

CENTRE  
FOR A  
SMART  
FUTURE

COLOMBO  
URBAN  
LAB

# CSF AT

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK

June 2021- May 2026



# ABOUT US

**Centre for a Smart Future (CSF) is a Colombo-based public policy think-tank with researchers, advisors, and partners around the world.**

Since 2021, we have conducted high-quality, and grounded research on Sri Lanka's economy and public policies, with a view to shape a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Since inception, CSF has published dozens of reports, policy briefs, analytical notes, knowledge primers, and op-ed articles to inform and influence the public policy space in the country. Increasingly, CSF's work is being recognized internationally for its unique interdisciplinary approach and new thinking on contemporary and emerging issues, particularly around climate, urbanization, informal work, and inclusive technology.

This document provides **a recap of our work and engagements during the period June 2021 to May 2026**, ranging from publications to high-level events.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
Nature, Climate & Economy -----	5
Colombo Urban Lab -----	<u>23</u>
Inclusive and Sustainable Tourism -----	<u>41</u>
Inclusive Technology & Innovation -----	<u>46</u>
International Trade and Economic Competitiveness -----	<u>52</u>
CSF Commentary on Critical National Issues -----	<u>59</u>
Selection of Key Events and Engagements -----	65

Five years of advancing research and advocacy that shapes a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future for Sri Lanka. We are working to influence public policies that are more people-centric and nature-centric.

SNAP SHOT

13

RESEARCH REPORTS

05

RESEARCH BRIEFS

06

ANALYTICAL NOTES &  
DISCUSSION PAPERS

14

POLICY BRIEFS &  
POLICY NOTES

05

ANALYTICAL  
NOTES

75

KNOWLEDGE  
ARTICLES

# NATURE, CLIMATE AND ECONOMY

# WE PUBLISHED

## NATURE, CLIMATE AND ECONOMY

04

RESEARCH REPORTS

02

RESEARCH BRIEFS

01

RESEARCH  
COMPENDIUM

05

KNOWLEDGE PRIMERS

01

POLICY BRIEF

05

ANALYTICAL  
NOTES

02

PRESENTATION

25

WEB ARTICLES



RESEARCH REPORT

### Assessing the Assessments: An Analysis of Social Impacts Reported in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in Sri Lanka

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are meant to anticipate and minimise harm to communities and nature, but CSF’s new report finds that the quality of social impact reporting in EIAs is low, making EIAs unreliable for decision-makers and investors to scrutinise and use.

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RESEARCH REPORT

### Shifting Grounds: Unpacking the Tensions between Real Estate Development and Nature in Colombo

CSF’s new report ‘Shifting Grounds: Unpacking the Tensions between Real Estate Development and Nature in Colombo’ examines this paradox of ‘green living’ and the destruction of natural spaces through the lens of one of Colombo’s nature-rich suburbs. The findings of the report are especially relevant now post Cyclone Ditwah.

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RESEARCH REPORT

### Researching Blue Financing in the Indo-Pacific: A Scoping Study of South Asia

Marine and coastal ecosystems in South Asia—crucial for food security, livelihoods, and disaster resilience—face intensifying climate risks but receive limited adaptation finance. A new CSF report highlights the Bay of Bengal as a strategic entry point for Canada in South Asia, to support nature-based, climate-resilient development through a regional regenerative blue economy.

[READ MORE](#)



**RESEARCH REPORT**

## CSF-BSL Report: Green Finance Maturity Assessment 2024

Green finance is getting greater attention in Sri Lanka, as banks and finance companies see it as a new area for lending, and the number of potential projects that need finance keep growing. CSF collaborated with Biodiversity Sri Lanka to better understand what this space is like right now. We surveyed 20 financial institutions to understand multiple aspects of their engagement with green finance.

[READ MORE](#)



**RESEARCH BRIEF**

## Strategic Insights on Corporate Environmental Disclosures in Sri Lanka

A new report by CSF titled, 'Acronyms and Accountability: Strategic Insights on Corporate Environmental Disclosures in Sri Lanka' offers a deeper examination of corporate environmental disclosures and their significance for Sri Lanka's sustainability journey. It aims to provide practical recommendations for decision-makers, businesses, and stakeholders to adopt more effective and impactful disclosure practices.

[READ MORE](#)



**RESEARCH BRIEF**

## Prioritising Nature Conservation: A Message for the Next Sri Lankan Parliament

Sri Lanka's next Parliament has many issues to contend with, but underpinning many of these is the looming threats to our nature and biodiversity. Elected members of Parliament at the forthcoming General Election need to understand what these issues are, and what priorities need to be tackled. CSF contributed to a document that is released today on selected critical environmental issues facing Sri Lanka, aimed at informing prospective legislators in our next Parliament.

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**RESEARCH COMPENDIUM**

## Sri Lanka Climate Risks and Impacts

Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to climate risks, with heat, sea level rise, floods, landslides, and droughts posing significant threats to its ecosystems, economy, and communities. Local drivers such as pollution and land management exacerbate these risks, impacting agriculture and food production, cities and infrastructure, water availability, local biodiversity, and human health and well-being. This document consolidates key datapoints on climate risks and its socio-economic and environmental impacts, offering a useful source of reference for diverse stakeholders.

[READ MORE](#)



**KNOWLEDGE PRIMER**

## Blue Carbon

A new publication by CSF helps to unpack the role of Blue Carbon ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrass and salt marshes in Sri Lanka in combating climate change, and how Blue Carbon projects can be leveraged to finance coastal ecosystem conservation. This latest Knowledge Primer explains these aspects, reviews the international mechanisms that guide blue carbon markets, and puts forward key considerations for Sri Lanka in implementing blue carbon schemes.

[READ MORE](#)



**KNOWLEDGE PRIMER**

## Acronyms and Accountability: Navigating Corporate Environmental Disclosures

Environmental disclosures are essential for accountability and transparency, but navigating the complex reporting landscape remains a challenge in Sri Lanka. From carbon accounting frameworks to sustainability standards, a myriad of acronyms shapes corporate accountability. As regulations tighten, understanding this evolving landscape and aligning with global expectations has become increasingly critical.

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KNOWLEDGE PRIMER

## Conservation Trust Funds

As Sri Lanka looks to leverage innovative financial solutions for both public finance as well as environmental conservation objectives, a key mechanism that stakeholders must become familiar with is 'Conservations Trust Funds'. The new publication helps to unpack what Conservations Trusts are, what key features they have, why they are used, and provides some insightful examples of their deployment in other countries around the world.

[READ MORE](#)



KNOWLEDGE PRIMER

## Blue Bonds

A new publication by CSF helps unpack what blue bonds are, for stakeholders in both the finance as well as environment professions, alongside Sri Lanka's interest in pursuing such instruments following other developing countries like Seychelles, Belize, Barbados, and others.

[READ MORE](#)



KNOWLEDGE PRIMER

## Debt for Nature Swaps

A new paper under CSF's Natural Capital Forum explores a sovereign financing instrument linked to nature called Debt for nature swaps (DFNS), their usage globally and relevance to Sri Lanka in overcoming the debt crisis and fiscal constraints to conservation.

[READ MORE](#)



## ROUNDTABLE SERIES ON SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR MARINE CONSERVATION

'DEEP DIVE ON CONSERVATION TRUST FUNDS  
WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERT DAVID MEYERS'

### ANALYTICAL NOTE

## Sustainable Financing for Marine Conservation – Recap of Knowledge Roundtable 3

As Sri Lanka endures mounting pressure on public finances and explores new avenues for funding conservation efforts, CTFs have emerged as a promising mechanism that could provide long-term financing for its Protected Areas (PAs). David Meyers, Executive Director of the Conservation Finance Alliance (CFA), spoke at a recent Knowledge Roundtable organised by CSF on Conservation Trust Funds. Read our Analytical Note Edition 3, which summarises the key takeaways and insights from David Meyers and discussion generated by the participants.

[READ MORE](#)



## ROUNDTABLE SERIES ON SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR MARINE CONSERVATION

'DEEP DIVE ON CONSERVATION TRUST FUNDS  
WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERT DAVID MEYERS'

### ANALYTICAL NOTE

## Sustainable Financing for Marine Conservation – Recap of Knowledge Roundtable 2

From our work with BRT on sustainable financing for marine conservation, read our Analytical Note Edition 2, from our second Knowledge Roundtable. It focuses on the imperative to develop bankable marine conservation plans, incorporating financial incentives and showcasing economic feasibility.

[READ MORE](#)



## ROUNDTABLE SERIES ON SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR MARINE CONSERVATION

'DEEP DIVE ON CONSERVATION TRUST FUNDS  
WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERT DAVID MEYERS'

### ANALYTICAL NOTE

## Sustainable Financing for Marine Conservation – Recap of Knowledge Roundtable 1

From our work with BRT on sustainable financing for marine conservation, read our Analytical Note Edition 1, from our first Knowledge Roundtable. It covers the need for site specific considerations for financing tools, government buy-in, and the alignment of financial incentives with stakeholder perspectives.

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#### ANALYTICAL NOTE

### Advancing Green Finance in Sri Lanka: Updates, Prospects, and Challenges

For a recent Roundtable on green finance with financial institutions and development partners, CSF had the opportunity to provide inputs into the design of the session and provide concluding insights at the end of the session. This Analytical Note serves as a recap of the key findings and takeaways on the progress of implementing green finance in Sri Lanka, the near-term prospects, and current and emerging challenges to be tackled.

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#### ANALYTICAL NOTE

### Nature-linked Sovereign Debt Instruments: 10 Key Considerations for Sri Lanka

CSF recently hosted a panel discussion with three national and international experts on the role of nature-linked sovereign debt instruments in Sri Lanka's economic recovery, amidst debt distress and acute environmental pressures. This Analytical Note summarises the 10 key messages.

[READ MORE](#)



#### POLICY BRIEF

### Tourism Development and Land Leases in Sri Lanka

A new Policy Brief by CSF warns that Sri Lanka's renewed push to lease large tracts of land for tourism risks repeating past failures unless land allocation is grounded in ecological limits, infrastructure readiness, and community realities. The findings are especially timely as Sri Lanka positions the tourism sector as a key pillar of post-crisis recovery. While streamlined land leasing may appear efficient, CSF cautions that speed without preparedness risks eroding community trust and undermines long-term economic value.

