multifaceted, addressing immediate needs while also fostering long-term improvements in health, economic stability, and educational outcomes. These interventions have contributed to societal resilience, empowering communities to manage future crises more independently. The feedback from communities and ongoing evaluation of these interventions will be crucial in shaping more adaptive and responsive strategies, ensuring the interventions remain aligned with the evolving needs of the affected populations.

## Sustainability

The sustainability and resilience of SLRCS response to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka can be assessed through several dimensions, including the lasting impact of the interventions, the empowerment of local communities, and the enhancement of their capacity to withstand future shocks.

### *Sustainability of Interventions*

The SLRCS implemented interventions towards long-term benefits, such as school feeding programs and health initiatives, which addressed immediate needs and aimed to improve future health and educational outcomes. These programs are designed to break the cycle of poverty and improve life chances, contributing to sustained impact beyond the immediate crisis response.

Economic empowerment programs focused on improving agricultural productivity and small-scale entrepreneurship. By enhancing local farming practices and business skills, these interventions helped to build economic resilience, reducing future dependency on external aid.

Interventions often involved community members in their planning and execution, which not only ensured that the programs were culturally appropriate and well-received but also helped build local capacities. For instance, engaging local suppliers in the school feeding programs not only provided economic benefits to the community but also ensured sustainability through local ownership.

### *Building Resilience*

The SLRCS's approach included a mix of direct aid, capacity building, and infrastructure improvement, which together enhance community resilience. Diversifying assistance helps communities withstand and recover from future economic shocks more effectively.

Significant efforts were made to train local populations and volunteers, equipping them with the skills needed to respond to future crises. This preparedness is crucial for resilience, ensuring communities are not just recipients of aid but active participants in disaster response and recovery.

Implementing robust feedback mechanisms allowed SLRCS to adapt interventions based on community input, ensuring that the aid provided continued to meet the evolving needs of the population. This adaptability is key to resilience, enabling a dynamic response to changing circumstances.

## Evaluation Criteria Rating

Evaluation Criteria	Rating (Out of 5)	Summary
Relevance/Appropriateness	4.00	Interventions largely addressed actual needs effectively, with cultural sensitivity and community engagement. Improvements needed in resource management.
Connectedness	3.50	Good alignment with long-term goals and community empowerment. Need for significant enhancement in strategic partnerships.
Coherence	4.00	Generally aligned with international humanitarian standards and coordinated with global efforts. Effective use of partnerships and adherence to principles, but room for improvement.
Coverage	3.50	Extensive geographic and sectoral reach. Addressed diverse needs but faced notable challenges in resource allocation and logistics.
Efficiency	3.00	Strategic use of resources and local engagement, but significant logistical challenges impacted overall efficiency.
Effectiveness	3.50	Achieved many planned objectives with positive community feedback. Faced challenges in resource distribution and a need for more sustainable solutions.
Impact	4.00	Positive impact on societal stability, health, nutrition, economic empowerment, and education. Notable improvements in long-term community resilience, but challenges remain.
Sustainability	3.50	Focus on long-term benefits and community empowerment. Need for ongoing improvement in resource management, integration with development goals, and strengthened partnerships.

**Scoring System:** A five-point Likert scale was used to rate each criterion:

- 1: Very Poor
- 2: Poor
- 3: Average
- 4: Good
- 5: Excellent

**Rating Assignment:** Based on the analysis, ratings were assigned to each criterion:

- **Relevance/Appropriateness (4.00):** Rated based on the extent to which interventions addressed actual needs with cultural sensitivity and community engagement.
- **Connectedness (3.50):** Rated on alignment with long-term goals and community empowerment.
- **Coherence (4.00):** Assessed on alignment with international standards and effective use of partnerships.
- **Coverage (3.50):** Evaluated on the geographic and sectoral reach of interventions.
- **Efficiency (3.00):** Rated on resource utilization and logistical efficiency.
- **Effectiveness (3.50):** Assessed on the achievement of planned objectives and community feedback.
- **Impact (4.00):** Rated based on positive changes in societal stability, health, nutrition, economic empowerment, and education.
- **Sustainability (3.50):** Evaluated on the focus on long-term benefits and community resilience.

For each criterion, a summary was synthesized to highlight key findings and areas for improvement. These summaries provide context to the numerical ratings and identify specific challenges and successes observed during the evaluation.

The preliminary ratings and summaries were reviewed and validated through stakeholder consultations and feedback sessions to ensure accuracy and relevance.

By following this rigorous process, the evaluation team ensured that the ratings were based on robust evidence and provided a balanced view of the project's performance across multiple dimensions.

## Challenges and Recommendations for Future Interventions

One of the significant challenges was the efficient management of limited resources. Future strategies could focus on enhancing logistical capacities and funding mechanisms to ensure more equitable distribution of resources.

While emergency interventions were effective, there is a need to better integrate these with broader development objectives. Ensuring that emergency aid supports and aligns with long-term development plans can enhance both sustainability and resilience.

Enhancing collaboration with local governments, international donors, and private sector partners can improve resource mobilization and program implementation. Stronger partnerships are essential for building sustainable systems that can withstand future crises.

## Reflections

The SLRCS's emergency response has been pivotal not only in addressing the immediate impacts of the economic crisis but also in laying the groundwork for sustainable development and enhanced resilience. By focusing on long-term outcomes, community engagement, and capacity building, the SLRCS has

contributed to creating more resilient communities capable of navigating future challenges more independently. However, ongoing efforts to address resource challenges, integrate with development goals, and strengthen partnerships will be crucial to maximizing the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian interventions in Sri Lanka.

## A Triple Nexus Approach to Protracted Crisis

### Triple Nexus Conceptual Framework

The "Triple Nexus" conceptual framework strategically combines humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding efforts. This framework aims to foster synergies among these three sectors to address complex challenges in crisis-affected areas more effectively. Key components of this framework:

Key Components of the Triple Nexus Framework	Description
<b>Integration of Efforts</b>	Recognizing the interdependence between humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives is crucial. Effective integration requires substantial policy shifts and enhanced coordination mechanisms that align strategic and operational activities across these sectors. This integration challenges traditional silos and promotes a unified approach to achieving sustainable outcomes.
<b>Complementarity</b>	The principle of complementarity ensures that interventions in one sector do not undermine efforts in another. Achieving this requires building a shared understanding and mutual respect among practitioners, which can be complicated by differing objectives and methodologies. This alignment is essential for ensuring that the efforts are not only aligned but also mutually reinforcing.
<b>Flexibility and Adaptability</b>	The dynamic nature of humanitarian crises necessitates flexible and adaptable funding and programming. This flexibility allows programs to respond effectively to immediate needs while also supporting long-term development goals and peacebuilding efforts, even in the context of ongoing conflict or rapid environmental changes.
<b>Inclusive Planning and Implementation</b>	Effective coordination and joint planning are hindered by bureaucratic and cultural differences among agencies. Investing in joint planning structures and fostering inter-agency collaboration are critical for transcending traditional sectoral boundaries, enabling a more holistic and impactful response.
<b>Resource Allocation and Conflict Resolution</b>	Developing funding mechanisms that encourage integrated approaches helps in addressing competition for limited resources, which often creates tensions. Balancing different interests and needs requires robust negotiation and conflict-resolution skills to achieve a cooperative and effective multi-sector response.
<b>Local Relevance and Engagement</b>	Tailoring approaches to fit local contexts ensures that interventions are both relevant and effective. Deep local knowledge and strong partnerships with local entities are indispensable for the successful adaptation and implementation of programs within the Triple Nexus framework.
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning</b>	Establishing integrated monitoring and evaluation frameworks is vital for assessing the impact of interventions and guiding adaptive management. These frameworks help in capturing the complexity of the nexus and support continuous improvement and learning across sectors.
<b>Advocacy and Policy Influence</b>	Promoting the benefits of the Triple Nexus approach among stakeholders and the public is challenging but necessary. Strategic advocacy and evidence-based policy engagement are required to influence broader systems changes that support the integration of humanitarian, development, and peace efforts.
<b>Response to Global Challenges</b>	The Triple Nexus framework must also be agile and innovative to remain relevant in the face of emerging global challenges like climate change and pandemics. Embracing new methodologies and technologies can enhance the effectiveness of collaboration across the three sectors.

The Triple Nexus conceptual framework offers a comprehensive strategy for addressing the intertwined challenges of humanitarian crises, underdevelopment, and conflict. By fostering integrated, flexible, and locally informed interventions, this framework aims to create more sustainable and resilient communities.

### Triple Nexus Framework Applied to the Unmet Needs in Sri Lanka

As SLRCS emergency response to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka was *not* developed within a Triple Nexus framework, the application of the Triple Nexus approach is applied to propose plausible intervention strategies and operations to the ongoing protracted crisis in Sri Lanka based on the unmet needs assessment anno 2024.

In the context of Sri Lanka, the Triple Nexus approach address the country's unique challenges stemming from its economic collapse, history of conflict, natural disasters, and development disparities. The framework emphasizes the importance of synchronizing these efforts to ensure that immediate

humanitarian aid does not undermine long-term development and peace efforts, and vice versa, i.e., Literature Review (Annex III).

## Conceptual Framework Integration

The Triple Nexus framework emphasizes the integration of humanitarian, development, and peace efforts to address complex crises holistically. In the context of Sri Lanka, applying this framework involves recognizing the interdependencies among these sectors and operationalizing their integration through coordinated policies and mechanisms.

