

## ***DIEing in Disaster: A Case of Transformational Leadership and a Postgraduate Institute of Management Responding to the Tsunami***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM) in Sri Lanka had just prepared its 160 MBA and MPA students for research when the Tsunami struck on December 26, 2004. Its devastating impact was unprecedented and through the ensuing chaos, the vision of the Director Prof. Gunapala Nanayakkara gave new purpose for PIM. Having searched for an effective national program or agency to work with, and failed, the PIM called on all persons with ability of purpose to DIE (Dedicate their ability...Innovate new ideas...and Execute the Solution) in Disaster. PIM changed its regular program, and designed and launched its own program of disaster management. The regular Skill Paper took the form of Camp Management Projects, and the regular Research Program included the Execution of Development Projects. Two new compulsory courses of Disaster Management were introduced into the curriculum.*

*PIM's organizational structure too underwent change. Senior faculty members now directed Disaster Management project units. Four guiding principles of the program were the Principles of Urgency, Plan Integration, Focus, and Participation.*

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*PIM's Masters students are typically practising managers and/or public administrators, and as such, exhibited great commitment in executing these projects in districts such as Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Trincomalee and Kilinochchi.*

*This paper describes the effect that organizations such as the PIM could have in disaster management. The case study describes how visionary leadership and a sense of corporate social responsibility could transform crises while gaining experiential learning.*