[READ MORE](#)



## ‘Debt and Dugongs’ – CSF Presentation on Debt-for-Nature Swaps and Blue Bonds

Is Sri Lanka ready for debt instruments linked to nature? This was the focus of a knowledge sharing and engagement session that CSF held last month, at the ‘Festival of Ideas’ organised by the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS). The session titled, ‘Debt and Dugongs’, was led by CSF Research Associate Ashani Basnayake, and joined by CSF Director Anushka Wijesinha. Participants were drawn from civil society, private sector, development partners, and government.

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## PRESENTATION

## Business and Human Rights: Navigating an Evolving Global Agenda

Business and Human Rights remains a space that is still being negotiated across legal systems, markets, and local contexts. It is no longer a question of whether BHR will shape the future of business practice, but rather about how that transition will be navigated in contexts like Sri Lanka – aligning global expectations, local institutional capacity, and everyday realities and concerns of companies and communities.

[READ MORE](#)

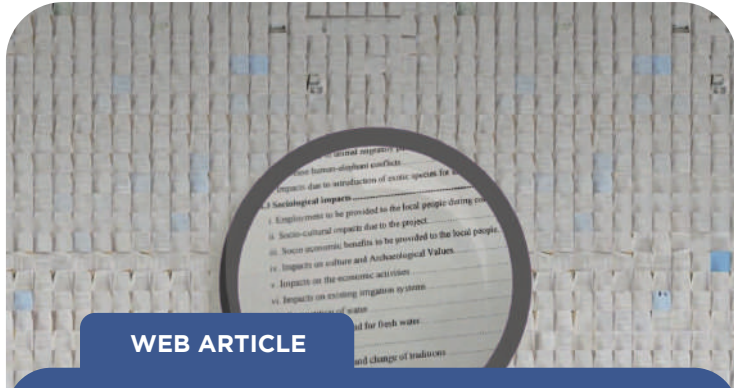


## WEB ARTICLE

## Sri Lanka’s Trade, Exports, FDI Agenda Lacks Ambition and Urgency

CSF called on the government to urgently revive and accelerate Sri Lanka’s trade competitiveness, export, and foreign direct investment (FDI) reform agenda, warning that delays will be more painful as Sri Lanka faces an unforgiving global economy. We urged private and public sector stakeholders to work together proactively to chart an ambitious path forward.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Are EIAs Losing Their Credibility Because of Weak Social Impact Reporting?

Environmental Impact Assessments in Sri Lanka are fast losing their credibility due to poor quality in reporting standards. In this op-ed based on a recent CSF study, critical issues on social impact reporting contained in EIAs are flagged. The author calls for greater scrutiny by authorities, project promoters, and financial institutions.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Sri Lanka's Growing Environmental and Policy Crisis in Managing Electronic Waste

Sri Lanka faces mounting challenges in managing its rapidly growing electronic waste (e-waste) problem, with the country generating an estimated 4.2 kg of e-waste per capita annually. The projected increase in e-waste highlights the urgent need for Sri Lanka to strengthen its waste management infrastructure and regulatory frameworks. This article urges coordinated policy action on e-waste management.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Economic Growth, Reimagined: Expert Perspectives on Putting Nature at the Centre of Sri Lanka's Recovery

This article takes a look back at insights shared in an interview series produced by Echelon and CSF earlier this year. The series brought together policymakers, financial sector leaders, conservation practitioners, tourism experts, and private-sector innovators to explore how Sri Lanka can integrate natural capital into its economic recovery.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Have Real Estate Developers Reduced Colombo's Wetlands to an 'Amenity'?

There is a paradox at the heart of Colombo's development crisis: a city that sells wetlands as sought-after amenities, even as they are drained and buried beneath concrete foundations. In this op-ed marking World Wetlands Day 2026, we are reminded that Colombo needs integrated planning that treats wetlands not as vacant lots awaiting development, but as essential infrastructure.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Why Sri Lankan Banks Must Urgently Consider Climate Risks in their Lending

Climate risk is credit risk. The question for Sri Lanka's banking sector isn't whether to integrate climate considerations into lending decisions - it's whether to lead this transformation or be overwhelmed by it. The institutions that begin this work immediately will not only protect their portfolios but position themselves as leaders in the climate-resilient economy that Sri Lanka must build to survive and thrive in the decades ahead.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Sri Lanka Needs A Cautious and Considered Approach to Blue Carbon Financing

Sri Lanka's extraordinary blue carbon ecosystems offer a powerful tool for climate mitigation and adaptation, while also providing a wealth of co-benefits essential for the well-being of our people and nature. However, the pursuit of blue carbon financing must be approached with utmost prudence and foresight, with the interests of our communities and ecosystems firmly at the centre.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Casting a Lifeline for Nature: Is a Debt-for-Nature Swap the Catalyst Sri Lanka Needs?

Debt-for-nature swaps (DFNS) are now emerging as a mainstream financial instrument, mobilising millions of dollars in conservation funding worldwide. Done correctly, a DFNS is an opportunity, not a liability. For Sri Lanka, a well-structured DFNS remains both financially and ecologically valuable, offering an opportunity to secure long-term conservation funding, even in a post-restructuring scenario.

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WEB ARTICLE

## To What Extent Do Sri Lankan Financial Institutions Integrate Environmental Considerations?

Beach clean-ups, tree planting programmes, and commitments to recycling. These are some of the common ways in which Sri Lankan financial institutions typically mark World Environment Day, falling each year on the 5th of June. Yet, there are major outstanding questions as to whether the country's financial institutions are effectively orienting themselves to meet the environmental challenges emerging in the country and ensure that capital flows in the direction needed to foster a nature-positive economic recovery for Sri Lanka.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Sri Lanka's Private Sector Needs to Rethink ESG

While ESG seeks to channel investment towards companies that are environmentally responsible, socially conscious, and well-governed, their true sustainability impact remains debated. Several issues have been highlighted in recent reports. For Sri Lankan firms, a critical look at ESG is timely, to make meaningful progress on charting a greener, climate-resilient economic future.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Is COP29's Carbon Markets Deal a Climate Lifeline or Coastal Sell-out for Blue Carbon Ecosystems?

Sri Lankan stakeholders need to view the new UNFCCC COP29 deal that set new rules for carbon markets, objectively. While it offers a new global framework for blue carbon projects - an area of emerging interest for Sri Lanka - it does come with many gaps and risks. Understanding the limitations of the deal, and indeed the complexities of blue carbon projects, is crucial for meaningful action.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Open Access Materials on CSF's Work in Conservation Finance

CSF announces the launch of a set of knowledge materials, findings reports, and easy guides for interested stakeholders, freely available for download, developed under a project with Blue Resources Trust on marine conservation finance.

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WEB ARTICLE

## 3 Reasons Why Sri Lanka Should Consider Gender in Climate Finance

Climate finance is growing globally, but women risk getting left behind. From the instruments we use, to the climate actions we fund, women are impacted. As Sri Lanka attempts to accelerate climate finance, gender must be a leading consideration.

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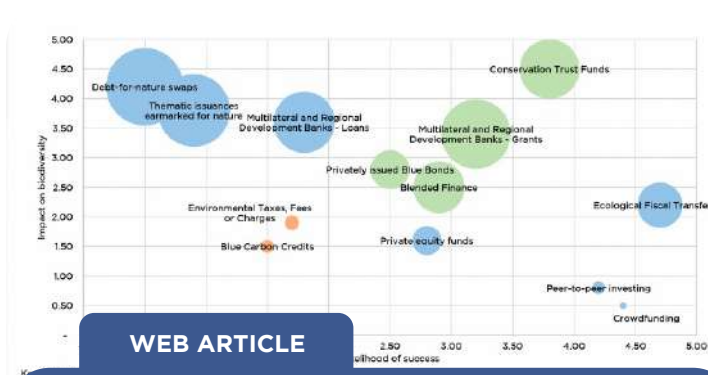


WEB ARTICLE

## Financing Biodiversity and Nature Amidst Debt Distress in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka needs to become much more open to, and informed about, the new sources and mechanisms that are available for biodiversity financing. With the right domestic mechanisms, a credible policy commitment, open-mindedness among government and non-government stakeholders, and a nuanced view of the financing options, Sri Lanka can rise up to meet the challenge.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Applying Innovative Financial Instruments to Marine Conservation in Sri Lanka

Based on a suggestion at a recent Knowledge Roundtable hosted by CSF, our researchers set out to compare various innovative financial solutions available for conservation and identify which might be the most desirable and feasible to implement. It provides a starting point for industry players, regulators, policymakers, and other interested parties to make meaningful improvements to financing marine conservation in Sri Lanka

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WEB ARTICLE

## Towards a Nature-Positive Economic Recovery in Sri Lanka: An Interview Series

As Sri Lanka's economic crisis jeopardizes sustainable development, the looming threat to environmental conservation and natural resource management is becoming apparent. The government's shrinking fiscal space intensifies the limiting of budgets for crucial initiatives. Meanwhile, much of the private sector is yet to fully integrate nature into their business and investment decisions. To add new ideas to the debate and push the conversation further, CSF and Echelon are collaborating on a new interview series launching soon.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Prioritising Green Jobs in Sri Lanka's Economic Recovery

Sri Lanka is yet to give dedicated national priority to this agenda, unlike several other countries that have placed it at the heart of public policies on TVET and employment. The country must build on the recognition given to green jobs in its Climate Prosperity Plan, and articulate a clear and future-oriented 'Green Jobs Strategy'.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Financing Conservation: Six Mechanisms Sri Lanka Should Know About

Climate shocks and natural ecosystem losses pose development challenges, especially for developing countries like Sri Lanka. Economic crises and debt restructuring pressure these countries, highlighting the need for innovative financing solutions. This article explores six financial instruments and initiatives to inspire Sri Lanka's efforts.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Why Moving Beyond GDP is Essential to Avert Planetary Disaster

Moving beyond GDP and focusing on 'green growth' could unlock a host of new opportunities such as job creation, restoration of natural capital, and increased climate adaptation. Policymakers must explore alternatives to GDP to anchor Sri Lanka's recovery from the economic crisis.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Expanding Green Finance in Sri Lanka's Financial Services Sector

There is now a growing interest in Sri Lanka on the concepts and prospects for green finance among Sri Lankan policymakers, regulators, and financial intermediaries, and some initial steps have been made to orient towards green lending. Yet, how far has actual implementation come and what are the prospects for the near-term? What are some of the critical issues that the financial sector must contend with, as it aims to support investments in a climate-resilient and nature-positive economic recovery?