Triple Nexus Implementation	Description
<b>Humanitarian Efforts</b>	<p><b>Immediate Relief:</b> Address the urgent needs identified in the unmet needs assessment, such as food insecurity and lack of healthcare access, through rapid response interventions. Implementing short-term solutions like food assistance and medical aid can stabilize vulnerable communities.</p> <p><b>Flexible Funding:</b> Develop flexible funding mechanisms that can adapt to changing circumstances, ensuring that immediate humanitarian needs do not conflict with longer-term development and peacebuilding goals.</p>
<b>Development Initiatives</b>	<p><b>Sustainable Livelihoods:</b> Promote alternative livelihoods and vocational training to improve financial stability and reduce dependency on immediate humanitarian aid. This can include support for home gardening, livestock rearing, and small-scale business development.</p> <p><b>Educational Programs:</b> Strengthen educational support by integrating school feeding programs and providing necessary supplies. This can help mitigate the adverse effects of the crisis on children's education and development.</p>
<b>Peacebuilding Efforts</b>	<p><b>Community Engagement:</b> Foster community resilience through participatory approaches that include local stakeholders in planning and implementing interventions. This can help build trust and address root causes of conflict.</p> <p><b>Inclusive Strategies:</b> Ensure that peacebuilding initiatives are inclusive, addressing the needs of marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, women, and children. Creating community-based protection mechanisms can enhance safety and security.</p>

## Triple Nexus Analytical Framework Implementation

The analytical framework provides a structured approach to understanding the complex interactions among humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. This involves:

Triple Nexus Analytical Framework Implementation	Description
<b>Variables</b>	<p><b>Independent Variables:</b> These are factors that influence the outcomes of the intervention. For example, economic instability is an independent variable that can lead to various issues such as food insecurity and poor health.</p> <p><b>Dependent Variables:</b> These are the outcomes affected by the interventions. For example, food security is a dependent variable influenced by economic stability and humanitarian aid.</p>
<b>Causal Analysis</b>	<p><b>Identify Drivers and Outcomes:</b> Use the unmet needs assessment data to identify the key drivers of the crisis and their outcomes. For instance, economic instability may lead to food insecurity, which in turn affects health and social stability.</p> <p><b>Feedback Loops:</b> Recognize how successful interventions in one area can reduce the need for aid in another. For example, improving food security can enhance overall health, reducing the demand for medical interventions.</p>
<b>Multi-Level Analysis</b>	<p><b>Micro Level:</b> Focus on individual and community experiences, ensuring that interventions are responsive to the actual needs and contexts of those affected.</p> <p><b>Meso Level:</b> Examine regional dynamics and the role of local policies and institutions in supporting or hindering intervention efforts. This helps in understanding the scalability of successful programs.</p> <p><b>Macro Level:</b> Consider national and international policies, global trends, and donor strategies that influence the overall framework. Aligning these broader strategies with local needs can enhance the effectiveness of interventions.</p>

## Moving Forward with Future Interventions

Based on the evaluation of past interventions and the unmet needs assessment, the following Triple Nexus recommendations can guide future actions:

Triple Nexus Recommendations	Description
<b>Enhanced Coordination</b>	Establish robust coordination mechanisms at both strategic and operational levels to integrate efforts across the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors. Joint planning and implementation structures can foster synergy and avoid contradictory actions.
<b>Community-Centric Approaches</b>	Engage communities in designing and implementing interventions to ensure they are contextually relevant and sustainable. This participatory approach can also enhance local ownership and resilience.
<b>Inclusive and Adaptive Programming</b>	Develop programs that are flexible and can adapt to changing circumstances. Ensure that interventions are inclusive, addressing the needs of all vulnerable groups, and are designed to be sustainable in the long term.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Implement integrated monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of interventions. Use these insights to adapt and improve strategies continuously.

By applying the Triple Nexus framework, future interventions in Sri Lanka can be more coherent, sustainable, and impactful, addressing the multifaceted nature of the crisis while promoting long-term stability and development.

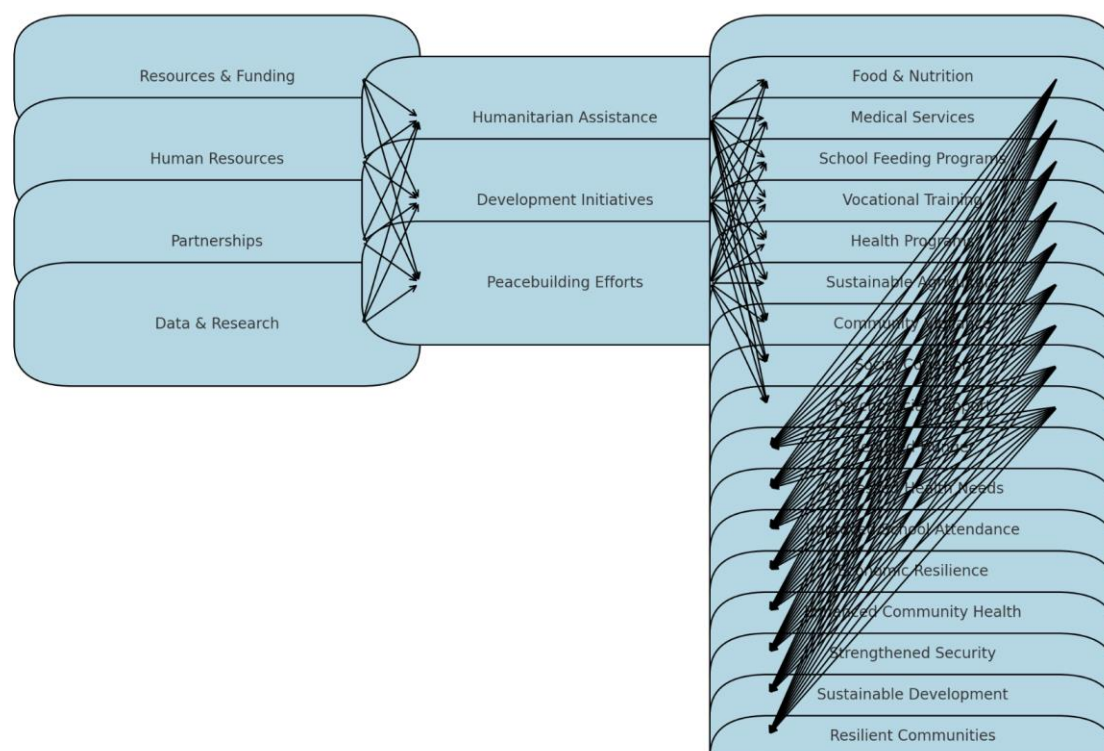
## Theory of Change (ToC) - Triple Nexus Interventions

**Goal:** To enhance the resilience and well-being of vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka through integrated humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding interventions.

Theory of Change for Triple Nexus Interventions	Description
Inputs	<p><b>Resources and Funding:</b> Financial support from international donors and local governments. In-kind donations (food, medical supplies, educational materials). Technical assistance and expertise from partners (UNDP, WFP, UNICEF).</p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> Trained volunteers and staff. Community leaders and local organizations.</p> <p><b>Partnerships:</b> Collaboration with INGOs, NGOs, and local stakeholders. Engagement with private sector and CSR initiatives.</p> <p><b>Data and Research:</b> Comprehensive needs assessments. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Community feedback mechanisms.</p>
Activities	<p><b>Humanitarian Assistance:</b> Provide immediate food aid and cash assistance to vulnerable populations. Implement school feeding programs to ensure children's nutrition and school attendance. Distribute essential medical supplies and facilitate mobile health clinics.</p> <p><b>Development Initiatives:</b> Vocational training and support for alternative livelihoods. Community-based health and first aid programs Infrastructure improvements (clean water systems, eco-friendly agriculture).</p> <p><b>Peacebuilding Efforts:</b> Establish community vigilance committees for safety and security. Promote social cohesion through inclusive community engagement.</p>
Outputs	<p><b>Humanitarian:</b> The immediate food and nutritional needs of vulnerable populations are met. Increased access to essential medical services and supplies. Improved school attendance and nutrition for children through feeding programs.</p> <p><b>Development:</b> Enhanced vocational skills and economic opportunities for community members. Improved health outcomes through community-based health programs. Sustainable agricultural practices adopted, increasing food security.</p> <p><b>Peacebuilding:</b> Reduced community tensions and increased sense of security. Enhanced social cohesion and reduced incidence of SGBV. Improved mental health and psychosocial well-being.</p>
Outcomes	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Reduced hunger and improved nutrition among vulnerable populations. Immediate health needs addressed, preventing disease outbreaks. Increased school attendance and educational engagement.</p> <p><b>Medium-term:</b> Economic resilience through diversified livelihoods and vocational training. Enhanced community health and reduced disease prevalence Strengthened community safety and security mechanisms.</p> <p><b>Long-term:</b> Sustainable development with improved living standards. Resilient communities capable of withstanding future crises. Lasting peace and social cohesion within communities.</p>
Assumptions	<p>Continuous funding and resource allocation. Effective collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders. Community engagement and participation in all phases of program implementation. Adaptability and responsiveness to changing needs and contexts.</p>
Risks and Mitigation	<p><b>Funding Shortages:</b> Diversify funding sources. Establish contingency funds for emergencies.</p> <p><b>Operational Challenges:</b> Strengthen logistical planning and resource management. Enhance training and capacity-building for volunteers and staff.</p> <p><b>Community Resistance:</b> Foster inclusive and participatory approaches. Implement culturally sensitive programs and interventions.</p>



## Theory of Change for IFRC and SLRCS Using the Triple Nexus Approach



*Triple Nexus Diagram*

By leveraging the Triple Nexus approach, SLRCS and IFRC can adjust their interventions to not only addressing immediate humanitarian needs but are also contributing to long-term development and peacebuilding, thereby creating a more sustainable and resilient future for the communities they serve.

## Lessons Learned

### *Red Cross Awareness and Advocacy*

Despite the presence of Red Cross branches in the district, in some areas where SLRCS does not have active disaster risk reduction and response interventions, community awareness is low. Some recent efforts have been taken to promote the Red Cross's principles and services such as the expansion of School Red Cross Circles to over 500 schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. It is recommended that branches increase advocacy efforts to enhance visibility and understanding of the Red Cross's work – particularly with urban communities.

### *Training and Capacity Building*

During Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), volunteers expressed a desire for more training. Branches should introduce volunteers to the IFRC e-learning platform, which offers training and facilitates knowledge sharing.

- As most of the e-courses are in English, if the resource is available, key modules such as Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), and Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) can be translated into Sinhala and Tamil to benefit wider audiences (including non-RCRC users such as healthcare and social workers).



- PGI training, including simulations, has been beneficial for volunteers. Expanding this training could enhance volunteer effectiveness.

The training provided should encompass both the core principles of the Red Cross, such as humanitarian values and disaster preparedness, and skills that are directly relevant to the youths' personal and professional development, like leadership, first aid, and project management. This approach ensures that youth are not only prepared to contribute to the Red Cross mission but are also gaining valuable life skills.

Building on the need for better training, there is a significant opportunity to develop comprehensive preparedness programs that equip volunteers with the skills to handle diverse and complex crisis scenarios more effectively.

### *Land Ownership Assistance*

Land ownership issues are significant for farmers and a complicated issue in real estate areas. Branches could partner with UNDP to aid in navigating district authority processes to clarify land ownership rights. Acknowledge the successful allocation of land and funds for house building for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Vavuniya as a model for replication. Advocate for the transfer of land ownership in estates such as Nwala Eliaya to local farmers to promote agricultural development and self-sufficiency, addressing current government ownership issues in areas like Badulla and Mongarala.

### *Advancement in Agriculture*

Given that some of the farming projects funded through the conditional cash grant were not particularly successful—either due to pests or because their long-term outputs were unable to address the immediate food crisis—exploring advanced agricultural methods is a critical lesson learned.

Encourage innovative and organic farming practices, referencing successful models from the FAO project. Agricultural practices can consider mixed cropping and nature-based solutions to ensure consistent food production, livelihood security, and more inclusive rural economies.

