Moving from institutional care to a community based child protection in Sri Lanka

Creating Safe Child Friendly Spaces
Moving from institutional care to a rights based approach

2015 Congregational Direction Statement invited to develop a clear Strategic Plan *Integrating Spirituality*

+ justice and peace
+ best ministry practices

A plan adopting a human rights approach to development integrating the Congregation’s vision with best ministries to provide best services to most vulnerable children.
Background

17 Child Care Centres, one detention home and a safe home (residential programs) providing child protection support to 800 children (730 girls and 70 boys) across Sri Lanka in 2016.

Urgent need to review practices and programs for children
Background

Rights based approach in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Non discrimination
- Best interest of the child
- Right to life, survival and development
- Right to participate
Key objective of GS
Sri Lanka Strategic Plan

Transition from Institutionalized care to deinstitutionalization of children to community based programs

Any desired changes in the children in GS residential centres
Key Result Areas

- Good Shepherd Best Practice in Child Protection established and children supported
- Empowered communities for effective child protection
- Support government in enhancing national / regional child protection systems
- Scale up and roll out a systems approach to child protection within Good Shepherd sisters Sri Lanka
Community Based Child Protection

PRIMARY CIRCLE OF CARE
RINGS OF RESPONSIBILITY

INTERNATIONAL
NATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS
COMMUNITY
FAMILY
CHILD
Rights based approach

- EMPOWERED
- SUPPORTED
- MOTIVATED
- CONFIDENT

Root causes are addressed
Awareness on rights and how to access them
Processes are owned by the program participants
Creating Child Friendly Safe Spaces

Community Based Child Protection Programs in Sri Lanka
Focus of activities are three pronged

- Child centered teaching and learning;
- Learning their rights and responsibilities;
- Nutrition;
- Empowering children to keep safe;
- Group games / play time;
- Spiritual and psychological support.
Focus of activities are three pronged

Family
- Forming Self help groups for the mothers;
- Parenting skills;
- Awareness of child rights especially to education and protection;
- Introducing income generating activities.
Focus of activities are three pronged

- Community awareness programs;
- Community working together on projects;
- Engagement of supervisors of tea estates, community elders, etc.

Community
### Number of programme participants in 5 locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinnapaduwa (Fishing village-North west)</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>271 (25 SHGs)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balangoda (3 tea estates: Waleboda, Halina, Walawa)</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mankany (Eastern coastal town)</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>977</strong></td>
<td><strong>526</strong></td>
<td><strong>136</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,639</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Documenting Emerging Practices and Lesson Learned in Alternative Care for Vulnerable Children

Community-Based Child Protection Initiative by Good Shepherd Sri Lanka

Research conducted in February 2019
Research Findings

• Overall findings show that CBCP created positive mindset among the families and community

• Children’s participation high in research locations
  ✓ Interested in studies 83%
  ✓ Know child rights 79%
  ✓ Health programs 60%

• Children and parents interaction are visible; positive transformation in CBCP families
• Child friendly safe spaces created opportunities for children to interact with one another and develop their skills

• Overall improvement in children’s educational performance

• Children were happy and active; learned good habits

• Participation of male members of the community to be further encouraged.
Research Findings

• The women are empowered through creating self help groups; income generating activities introduced
• Parents are aware of their responsibilities towards their children
• Communities are empowered to take the responsibility to protect their children

Other positive observation

• Greater collaboration of like minded organizations, schools and some local government agencies.
• Greater support from the funding agencies.
• Greater support from the Congregation
Challenges

From within the sisters’ communities:

- Attitudes and resistance from our own sisters towards change.
- Fear of change and lack of trust
- Lack of skills, and reluctance to gain new skills that are required to respond to the emerging needs of our society.
Challenges

From external parties

• Lack of cooperation by beneficiary communities at the initial phase of the project - fear of religious conversion

• Attitudes of the Church authority which are not familiar and not receptive to sisters doing rights based social services.

• Attitudes and receiving mentality of the people in the community

• Difficulty in employing the professional staff

• Motivating the women to form the SHGs