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WEB ARTICLE

## Is Economic Valuation of Biodiversity Necessary for Successful Conservation?

The debate on whether biodiversity should be economically valued remains highly polarized and a more nuanced contextual approach is required. Yet, it's clear that striking a balance between environmental, social and economic objectives is vital.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Changing How We Think About Economic Growth and Nature

The fact that the creation of a 269-hectare artificial land parcel attached to the capital, with sand extracted from nature, materially changed the country's GDP base was startling. It reaffirmed our growing discontent on how we measure economic growth.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Are Marine Conservation and Sri Lanka's Maritime Hub Ambitions Compatible?

Nishan Perera - Sri Lanka's leading marine ecologist, an avid diver and underwater photographer - argues that contradictory policies are hurting our prospects for striking a smarter balance between marine conservation and maritime-related economics activities like fisheries and tourism.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Sri Lanka Must Use GSP Plus for Smarter Positioning on Sustainability

In this interview in the Smarter Sustainability series, Anisha Rajapakse explores key issues for Sri Lanka in strengthening its positioning as a trusted and preferred sourcing location for EU buyers, using GSP+ and beyond.

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WEB ARTICLE

## GLOBAL VOICES: Interview with Leonora Milan, Mexico's Leading Young Science Communicator

Leonora Milan, Mexico's leading science communicator, shares her thoughts on the shape of the public debates on science, climate change, environmental issues, and policy in Mexico, as part of CSF's 'Global Voices' series.

[READ MORE](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Shift to Organic Agriculture Must be Staged and Strategic

Sri Lanka's President has announced a policy directive to transition to 100% organic farming and ban chemical fertilizers and agro-chemicals. The decision has sparked debate, with concerns about food security and export impacts. Agriculture economist Chatura Rodrigo discusses the transition, implications for farmers, and policy gaps.

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# WE PUBLISHED

COLOMBO URBAN LAB

05

RESEARCH REPORTS

02

RESEARCH BRIEFS

08

POLICY BRIEFS

02

WEBINARS

02

STORY MAPS

02

INFOGRAPHICS

01

ANALYTICAL NOTE

25

WEB ARTICLES



#### RESEARCH REPORT

### Social Protection and Urban Infrastructures of Care in Colombo

This report explores care burdens faced by working mothers in low-income communities in Colombo, seeking to understand how they balance work and child care responsibilities. It also examines how social protection can be better suited to meet the different dynamics and needs that these women face within their households, places of work and beyond.

[READ MORE](#)



#### RESEARCH REPORT

### White Elephants or Cash Cows? Evaluating Two Urban Development Projects in Colombo

This report documents public expenditure, user perception, financial feasibility and building design, charting the decline of Arcade Independence Square and Floating Market in Colombo, and examines why they failed to achieve their own objectives. It builds on Colombo Urban Lab's research and advocacy on Sri Lanka's debt, specifically looking at national debt incurred for public infrastructure or large-scale infrastructure projects.

[READ MORE](#)



#### RESEARCH REPORT

### Built on Sand: A Review of Colombo's Urban Regeneration Project

Colombo Urban Lab's latest report "Built on Sand: A Review of Colombo's Urban Regeneration Project" does a deep dive into one of Sri Lanka's key post-war infrastructure projects - the Urban Regeneration Project by the Urban Development Authority. This report covers the dispossession and lived realities of the relocated communities in the high-rises, looks at the financing of the URP - including findings of Auditor General's reports, reports from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and other publicly available material, and the status of the 'liberated' lands in Colombo today.

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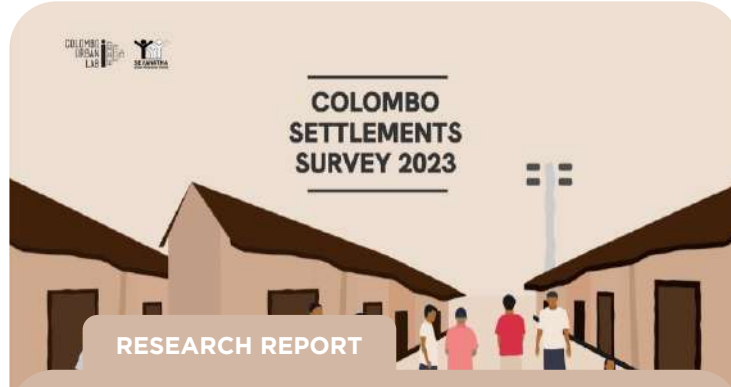


RESEARCH REPORT

## Methodology for Mapping Urban Food Environments

Mapping food vendors is an important method to capture availability, accessibility and diversity of food environments. This report details the methodology used to map food vendors in urban sites and explores the reasons behind the development of this methodology. It provides practical insights into the implementation of field-based vendor mapping, discussing both the challenges encountered and the lessons learned.

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RESEARCH REPORT

## Colombo Settlements Survey 2023

SEVANATHA and Colombo Urban Lab is pleased to announce the launch of the Colombo Settlements Survey Report for the year 2023, in collaboration with the Colombo Municipal Council. The report provides the latest data on all 1360 urban settlements in the City of Colombo, with key findings and recommendations. The Colombo Settlements Survey is the third iteration of the Survey, which was previously conducted in 2002 and 2012 by SEVANATHA in collaboration with the Colombo Municipal Council. The survey collects data on key indicators including tenure, access to basic services and level of housing development as well as on the socio-economic aspects of the settlements.

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TOOL-KIT

## A Guide for Raising Awareness on Social Protection

Promoting Social Protection Through Human-Centred Design is a practical workshop guide that helps communities understand social protection as a right. Using methods rooted in Human-Centred Design (HCD), it supports citizens to connect policy to lived experience, identify barriers, and formulate recommendations. Originally developed for urban working-class communities in Colombo, the guide can be adapted for diverse sectors and contexts across Sri Lanka.

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RESEARCH BRIEF

## Electricity and Colombo's Working Class Poor

In this latest Research Brief, Meghal Perera explores the impact of cost-reflective energy pricing on urban working-class poor households. Consecutive tariff hikes have led to the deterioration of the quality of life of households as attempts to conserve electricity have often increased the time poverty of women and placed their health, comfort and safety at risk. Based on findings from over 3 years of fieldwork in low-income settlements in Colombo, this Research Brief explores key trends in electricity consumption of the urban poor, examining the impact of tariff increases as well as coping strategies adopted by households.

[READ MORE](#)



RESEARCH BRIEF

## Navigating vendor informality and infrastructure in Colombo

A new publication by Colombo Urban Lab explores the implications of relocation of vendors to modern marketplaces, with justifications for these relocations centering around formalisation, beautification, cleansing (of the streets), sanitation or the provision of modern services for vendors.

[READ MORE](#)



POLICY BRIEF

## Nothing Left to Pawn: Impact of Polycrisis on Colombo's Working Class Poor

Colombo Urban Lab's latest policy brief examines the protracted and often invisible impacts of Sri Lanka's polycrisis on Colombo's working-class poor, focusing on how they have increased vulnerabilities to new shocks such as natural disasters and the global energy crisis. These findings are based on qualitative research with communities in Colombo, a household survey of 45 households conducted across four settlements in January 2026, and ongoing engagements with community leaders from across Colombo.

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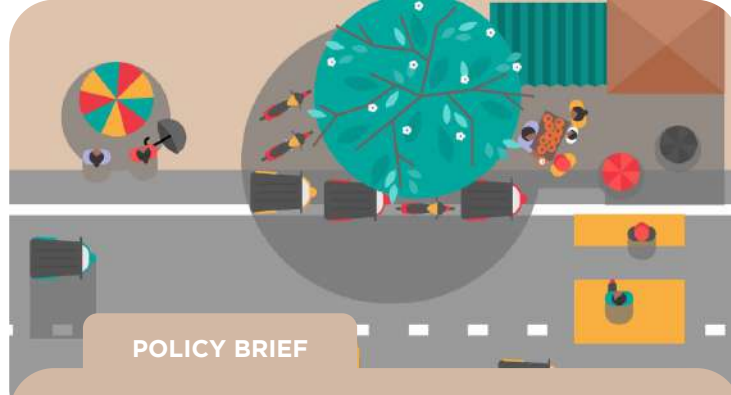


#### POLICY BRIEF

## COVID-19, Economic Crisis, and the Erosion of Sri Lanka's Rights Commitments

Sri Lanka is a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), obligated to progressively realise rights such as adequate food, housing, health, education, and social security. Despite clear obligations, Sri Lanka's track record shows a persistent gap between formal commitments and reality.

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#### POLICY BRIEF

## Heat Stress in Colombo: Understanding Impacts and Planning for the Future

2024 was the warmest year on record. A recent report by the World Bank revealed that Sri Lanka is among a few South Asian countries identified with a temperature level that is considered too hot for people to be able to work safely outdoors for an average of six hours a day. When compared with other Asian cities, Colombo has made little or no effort to mitigate this overheating threat at a planning level. We highlight in this policy brief the impacts of heat stress on outdoor workers in the city and pathways for addressing climate change in Colombo that need to be acted on.

[READ MORE](#)



#### POLICY BRIEF

## Beyond Aswesuma: Investing in Transformative Social Protection

The impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns followed by a crushing economic crisis provided Sri Lanka the perfect opportunity to rethink what social protection means for the country, who it should be for, what it should entail and how it should be operationalised. Unfortunately, what we saw was a heavy focus on one new cash transfer programme Aswesuma, which replaced the existing Samurdhi programme. This Policy Brief presents a detailed critique of the Aswesuma programme and some pathways to the new government and policy makers to strengthen social protection in Sri Lanka.

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POLICY BRIEF

### Falling Through The Cracks: The Impact of Sri Lanka’s Economic Crisis on Colombo’s Working Class Poor

Colombo Urban Lab’s fourth policy brief on the impact of Sri Lanka’s economic crisis on the city’s working class poor communities focusses on energy, education and health. These findings are from our ongoing qualitative research with communities in Colombo as well as a household survey conducted in April 2024 with thirty households in a settlement in North Colombo.