### *Funding for Branches*

Through the interviews with branches, it was discovered that SLRCS has developed a revised guideline that includes minimum monthly funding targets for branches to gain points in an overall scoring model. However, the goals set in this guideline appear unrealistic given the current situation in the country and the branches' limited ability to generate income. Therefore, alternative measures must be incorporated, considering that SLRCS and its branches cannot rely on DREF and Emergency Appeal income to support their interventions. Self-funding should be a primary focus and a critical area for future efforts.

With branches facing underfunding, strategies for self-funding are essential. Exploring partnerships with NGOs/INGOs, private sector, and government projects could provide solutions. As observed, the branches are operating via conventional income-generating activities such as commercial first aid training and rental of building space. Supporting them to diversify their income streams can help to expand their services and values in the areas they serve.

### *Expanded Emphasis on Regular Programming*

There is a need to reorient the approach from primarily addressing crises reactively to emphasizing regular programming that encompasses mitigation, prevention, and preparedness measures. The current reliance on post-disaster responses, such as DREF and Appeals, is insufficient for sustainable impact. While National Societies often face challenges due to resource constraints, limiting their ability to engage in long-term projects, the priority should shift towards establishing a dedicated human resource team focused on fundraising for multi-year programs. This team would be tasked with securing continuous funding, enabling the society to plan and execute long-term strategies effectively. By doing

so, it can build resilience within communities, reducing their vulnerability to disasters and the need for emergency responses. This strategic shift would not only enhance the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction initiatives but also ensure a more sustainable and proactive approach to community support and development.

### *Multipurpose Cash Grant - Sustainable Financial Support*

To ensure long-term resilience and economic stability in vulnerable communities, it is crucial to extend financial support strategies beyond unconditional cash transfers. While these transfers provide immediate relief and meet basic needs, they can potentially lead to a dependency on external aid if not coupled with strategies aimed at promoting self-sufficiency.

To counteract this, it is essential to advocate for and raise awareness about self-employment opportunities. This involves not only educating individuals on how to leverage their skills and resources to create sustainable livelihoods but also providing access to training, capital, and markets. By focusing on empowering communities through skill development and entrepreneurship, individuals can transition from being aid recipients to self-reliant, contributing members of their local economies.

Moreover, supporting self-employment aligns with the development of community-driven economic initiatives that can stimulate local markets and foster an ecosystem of growth and innovation. Initiatives such as micro-loan programs, business development services, mentorship, and networking opportunities can significantly enhance the capacity of individuals to start and sustain their businesses.

Ultimately, integrating self-employment awareness and advocacy into the financial support system not only mitigates the risk of dependency on aid but also contributes to the overall economic resilience and prosperity of communities. This multifaceted approach ensures that financial support is not just a temporary fix but a steppingstone towards sustainable development and self-sufficiency.

### *Expanded Youth Engagement Strategy*

To effectively engage and empower youth within the existing Junior Red Cross (JRC) structure, it is essential to enhance and leverage this platform by providing structured, age-appropriate opportunities for involvement. This includes the recruitment and training of young volunteers, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. The platform should offer a diverse range of activities that cater to the interests and developmental stages of youth, fostering a sense of responsibility and community involvement. Key Strategies for Enhancing JRC:

Strategy	Description
<b>Enhanced Training Programs</b>	Develop comprehensive training modules that are tailored to different age groups within the JRC, ensuring that each group receives age-appropriate education and skill development.
<b>Activity Diversification</b>	Introduce a variety of activities, including community service projects, leadership workshops, and health education initiatives, to cater to the diverse interests of young volunteers.
<b>Mentorship Opportunities</b>	Establish mentorship programs where experienced volunteers and staff can guide and support younger members, helping them navigate their roles and develop leadership skills.
<b>Feedback and Adaptation</b>	Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input from youth participants about their experiences and preferences, using this information to continuously improve the JRC programs.
<b>Recognition and Incentives</b>	Create a system of recognition and incentives to motivate and reward active participation and outstanding contributions from young volunteers.

To understand the current landscape of youth engagement within the organization, it is crucial to communicate with various branches to gather information about the activities and programs they have in place. This inquiry should aim to uncover the types of initiatives being implemented to attract, engage, and retain young volunteers.

There is a need for clarity regarding how these activities contribute to empowering the youth beyond the basic recruitment and training processes. The goal is to understand how these programs foster a

sense of ownership, leadership, and commitment among the young volunteers within the context of the Red Cross's mission.

Based on the findings from the branches, a comprehensive strategy should be developed that outlines specific, measurable, and achievable goals for youth engagement. This strategy should detail the types of activities, expected outcomes, and how these efforts align with the broader objectives of the Red Cross. By expanding the focus beyond recruitment and training to include a more holistic and detailed approach to youth engagement, the Red Cross can cultivate a generation of empowered, skilled, and dedicated young volunteers who are capable of leading and contributing to the organization's humanitarian efforts in the long term.

### *Expanded Partnerships*

To enhance the support for nutritional and menstrual hygiene in schools, it is vital to explore partnerships with international and local organizations that have the expertise and resources to address these needs effectively. Collaborating with the WFP and Save the Children can help establish or expand school feeding programs for 7-10 grades that are not included in the government's recent implementation of school feeding programs, ensuring that children > 12 receive the necessary nutrients to support their physical and cognitive development.

Additionally, partnering with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) can facilitate access to menstrual hygiene products, like sanitary napkins, and promote education around menstrual health, reducing stigmas and barriers that girls often face in school environments.

By integrating efforts with these diverse stakeholders, including religious institutions, international and local NGOs, government bodies, and private sector companies, a more holistic and effective support system can be established. This multifaceted approach ensures that nutritional and menstrual hygiene needs are addressed comprehensively, leveraging the strengths and resources of each partner.

### *Leveraging Local Religious Institutions*

In addition to these international partnerships, local religious institutions can play a pivotal role in supporting these initiatives. Given the widespread practice of donating to religious institutions and their involvement in distributing hot food through temples and during festival events, these entities could be key partners in extending the school feeding programs. Their established networks and community trust can be leveraged to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and facilitate the distribution of both food and menstrual hygiene products.

Collaboration with religious institutions can also ensure that the programs are culturally sensitive and community-centric, which can enhance the acceptance and effectiveness of the initiatives. By integrating these programs with existing community practices and events, such as religious festivals and gatherings, the initiatives can gain more visibility, acceptance, and support.

Engaging with these diverse partners can also help in attracting the necessary attention and funding for these programs. By highlighting the collaborative efforts between international organizations, local NGOs, and religious institutions, it becomes easier to highlight the importance and impact of these initiatives, thereby drawing in more support and resources.

Alongside international partnerships, it is crucial to include collaborations with local entities like the Api Foundation Sri Lanka and Selyn. These organizations are actively involved in projects such as the production and distribution of reusable sanitary pads, which align with the goals of enhancing menstrual hygiene support in schools.

The partnership with Api Foundation Sri Lanka and Selyn can bring innovative solutions like reusable sanitary pads to the forefront of menstrual hygiene initiatives. These collaborations can promote

sustainability and environmental consciousness while addressing the menstrual health needs of school-aged girls. Engaging with these organizations can also provide educational opportunities on menstrual health management, reducing stigma and empowering students with knowledge.

### *Involvement Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*

The government's initiative to distribute sanitary napkins through CSR projects indicates a growing recognition and commitment to addressing menstrual hygiene needs. This public-private partnership model can be a valuable addition to the support network, ensuring a consistent supply of menstrual hygiene products to schools.

The involvement of private sector companies like Teejay Lanka and Hemas further exemplifies the potential for collaborative efforts in enhancing health and hygiene in educational settings. These companies can contribute through their CSR initiatives, providing resources, funding, or products like sanitary napkins, and potentially participating in awareness campaigns to educate students about menstrual health.

### *Sustainable Implementation and Outreach*

For the successful implementation of these partnerships, a clear framework for cooperation should be established, outlining the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each partner. Regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to assess these programs' impact and to ensure they meet the students' nutritional and health needs effectively.

### *Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT)*

To enhance the impact of conditional cash transfer programs in Sri Lanka, there needs to be an increased focus on integrating these financial supports with broader development objectives. CCT programs, by design, provide financial aid to targeted populations under the condition that they meet certain predetermined criteria, such as regular school attendance or health check-ups. The aim is to achieve immediate social welfare objectives while promoting long-term sustainable outcomes, like improved education and health status.

In the context of Sri Lanka, CCT programs could be more effectively tied to development projects led by organizations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This would ensure that the financial aid provided not only addresses immediate needs but also contributes to the strategic development goals of the country, such as reducing poverty, enhancing education, improving healthcare, and supporting economic development.

To optimize the design and implementation of CCT programs, thorough research is needed to understand the current landscape of such initiatives in Sri Lanka. Collaborating with UNDP and conducting KIIs with stakeholders involved in these programs can provide valuable insights into their effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. This research can also identify best practices and innovative approaches to CCT that could be adapted or scaled up in the Sri Lankan context.

The goal of CCT programs should be to contribute to sustainable outcomes that align with the long-term development plans of Sri Lanka. This includes not only alleviating immediate financial burdens for families but also ensuring that the conditions attached to the cash transfers lead to measurable improvements in education, health, and economic empowerment. The success of CCT programs should be evaluated based on their ability to foster lasting positive changes in the lives of the targeted populations and their communities.

CCT programs should be integrated with national development strategies to ensure coherence and constructive collaboration with broader policy objectives. This alignment will help maximize the impact

of the financial resources invested and ensure that CCT programs contribute effectively to the country's development goals.

By increasing efforts in conditional cash transfer programs and ensuring they are strategically tied to sustainable development projects, Sri Lanka can leverage these initiatives to achieve significant and lasting improvements in the socio-economic well-being of its population.

### *Targeted Populations* **Selection Integrity**

Maintaining integrity in the selection of targeted populations for humanitarian aid is critical to upholding the principles of independence, humanity, impartiality, and neutrality. This integrity ensures that assistance reaches those most in need, based on objective criteria rather than political influence or other biases. The process must be transparent and accountable to prevent any misuse of resources and to foster trust among stakeholders, including the communities served, funding partners, and the public.

In some cases, there may be concerns that local branches are overly influenced by government authorities in the selection of targeted populations. This can lead to the potential prioritization of certain groups or individuals based on political affiliations or other non-needs-based criteria, undermining the fairness and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions.

