

ChildFund  
Sri Lanka



# PROTECT EVERY CHILD.

Report on Gaps in Delivering Child  
Protection Services in Nine  
Districts in Sri Lanka

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Child protection services in Sri Lanka play a vital role in the protection and promotion of the right to protection of children in Sri Lanka. Child protection services are available at national, provincial, district, and divisional levels in the country. The purpose of this exercise was to understand existing critical gaps in service delivery at district and divisional levels. This was conducted by a group of youth activists.

It was identified during the exercise that these service providers encounter several gaps in providing their services, mainly in areas of technical capacities to provide quality services, recognition and access of services, coordination in resource allocation and planning, and managing sensitive data. Due to these gaps, some service providers, especially the prevention services have gained relatively less recognition in the community and have not been adequately equipped. There have been fewer opportunities for service providers to acquire adequate technical capacities prior to and during the service delivery. Lack of resources has become a main hindrance for the service providers to adequately respond to the needs of the communities.

The risk of mishandling sensitive data is high and there is less opportunity to systematically make use of available data to plan for a strategic service delivery approach. In response to these gaps, it is recommended to take steps for proper identification of the child protection service delivery workforce and to introduce a standardized technical capacity-building process, as well as to increase coordination of capacity building, resource allocation, and service delivery process, especially at the grassroots level. Communities shall be made aware of all of the available services at the grassroots level and this can be done by mobilizing young change-makers within the communities.

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**AYEVAC**- Alliance of Youth to End Violence Against Children  
**CPO**- Child Protection Officer  
**CRPO**- Child Rights Promotion Officer  
**DI**- Direct Implementation  
**AUL**- Action Unity Lanka  
**IP**- Inspector of Police  
**JMO**- Judicial Medical Officer  
**NCPA**- National Child Protection Authority  
**PO**- Probation Officer  
**TFCD**- Tea Field Child Development Federation  
**WDO**- Women Development Officer  
**LP**- Local Partner  
**ISA**- In-service Adviser



# SNAPSHOT

### Task

To conduct an analysis utilizing qualitative methods of data collection to identify existing critical gaps in child protection service delivery at district and divisional levels in Sri Lanka.

### Recognized Gaps

1. Lack of proper identification of the child protection workforce
2. Lack of standard qualifications for the workforce
3. Lack of proper pre-job training
4. Lack of well-coordinated multisectoral capacity building plan
5. Unavailability of a coordinated centralized budget for child protection services
6. Gaps in availability and accessibility of service providers
7. Data collection gaps
8. Monitoring and evaluation

### Recommendations

1. Identification of the child protection workforce
2. Standardized qualifications for the CP workforce
3. Centralized standard pre-job training program
4. Well-coordinated multisectoral capacity-building plan led by one central authority
5. Centralized budget
6. Centralized database
7. Grassroot level awareness raising on child protection services
8. Mobilize grassroots level change makers to ensure accountability

## INTRODUCTION

Child Fund Sri Lanka is a leading non-governmental organization working towards the protection and advancement of the rights of children in Sri Lanka. Child Fund has operated in Sri Lanka since 1985 through partnerships with grassroots level Civil Society Organizations and networks in delivering their services. ALLIANCE OF YOUTH TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN is a network supported by Child Fund Sri Lanka.

This exercise was conducted by the “ALLIANCE OF YOUTH TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN”, hereinafter referred to as “AYEVAC” which represents the Sri Lankan youths. This movement was begun in 2017 with 2000 youth representing all 25 districts in Sri Lanka. The vision of this youth movement is to “Be Humane Towards Children”. They operate in Sri Lanka with the mission of promoting both advocacy and programmatic measures to create a generation of adults who are sensitive to creating a society free from harm against children and provide volunteer opportunities to young people who want to raise their voices against violence against children. The main objectives of this movement are to:

1. Advocate with the government to ensure policies and practices conducive to child protection.
2. Prevent and respond to sexual, physical, mental, and online violence against children.
3. Provide opportunities for children and youth to develop their social and emotional skills.
4. Prevent discrimination against children and changing social stereotypes.

The main purpose of a GAP analysis is to understand the difference or the distance between the expected status and the reality in any given area/function etc. This exercise has been carried out with the intention of understanding the gaps within the child protection service provision at selected districts and divisions in Sri Lanka. The report also seeks to provide recommendations for improvement based on the findings of the GAP analysis.

The child protection sector of Sri Lanka comprises different stakeholders at different levels. These stakeholders can be mainly categorized as government and non-government stakeholders. This exercise has been conducted mainly with the government stakeholders to understand the gaps between expected and actual levels of service delivery. Furthermore, based on the roles and responsibilities, these stakeholders can be further categorized as prevention and response services. Child protection services in Sri Lanka are currently operating at the National, Provincial, District, and Divisional Secretariate levels. Different officers are line-managed by different ministries and there is no one centralized ministry or agency to coordinate all these officers.