[READ MORE](#)



POLICY BRIEF

### Borrowing To Eat: The Impact of Sri Lanka’s Economic Crisis on Colombo’s Working Class Poor

Colombo Urban Lab’s policy brief on Sri Lanka’s economic crisis highlights increased household debt and social security in working-class poor communities, highlighting the unique challenges faced by these families, despite the seemingly normal streets.

[READ MORE](#)



POLICY BRIEF

### Breaking Point: Impact of Sri Lanka’s Economic Crisis on Colombo’s Working Class Poor

The economic crisis in Colombo has significantly impacted the working-class poor, who were already struggling due to lockdowns and loss of daily wage work. The April 2023 policy brief updates the situation, discussing electricity tariff hikes, Welfare Benefits Board enumeration, and recommendations for State and policy support.

[READ MORE](#)



PUBLICATION

## Understanding the Infrastructure - Nutrition Nexus

This publication brings together Colombo Urban Lab's analysis and writing from the Living Off Grid Food and Infrastructure Collaboration together with the Institute of Development Studies; the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town; the Indian Institute of Human Settlements, Bangalore; Colombo Urban Lab and the University of Ghana, Accra. LOGIC sought to understand how marginalised people's food and nutrition security is shaped by urban infrastructure assemblages in a variety of 'off-grid' settings in five cities in Asia and Africa.

[READ MORE](#)



WEBINAR

## Debt without development

Colombo Urban Lab hosted Professor Jonathan Spencer from the University of Edinburgh and Dr. Avanka Fernando from the University of Colombo on the 16th of January 2025 in an online event titled "Debt without Development? Sri Lanka's Urban Regeneration Project's Failed Promises". The guests shared their insight on Sri Lanka's development projects and debt, and the impact of the Colombo Urban Regeneration Project on the primary stakeholders, the local community. Alongside the discussion, a review of the key insights from the report, "Built on Sand: Colombo's Urban Regeneration Project" was presented by the Colombo Urban Lab team.

[WATCH THE WEBINAR](#)



WEBINAR

## Boiling Point

The webinar 'Boiling Point' presented the key findings from our report on heat stress in Colombo, followed by a discussion on extreme heat in South Asia, the lived realities of outdoor and informal workers, and policy strategies for building resilience. Discussants include Amita Arudpragasam (Policy Analyst), Muhammad Toheed (Karachi Urban Lab), Iromi Perera (Colombo Urban Lab) and Meghal Perera (Colombo Urban Lab).

[WATCH THE WEBINAR](#)

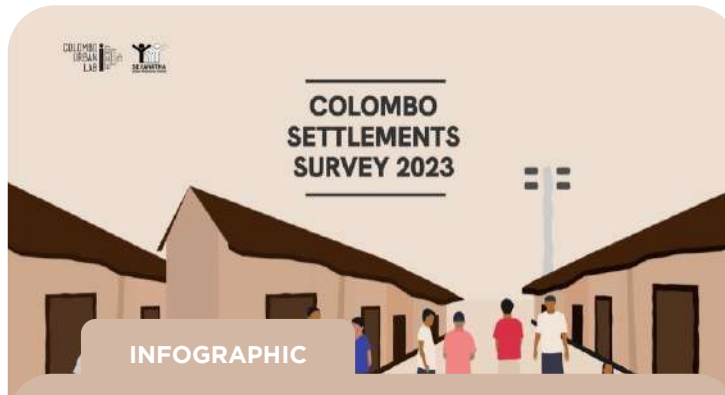


#### ANALYTICAL NOTE

### Communicating Crisis

On the 7th of March 2024, Centre for a Smart Future and Colombo Urban Lab hosted an event called, “Communicating Crisis”. The event featured a panel discussion on Sri Lanka’s path to a just recovery, anchored to key questions. How do economic indicators compare with peoples lived experiences? How can civil society and the media amplify voices from the ground?

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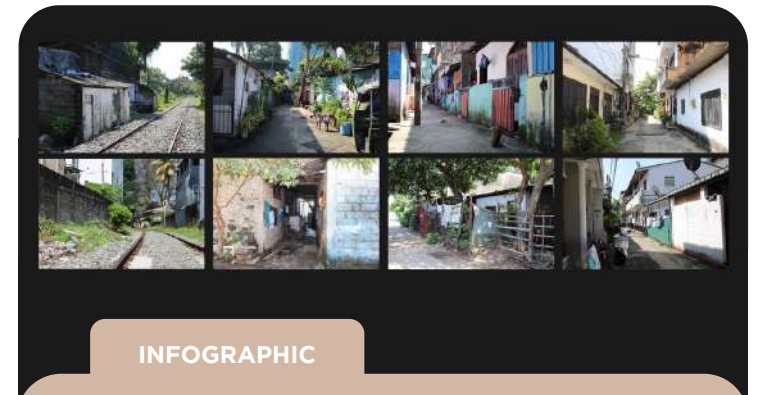


#### INFOGRAPHIC

### Does Colombo have sprawling slums and shanties?

This infographic provides an overview of settlements in the City of Colombo. The map shows the distribution of settlements in Colombo, with the greatest number of settlements concentrated in Colombo North. The data shows that most settlements have upgraded on-site, and that compared to other cities in the Global South, Colombo’s settlements are smaller and fragmented, with no trend of sprawling slums and shanties to be found

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#### INFOGRAPHIC

### Settlements in Colombo: Sustainability of neighbourhoods

This infographic provides an overview of the sustainability of neighbourhoods in Colombo. A total of 1,360 settlements in the Colombo Municipality were surveyed in 2023, using 27 indicators for physical infrastructure, tenure and socio-economic conditions, to assess sustainability of neighbourhoods. The findings showed that settlements cannot be characterised as underserved settlements as they have adequate infrastructure provisioning.

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STORY MAP

## From informal gardens to planned parks

In Colombo's older working-class neighbourhoods, watters—"gardens" in Sinhala—were more than clusters of tenement housing. They were shared landscapes where homes opened directly onto open ground, shaded by fruit trees, threaded with footpaths, and alive with the everyday theatre of washing, cooking, gossiping, and play. These spaces blurred the line between public and private, functioning as informal commons for leisure, social life, and survival. As the built form changes, the fate of the green spaces they once inhabited—and the ways residents now find places to rest, gather, and play—remains an open question.

[ACCESS TO MAP](#)



WEB ARTICLE/ STORY MAP

## Hostile Architecture in Colombo

Hostile architecture is unpleasant or exclusionary architecture or defensive urban design, that uses elements of the built environment to guide or restrict behaviour, particularly intending to stop people from doing something. We map Colombo's public spaces that have hostile infrastructure and do a deep dive on the topic.

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[ACCESS TO MAP](#)



WEB ARTICLE

## Domestic Workers as Care Infrastructure in Cities

Domestic workers are an invisible infrastructure holding Colombo's fragile care systems together. They enable women from the upper and middle classes to engage in the workforce, while receiving no protections themselves. Despite receiving no guaranteed minimum wage, social protection, paid leave or pensions, their labour is vital to sustaining urban economies. Drawing from our research with working mothers across Colombo's low-income communities, this article makes a case for recognising care work as dignified work to advocate for the rights of domestic workers and other workers in the informal sector.

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WEB ARTICLE

## ‘Legalised Begging’ and Elegant Targeting: What Ministers and Multilaterals are Getting Wrong About Social Protection in Sri Lanka

Social protection is a right and should not be viewed as charity. The government must commit to better investing in the economic, social and cultural rights of citizens through stronger social protection, if not it will be difficult to achieve a just and equitable recovery from not just the polycrisis, but also the impact of Cyclone Ditwah.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Criminalisation of Poverty in Colombo

Criminalisation is often understood narrowly—as something that happens after a crime, involving police, courts, and prisons. But we argue that criminalisation is not only about breaking laws; it is about how laws are written, where suspicion is cast, and which bodies are deemed out of place. A critical example of the criminalisation of poverty is Colombo’s Urban Regeneration Project (URP) of the Government of Sri Lanka and implemented by the Urban Development Authority since 2012, which reveals that criminalisation extends beyond incarceration; it includes the transformation of poor people’s living environments into carceral spaces themselves.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Gendered Impacts of Heat Stress: Impacts and Policy Responses

Sri Lankan urban women face multifaceted impacts from heat stress. Women are disproportionately affected by extreme heat due to a variety of factors, including health risks, additional care burdens, and a lack of gender-targeted resource support. Heat stress adaptation policies need to provide gender-specific targeted responses to better serve women.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Recovery Without Relief: How Colombo's Working Class Poor Stay Afloat

With the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis behind us, many have been quick to categorise Sri Lanka's status quo as being in a state of economic recovery. However, for Colombo's working-class poor, daily life remains unchanged. Even in Colombo where the wheels of economic development are turning the fastest, these communities are using the same survival strategies since 2022 of cutting expenses, depending on borrowing from the informal credit market, and juggling multiple income streams just to get by. If households are still making trade-offs and sacrifices as before, can we truly call this a recovery?

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WEB ARTICLE

## Mainstreaming Social Infrastructure in Development

Development projects, especially those that include housing and public spaces, must mainstream the idea of social infrastructure. Going beyond its physical manifestations like parks or even community centres and look at the social needs of a community, drawing from aspects such as community dynamics that are crucial for creating liveable spaces that contribute to higher levels of social cohesion, and improving the overall well-being of communities.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Shaky foundations? Reorienting housing policy for Colombo's urban poor

For over a decade, Sri Lanka's Urban Development Authority's Urban Regeneration Project has reshaped Colombo's fabric. As the third phase of the project draws to a close next year, there is a new window of opportunity for a new government to review and change course, to create and implement evidence-based housing policy. Apart from the widely cited critiques of autocratic leadership, poor governance and military force levelled against the project, the genesis of its failure lies in a set of assumptions, mostly about the nature of the urban poor.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Reclaiming Public Space: Who Is It For and Who Is Welcome?

In July 2024, the Colombo Urban Lab team embarked on a series of exploratory sessions in Colombo to reflect on public spaces in the city. Starting at Independence Square, we took routes that went through major public spaces that we recognised as being synonymous with many people's lives in Colombo. From Viharamahadevi Park to Racecourse Mall, we looked at the purpose of each of these public spaces, and how they are used today. These are some of our reflections on what we felt, saw, and heard.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Quantifying poverty: Can we truly capture its complexity?