To counteract these challenges and ensure the integrity of beneficiary selection, it is essential to implement mechanisms for independent, impartial, and neutral scrutiny. This could involve:

Implementing Independent Scrutiny	Description
<b>Random Household Visits</b>	Conducting unannounced visits to randomly selected households from the beneficiary list can help verify the accuracy of the information provided and ensure that the selection criteria are being applied fairly and consistently.
<b>Third-Party Monitoring</b>	Engaging independent third-party organizations to audit and monitor the selection process can provide an external check on the integrity of the process. This can help to identify any irregularities or biases and suggest corrective actions.
<b>Transparent Criteria and Processes</b>	Clearly defining and publicizing the criteria and processes used for beneficiary selection can enhance transparency and accountability. This should include clear guidelines on how individuals and households qualify for assistance, the steps involved in the selection process, and the rights and mechanisms available for grievances and appeals.
<b>Strengthening Community Involvement</b>	Involving community representatives in the selection process can help ensure that it is rooted in local realities and that the needs of the community are adequately reflected. This participatory approach can also help mitigate the influence of external actors, including government authorities, in the selection process.
<b>Training and Capacity Building</b>	To support the implementation of these mechanisms, it is crucial to provide training and capacity building for staff and volunteers involved in the selection process. This should focus on the principles of humanitarian aid, the importance of impartiality and neutrality, and the skills needed to conduct fair and transparent beneficiary selection.

By maintaining independent, impartial, and neutral scrutiny of beneficiary lists, with mechanisms like random household visits and third-party monitoring, humanitarian organizations can uphold their principles and ensure that aid is delivered effectively to those in genuine need.

Selection Criteria Guidelines	Description
<b>Vulnerability Assessment</b>	Focus on identifying individuals or households that are most vulnerable to the impact of the crisis. This includes considering factors such as age, disability, gender, health status, and socio-economic conditions.
<b>Transparency</b>	Ensure that the selection criteria are clear, well-documented, and communicated to all stakeholders. This helps to build trust in the process and ensures that beneficiaries understand why they were selected.
<b>Community Involvement</b>	Involve community representatives in the selection process to ensure that local knowledge and context are considered. This can help to identify those who are most in need and ensure that the selection process is fair and inclusive.
<b>Impartiality</b>	Apply the selection criteria consistently across all potential beneficiaries to avoid any bias or favoritism. The process should be impartial and based solely on the established criteria.
<b>Grievance Mechanisms</b>	Establish clear mechanisms for individuals to raise concerns or appeal the selection process. This ensures that any issues can be addressed promptly and that the selection process remains fair and transparent.

### Long-term Development Focus

While immediate humanitarian responses are crucial for saving lives and meeting urgent needs, there is a growing recognition that these interventions should also be designed to contribute to long-term development outcomes. The challenge lies in transitioning from one-dimensional, temporary solutions to comprehensive strategies that yield sustainable benefits.

Long Term Development Focus Areas	Description
<b>Sanitary Napkins</b>	Providing sanitary napkins is a critical response to meet immediate menstrual hygiene needs. However, if this intervention is not integrated into a broader strategy promoting reproductive health education and access to ongoing supplies, its long-term impact remains limited.
<b>First Aid Kits (FA Kits)</b>	Distribution of FA kits is essential in emergency responses but without accompanying first aid training and education on health risks, the long-term effectiveness of such interventions is diminished.
<b>Medical Camps</b>	While medical camps provide immediate healthcare services, their one-off nature means they often lack continuity in care and health monitoring. Long-term health improvement requires integration with ongoing health services and systems.
<b>Elixir Platform for Medicines and Medical Supplies</b>	While the concept of a platform like Elixir to streamline access to medicines and medical consumables is innovative, its operational challenges highlight the need for reliable solutions that can integrate with the broader health system infrastructure for lasting impact.
<b>Sustainable Solutions for Menstrual Hygiene</b>	Transition from providing sanitary napkins as a one-time aid to establishing programs that ensure continuous access, such as local production initiatives, education on menstrual health, and building sanitation facilities that support menstrual hygiene management in schools and communities.
<b>Comprehensive Health Initiatives</b>	Link distribution of FA kits with training programs in first aid, health literacy, and preventive healthcare to build community capacity to respond to health emergencies and reduce long-term health vulnerabilities.
<b>Integration of Medical Camps with Local Health Systems</b>	Ensure that medical camps are part of a broader health strategy, linking patients to local health facilities for ongoing care and support, thus improving the health infrastructure and access in the long term.
<b>Assessment and Revitalization of Elixir Platform</b>	Conduct a thorough assessment of the Elixir platform's challenges and explore partnerships or technological upgrades to enhance its functionality and integration with national health systems, ensuring it can provide sustained support for medical needs.
<b>Conditional Cash for Food Production</b>	Acknowledge the successes of the conditional cash initiative for food production, which has been well received by farmers, supporting both production and self-dignity.
<b>Monitoring Impact and Needs Beyond Interventions</b>	During FGDs, several examples of positive results observed shortly after interventions include increased school attendance with the reinstated school feeding program and provision of school packs, and increased acceptance of discussions regarding menstrual hygiene management in communities. However, some negative results were observed where multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG) were used by recipients for medical treatment without sustained impact as they continued to face difficulty in affording or accessing treatment when the money was used up. The Branches do not have strategies and resources allocated to continue monitoring these changes and to plan accordingly to address ongoing humanitarian and development gaps.
<b>Close Coordination with the Divisional Secretariat</b>	Identification and selection of the target recipients of the response interventions were adequately consulted with local government and affected communities. The selection criteria and procedures were transparent and well-informed. The progress of intervention such as food production through conditional cash grants was jointly monitored by the SLRCS and local government, which also ensured continuous monitoring by the local government after the intervention period.

### Climate Resilience

The collaboration in Kurunegala Branch/district shows the potential for expanding access to clean drinking water and improved agricultural practices. This can be scaled to other areas by identifying similar needs and leveraging UNDP's expertise and resources. Emphasizing mixed cropping and nature-based solutions can enhance agricultural resilience. Local branches should actively seek partnerships with organizations like FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture to adopt successful models of innovative and organic farming.

### Post-Conflict and Peacebuilding

In areas with internally displaced persons (IDPs), the ongoing post-conflict issues necessitate integrating peacebuilding and fostering positive peace. Engaging with local governments for coordinated response and monitoring can help in addressing these challenges more effectively.

Post-Conflict and Peacebuilding (IDPs) Recommendations	Description
--	-------------



<b>Advocacy for School Needs</b>	Recommend the exclusion of school uniforms and shoes from the list of provided items due to their prohibitive cost, advocating instead for the provision of school bags to ensure no child's education is hindered by lack of access to necessary materials.
<b>Financial Assistance Preferences</b>	Highlight the preference of beneficiaries for conditional cash grants, which are seen as more effective in supporting sustainable livelihoods and development compared to in-kind donations.
<b>School Feeding Programs</b>	Address the urgency of school feeding programs, acknowledging recent government efforts while also noting the need for continuous support to ensure nutritional standards are met, especially in primary schools.
<b>Youth Employment and Training</b>	Emphasize the need for self-employment training, awareness, and advocacy, with a focus on providing career awareness and training for youths aged 16 and above exiting schools in estate areas.
<b>Resource Mobilization and Fundraising</b>	Stress the importance of branch fundraising efforts, recommending increased emphasis on leveraging resources from partnerships like the IFRC.
<b>Strategic Planning and Expansion</b>	Advocate for the expansion of annual work plans and targets for branches, including the development of activities related to self-funding, disaster preparedness, and mitigation. Consider expanding climate resilience projects in collaboration with UNDP to districts beyond Kurunegala.
<b>Collaboration and Partnership for Educational Support</b>	Explore potential collaborations with UNICEF for school bag distribution and with WFP for enhancing school feeding programs to improve educational support and nutrition.
<b>Exit Strategy for School Feeding Programs</b>	Develop an exit strategy for school feeding programs that have been operational for over a year, ensuring the nutrition quality is maintained even when transitioning away from the program, given the concern over reduced nutritional value and cost-effectiveness.

### *Implementing Clean Drinking Water Projects*

The importance of community engagement and awareness is a crucial lesson drawn from partnerships like those with the UNDP for installing clean drinking water in estate area schools. Insights from the Red Cross initiatives in Sri Lanka reveal that even with the presence of established organizations, community awareness can remain limited without proactive advocacy and visibility efforts. This underscores the necessity of active communication and community involvement to ensure the success and sustainability of such projects.

To facilitate the successful installation of clean drinking water systems in estate area schools, it is recommended to collaborate with agencies like the UNDP, focusing on enhancing community engagement and awareness. This approach should involve educating the community on the importance of accessible clean water and incorporating their input during the planning and execution stages. Moreover, strategic measures should be implemented to address the long distances children travel to school, such as establishing intermediate water stations or ensuring that schools are equipped with adequate water facilities. This will help guarantee that students have reliable access to clean water throughout their school day.

### *Humanitarian Coordination Gaps*

A common concern among INGOs/NGOs, including the Red Cross, is the evident lack of humanitarian coordination, which leads to gaps and duplications in service delivery. A unified approach is essential for maximizing the impact of humanitarian efforts. Strengthening collaboration across humanitarian agencies through forums like the Cash Working Group is crucial. SLRCS's involvement can facilitate better coordination and collaboration on cash and voucher programs.

<b>Enhance Humanitarian Coordination Across Agencies</b>	<b>Description</b>
Cash Working Group Participation	The widespread adoption of multipurpose (unconditional) cash transfers for emergency response and conditional cash for livelihood development underscores the need for a cohesive strategy. The Cash Working Group, led by Save the Children, emerges as a vital forum for enhancing collaboration, with SLRCS being urged to participate actively.
Challenges in Livelihood Development	Field visits revealed that some beneficiaries of conditional cash transfers for livelihood development faced failures, often due to environmental factors like pests or natural disasters. This indicates a gap in supporting resilient agricultural practices and sustainable livelihood initiatives.
Adopt Best Practices in Agriculture	SLRCS is recommended to incorporate best practices from organizations like World Vision's smart agriculture projects and Save the Children's climate resilience farming initiatives to enhance the success of livelihood development programs.
Maintain Selection Criteria Integrity	The selection criteria for humanitarian response should remain independent of government influence, adhering strictly to guidelines set by IFRC and HQN SLRCS to ensure fairness and effectiveness.

Lead in Data Collection and Management	Given the expressed need for more comprehensive data at the community and local levels, SLRCS, with its significant presence across urban, rural, and estate areas, should take a leading role in data collection and management. This effort could potentially be supported through partnerships and funding from other INGOs/NGOs recognizing the mutual benefits of shared data.
--	---

## Recommendations

### Sector-Specific Recommendations for SLRCS

#### Food security, nutrition, and livelihoods

The key short-term recommendation to prevent further deterioration of food security and nutrition is the urgent provision of food assistance (in-kind or CVA) for vulnerable and marginalized people and households, including those with pregnant and breastfeeding women, children, PLWD, and female-headed households, to help them meet their immediate food and nutrition needs.

The significance of food assistance at schools is highlighted because of the link to school attendance, and the cascade of other benefits that this brings.

Support should be integrated as a systematic and well-coordinated programme of intervention against malnutrition especially targeting vulnerable persons and households, while covering all the country and reaching out to remote and hard-to-reach areas.

#### Community engagement

Community and household engagement will mobilize community resources for collective crisis resilience.

