

| Sri Lanka

2025 Grant Recipients

Direct Aid Program



At A Glance

The Direct Aid Program (DAP) is a small grants program that supports local communities in their efforts to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, supporting the national interests of both Sri Lanka and Australia. In 2025, AUD \$495,000 was awarded to seven projects in Sri Lanka focusing on climate change, women's economic empowerment, gender-based violence and disability equity and rights.

Key project locations

Improving Disability Equity and Inclusion Rights

1 Sri Lanka Central Federation of the Deaf

2 Sunera Foundation

Enhancing Community Resilience to Climate Change

3 Northern Co-operative Development Bank

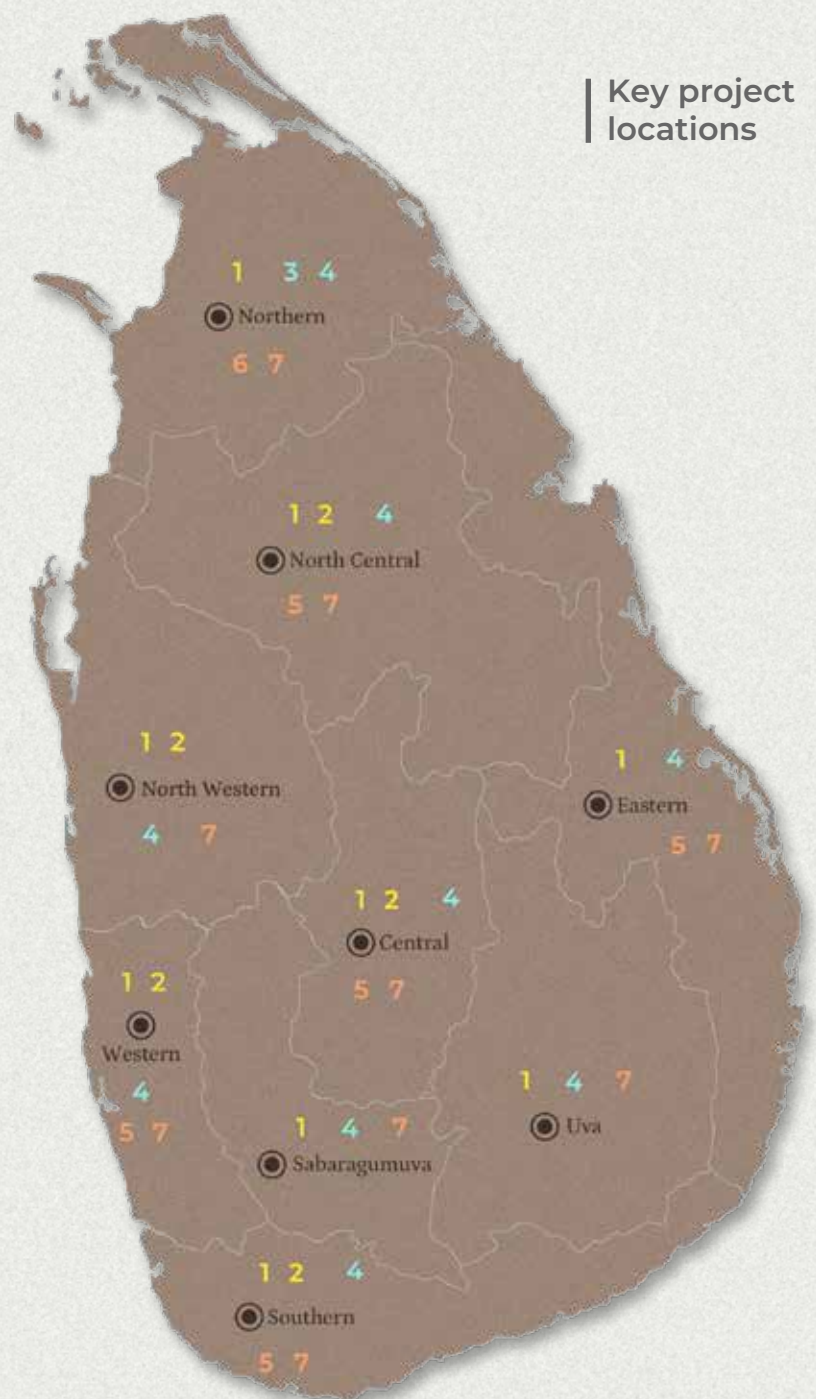
4 Sri Lanka Press Institute

Promoting Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

5 Equal Ground

6 Jaffna Social Action Centre

7 Équité





Improving Disability Equity and Inclusion Rights

In Sri Lanka, people with disability often face significant barriers to participation in society, including discrimination and limited access to essential services. DAP is committed to supporting initiatives that strengthen mobility, livelihood opportunities, and advocacy for inclusive policies to ensure that people with disability can lead fuller, more independent lives.