Developing an operational definition for household poverty requires the consideration of two aspects. Firstly, it needs to identify an indicative property or combination of such properties which are generalisable across all households facing poverty (within the population of interest), and secondly, it needs to explain how they would be empirically measured and the degree of poverty calculated. According to the discourse on the limitations of both Samurghi and Aswesuma, this article highlights how these aspects need to negotiate the complexities of at least three conflicting cues (a triple bind).

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WEB ARTICLE

## Navigating Food Environments: A Study of households in Colombo and Deniyaya

What fruits and vegetables do working class poor communities consume? What are the drivers behind the choices they make and how do they experience their food environment? Since July 2023, we have been researching these questions in Colombo and Deniyaya. The nutritional landscape of Sri Lanka's working-class poor is complex, shaped by institutional and systemic challenges that go beyond lack of income or limited access to fresh produce.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Are Colombo's working-class poor really 'underserved'?

How we talk about the urban poor is situated in a broader context of urban development and competing ideas of what Colombo should and will look like, and such words sanction the exclusion of the urban poor from the city. It is crucial that our terminology reflects the complexity of ground level realities, particularly when Sri Lanka's difference is erased and subsumed by other South Asian narratives.

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WEB ARTICLE

## A research methodology to understand stories of development and displacement in two of Colombo's markets

In the bid to build a world class city, many of Colombo's working-class poor found themselves being displaced- displaced from both places of residence and places of business, as they did not align with Colombo's evolving identity. This article presents a methodology, following an ethnographic approach to understanding development and the problems associated with it for those whose views are seldom included in the new city identity.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Dirty Business: Reading modernity in Colombo's fish markets

Why are fish markets consistently decried as filthy, and what does that say about urban space and our changing ideas of what is acceptable in our cities? While adding fish markets to the list of national failings may be the simplest course of action, a closer examination of how these markets are perceived by urban planners and administrators, offers us insight into dominant ideologies of planning, municipal governance and public health that continue to influence our cities today.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Behind the scenes: Colombo Settlements Survey 2023

While data and numbers offer helpful insights, the picture it paints is almost always incomplete without an understanding of how those numbers were arrived at—how data is collected, and the sensitivities that enumerators need to be mindful of when conducting large scale surveys. Understanding the methodology of conducting such surveys add an important realistic dimension to policies that are solely data-driven.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Anchoring meaningful community participation at the heart of nature-based solutions in cities

Nature-based solutions (NbS) aim to repair, sustain, and protect ecosystems while addressing societal challenges. They include biodiversity conservation, erosion control, wetland reforestation, climate change mitigation, food and water security, among others.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Valuing the Catch of the Day: Towards a more Humanised Food Value Chain

An article on the pricing of fish in Colombo, exploring more into the function and capacity of the markets to coordinate the movement of seafood from the ocean to our plates using price mechanisms and relationships.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Circuits of Semiconductors and Affiliation: a Shallow Dive into the Small-Scale Mobile Phone Repair Sector

In Sri Lanka, the way telecommunication technologies have embedded themselves into people's lives cannot be ignored. However, within this sector, the roles played by states and larger enterprises tend to overshadow ancillary roles played by people organised at smaller scales.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Beyond Pomp and Pageantry: Looking at Public Markets as Lived Spaces

The reconfiguration of Colombo's built environment and infrastructure has lasting consequences for the city's food environment and people's access to affordable fresh produce. This article discusses how public markets are more than the building in which its activities take place.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Debt or Disconnection: Prioritising Energy Justice in Economic Recovery

The article examines the proposed electricity tariff revision from the perspective of the urban poor in Colombo, arguing it fails to account for financial pressures and changes in electricity usage, and offers recommendations for energy justice.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Chasing Efficiency While Leaving the Vulnerable to Their Own Devices

Solving issues related to people's capacities to access infrastructure requires a more grounded approach that's sensitive to understanding the variety of contexts in which people live, and not only counting and accounting revenue generated, costs incurred, and average monthly incomes.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Food for Thought: Rethinking Home Gardening and Subsistence Agriculture

Home gardening has gained popularity as a solution to food insecurity in Colombo. The Minister of Agriculture encouraged the public to grow food in their gardens, but this doesn't completely eradicate the issue. More targeted support is needed for communities without space or resources. Recommendations based on empirical evidence are provided to help increase dietary diversity and reduce food insecurity impact.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Budget Makers for the Country Must Listen to the Budget Makers of the Home

Since the lockdown in March 2020, discussions with working-class poor communities in Colombo have primarily focused on budgets and prioritizing expenditure based on needs and income. The challenge is to transform these struggles into experiences where needs can be met with well-funded institutions.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Debt or Disconnection: CEB's Tariff Hikes and the Urban Poor

This article interrogates the proposed CEB electricity tariffs, and unpacks crucial equity considerations that have been missed in the public discourse. It argues that households' diverse consumption patterns must be considered, alongside existing vulnerabilities like financial debt.

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WEB ARTICLE

## From Bad to Worse: Understanding and Supporting Colombo's Urban Poor Families in Crisis

Researchers from the Colombo Urban Lab highlight the food insecurity faced by 72% of low-income households in Colombo, highlighting the worsening situation due to the COVID-19 lockdowns and economic crisis. They recommend universal support for relief, avoiding targeting to exacerbate community divisions.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Housing in a Pandemic: Need for New Methods of Engagement

The COVID pandemic has highlighted the importance of safe environments and the rights of everyone, including access to trees, gardens, and children's playtime. Advocacy must use data and intersections to make points clear, even in court, and translate intangible aspects into comprehensible language for policymakers.

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02

RESEARCH REPORTS

01

POLICY BRIEF

01

SCOPING REPORT

03

WEB ARTICLES



RESEARCH REPORT

### Spotting the Problem: Understanding Complexities in Tourism and Nature in Yala National Park

Tourism in Sri Lanka stands at a crossroads. While the industry is a crucial driver of economic recovery, it also places immense pressure on the country's natural resources. This paradox—where tourism both depends on and threatens nature—requires urgent attention for long-term sustainability. CSF's new report 'Spotting the Problem' explores this intricate relationship through the lens of complexity theory, highlighting the case of overcrowding and safari misbehaviour in Yala National Park Block 1.

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RESEARCH REPORT

### Getting the Price Right: Rationalizing Park Entry Fees and the Case of Yala National Park

Sri Lanka will be hosting unprecedented numbers of tourists in the short-term. National parks are a key tourist attraction, hosting rapidly increasing visitors since 2009. A new report by CSF, titled 'Getting the Price Right: Rationalizing Park Entry Fees and the Case of Yala National Park', makes the case for why we should take a closer look at how national park entry fees must be determined and revised. Through a review of the theory and practice of national park entry fee pricing, along with a historical analysis of Sri Lankan national park entry fee revisions, the report presents four policy considerations.

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SCOPING REPORT

### How Tourism and Nature Interact: Studying Perceptions in Three Sites in Sri Lanka

In 2024, the Centre for a Smart Future (CSF) conducted a research study on how local stakeholders perceive the interactions between tourism and nature in Maskeliya, Kalpitiya, and Yala National Park, with the objective of unpacking destination-level realities of how tourism activities are taking place in Sri Lanka's nature-abundant tourism sites.

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**POLICY BRIEF**

## Private-Public Collaboration in Tourism Decision-Making in Sri Lanka: Time to Rethink Representation?

A new CSF Policy Brief argues that private-public collaboration platforms in tourism must include members who can provide a more holistic and contemporary perspective of the industry. Plans for a new Act provide a good opportunity to rethink private sector representation in tourism bodies.

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**WEB ARTICLE**

## Lessons from Kalpitiya for Sri Lanka's Next Wave of Tourism Land Leases

Sri Lankan tourism authorities are planning on leasing 3,000 acres of state land across coastal regions for tourism investment, expecting to generate US\$ 60Mn in investment. But experience from the Kalpitiya island leases hint at a larger problem with tourism land leases that need attention, to avoid repeating mistakes of the past.

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**WEB ARTICLE**

## Re-defining Destination Identities for Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka

Short-term and unsustainable plans for a tourism recovery, with narrow views on destination identity, can threaten the natural assets that Sri Lanka's tourism is branded on. On World Tourism Day 2024, we argue that its time for Sri Lanka to re-define tourism destination identities through an inclusive and imaginative approach. With examples from Kalpitiya and Yala, based on ongoing research, this article suggests the need to 'co-discover' destination identities with local stakeholders.

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WEB ARTICLE

## How can we re-orient Sri Lanka's tourism future?

CSF Research Associate Senith Abeyanayake reflects on a recent engagement with tourism industry leaders for a panel on charting a nature-positive economic recovery for Sri Lanka's tourism. This is part of CSF's 'Perspectives Series' of articles.

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# INCLUSIVE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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01

RESEARCH REPORT

01

RESEARCH BRIEF

01

POLICY NOTE

08

WEB ARTICLES

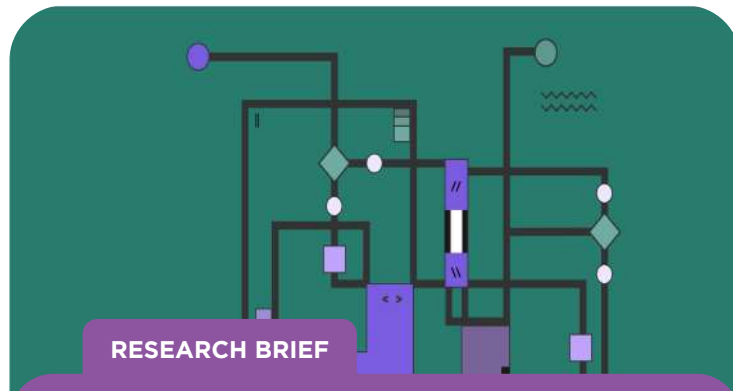


#### RESEARCH REPORT

### Flexibility and Fairness in Platform Labour: Navigating Gig Work in Colombo

A new report by CSF explores multiple dimensions of platform-based gig work in Sri Lanka, drawing on primary research since 2023 and building on previous research conducted in 2022. The report titled, 'Flexibility and Fairness in Platform Labour: Navigating Gig Work in Colombo' delves into issues not explored in the Sri Lankan context before, and provides fresh insights relevant for platform companies, worker rights organisations, international development agencies, and government institutions.