Opportunities	Description
Support for alternative livelihoods and vocational training	Developing and promoting alternative livelihoods and vocational training programs to enhance financial stability and reduce dependency on traditional income sources.
Family-based 'home economics'	Foods and Nutrition: Providing education on balanced diets and nutritional needs. Financial Literacy and Family Economics: Teaching budgeting, saving, and financial planning. Child Development: Focusing on the holistic development of children. Family Relations: Strengthening family dynamics and communication.
Development of community kitchens	Establishing community kitchens to provide shared resources for food preparation and nutrition education.
Improvement of financial and market literacy	Enhancing financial and market literacy at the community level to improve economic decision-making and access to markets.
Systems for bartering and sharing of common assets	Creating systems for bartering and sharing common assets like tools and equipment to reduce costs and promote community cooperation.
Support for gardening, agriculture, and home food production	Promoting eco-friendly agriculture and horticulture, including forest market gardening, cereal food production, and home gardening to ensure sustainable food production and self-sufficiency.
Initiatives to desiccate and preserve seasonal foods	Developing programs to desiccate and preserve seasonal foods, extending their shelf life and availability throughout the year.

#### Health

The current crisis has profound consequences for clinical, public and community health and the health system's functionality. There has been a general decline in the physical and mental well-being of the population because of many factors, including rising drug prices and decreased availability of medicines, decreased access to medical care, rising transportation costs, declining nutritional status, and aggravation of pre-existing chronic medical and mental health conditions. Addressing these issues systemically requires holistic intervention and coordination at the highest level and is beyond the scope of this assessment. However, there are many humanitarian requirements and opportunities to develop and promote community and individual health in the current crisis context.



## Community health

By engaging with communities, in all their diversity, to improve individual and community health, community-based organizations can help improve national health outcomes. This involves empowering people to take responsibility for their own health by using community-based participatory approaches, assessments, and local volunteer-led interventions. This is especially true when communities are involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating community-based health promotion, WASH, and disease prevention services in their own neighborhoods. Programming can range from health promotion, advocacy, and awareness campaigns to a focus on risky behaviors and behavior change strategies, to treatment literacy, and provision of life-saving interventions, for example, support for immunization programmes.

Practical Recommendations	Description
Scaling up dengue prevention and control programmes	Expanding dengue prevention and control programmes and other environmental health programmes, such as environmental cleaning campaigns, across the country.
Developing and implementing community-based health and first aid programming	Focusing on both communicable and non-communicable diseases through community-based health and first aid programs.
Exploring community-based ambulance services	Together with affected communities, exploring the potential for community-based ambulance services utilizing community resources.
Promotion of menstrual hygiene	Promoting menstrual hygiene and providing menstrual hygiene products to women and girls.
Training in mental health and psychosocial support	Training volunteers and community members in mental health and psychosocial support, enabling them to conduct related activities and provide services at the community level.
Collaborating with disability organizations	Working with disability organizations in Sri Lanka to develop and implement community-based services that support the inclusion of people living with disabilities (PLWD) in all sectors of community life.
Coordinating mobile health and dental clinics	Collaborating with pharmaceutical companies, the corporate sector, and the relevant administrations of the Ministry of Health to conduct mobile health and dental clinics, especially in rural and estate sectors.

## Protection

### Physical safety and security

For most of the surveyed households, physical safety and security was a major concern, with 85 % indicating they are severely affected, with some respondents describing this as one of their immediate needs. It is apparent that communities are living in severe mental stress, fear, and a creeping sense of hopelessness.

Practical Steps	Description
<b>Formation of Village/Neighborhood Vigilance Committees</b>	Facilitating and encouraging the formation of village/neighborhood vigilance committees to prevent and address the trend of increasing robberies and thefts.
<b>Advocacy for Increased Law Enforcement Patrolling</b>	Advocating for local law enforcement authorities to increase their patrolling of vulnerable neighborhoods to enhance security and prevent crimes.
<b>Development of Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Programs</b>	Developing community-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programs to help address and reduce community tensions and stresses, promoting overall mental well-being.

### Child protection

The assessment findings note the deteriorating protection situation for children. Increasingly, children are dropping out of school and if not addressed, these children will become more vulnerable to violence and abuse, child labor and early marriage.

<b>Recommended Measures to Keep Children in School</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Provision of School Supplies</b>	Providing school supplies such as stationery, learning instruments, shoes, etc., to ensure children have the necessary materials for their education.
<b>Facilitate and Support School Kitchens and Food Banks</b>	Supporting school kitchens and food banks to address the issue of hunger and poor nutrition, ensuring that children receive adequate meals to stay healthy and focused on their studies.
<b>Setting Up Child-Friendly Spaces</b>	Establishing child-friendly spaces and involving specialist agencies such as Save the Children to address violence and psychosocial needs, creating a safe and supportive environment for children to learn and thrive.

### *Sexual and gender-based violence*

Exploring this sensitive issue was difficult during the household survey and FGDs, but most households believed the risks are now much higher because of the crisis, and that the accessibility and quality of services available for survivors has deteriorated. Some districts also highlighted SGBV is likely to increase if immediate needs are not met.

<b>Recommendations for SGBV/GBV</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Mapping District Specific Services</b>	Map out district-specific services, resources, and referral pathways available to support survivors of SGBV and disseminate this information widely to ensure survivors know where and how to access help.
<b>Community-Based Awareness Sessions</b>	Develop and implement community-based awareness sessions on SGBV prevention and response with the active participation of community members to raise awareness and educate the community on these critical issues.
<b>Engaging Men and Adolescent Boys</b>	Proactively explore ways and means of engaging men and adolescent boys in SGBV and other violence prevention and response activities to foster a supportive environment and promote gender equality and respect.

### *People living with Disabilities*

50 % of the households surveyed had a PLWD in that household. The crisis has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and the quality of life of PLWD has further deteriorated.

<b>Recommendations Supporting People with Disabilities</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Advocating for Accessibility and Inclusion</b>	Advocate for the accessibility of public physical and social environments and inclusion of PLWD in all sectors and aspects of society, pursuing the principle 'nothing about us without us.'
<b>Providing Targeted Support</b>	Provide targeted support to ensure meeting the basic needs of PLWD, while ensuring prevention of abuse by the persons they may depend upon.
<b>Ensuring Mandatory Inclusion</b>	Ensure mandatory inclusion of PLWD during the development of community-based programmes and involve them during all levels of the programme cycle to guarantee their needs and perspectives are adequately addressed.

## Recommendations for IFRC operational strategy

The following recommendations are drawn from the 2022 assessment findings and align with the thematic areas of the Emergency Appeal operational strategy. With the response largely complete, these recommendations aim to inform future initiatives and enhance resilience in the communities served.

### Food Security and Livelihoods

Given the success of the cash and food grants during the response, it is recommended to continue and expand these programs in future emergencies, provided resources are available. The assessment highlighted these grants as critical for preventing further deterioration of food security and nutrition. Future initiatives should ensure the inclusion of female-headed households, persons with disabilities (PLWD), and other vulnerable or marginalized groups based on local branch assessments.

Medium to long-term strategies should focus on enhancing access, participation, safety, and dignity, empowering affected communities to be informed and sufficiently resourced. Prioritizing food assistance in schools can yield nutritional benefits, improve school attendance, and reduce vulnerability to physical and sexual abuse, child labour, and early marriage.

### Education

The education sector was notably impacted by the emergency. Future strategies should allocate more resources to school-based interventions. While the initial response included CHF 2,000 for education, further financial support is necessary. Integrating cross-cutting issues such as food security and protection into educational initiatives can enhance overall effectiveness.

### Health and Care

The initial response addressed critical shortages in pharmaceutical drugs by supporting the Ministry of Health with in-kind donations from Movement partners. Given the assessment's findings on the lack of and high cost of medicines, future responses should continue to prioritize medical and rehabilitation equipment for PLWD as part of in-kind donations.

Additionally, scaling up dengue prevention and control programs, community-based health and first aid programming, menstrual hygiene promotion, and community-based mental health and psychosocial support activities should be prioritized in future appeals.

## Protection, Gender, and Inclusion

The completed child safeguarding risk analysis informed the current operational strategy. Future responses should continue to support these priorities and include:

1. Establishing village/neighbourhood vigilance committees.
2. Conducting community-based awareness sessions on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
3. Engaging men and adolescent boys in SGBV activities.
4. Ensuring the basic needs of PLWD are met and including them in programming.

## Migration

Future programs should integrate migrants living in Sri Lanka and returnees into community-based programming, fostering better inclusion and social coherence.

## Disaster Preparedness

While the initial strategy focused on enhancing the capacity of SLRCS, future strategies should prioritize building broader resilience capacities within local communities. This includes comprehensive disaster preparedness and response as integral components of programming.

By implementing these recommendations, IFRC can continue to support vulnerable communities effectively and enable them to rebuild better post-crisis.

## Triple Nexus Recommendations for Future Interventions in Sri Lanka

Based on the recommendations from the unmet needs assessment and the lessons learned from past interventions, the following integrated Triple Nexus approach can be adopted by IFRC and SLRCS to effectively address the complex humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding needs in Sri Lanka.

### *Food Security, Nutrition, and Livelihoods*

Recommendations	Description
<b>Short-Term Food Assistance</b>	
Immediate Provision	Provide emergency food assistance (in-kind or cash and voucher assistance – CVA) to vulnerable groups including pregnant and breastfeeding women, children, PLWD, and female-headed households. This helps to address immediate nutrition needs and prevent further deterioration in food security.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Provides immediate humanitarian relief while laying the groundwork for improved health outcomes (development) and reducing potential conflicts over scarce resources (peacebuilding).
School Feeding Programs	Prioritise food assistance in schools to improve attendance and address child malnutrition, ensuring nutrition benefits and promoting educational outcomes.

Triple Nexus Alignment	Enhances children's health and education (development) and fosters a more stable and hopeful future, reducing the risk of future conflicts (peacebuilding).
<b>Medium to Long-Term Interventions</b>	
Alternative Livelihoods	Support alternative livelihood and vocational training, including home-gardening, livestock rearing, and small-scale businesses. Promote eco-friendly agriculture and horticulture practices to ensure sustainability.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Develops economic resilience and self-sufficiency (development), reducing dependency on humanitarian aid (humanitarian), and mitigating conflict over resources (peacebuilding).
Community Engagement	Develop community kitchens, bartering systems, and financial and market literacy programs to enhance local economic resilience. Mobilize community resources for collective crisis resilience.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Build community ownership and resilience (development), fosters self-reliance (humanitarian), and strengthens social cohesion (peacebuilding).