This report draws on some key gaps identified during this exercise by AYEAC members. It also contains key recommendations drawn from data gathered through the same exercise. The expectation of this report is to support the child protection service providers at different levels to deliver a quality service by advocating for reforms to address identified gaps.



## METHODOLOGY

This gap analysis was conducted by AYEAC youth members using qualitative methods of data collection. 40 youths took part in this exercise under the guidance of Child Fund and its partner organizations.<sup>1</sup> Following diagram explains the process of this exercise.

### STEP 1

AYEVAC Ambassadors (2) and another (4) youth of AYEAC group were trained by trained LPs/DI on how to conduct the gap analysis on service provision at the district and divisional level as a 1-day workshop.

During the workshop, an agreement was reached with AYEAC Ambassadors on the discussion topics, target group, and the questions asked by service providers and rights holders.

Youth-friendly questionnaire according to their own language was prepared.

This exercise has been conducted in the following locations. The locations have been selected based on the working areas of Child Fund partners.

### STEP 2

An Action plan was prepared for dialogues on CP service provision for selected districts and divisions with AYEAC ambassadors.

AYEVAC ambassadors were trained on policy advocacy, negotiation skills/approaches, and designing and facilitating dialogues on CP service provision.

### STEP 3

AYEVAC District and divisional ambassadors together with local partners and CFDI team conducted the gap analysis with divisional and district service providers.

### STEP 4

AYEVAC team developed this learning document on the experience, recommendations for effective service provision using the findings from gap analysis.

AYEVAC team will share the findings of learning document with district and provincial level decision makers and implementors in a physical event.



Partner organization	District	Division
DI	Puttalam	Karuwalagaswewa
TFCDF	Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya Thalawakele
	Matale	Dambulla
CDF	Trincomalee	Kuchchaveli Gomarankadawela Morawewa
DI	Monaragala	Siyambalanduwa Kataragama
	Hambanthota	Sooriyawewa Thissamaharamaya
AUL	Mullaithivu Batticaloa	Puthukkudiyiruppu Vavunathivu

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to annexure 1 for details related to youth who took part in the exercise.

The table below indicates the numbers and designations of officers interviewed during this exercise in each location.

Sample	DCPO	DCRPO	DWCHD	CPO	CRPO	PO	Drug prevention	ECDC	JMO	LA	MOH	Children	CSO	WDO	Disability officer	Social officer	Policewomen and Children Desk	Teacher incharge of counselling	ISA
<b>Districts</b>																			
Puttalam	1	1	1	1			1		No	1									
Nuwara Eliya	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Matale	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Trincomalee	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-				
Monaragala				1	1	1	1			1			1	1					
Hambantota	1	1					1	1				1							
Mullaitivu	1	1	1	1	-	-	1		1	1	-	-	-						
Batticaloa	1	1	1	1	-	-	1		1	1	-	-	-						
<b>Divisions</b>																			
Karuwalagaswewa			2		1			2	No		1	5	3						
Nuwara Eliya		-	1				-	-			-	5							
Thalawakele	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	5	5					1	1
Dambulla	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	5	5					1	1
Kuchchaveli	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	1						
Gomarankadawela	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	1						
Morawewa	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	1						
Siyambalanduwa			1		1	1					1	5	1				1	1	
Kataragama				1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-				1	1	
Sooriyawewa			1	1	1		1	1				1			1	1			
Thissamaharamaya			1	1	1		1	1				1			1	1			
Puthukkudiyiruppu					1	1	-	1	-	-	1	3	3						
Vavunathivu					1	1	-	1	-	-	1	3	3						

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1.1. Lack of proper identification of the child protection workforce

The findings of this exercise suggest that most of the officers who are providing child protection services are not aware of other officers who are providing similar or complementary services. Officers attached to national and provincial departments of probation and the National Child Protection Authority are able to identify child protection service providers up to a certain extent. However, other officers who are attached to various departments and authorities do not have a common understanding of the scope and the roles and responsibilities of various service providers. This observation was common among the children as well. More than 50% of the children who were interviewed were not able to identify at least three of the child protection officers at the grassroots level.

### 1.2. Lack of standard qualifications for the workforce

Apart from the Child Protection Officers, Child Rights Promotion Officers, and Probation Officers, most of the other officers lacked educational qualifications related to child rights or child protection. Even for the officers who have obtained a qualification related to this area of expertise, it has not been a mandatory requirement. Most of the officers have gathered their knowledge in this area through informal training programs. Furthermore, there is no common technical skill development program available for all these officers. They have learnt most of the skills through practice and experience. This has resulted in a lack of uniform conceptual and theoretical understanding of child protection and child rights and different levels of technical skills among different types of services.

### 1.3. Lack of proper pre-job training

Questions were asked during this exercise to clarify the nature and scope of pre-job training received by these officers related to child protection. Only a handful of officers, especially officers attached to Provincial and National

Probation Departments and National Child Protection Authority claimed that they have received some sort of pre-job training related to child protection. The vast majority of officers have not received any pre-job training related to this technical area. There is no uniform mandatory pre-job training available to all officers who are attached to child protection service delivery.