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#### RESEARCH BRIEF

### Algorithms at Work: The Management of Gig Work in Sri Lanka

A new publication by CSF explores the proliferation of algorithms in platform-based gig work, and draws on field research from Sri Lanka on implications for gig workers in the delivery and ride-hailing occupations. The publication titled, 'Algorithms at Work: The Management of Gig Work in Sri Lanka' by Anisha Gooneratne, is part of CSF's thematic pillar on Inclusive Technology and Innovation.

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#### POLICY NOTE

### A Resource Reality Check for Sri Lanka's AI Data Centre Ambition

A new Policy Note by CSF argues that the Sri Lankan government's new plans to encourage AI data centres must be carefully considered alongside constraints to water, electricity and land, given the high resource intensity typically seen with data centres around the world. The Note urges a measured, forward-looking approach to data centres – one that keeps the country's resource security and community wellbeing at the centre of Sri Lanka's digital ambitions.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Four Ways The World Is Making Gig Work Fairer

From Spain's Riders Law to Singapore's new Platform Workers Bill, countries are beginning to rethink what flexibility and fairness mean in the age of algorithmic work. This is becoming crucial because the next chapter of the gig economy will not be written by apps or algorithms, but by how societies choose to value those who keep them running.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Dissecting the Digital Focus in Sri Lanka's National Education Policy Framework

Sri Lanka's multiple and overlapping crises since the Easter Sunday bombings in 2019 have impacted digital inclusion, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities, and in turn impacting the prospects for inclusive digital education. These cannot be ignored when crafting national education policy frameworks where 'digital' features so prominently, and must be dealt with in a considered and coherent manner.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Precarious Pay checks: The Rise of the Gig Economy in Sri Lanka and its Implications for the Future of Work

Platform-based gig work has grown in Sri Lanka, introducing new sources of income, flexibility, and choice for workers. Yet, tensions around precarious incomes, worker safeguards, and algorithm opacity, have been under explored. New CSF research pioneers field-based findings and insights into these issues, to help move regulation forward and improve our thinking on the future of work.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Understanding Power Asymmetries in Platform-based Gig Work

A recent survey by CSF found gig workers desire independence, freedom, and flexibility, making it an attractive choice. This article explores power asymmetries in gig economy models in Sri Lanka, focusing on the reasons behind joining the gig economy.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Governance of Digital Technologies in South Asia

This paper explores the status of digital governance in South Asia, with a specific focus on Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The research explores four major thematic areas - cybersecurity, data protection, artificial intelligence, and mis/disinformation.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Making Sri Lanka's Technology Transition More Inclusive

Sri Lanka needs to focus on enhancing technology access, usage, and literacy across the board, to help workers be better prepared for jobs in the technology sector. Without it, Sri Lanka's ambitions for digital-led development will leave youth behind.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Is Gig Work in Sri Lanka Enabling Female Participation in the Workforce?

A recent survey in Sri Lanka shows that relatively less women were engaged in gig economy work despite its relative flexibility, equal pay opportunities, and low barriers to entry. This article explores some of the drivers and issues.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Is Gig Work Really Part-time in Sri Lanka?: Findings from a Survey

Despite the perception that gig work is largely part-time, our recent survey finds that most workers in location-based gig work actually work full-time on the platforms. Yet, they are typically not recognised as 'employees.'

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## INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

03

POLICY BRIEFS

01

POLICY NOTE

01

DISCUSSION PAPER

08

WEB ARTICLE



POLICY BRIEF

## Trade Policy Uncertainty and Impacts on Sri Lankan Exporters

The pervasive and unpredictable nature of the ongoing trade policy developments, and the many dimensions of impacts that the resulting uncertainty causes, are important considerations for further exploration in Sri Lanka. In this new Policy Brief by CSF, we take an early look at the effects of trade policy uncertainty on Sri Lankan export-oriented firms, based on an executive opinion survey and key informant interviews.

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POLICY BRIEF

## Sri Lanka's New Investment Law in Global Comparison: 7 Key Observations

As Sri Lanka's new government looks to revise the country's investment framework, understanding current global trends and best practices will be crucial. Anchored to global investment policy trends identified by the UNCTAD in a recent report, this Policy Brief presents seven observations stemming from a comparison of these global trends against the investment-related provisions of the Economic Transformation Act (ETA) passed in 2024.

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POLICY BRIEF

## EU Green Deal and Implications for Sri Lanka's Exports

CSF's latest Policy Brief looks at the implications of selected aspects of the European Green Deal for Sri Lanka's exports. We flag four areas for action -Government support, Public-private partnerships, International cooperation and bilateral engagement, and Industry support to SMEs.

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**POLICY NOTE**

## Responding to Global Economic Challenges: Eight Priority Trade and Competitiveness Reforms for Sri Lanka

Global trade is entering a period of turmoil that is likely to be more acute and more challenging than during the Covid-19 pandemic five years ago. Smaller economies like Sri Lanka that depend on international markets and who have benefited from a relatively predictable international trading system, will be worst affected. In this context, CSF's latest Policy Note outlines 8 key trade and competitiveness reforms and strategic initiatives that Sri Lanka must now prioritize, to build resilience and success.

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**DISCUSSION PAPER**

## The Emergence of National Security Considerations in Foreign Investment Regulation

While national security considerations when developing foreign investment regulation isn't new, it is becoming a greater consideration when assessing investment into sectors and companies that play a critical function to society or are of strategic importance to a country. A recently published Discussion Paper by CSF serves to introduce this emerging area to Sri Lankan trade and investment stakeholders, provide some country examples, and to inform further deliberation on the topic.

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**WEB ARTICLE**

## Overhauling Sri Lanka's Commercial Diplomacy Efforts Can Boost Trade and Investment Prospects

As Sri Lanka is pushed to explore alternative markets and forge new partnerships, commercial diplomacy must be utilised as a proactive mechanism. While fiscal constraints persist, policies can focus instead on establishing long-term commercial diplomacy strategies for high-potential economies and bridging the gap between the private sector and the commercial diplomatic apparatus.

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## 'Trimming the Fat' in Sri Lanka's Enterprise-support Institutions

Sri Lanka must consolidate its enterprise-support agencies into one single agency, that is smaller, sharper, and with a clear and unambiguous mandate - to improve SME competitiveness towards creating more export-ready and near export-ready firms. The need of the hour is not generic SME development and enterprise support initiatives.

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## How Can Sri Lanka Improve Gender Considerations in its Trade Agreements?

CSF Visiting Fellow Dr Janaka Wijayasiri argues that as the country begins to explore FTAs once again, it is timely to consider mainstreaming gender into Sri Lanka's trade policy and trade agreements taking into the gender inequality in the country.

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## Attracting Good FDI Starts with Designing Good Incentives Regimes

In this interview, former Deloitte consultant Danindu Udalamaththa outlines some key areas for Sri Lanka to focus on in designing good incentives frameworks to attract good quality foreign direct investment.

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## Solving SME Development Challenges: Looking Beyond Easy Loan Schemes

In this interview with finance and investment specialist Sharini Kulasinghe, we explore some new perspectives on solving SME development challenges (especially SME access to finance), going beyond the conventional wisdom.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Signals Of Change: Three Emerging Post-Covid Trends for Sri Lanka's Apparel Sector

Sri Lanka's apparel industry – a significant export revenue earner and employer – was substantially hit by the pandemic. Moving from recovery to resilience and a new phase of growth will be shaped by three key trends.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Fiscal Constraints Amidst COVID-19: Sri Lanka on Red Notice for Tax Reform

COVID-19 caused severe economic challenges worldwide, including a negative 3.6% growth in Sri Lanka in 2020. A lockdown by the government led to a drop-in economic activity and job losses. The government intervened by providing limited stimulus, including cash transfers and low-interest loans, and investing heavily in infrastructure development to help the economy rebound.

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## Refreshing Growth in Sri Lanka's Provinces: Changing the Narrative

CSF Visiting Fellow Dr Janaka Wijayasiri argues that as the country begins to explore FTAs once again, it is timely to consider mainstreaming gender into Sri Lanka's trade policy and trade agreements taking into the gender inequality in the country.

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## CYCLONE DITWAH

NOV 2025

PAGE 60

01

POLICY BRIEF

02

WEB ARTICLES

## ECONOMIC CRISIS

MAR 2022

PAGE 61

05

WEB ARTICLES

02

MEDIA APPERANCES



WEB ARTICLE

## How Can Colombo's Recovery From Cyclone Ditwah Be Transformative?

The immediacy of any disaster we see the outpouring support from Sri Lankans - coming together to raise money, collect rations and clothes and deliver them where needed. But to break this cycle of stepping in where the state and government fail, we need proactive governance and planning, and not reactive as we have been for decades.

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POLICY BRIEF

## The Nexus of Climate Vulnerability and Sovereign Debt: Emerging Global Mechanisms and Imperatives for Sri Lanka

The aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah has underscored an unavoidable truth: any future debt arrangements Sri Lanka enters must incorporate mechanisms that provide flexibility when climate shocks strike. As Sri Lanka plans its gradual return to international capital markets post-restructuring, future debt instruments must incorporate climate-contingent mechanisms.

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## Who Decides What 'Rebuilding' Looks Like After Cyclone Ditwah?

Sri Lanka must shape recovery governance that is both legally legitimate, and reflective of the inclusivity principles Sri Lanka has committed to under the Sendai Framework. A recently appointed committee to manage rebuilding funds is not inclusive, or reflective of contemporary Sri Lanka, and the complex needs in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.

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# ECONOMIC CRISIS - MAR 2022

INTERNATIONAL OP-ED ARTICLE

## Sri Lanka: Anatomy of a Crisis and the Path Ahead

At the invitation of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in India, this article by Anushka Wijesinha was featured in the Raisina Dialogues and served to provide an international reader with a more useful reference point for the recent origins, evolution, and dimensions of Sri Lanka's economic crisis, and selected perspectives on the policy issues and path ahead.

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INTERNATIONAL OP-ED ARTICLE

## Sri Lanka's political turmoil risks derailing the economy further

In a special commentary for The East Asia Forum based at Australian National University, Anushka Wijesinha discussed Sri Lanka's political turmoil, economic downturn, and potential sovereign debt default, highlighting the country's vulnerability to external shocks.

