

ChildFund facilitates youth to become child protection advocates

ChildFund Sri Lanka recently conducted a leadership training camp for 'Alliance of Youth to End Violence Against Children' (AYEVAC) in Dambulla.

'Alliance of Youth to End Violence Against Children' was initiated by ChildFund Sri Lanka as a child and youth advocacy body to end violence against children. This includes preventing and responding to sexual, physical, mental, and online abuse against children. It adds value to ChildFund's mandate of ensuring every child's rights are protected and safe. By supporting AYEAC, ChildFund is creating the next generation of change agents who will advocate for children's rights and protection in Sri Lanka.

The camp, facilitated by ChildFund Sri Lanka, brought together over 100 youth leaders of the

AYEVAC team from all 25 districts in the island. A few parents of the youth members, ChildFund Sri Lanka staff, and local partners were also present at this unique event. The camp focused on building youth leadership qualities, increasing awareness on child related issues, learning how to be advocates for ending violence against children, and raising their voices on child protection issues.



ChildFund Sri Lanka's leadership training camp for Alliance of Youth to End Violence Against Children' (AYEVAC) in Dambulla

The camp also aimed at building team spirit among AYEAC members, reviewing and updating the existing AYEAC leadership structure, and electing members for governance and leadership roles. Another key priority was to develop a plan of action for the period July 2022 to June 2024 to energise and upscale the future mission of the movement.

Elaborating on ChildFund Sri Lanka's collaboration with AYEAC, Country Manager Sri Lanka Nalaka Siriwardena said: "It is our mandate to support youth in the country to develop their leadership abilities and become responsible citizens. Increasing their knowledge on child rights and protection, mobilising them to be change agents, giving them the exposure and opportunities, are essential elements in this process. AYEAC provides them this space while contributing to the important discourse on ending violence against children in the country. AYEAC will not only develop a set of youth leaders but it will also address one of the grave issues related to children."

National Convener Waruna Hashan from Monaragala stated: "We were able to meet and connect with the movement's leaders from across the country. To date we only met online and were able to physically meet everyone for the first time at the camp. The camp supported us to develop our leadership skills, learn about child rights and child protection issues in the community, and how we can use our voice to advocate for children. We appreciate ChildFund's efforts in organising such an event. With youth recognised as the backbone of society today, we are hopeful ChildFund will organise similar events in future."