## Health

Community Health Interventions	Description
Health Programs	Implement community-based health and first aid programs focusing on both communicable and non-communicable diseases. Scale up dengue prevention and control programs along with other environmental health initiatives.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Improves immediate health conditions (humanitarian), promotes long-term public health (development), and reduces health-related social tensions (peacebuilding).
Mental Health Support	Train volunteers and community members in mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to address community tensions and stress.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Provides immediate psychosocial support (humanitarian), builds long-term mental health capacity (development), and addresses potential sources of conflict (peacebuilding).
Access to Medical Services	Collaborate with pharmaceutical companies and the Ministry of Health to conduct mobile health and dental clinics, especially in rural and estate sectors. Promote menstrual hygiene by providing products and education to women and girls.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Addresses urgent medical needs (humanitarian), enhances healthcare accessibility and education (development), and promotes gender equality and social stability (peacebuilding).

## Protection

Physical Safety and Security Interventions	Description
--	-------------

Community Vigilance	Facilitate the formation of village/neighborhood vigilance committees to prevent thefts and robberies. Advocate for increased patrolling by local law enforcement in vulnerable areas.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Enhances immediate community security (humanitarian), strengthens local governance and trust (development), and prevents conflicts (peacebuilding).
Child Protection	Ensure children stay in school by providing school supplies, supporting school kitchens, and setting up child-friendly spaces in collaboration with specialized agencies like Save the Children.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Protects children's rights and safety (humanitarian), supports educational development (development), and mitigates risks of exploitation and violence (peacebuilding).
Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)	Map out district-specific services and resources for SGBV survivors and disseminate this information widely. Conduct community-based awareness sessions and engage men and adolescent boys in SGBV prevention.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Provides immediate protection and support to survivors (humanitarian), educates communities to prevent SGBV (development), and fosters gender equality and reduces social tensions (peacebuilding).
Inclusion of People Living with Disabilities (PLWD)	Advocate for accessible public environments and inclusion of PLWD in all sectors. Provide targeted support to meet their basic needs and ensure their involvement in community-based program development and implementation.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Addresses immediate needs of PLWD (humanitarian), promotes inclusive development (development), and fosters social cohesion and equality (peacebuilding).

## Operational Strategy for IFRC and SLRCS

<b>Strengthening Organizational Capacity</b>	<b>Description</b>
Training and Capacity Building	Increases training for volunteers on IFRC's e-learning platform, with translations of key modules into local languages (Sinhala and Tamil) to benefit wider audiences.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Enhances volunteer capacity for immediate response (humanitarian), builds long-term skills (development), and promotes informed and cohesive community actions (peacebuilding).
Advocacy and Awareness	Enhance visibility and understanding of Red Cross services through advocacy efforts, particularly in urban communities and schools.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Increases community awareness and support for humanitarian efforts, fosters a culture of preparedness and cooperation (development), and builds trust and social cohesion (peacebuilding).
<b>Sustainable Financial Strategies</b>	
Diversified Funding	Encourage branches to explore self-funding mechanisms such as partnerships with NGOs, INGOs, businesses, and government projects. Promote income-generating activities like commercial first aid training and rental of building space.

Triple Nexus Alignment	Supports financial sustainability (development), reduces dependency on external aid (humanitarian), and enhances collaboration and trust (peacebuilding).
------------------------	---

## Education and Youth Engagement

Education Support	Description
School Supplies and Support Programs	Provide school supplies such as stationery, learning instruments, and shoes to ensure children remain in school. Support school kitchens and food banks to address hunger and poor nutrition, facilitating better educational outcomes.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Addresses immediate educational needs (humanitarian), supports long-term educational development (development), and reduces risks of child labor and early marriage (peacebuilding).
Child-Friendly Spaces	Set up child-friendly spaces in collaboration with organizations like Save the Children to address violence and psychosocial needs, ensuring a safe learning environment for children.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Provides immediate protection and psychosocial support (humanitarian), promotes healthy child development (development), and reduces vulnerabilities to exploitation and violence (peacebuilding).

## Youth Engagement

Youth Engagement	Description
Junior Red Cross Platform	Develop a Junior Red Cross platform to provide structured and age-appropriate opportunities for youth involvement, training, and empowerment.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Engages youth in humanitarian activities (humanitarian), builds leadership and skills for future development (development), and fosters a culture of peace and volunteerism (peacebuilding).
Career Awareness and Training	Focus on career awareness and self-employment training for youths, particularly those exiting schools in estate areas. Provide opportunities for skill development and entrepreneurship.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Provides immediate vocational support (humanitarian), promotes sustainable livelihoods and economic independence (development), and reduces youth involvement in conflicts and illegal activities (peacebuilding).

## Migration and Disaster Preparedness

Migration and Disaster Preparedness	Description
Support for Migrants	



Inclusive Programming	Include migrants living in Sri Lanka and people who have moved from abroad into existing community-based programming. Enhance their inclusion and social coherence within local communities.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Provides immediate support for migrant communities (humanitarian), integrates with local development initiatives (development), and fosters social harmony and stability (peace).
<b>Disaster Preparedness</b>	
Capacity Building	Strengthen the disaster preparedness and response capacities of local communities as an integral part of programming. Focus on building resilience to natural disasters through training and community engagement.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Enhances community preparedness and response to emergencies (humanitarian), promotes long-term resilience and adaptation to climate change, and addresses the impact of disasters on social stability (peace).
Climate Resilience Projects	Collaborate with organizations like UNDP to expand access to clean drinking water and improve agricultural practices through innovative and organic farming methods.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Addresses immediate water and food security needs (humanitarian), supports sustainable development (development), and enhances community resilience to climate-induced conflicts (peacebuilding).

## Monitoring and Evaluation, and Financial Strategies

<b>Monitoring and Evaluation, and Financial Strategies</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Comprehensive Monitoring Evaluation</b>	
Integrated Frameworks	Implement monitoring and evaluation frameworks that integrate humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding metrics to assess the overall impact of interventions.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Ensures continuous assessment of immediate needs (humanitarian), supports adaptive and sustainable development strategies (development), and sustains long-term peace and stability by addressing root causes.
<b>Sustainable Financial Strategies</b>	
Diversified Funding Mechanisms	Encourage branches to explore varied funding mechanisms such as partnerships with NGOs, INGOs, businesses, and governments. Promote income-generating activities like commercial sales and renting of building space.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Ensures financial support for ongoing needs and supports community resilience and sustainability (peace), reducing dependency on external aid (humanitarian).
Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT)	Strengthen CCT programs by aligning financial aid with development projects and contributing to sustainable growth. Collaborate with UNDP and conduct research to optimize the design and implementation of CCT programs.
Triple Nexus Alignment	Provides immediate financial relief (humanitarian), promotes sustainable economic practices (development), and reduces economic-related conflicts (peacebuilding).

By continuing to implement these integrated strategies, IFRC and SLRCS can ensure a cohesive and effective approach that addresses immediate needs while fostering long-term development and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. This integrated approach aligns with the Triple Nexus framework, ensuring that humanitarian, development, and peace efforts are mutually reinforcing and sustainable.

## Strategic Recommendations for IFRC and SLRCS HQ

Strategic Recommendations for IFRC and SLRCS HQ	Description
<b>Priorities</b>	
Enhance Community Resilience and Sustainability	Focus on integrating long-term development goals with immediate humanitarian responses. Implement sustainable development initiatives such as capacity building, vocational training, and eco-friendly agricultural practices.
Strengthen Organizational Capacity	Increase training and capacity-building programs for volunteers and staff. Translate key training modules into local languages to ensure broader accessibility.
Improve Monitoring and Evaluation	Develop robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess intervention impact continuously. Utilize community feedback mechanisms to adapt and refine strategies.
<b>Timeframe</b>	
Short-term (0-6 months)	Immediate integration of community feedback into ongoing programs. Start translating training modules and initiate capacity-building sessions.
Medium-term (6-12 months)	Implement sustainable development projects focused on long-term resilience. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
Long-term (1-2 years)	Regularly assess the effectiveness of interventions and adjust strategies accordingly. Continue to enhance organizational capacity through ongoing training programs.

## Operational Recommendations for SLRCS Branches

Operational Recommendations for SLRCS Branches	Description
<b>Priorities</b>	
Community-Based Health and Nutrition Programs	Expand community health and first aid programs. Increase focus on school feeding programs and nutritional support.
Economic Empowerment Initiatives	Support alternative livelihoods through vocational training and small business support. Promote eco-friendly agriculture and home gardening projects.
Protection and Inclusion	Develop community-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programs. Ensure inclusion of persons living with disabilities (PLWD) in all community programs.
<b>Timeframe</b>	

Short-term (0-6 months)	Immediate expansion of community health programs and nutritional support. Initiate economic empowerment projects focusing on urgent needs.
Medium-term (6-12 months)	Implement comprehensive MHPSS programs and ensure PLWD inclusion. Scale up alternative livelihood projects.
Long-term (1-2 years)	Assess the impact of health and nutrition programs and adapt as needed. Continue to develop and refine economic empowerment initiatives.

## Recommendations for Donor Advocacy

Recommendations for Donor Advocacy	Description
<b>Priorities</b>	
Increase Flexible Funding	Advocate for flexible donor funding to allow for adaptive response to evolving needs. Emphasize the need for long-term financial support for sustainable development projects.
Promote Integrated Approaches	Encourage donors to support integrated programs that combine humanitarian aid with development and peacebuilding efforts. Highlight successful cases to attract sustained interest.
<b>Timeframe</b>	
Short-term (0-6 months)	Engage with donors to discuss the need for flexible and long-term funding. Present successful integrated program case studies.
Medium-term (6-12 months)	Develop detailed proposals for integrated programs. Secure commitments for long-term funding.
Long-term (1-2 years)	Maintain regular communication with donors for continued support. Monitor and report on the impact of funded programs to reinforce the need for sustained investment.

## Recommendations for Protracted Crisis

Recommendations for Protracted Crisis	Description
<b>Priorities</b>	
Sustainable Resource Management	Focus on improving resource allocation and management to ensure equitable distribution. Develop strategies for addressing logistical challenges in resource distribution.
Long-term Development Focus	Integrate emergency aid with long-term development goals to build resilience. Implement community-based projects that promote economic self-sufficiency and reduce dependency on aid.
Strengthened Partnerships	Enhance collaboration with local governments, international donors, and private sector partners. Leverage partnerships to improve resource mobilization and program implementation.
<b>Timeframe</b>	
Short-term (0-6 months)	Immediate improvement in resource management and logistical planning. Initiate discussions with partners for enhanced collaboration.

Medium-term (6-12 months)	Implement community-based development projects. Formalize partnerships and start joint initiatives.
Long-term (1-2 years)	Regularly assess the impact of development projects and adjust strategies as needed. Continue to strengthen partnerships and leverage resources for sustained impact.