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INTERNATIONAL OP-ED ARTICLE

## Navigating Sri Lanka's rocky road to recovery

At the invitation of The Hindu newspaper in India, Anushka Wijesinha unpacked the Sri Lankan economic crisis for an Indian audience, and argued that focusing on smarter policymaking was needed to ensure a smoother path ahead.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Impact of Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis on the Exports Sector

While steady growth in exports was recorded in the year 2021, Sri Lanka's deepening economic crisis runs the serious risk of impacting the export recovery achieved to date. This article reviews some key data points and industry insights.

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WEB ARTICLE

## Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis is Hurting Education and Students' Future Prospects

Amidst other economic reforms, the critical state of the education sector has received relatively less attention. Sri Lanka needs a comprehensive action plan that is student-centric, in order to help students and teachers manage the current crisis.

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# MEDIA APPEARANCES

## DURING ECONOMIC CRISIS



### Sri Lanka needs a 'sensible' fiscal adjustment plan

CSF Co-Founder Anushka Wijesinha was interviewed by Andrea Sanke of the leading Turkish global news channel TRT World, on their show 'Newsmakers' to talk about the ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka, along with two other Sri Lankan experts.

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### Credit lines would provide temporary respite but sustainable solutions needed

CSF Co-Founder Anushka Wijesinha was interviewed by Gargi Rawat of NDTV (India) to explain to an Indian audience the current economic crisis in Sri Lanka and what the prospects are in the near-term.

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EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

02

BOOK LAUNCHES

01

FELLOWSHIP  
PROGRAM

11

YPPP MEET UPS

01

MOVIE SCREENING

06

PANEL  
DISCUSSIONS

02

INTERVIEW  
SERIES

09

SYMPOSIUMS,  
WORKSHOPS

03

INTERNATIONAL  
EVENTS



BOOK LAUNCH

## Looking Back, Building Forward

Centre for a Smart Future launched 'Looking Back, Building Forward' A Collection of Essays on Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis and Emerging Priorities on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The purpose of this publication - a collection of essays of our writing since 2022 - was twofold. Firstly, to serve as a reminder of some of the key contributing aspects of the crisis, as well as the impacts faced by vulnerable communities. With a desire to quickly 'move on' and celebrate recovery, these aspects have been forgotten. Secondly, to serve as reference points to inform and influence a more just, inclusive, and sustainable economic recovery, which is our idea of a 'smart future'.



looking  
back  
building  
forward

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## Greening Sri Lanka's Recovery

Centre for a Smart Future 'Greening Sri Lanka's Recovery- Contemporary Issues and Emerging Priorities', a collection of essays that brought together CSF's research and writing from 2022 to 2025 at the intersections of nature, climate, and the economy, launched on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025. As Sri Lanka moves beyond crisis response and towards economic stabilisation, there is a growing risk that environmental pressures, climate vulnerabilities, and the realities faced by communities most exposed to these challenges are side-lined in the rush to demonstrate recovery. This publication reflects on how these dynamics have shaped and continue to shape Sri Lanka's economic trajectory, highlighting gaps in policy thinking and the consequences of overlooking natural capital in decision-making.

BOOK LAUNCH

Greening  
Sri Lanka's  
Recovery

Contemporary Issues and  
Emerging Priorities



FELLOWSHIP

## CSF Academy 2025: Youth Fellowship on Nature, Climate, Economy

We brought together a diverse cohort of young thinkers and doers, with backgrounds ranging from environmental science, law, and urban planning, to design, communications, and government. Over the next eight weeks, the Fellows will explore key issues shaping Sri Lanka's future - from linkages between tourism and nature, to climate finance, heat stress and the future of work, and more.



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YPPP MEET-UPS

April 2023:  
**YPPP Learning and Networking Series-  
 Matt Andrews**

June 2023:  
**Soft power as a Superpower- Penny  
 Abeywardena**

February 2024:  
**Debt sustainability and Economic  
 recovery- Theo Maret**

August 2024:  
**Public Policy (Asia Pacific) for Uber- Mike  
 Orgill**

September 2024:  
**'PATHWAYS' Better public policies for a  
 better economic recovery- Marc-Andre  
 Franche**

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October 2024:  
**From the politics of economic reforms, to  
 priorities for the new President- Prof Mick  
 Moore**

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YPPPP MEET-UPS

January 2025:  
**From K-Pop to Crisis: Understanding South Korea's Recent Socio-Political Shifts- Dr Song**

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February 2025:  
**Dig Where we Stand: Understanding the Systems Critical for Sustainable and Effective Leadership- Dr Britt Yamamoto**

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May 2025:  
**Financing the Green Transition Amidst Global Economic Tensions- Dr. Ma Jun**

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September 2025:  
**How to Make Change When Change is Hard- Suresh Shah**

[READ MORE](#)

February 2026:  
**Explaining the Economy: Rethinking Economic journalism**

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MOVIE SCREENING

## Community screening of the movie 'Ocean' by David Attenborough

On 5 August, CSF partnered with LEF and Blue Resources Trust to host this special movie screening which brought together conservationists, researchers, students, ocean advocates and private sector stakeholders to reflect on the ocean's role in sustaining life, livelihoods and national development.

The film explored the interconnected nature of marine ecosystems, the pressures from overfishing, climate change and habitat loss, and examples of how conservation can work alongside economic and social well-being.

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PANEL DISCUSSION

## Presentation at the 'Poverty and Development in Times of Crisis' Conference

Colombo urban lab research associate Meghal Perera presented at CEPA's 25th annual conference, which focused on inclusive growth, economic resilience, trade, and long-term policy reform.

Her paper titled 'Colombo's Urban Poor and the Cost of Cost-Reflective Electricity Tariffs' draws from CUL's qualitative research with Colombo's low-income households from 2021 to 2026, and traces the impact of electricity tariffs on these households. It also explores how the polycrisis exacerbated vulnerabilities and changed the nature of electricity consumption within these households.



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PANEL DISCUSSION

## Sri Lanka's Debt-Climate Nexus: A Conversation with Prof. Ulrich Volz

CSF Convened a roundtable discussion on integrating climate risk considerations into Sri Lanka's sovereign debt and fiscal frameworks.

The discussion focused on why climate change is now considered 'macro-critical' - it tightens fiscal space, raises borrowing costs, and increases systemic financial risk. Participants explored practical pathways for the future, including climate-resilient debt clauses, 'green' debt sustainability analyses, and building institutional capacity in key government agencies.



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PANEL DISCUSSION

## Climate Finance Architecture: Power, Access, and Accountability in Transition

CSF convened a roundtable together with open society foundations to discuss the emerging realities of global climate finance and how Sri Lanka must navigate them.

The discussion focussed on how climate-vulnerable and debt-distressed countries like Sri Lanka can navigate a challenging international climate finance landscape, recognize the realistic sources of capital, and take strategic steps to mobilize resources.



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PANEL DISCUSSION

## Panel Discussion Highlights: Social Protection and Urban Infrastructures of Care in Colombo

Colombo Urban Lab launched its latest report, "Social Protection and Urban Infrastructures of Care in Colombo" on the 19th of January 2026. The presentation of the report's findings was followed by a panel discussion on recommendations for improving care infrastructure and social protection and what opportunities and roadblocks lay ahead in catalysing change. The panel consisted of Vraie Cally Balthazaar, Mayor of Colombo, Dr. Farzana Haniffa, Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, Emma Brigham, UNICEF representative for Sri Lanka and Iromi Perera, Director of the Colombo Urban Lab.

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PANEL DISCUSSION

## Blue Financing and Climate Resilience

CSF Director Anushka Wijesinha spoke at a regional convening of members of parliament from Sri Lanka and several bay of Bengal countries, hosted by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. He spoke in the panel alongside MPs Dr. Harsha de Silva (Sri Lanka), Datuk Ir. Ts. Dr. Mahadi Mohamad (Malaysia), and Esterina Gaghana (Indonesia). The panel was moderated by KASY alumni Chamathka Rathnayake. In his remarks, CSF's Co-founder/Director also noted that countries must look at the spectrum of climate funding options (from environmental fees and levies, to ecological fiscal transfers, and indeed reef-positive impact investment), and tailor their adoption to suit local contexts and being mindful of local community needs and realities.



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PANEL DISCUSSION

## British High Commission's event on 'Mangroves, Wetlands and Marine Ecosystems in Climate Resilience

A Commonwealth Perspective', where we shared our views on sustainable financing for conservation. CSF Co-founder and Director Anushka Wijesinha joined Chaturangi Wickramaratne (IWMI), Prof. Sevvandi Jayakody (Wayamba University), and (UK's Marine Management Organisation) on this panel held coinciding with Commonwealth Day 2025.



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INTERVIEW SERIES

## Echelon x CSF Video Series: Expert Perspectives on Putting Nature at the Centre of Sri Lanka's Recovery

Across four podcast-style video interviews, and featuring experts from business, finance, conservation, policy, and civil society, CSF explored topics like 'Prioritizing Natural Capital in Our Economic Recovery', 'Transforming Tourism through Nature and Biodiversity', 'Financing Green Business Recovery', and 'Business Models for a Nature-Positive Recovery'. The series was a partnership with the leading business magazine Echelon.

