

## **BACKGROUND**

Lack of access to viable employment opportunities in the war torn North of Sri Lanka has resulted in over 75% of the population living under the poverty line with an average earned income of less than \$1 USD per day. For the last 15 years, youth between the ages of 20-29 years of age make up more than 60% of the nationally unemployed. Post conflict, youth remain extremely vulnerable with the majority of families losing the primary breadwinner of the family due to the protracted war. In order for a durable peace to be fully realized, economic stability must be achieved across the region. The Northern Province suffered under the militant control of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for more than 30 years. The pervasive lack of established industry, lack of access to agricultural lands due to contamination of landmines and extensive damage to pre-existing infrastructure has resulted in an epidemic of economic uncertainty with most families completely dependent on dwindling humanitarian assistance.

## **TARGETED BENEFICIARIES AND PARTNERS**

Unemployed youth from across four districts of the Northern Province were the primary target of the project with a focus on engaging the private sector through informal and formal dialogue to establish a market driven employment program.

The **USAID/RISEN** program partnered with Sri Lanka JobsNet, a Tripartite Partnership among the government, employers and trade unions, representing an innovation in the area of employment services.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The project sought to provide viable employment opportunities to unemployed, conflict affected youth whilst encouraging leading national employers to expand industry into the North.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

- A grass root mobilization campaign leveraged the efforts of 50 youth volunteers in conjunction with a highly visible mobile unit consisting of a decorated full body lorry equipped with a sound system, awareness brochure and registration form distribution and poster campaign in 12 Divisions across 4 Districts in the North.
- 24 Registration clinics resulting in over 17,500 youth registered in the national employee delivery system database
- Training for CV preparation, career guidance and interview skills for 2000 pre-screened registered youth.
- Two employer forums; one forum held in the capital for the nation's industry leaders and the second held in Vavuniya for leading regional small to medium based enterprises. Individual consultations with private sector companies resulted in 10,200 job orders before the Jobs Fair.
- A one-day Jobs Fair linking over 80 employers from across the country with more than 15,000 participants. Over 8200 interviews conducted by employers resulted in 3218 job offers made the same day with hundreds of positions offered post jobs fair.