1

Sri Lanka Central Federation of the Deaf (SLCFD) - Development and Standardisation of Sign Language in Sri Lanka

The project will improve accessibility and inclusivity for the Deaf community in Sri Lanka by standardising sign language. The establishment of the Research Centre, in collaboration with the University of Kelaniya, and the development of 300 new signs, will improve communication between hearing impaired individuals and hearing people. The expanded sign language vocabulary will enhance access to education, healthcare, and public services, reducing communication barriers. As a result, the deaf community will have improved self-expression through an expanded sign language vocabulary. This initiative further aims to advocate with national stakeholders for the legal recognition of the Sri Lankan Sign Language Act.

2

Sunera Foundation - 'Samanalayaya' 2025 Grand Finals

The project will support a drama festival titled 'Samanalayaya' during which 160 children with disability perform in public before a large audience. The Grand Finals of 'Samanalayaya' 2025 will feature the best performances selected from regional festivals. Accordingly, the Grand Finals will showcase three short dramas and several dance performances in Colombo representing performers from different regions. This initiative empowers individuals with disabilities through workshops that build skills and confidence, promoting their inclusion in society.

3

Northern Co-operative Development Bank (NCDB) - Building Climate-Resilient Livelihoods through Cooperative Farming

This project will promote sustainable and climate-resilient pulse and other crop cultivation through co-operative societies in the Northern Province. Engaging 10 cooperative societies and benefiting 350 farmers, the project will support improved cultivation practices, value addition, and co-operative-led marketing to create demand for local livelihoods and supply food to local consumers, strengthening food security. By addressing climate change impacts and introducing resource-efficient techniques, the project will increase productivity, boost farmer incomes, and strengthen cooperative networks. Led by NCDB and Jaffna University's Technology Faculty, it aims to drive sustainable rural development and support agricultural revival in the region.

4

Sri Lanka Press Institute (SLPI) - Strengthening Journalism on Climate Resilience and Social Harmony

This project empowers journalists to report on the critical intersection of climate change and social cohesion. Through fact-checking, capacity-building workshops, and multimedia storytelling platforms, it empowers journalists and communities to counter misinformation, amplify voices from marginalised communities, and foster a shared understanding of climate resilience and social harmony. The initiative will enhance discourse on climate change impacts and related dynamics through exhibitions and expert-led discussions. These efforts will build trust, strengthen community bonds, and support a united, informed response to the challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation.

Enhancing Community Resilience to Climate Change

Sri Lanka is acutely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which pose serious risks to communities, particularly marginalised groups such as women, children, and people with disability. DAP supports projects that build resilience to climate change through sustainable livelihoods and improved community preparedness.



Promoting Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Despite progress, women, girls and marginalised communities in Sri Lanka continue to face structural and systemic barriers that limit their full participation in society and the economy. These barriers not only hinder development but also increase the risk of gender-based violence (GBV). Through the Direct Aid Program (DAP), targeted initiatives are supported to advance gender equality, improve economic opportunities for women, prevent and respond to GBV, and foster social inclusion and cohesion.



5 Equal Ground - Promoting LGBTQIA+ Tourism as a Driver of Social Change and Economic Growth

This project will harness the economic benefits of LGBTQIA+ tourism by providing training for approximately 450 tourist guides, equipping hotels and tour operators, and sensitising travel agencies in five districts on LGBTQIA+ rights. It also includes advocacy efforts such as organising a pride event, media campaigns, and publishing guidelines for LGBTQIA+ travellers, promoting inclusive hospitality and tourism. This initiative will use the economic benefits of LGBTQIA+ tourism to promote decriminalisation of consenting adult same sex relationships, promote policies of inclusion and non-discrimination and open employment opportunities for the LGBTQIA+ community in Sri Lanka.

6 Jaffna Social Action Center (JSAC) - Empowering SGBV Survivors through Skill Development and Reintegration

This project will improve shelter services, enhance support systems, and create sustainable economic empowerment opportunities for 180–200 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) residing in shelter homes in the Mullaitivu and Jaffna districts of Sri Lanka's Northern Province. The program focuses on livelihood training, skill development, and economic empowerment to foster resilience, independence, and socioeconomic stability for 25 post-shelter women. This includes providing survivors with the tools, resources, and ongoing support needed to rebuild their lives, sustain livelihoods, and achieve financial independence after leaving the shelter environment.

7 Équité - Empowering the LGBTQIA+ Community & Expanding Support Services on Mental Well-Being

This project aims to address the mental health challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community in Sri Lanka by developing an accessible mental well-being handbook in Sinhala and Tamil (including in Braille and audio formats), establishing a peer support network within the LGBTQIA+ community, and sensitising mental health professionals on various mental health challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community. This will foster a more supportive environment and improve access to LGBTQIA+ inclusive mental health services, thereby empowering the LGBTQIA+ community.