[SEE MORE](#)





### HOW SHOULD THE PUBLIC SECTOR ADAPT TO A POST-PANDEMIC ERA?

and other questions with **Ismail Radwan**



### AUSTERITY & VULNERABILITY: BETTER SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT THE POOR DURING ECONOMIC CRISES

**Dr. Anila Dias Bandaranaike**



### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT FROM PAST IMF PROGRAMMES?

and other questions with **Dr. Indrajit Coomaraswamy**



LEARNING FROM THE PAST

### PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS: BUILDING STRONGER PUBLIC FINANCES TO BETTER MANAGE ECONOMIC CRISES

**Julie Cooper, International PFM Expert**



### EYE-WITNESS TO AN ECONOMIC MELTDOWN: REFLECTIONS FROM LEBANON

**Chloe Cornish of the Financial Times**



LEARNING FROM THE PAST

### SRI LANKA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH ASIA: PARALLELS WITH PAKISTAN, CONTRASTS WITH BANGLADESH

**Dr. Sanjay Kathuria, Fellow, Wilson Centre, Washington D.C. and NUS, Singapore**



INTERVIEW SERIES

## '3 Smart Questions' Video Interviews

Across six video interviews, CSF explored topics like 'Sri Lanka's economic crisis', 'Public sector reforms', 'Austerity and vulnerability', 'Reflections from Lebanon's economic meltdown', 'Learnings from IMF programs', and 'Adaptations to post-pandemic era' as a part of the interview series of the Smart Future Forum (SFF) of the Centre for a Smart Future

1. World Bank economist Ismail Radwan. Ismail is the Lead Economist for the GCC region, and is based in Kuwait.
2. Dr Indrajit Coomaraswamy, former Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and former Head of Economic Affairs at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.
3. Chloe Cornish of the Financial Times (Correspondent- Middle East, India)
4. Dr. Anila Dias Bandaranaike- former Assistant Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka
5. Julie Cooper an expert in public financial management and public sector reform
6. Dr Sanjay Kathuria, was a Lead Economist at the World Bank in Washington, D.C

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KNOWLEDGE SYMPOSIUM

## World Wildlife Day Event – ‘Investing in Conservation, Valuing our Wildlife and Natural Ecosystems’

Centre for a Smart Future in partnership with Lanka Environment Fund and Blue Resources Trust are organising a half-day event marking World Wildlife Day 2025, filled with insightful discussions, interactive activities, and networking opportunities. The event will primarily focus on conservation finance issues but will also feature topics like how to balance tourism and nature, and the complexities of financing Marine Protected Area. The event aims to generate interest in pathways for mobilizing the necessary financial resources to protect our country's valuable wildlife and nature and encourage pragmatic thinking.



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SRI LANKA  
DESIGN  
FESTIVAL  
2025

SLDF

Aod—  
Create,  
design,  
innovate.

## Design Dialogue: Branding Cities for People, Not Just Tourists



Anant Ahuja  
Sithumini Rathnamalala  
Iromi Perera  
& Shamalee De Silva Parizeau



Nov 23

3.45pm–4.45pm

Venue: Level 8, The Shoppes,  
Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams

DESIGN FESTIVAL

## Branding Cities For People, Not Just Tourists?

Colombo. Jaffna. Trincomalee. Beyond geography, these names represent critical aspects of our national identity. As Sri Lanka grows in popularity on the tourism map, city branding becomes a complex process where identity and local culture are paramount.

CSF Director Iromi Perera took part in the dialogue to explore; What does city branding reveal about our national identity?, Who determines what our cities stand for and how they're marketed?, How do we design and brand urban spaces for people who live there, not just those who visit?, Can cities be branded authentically for multiple audiences?



[READ MORE](#)

# TRADE POLICY UNCERTAINTY & THE IMPACT ON SRI LANKAN EXPORTERS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY AMCHAM SRI LANKA  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CENTRE FOR A SMART FUTURE

WEBINAR

## Trade Policy Uncertainty & The Impact On Sri Lankan Exporters Brought To You By AMCHAM Sri Lanka

Global tariff shifts are creating fresh challenges for Sri Lankan exporters. How are businesses responding, and what strategies can help them stay ahead?

AmCham Sri Lanka in partnership with Centre for a Smart Future (CSF) Joined for a webinar presenting key findings from a rapid survey on trade policy uncertainty, followed by a panel of leading exporters and industry exporters.



**SPEAKER**  
**SENITH ABEYANAYAKE**  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE,  
CENTRE FOR A SMART FUTURE  
POLICY ANALYST IN TRADE,  
INVESTMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL  
GOVERNANCE  
MSC IN DEVELOPMENT  
ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD



**MODERATOR**  
**ANUSHKA WIJESINHA**  
CO-FOUNDER/DIRECTOR,  
CENTRE FOR A SMART FUTURE  
MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING  
BOARD AND MONETARY POLICY  
BOARD, CENTRAL BANK OF SRI  
LANKA



**PANELIST**  
**ABHISHEK AMBANI**  
DIRECTOR - OVERSEAS  
OPERATIONS,  
BOGAWANTALAWA TEA CEYLON



**PANELIST**  
**SHEHANI GOMES**  
HEAD OF BUSINESS  
INTELLIGENCE, MAS HOLDINGS

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SYMPOSIUM

## National Symposium on Housing in Sri Lanka 2025

CSF Director Iromi Perera was a panellist at this year's National Symposium on Housing in Sri Lanka held at Temple Trees. Organised by the Ministry of Urban Development, Construction and Housing parallel to World Habitat Day 2025, this symposium aimed to discuss the potential housing policies, strategies and designs for Sri Lanka, with a focus on inclusivity and sustainability.

[READ MORE](#)

# THE EMPLOYERS' SYMPOSIUM 2025

Traversing Turbulence:  
Fueling Enterprises for Success



SYMPOSIUM

## Employers' Symposium organised by the Employers' Federation of Ceylon

Research Associate Anisha Gooneratne spoke in a session titled, 'Responding to the Technological Environment: Fostering a Technologically Savvy Workforce' and her presentation 'The Platform Economy and its Impact on Business Operations and People Management' was anchored to previous and ongoing CSF research on the gig economy in Sri Lanka. In her presentation she argued that three key trends shaping the platform economy - algorithmic management of work, employee safety, and worker rights and social protection - are key considerations shaping the future of work. Inclusive Technology and Innovation is one of CSF's thematic research pillars.



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# POLICY LAB

## Integrating Equity and Reframing Urban Nature-based Solutions

Sri Lanka, August 21 - 23, 2023

Supported by:



POLICY LAB

### Policy-Lab on 'Integrating Equity and Reframing Urban NbS in South Asian Cities'

A two-day Policy-Lab in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on August 22-23, 2023, focused on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for South Asian cities, integrating equity and addressing unique challenges, with collaborations from Colombo Urban Lab, People's Alliance for Right to Land, Transitions Research, and International Centre for Climate Change and Development.

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## 'Looking Ahead in Sri Lanka': Four Priorities for the Near-term

CSF Co-founder Anushka Wijesinha was recently invited by the London School of Economics South Asia Centre to speak at a forum on 'Looking Ahead in Sri Lanka', alongside four eminent panellists. Here is a recap of his key points.

1. Looking beyond the macro, to real lives
2. Looking beyond taxation in fixing the fiscal mess
3. Looking to build public confidence and trust
4. Looking at quick wins in trade and exports

[READ MORE](#)



## Thrive Masterclass | Tourism Edition

11th October, 10.00am - 1.00pm  
Café Ceylon, Ahangama

Facilitated by:




Arj Wignaraja  
Good Life X



Senith Abeynayake  
Centre for a Smart Future



Randhula De Silva  
Good Life X

 Who should attend:

**Entrepreneurs & professionals in tourism**

**GOOD  
LIFEX**



Knowledge Partner:



MASTER CLASS

## Thrive Masterclass on Tourism organized by Good Life X

Research Associate Senith Abeynayake explored how Sri Lanka's tourism industry can evolve from extractive to regenerative. From rethinking the tourist of the future, to embracing Joy, Agility, Abundance & Inclusivity, this was a space to learn, reflect, and co-create what thriving tourism really looks like.

Case studies from Maskeliya, Yala & Kalpitiya shows:  
Tourism challenges are regional - with region-specific actors involved. Real change must then be collaborative. It must be cocreated by consulting the communities within each region.

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SYMPOSIUM

## Inclusive and Sustainable Finance event hosted by the European Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (ECCSL)

CSF Researcher Medhini Igoor presented at the Inclusive and Sustainable Finance event hosted by the ECCSL, in collaboration with the Strengthening Social Cohesion and Peace in Sri Lanka (SCOPE) programme supported by GIZ. She drew from CSF research published in recent months on corporate environmental disclosures, green finance, and environmental integration FIs.

Medhini's presentation, titled "Better Reporting, Better Impact", focused on the shifting global ESG landscape and how Sri Lanka's corporate and financial sectors can navigate these changes through stronger environmental disclosures and integration.

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INTERNATIONAL EVENT

## UTA-Do African Cities Workshop

Colombo urban lab director Iromi Perera delivered a keynote address at the 2026 UTA-Do African cities workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Speaking on Intersectionality in Practice: What Can a Family's Food Plate Reveal About Polycrisis, Time Poverty, Urban Infrastructures and City Planning?' Iromi brought the interdisciplinary work and findings of CUL to an international audience of scholars, urbanists, architects, planners, artists and development practitioners.



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INTERNATIONAL EVENT

## 'The Promise of Trade Reform' hosted by The World Bank and India International Centre

CSF Director/Co-Founder Anushka Wijesinha was recently in New Delhi, India to speak at a roundtable jointly hosted by The World Bank and India International Centre, on 'The Promise of Trade Reform', along with the launch of the World Bank's 'South Asia Development Update: Jobs, AI, and Tariffs' (October 2025).



[READ MORE](#)



INTERNATIONAL EVENT

## Regional Dialogue, 'South Asia in the Global DPI Moment: Opportunities and Challenges'

Is Sri Lanka ready for digital public infrastructure (DPI), CSF Research Associate Stephanie Nicolle recently spoke at the regional Roundtable in Islamabad. She highlighted three key considerations as Sri Lanka pursues the DPI agenda:

1. How does DPI fit into the development priorities amidst crisis recovery?
2. Does the country have the right governance architecture and guiding principles?
3. Does it have the operational credibility to deliver sustainable DPI?

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**Centre for a Smart Future (CSF)** is a Colombo-based public policy think-tank with researchers, advisors, and partners around the world.

We conduct high-quality research, promote collaboration across disciplines, and generate actionable ideas. Our current work is anchored to influencing a just recovery from Sri Lanka's polycrisis, with the environment and human wellbeing at the core. Our research has partnered with organisations such as Institute of Development Studies, London School of Economics, Max Planck Foundation, International Labour Organization, Open Society Foundations, Blue Resources Trust, and Biodiversity Sri Lanka. What sets us apart is our interdisciplinary approach to research and policy advocacy. We like being imaginative in how we think about challenges and solutions.

We continually engage with a spectrum of stakeholders - from local communities to policymakers - which ensures that our research is relevant and accessible to a broad audience, while also contributing to meaningful policy change.

We conduct research, convene stakeholders, and communicate policy imperatives to shape a more just and inclusive economy for Sri Lanka, putting people and nature at the centre of policymaking.

The flagship initiative '**Colombo Urban Lab**' is now recognized internationally for its unique approach to research, advocacy, and practical solutions-seeking, and serves as a hub for new thinking on inclusive and sustainable cities.



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