## Continuous Risk Management Recommendations

Recommendations for Continuous Risk Management	Description
<b>Risk Identification</b>	Conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential threats and vulnerabilities. Utilize data and feedback from community stakeholders to stay informed about emerging risks.
<b>Risk Mitigation</b>	Develop and implement strategies to mitigate identified risks. This includes establishing early warning systems, enhancing emergency preparedness, and ensuring flexible resource allocation.
<b>Capacity Building</b>	Invest in training and capacity-building initiatives for staff and volunteers to effectively manage risks. Focus on enhancing skills in risk assessment, crisis management, and community engagement.
<b>Community Involvement</b>	Engage community members in risk management processes. Encourage local participation in identifying risks and developing mitigation strategies to ensure they are contextually relevant and effective.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track the effectiveness of risk management strategies. Regularly review and update risk management plans based on evaluation findings and changing circumstances.
<b>Resource Mobilization</b>	Secure necessary resources for continuous risk management. This includes financial resources, technical expertise, and logistical support to ensure preparedness and resilience.
<b>Partnership and Collaboration</b>	Strengthen partnerships with local governments, international organizations, and private sector entities for comprehensive risk management. Leverage collective expertise and resources to enhance risk mitigation efforts.
<b>Communication and Awareness</b>	Develop effective communication strategies to raise awareness about risks and promote a culture of preparedness. Use multiple channels to disseminate information and engage with diverse audiences.

## Conclusion

Evaluation of SLRCS's Emergency Response to the Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has demonstrated a significant and multifaceted approach in their response to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka. This evaluation highlights both the successes and challenges of their interventions, providing a comprehensive understanding of their impact and areas for future improvement.

Output Emergency Response Evaluation	Description
<b>What Worked</b>	
Comprehensive Aid Programs	The SLRCS implemented a range of interventions, including monetary assistance, food security initiatives, health interventions, and the provision of essential supplies such as sanitary products and school supplies. These efforts effectively addressed immediate needs and supported the continuity of health and education.
Community Engagement and Capacity Building	By involving community members in planning and execution, the SLRCS ensured cultural appropriateness and local ownership of programs. This approach not only increased the relevance and acceptance of aid but also built local capacities for future resilience.
Health and Nutritional Support	Health-oriented interventions, including the distribution of first aid kits and school feeding programs, addressed immediate health needs and contributed to long-term public health goals. These initiatives prevented secondary crises such as disease outbreaks and improved nutritional intake among children.
Economic Empowerment	Programs aimed at enhancing local farming practices and entrepreneurial skills provided immediate economic relief and fostered long-term economic resilience. These interventions helped reduce dependency on external aid and supported sustainable economic development.
Effective Feedback Mechanisms	Continuous feedback from beneficiaries allowed the SLRCS to adapt interventions to meet evolving needs, ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of aid provided.
<b>What Did Not Work</b>	
Resource Limitations	Significant challenges were encountered in managing limited resources efficiently. Logistical issues such as transportation and distribution, along with financial constraints, impacted the reach and adequacy of aid. These limitations highlighted the need for better logistical planning and resource management.
Cultural Sensitivity Challenges	Ensuring that interventions were culturally appropriate and accepted by all segments of the population was a recurrent issue. Addressing gender and ethnic sensitivities proved crucial for the success of aid programs.
<b>Challenges</b>	
Logistical and Operational Hurdles	The efficient delivery of aid was hampered by logistical challenges, particularly in remote or disaster-struck areas. This affected the speed and coverage of interventions.
Sustainability of Interventions	While emergency interventions were effective, there was a need to better integrate these with broader development objectives. Ensuring that emergency aid supports and aligns with long-term development plans is essential for sustainability.

While the operations have implemented some monitoring and evaluation activities including feedback mechanisms, they lack consistent application for assessing intervention effectiveness and refining strategies accordingly. Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks will be crucial to ensure that critical data and information and lessons learned from current responses are utilized to inform future practices, leading to more adaptive and responsive strategies.

To enhance collaboration with a broader range of stakeholders, including local authorities, international donors, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and private sector partners, it is crucial to establish clear communication channels and define specific roles and responsibilities. During the crises, SLRCS faced challenges in facilitating collaboration and inclusive planning. To advocate for improved collaboration and inclusivity, SLRCS may consider:

Strategy	Description
Develop Crisis-Specific Protocols	Create detailed protocols outlining how to engage with different stakeholders during emergencies. These protocols should include mechanisms for regular communication, information sharing, and joint decision-making processes.
Conduct Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement	Identify and map key stakeholders, including local governments, international donors, and private sector partners. Engage these stakeholders through regular meetings, workshops, and consultations to ensure their input and support are integrated into emergency planning and response.
Strengthen Community Engagement	Implement strategies to actively involve community members in planning and decision-making processes. This can be achieved through community meetings, feedback sessions, and the establishment of community advisory boards to ensure that emergency interventions are relevant and accepted by those affected.
Advocate for Policy Changes	Work with local and national authorities to advocate for policies that facilitate better coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders. This may include advocating for the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms or task forces that can be activated during crises.
Enhance Training and Capacity Building	Provide training and capacity-building opportunities for staff, volunteers, and stakeholders on effective collaboration and inclusive planning. This can include workshops on communication skills, negotiation techniques, and conflict resolution.
Leverage Technology	Utilize technology to improve communication and coordination. This can include the use of online collaboration tools, real-time data sharing platforms, and mobile applications to ensure all stakeholders are informed and can contribute to the planning and response efforts.
Enhanced Resource Management	Future strategies should focus on enhancing logistical capacities and funding mechanisms to ensure more equitable distribution of resources. Addressing logistical challenges can significantly improve the efficiency of responses.
Strengthened Partnerships	Enhancing collaboration with local governments, international donors, and private sector partners can improve resource mobilization and program implementation. Stronger partnerships are essential for building sustainable systems capable of withstanding future crises.

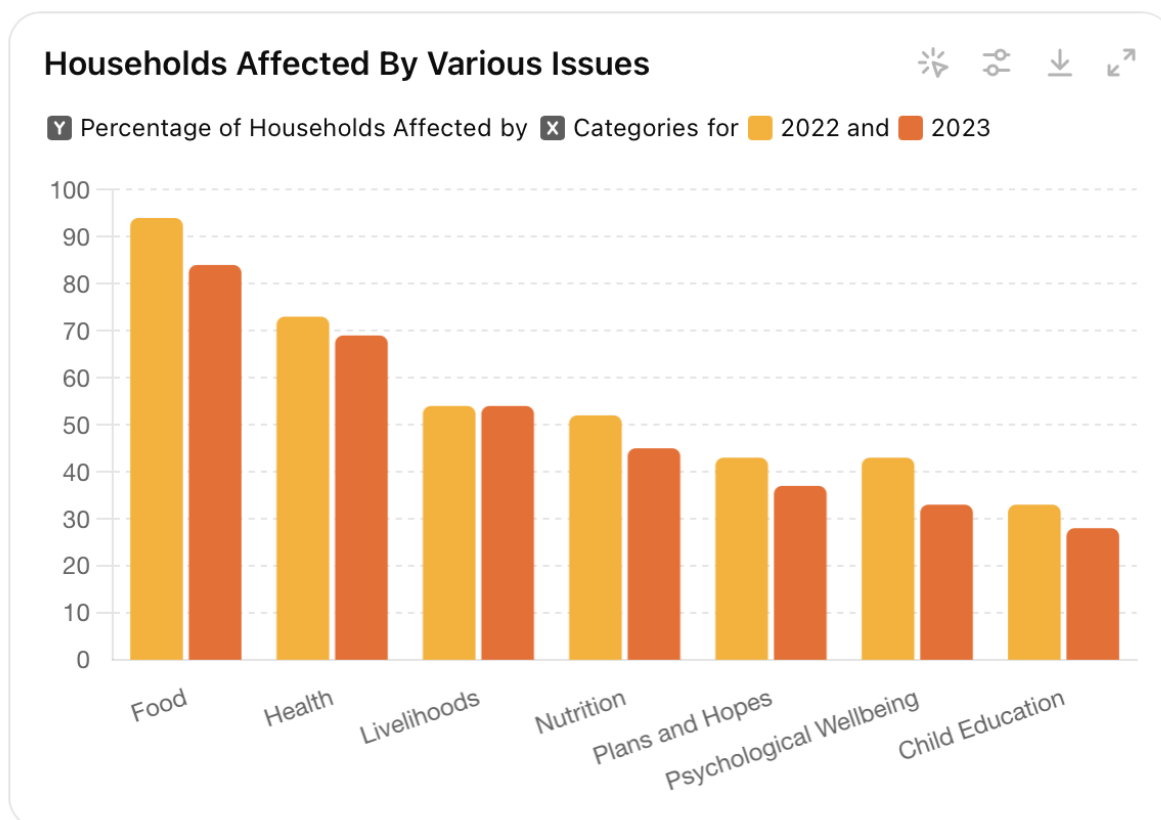
Integration with Long-term Goals	There is a need for strategies that focus on integrating short-term relief with long-term developmental goals. This approach will lay the groundwork for sustainable recovery and resilience against future crises.
Robust Monitoring and Evaluation	Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of interventions and refining strategies accordingly. This will ensure that resources are used effectively and that programs deliver the intended outcomes.

Overall, the SLRCS's emergency response to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka has been pivotal in addressing immediate needs and laying the groundwork for sustainable development and resilience. Ongoing efforts to address resource challenges, integrate with development goals, and strengthen partnerships will be crucial to maximizing the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian interventions in Sri Lanka.

## Unmet Needs Assessment

There has been a slight improvement in the impact of the current crisis on households between 2022 and the current year. In 2022, 95 percent of households in survey districts reported being affected by the crisis, whereas 2024 shows a decrease to 84 percent. This improvement is observed across rural, urban, and estate households. Specifically, rural households saw a reduction in affectedness from 99 percent to 87 percent, urban households from 93 percent to 78 percent, and estate households from 97 percent to 96 percent. The highest proportion of households earning LKR 80k or more per month perceived a positive change (22 %), against only 3 % of households earning less than LKR 10k per month, and 4 % of female headed households. Despite this improvement, most households, especially in rural and estate areas, and those with existing vulnerabilities, continue to feel profound effects of the crisis.

Households are still affected in multiple dimensions, in food. The graph shows the percentage of households affected by various issues in 2022 and 2023. While there are areas of slight improvement, many households remain significantly affected in these dimensions.



Focus group discussions broadly corroborate these findings: Participants noted significant, ongoing economic impacts, exacerbated by natural disasters such as floods and droughts, and insufficient government support, with increased costs of essential items and job losses. Financial burdens have intensified, with families resorting further to pawning assets, taking informal loans, and pushing some towards illegal activities. Health concerns are prevalent, with shortages of essential drugs, increased non-communicable diseases, and mental health issues driven by economic stress. Community safety has deteriorated, with rising theft, drug use, and domestic violence, while educational barriers and the risk of early marriage have increased.

