

Post-Tsunami Crisis Response and Disaster Recovery in Sri Lanka: Experiences from Tilburg University Student Projects

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SHORT COMMUNICATION

In this short communication, we present the results from four projects that have been carried out in Sri Lanka by Tilburg University students as part of their course “International Orientation” during a two week trip to Sri Lanka from March 18th till April 2nd 2005. These projects have been carried out at local organizations, or at NGO’s active in Sri Lanka. The focus of all projects is on Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity.

Project 1: GIS project

The goal of this project is to find a beneficial use of GIS (Geographic Information System) software in Sri Lanka, in the area of crisis response and disaster recovery. This group of students has attended a training program at Intergraph, a major GIS vendor. Intergraph has also agreed with the use of their GIS software for this project. Through contacts with Professor Bandulla from Colombo, this group will carry out a project with the Urban Development Authority (UDA). A second project will be carried out with ‘Doctors without Borders’, active in the East of Sri Lanka.

Project 2: Local Recovery projects

The students in this group have identified several initiatives in Sri Lanka that are being supported by Belgian and Dutch organizations or groups, and which could benefit from a 'portal' website that enables the exchange of information between the work in Sri Lanka and the Belgian-Dutch supporting organisations. One of the projects here is with Caritas Belgium, to rebuild a school and several houses in three fishermen villages. Another project is with the Unawatuna Tourist Development Society, a newly established society in Unawatuna.

Project 3: Risk analysis at DFCC Bank

The students in this group carry out a risk analysis project at DFCC bank, one of the larger banks in Sri Lanka. While this bank has not been directly hit by the Tsunami, management of the bank is interested to further identify and analyze the major risks the bank needs to mitigate. Students in this group will base their work on an approach developed authors of this paper (Rutkowski et al., 2005 and Van Den Eede et al. 2004) on IT and Business alignment in risk management and High Reliability Theory.

Project 4: Tourism project

Certainly the Tourism sector has been seriously impacted by the Tsunami of December 26 2004. The students in this group will analyse the status of the tourism industry in general, and investigate the business strategy of a small tourism

office to expand their activities in the near future. They will also analyse the potential benefits of having a crisis management plan in place.

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