The lack of improvement in livelihoods and the substantial proportion of households with uncertain plans and hopes for the future emphasize the importance of ongoing support and targeted interventions to address these persistent challenges.

The humanitarian sector is navigating between the need for large-scale economic recovery, facilitated by international financial institutions and development donors, and the necessity for localized community assistance, best managed by smaller local organizations focused on the community level. The Movement, rooted in the community, aligns its findings and recommendations with community priorities, rather than macroeconomic and systemic solutions.

Households and communities have been impacted in numerous ways by the ongoing crisis, with reports indicating rising poverty levels. Traditional measures of poverty, often based on income, fail to capture its multifaceted nature. Multidimensional poverty encompasses various deprivations, including poor health, malnutrition, inadequate sanitation and clean water, social exclusion, low education, substandard housing conditions, environmental hazards, violence, shame, disempowerment, and more.

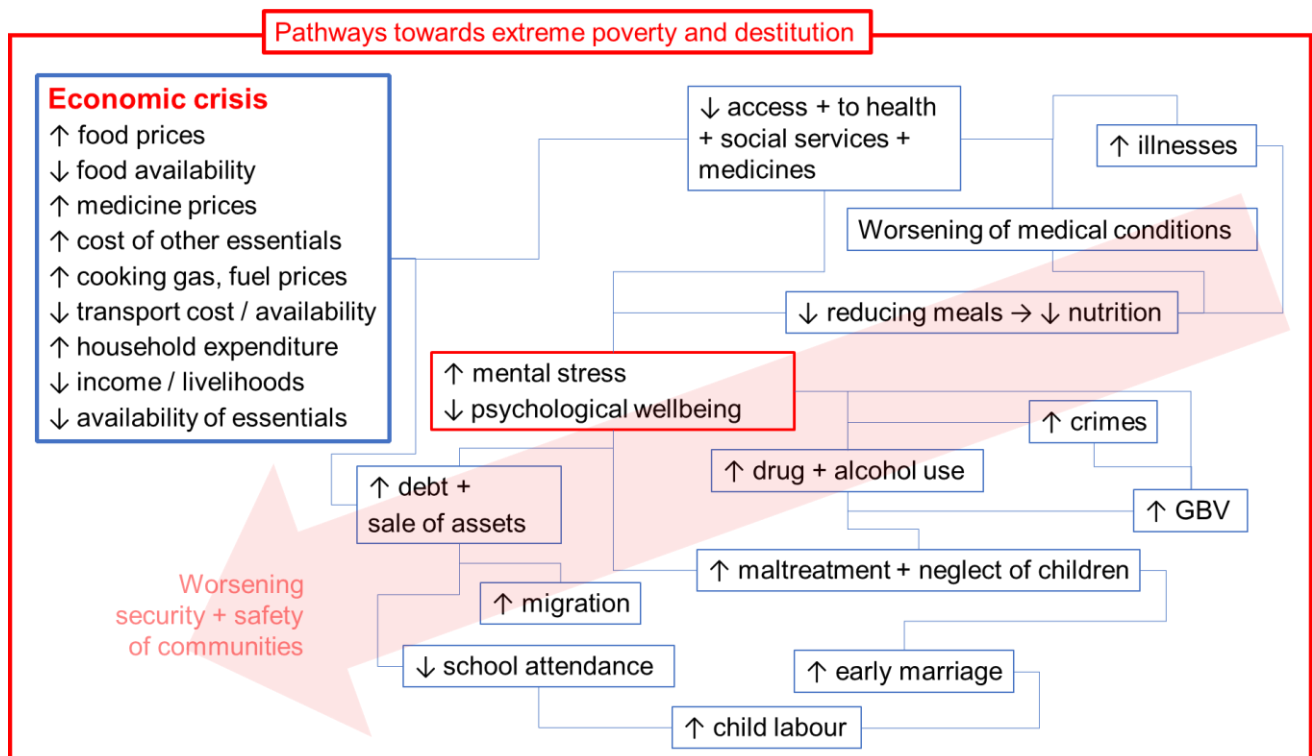
The 2022 assessment indicates that the crisis is pushing more vulnerable individuals towards destitution. Initially, people strive to preserve their assets, but this is often followed by negative coping strategies such as reducing meals, postponing medical care, employing family members (especially children) for income, asset depletion, selling assets, engaging in crime and theft, migrating in search of work, and family breakups.

Effective community-based interventions should:

1. Focus on those who are 'left behind,' including marginalized and vulnerable populations, persons with disabilities (PLWD), migrants, older people, and those who are socially isolated and excluded.
2. Assist communities and individuals in asserting their rights to food security, livelihoods, health, and care, including mental health and psychosocial support, and protection, within the framework of community inclusion principles.
3. Prioritize access, participation, safety, and dignity, ensuring that affected individuals are empowered, informed, and adequately resourced to make appropriate choices, and can access quality and sustainable programs.

Baseline Data Output – Needs Assessment 2022





*The effects of the economic crisis at the community and family level 2022*

## Targeting the Most Vulnerable

The response efforts by SLRCS and IFRC effectively targeted the most vulnerable populations, including ethnic minorities, rural subsistence farmers, and those heavily affected by the economic crisis. These efforts were particularly evident in the distribution of cash grants and food aid, the provision of health services, and the implementation of school feeding programs, which prioritized communities with elevated levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.

## Operational Capacity

Operational capacity and coordination can be improved by enhancing logistical frameworks and funding mechanisms to ensure timely delivery of assistance. The challenges faced during the emergency operations, such as delays in cash transfers and transportation issues, highlighted the need for better planning and resource allocation. Recommendations include developing a more robust financial and logistical strategy and increasing community engagement to understand and address beneficiary needs more effectively.

## Preparedness

To enhance preparedness for future crises, it is crucial to improve the national society's ability to manage cash transfers and other support mechanisms promptly. This includes developing a Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Preparedness Project, improving coordination with financial service providers, and establishing clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for emergency responses. Strengthening these areas will ensure a more rapid and efficient response in future emergencies.

## Donor Engagement

Engaging with donors can be improved by increasing transparency and demonstrating the impact of interventions. The SLRCS and IFRC can better engage with donors by displaying success stories and the effectiveness of their programs, as evidenced by the positive outcomes of the school feeding

programs and cash assistance initiatives. Building trust through regular updates, detailed reports, and effective communication strategies will help secure more funding and improve the organization's profile

## Integration with Social Security Systems

Integrating response efforts with existing social security systems in Sri Lanka can enhance sustainability and long-term resilience. This can be achieved by aligning humanitarian interventions with national social protection programs, ensuring that aid complements and strengthens these systems. Collaborative efforts with government agencies to streamline support mechanisms and avoid duplication of services will enhance overall effectiveness.

## Strategic and Technical Guidance

Specific strategic and technical guidance should be provided to National Societies to ensure that their emergency appeals and responses are effective and aligned with long-term goals. This includes training in areas such as sexual exploitation and abuse prevention, gender inclusion, and handling cultural sensitivities. Additionally, developing clear frameworks and response manuals for various emergency scenarios will ensure a more structured and efficient approach.

## Presence of the Federation

A more robust presence of the Federation in Sri Lanka could enhance engagement with SLRCS, partners, donors, and external stakeholders. Increased on-ground support and coordination can facilitate better resource allocation, improve communication channels, and ensure more cohesive and effective responses to crises.

## Evaluating Response Effectiveness

The response's effectiveness in meeting its original objectives of providing immediate relief can be measured through continuous monitoring and evaluation. Using feedback mechanisms such as hotlines and complaint boxes, and conducting mid-term evaluations, will provide critical insights into the impact of interventions and areas needing improvement. These measures have shown high beneficiary satisfaction and have helped us adapt strategies to better meet community needs.

## Reflections on the Evaluation and Data Collection

The evaluation of the Complex Emergency Operation and the assessment of humanitarian needs in Sri Lanka undertaken by the IFRC offers critical insights into the effectiveness and challenges of humanitarian interventions amid the country's economic crisis. This section provides reflections on the evaluation process, data collection methodologies, and the implications of the findings from both methodological and case study perspectives.

## Evaluation Methodology and Data Collection Approaches

The evaluation employed a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to ensure a robust analysis of intervention outcomes and ongoing needs. This approach included:

1. **Field Visits and Observations:** These provided first-hand insights into the on-ground realities of intervention sites, allowing evaluators to understand the context and nuances that might not be captured through other methods.
2. **Interviews and Focus Groups:** Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders—including government officials, partner organizations, and affected populations—through key informant

interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) facilitated a deep dive into the perceptions and impacts of the interventions.

3. **Surveys:** Conducted among community households, these surveys collected quantitative data on key evaluation criteria such as relevance, appropriateness, and outcomes of the interventions.
4. **Case Studies:** Detailed case studies provided personal narratives and highlighted the specific impacts and challenges of the interventions, enriching the overall understanding with qualitative depth.

## Insights from Case Studies

The case studies, such as the School Feeding Program and the Daily Workers' Cash Assistance, illustrated both the successes and the challenges faced during implementation. These narratives underscore the importance of contextual adaptation and community engagement:

- **School Feeding Program:** This initiative demonstrated significant improvements in nutritional intake and school attendance among children. However, logistical challenges and initial community resistance highlighted the need for effective communication and local involvement in planning and implementation.
- **Daily Workers' Cash Assistance:** This program provided critical financial relief, allowing targeted populations to meet immediate needs such as food and medical expenses. The feedback mechanisms established ensured transparency and responsiveness, although delays in fund disbursement due to banking issues indicated areas for process improvement.

## Evaluation Criteria and Analytical Techniques

The evaluation was guided by several criteria, including relevance, outcomes, adherence to principles, and sustainability. Advanced analytical strategies were employed to integrate data from various sources:

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Utilizing statistical methods and software tools for data analysis provided robust insights into trends and outcomes.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Tools like NVivo facilitated the thematic analysis of qualitative data, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the intervention impacts.

## Ethical Considerations

Ensuring ethical integrity was paramount throughout the evaluation process. This included obtaining informed consent from participants, maintaining data confidentiality, and respecting cultural sensitivities during data collection and analysis.

## Challenges and Recommendations

Several challenges were identified during the evaluation process:

- **Resource Constraints:** Limited resources and logistical issues posted significant challenges in the efficient delivery of aid.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Addressing the diverse cultural contexts of affected communities required careful planning and adaptive strategies.
- **Sustainability:** Ensuring the long-term impact and sustainability of interventions remained a critical concern, necessitating a focus on capacity building and community empowerment.

The reflections on the evaluation and data collection processes highlight the importance of a comprehensive, mixed methods approach in capturing the multifaceted impacts of humanitarian interventions. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provided a holistic view, while the ethical and culturally sensitive conduct of the evaluation ensured its credibility and relevance. Moving forward, strategic recommendations emphasize the need for sustainable development, enhanced community engagement, and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to inform future humanitarian efforts in Sri Lanka.