### 1.4. Lack of well-coordinated multisectoral capacity building plan

Different officers have been exposed to a variety of training programs during the past two years. These programs have covered different capacities such as legal awareness, child-friendly services, child psychology, counselling, etc. However, service providers have been exposed to these trainings depending on their area of expertise. Some officers have been able to attend different types of programs. There is no mechanism to coordinate these training programs and to manage the opportunities by linking those with existing capacity gaps. There is no centralized authority to coordinate multi-sectoral training programs and ensure that all officers are equipped with the necessary cross-functional knowledge and skills to deliver well-coordinated quality services to children and their families.



### 1.5. Unavailability of a coordinated centralized budget for child protection services

Budgetary allocation for service provision is available under the line ministry of each sector. However, most of the service providers complain that there is a lack of financial resources to provide adequate service at the grassroots level. Available funds are not centralized at any layer of the administration structure. Therefore, sometimes an overlap of funded services and locations can be noted. According to service providers, this hinders adequate financial resources for most vulnerable groups and areas. It was also identified that there are limited allocations for services provided to differently-abled children and this is an area that needs to be specially considered in resource allocation.

### 1.6. Gaps in availability and accessibility of service providers

One of the key findings in this section is that most of the children and adults including service providers identify the Police and the National Child Protection Authority as key protection services in the country. It is a positive observation regarding children that more than 80% of the children were able to recognize these two authorities and the hotline number of the NCPA. However, this also suggests another gap related to child protection service provision. In the current situation response services or reporting mechanisms are mainly identified, but the important role played by the prevention services also needs to be recognized. Their roles and responsibilities as child protection service providers need to be clearly identified and defined.

### 1.7. Data collection gaps

Most of the service providers still depend on traditional methods of data collection and storage. They are also utilizing social media as a form of data collection in the present. However, there is no accurate systematic approach to collecting and managing data related to child protection concerns. Data is scattered among different service providers. DCDC and the VCDC are the platforms available at the grassroots level to share data with different service providers. The use of technology in

storing and accessing data is at a very minimal level. These manual methods of data storage further increase the risk to vulnerable children. Most of the service providers maintain their own personal database related to the services they provide. Police, NCP, Probation Department, and health sector service providers are better organized in terms of data management.

### 1.8. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the child protection service provision has also become a challenge due to decentralized operations. Even though all the services are monitored and evaluated by their respective ministries, it is not done according to a common quality standard. NCPA is monitoring and evaluating some of the services under the same ministry. They also have the authority and power vested by the NCPA Act to monitor all child protection-related services. However, since these services and service providers have not been properly identified as one category of Child Protection service providers, it is difficult to monitor and evaluate their services. It is recommended to introduce a common monitoring and evaluation mechanism along with a learning and application process to increase the quality of the services.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Identification of the child protection workforce

As explained in the findings section of this report, officers who are delivering child protection services are not recognized as one category within the government sector. They are functioning under different line ministries and their services are designed, implemented, and evaluated according to the priorities of the relevant line ministry. Identification of all these officers as one workforce will lay the foundation for a well-coordinated service delivery system. This identification shall create the basis for standardized qualifications, technical skills, and capacities and increase access to services by the public.

### 2. Standardized qualifications for the CP workforce

It is also important to address the lack of technical knowledge and skills of the child protection service providers. There is no one institute or authority to issue professional qualifications for child protection service providers. Identifying a suitable institute for this purpose and providing a standardized qualification for all child protection

service providers is a key requirement to ensure the quality of services provided.

### 3. Centralized standard pre-job training program

Since there is no standard education or professional qualification for child protection service providers, they join the sector from different backgrounds with different expertise. While recognizing the importance of having different expertise in providing multi-sectoral services for children, it is also important to note that these service providers need to reach a common understanding of the conceptual and theoretical basis of child protection and child rights. They also need to have key competencies and skills to deliver quality services for children and their families. Therefore, it is recommended to introduce a standard uniform pre-job training that is necessary for all child protection service providers.

### 4. Well-coordinated multisectoral capacity-building plan led by one central authority

There are many opportunities and resources for training and capacity building of the child protection workforce, especially from the non-government sector. However, these opportunities and resources are not strategically managed and pro-actively utilized. It is recommended to have one central authority to plan, coordinate, and implement a common capacity-building plan for all officers attached to the child protection workforce. This approach will ensure the maximum use of existing opportunities while standardizing the programs. This will also be helpful for proper monitoring and evaluation of technical skills and capacities of the workforce.

### 5. Centralized budget

It is noted that budgetary allocations for Child protection services. In reality, these services are managed by different line ministries. It is recommended to pool these budgets at the divisional secretarial level to provide more coordinated services and make maximum use of the existing mechanism

## 6. Centralized database

It is important to maintain a centralized database of child protection service provision in the country. Having a centralized system will ensure effective management of data. This database may include data related to existing government and non-government services at the grassroots level, the number of cases handled by service providers, the track record of each case, data related to capacity-building initiatives for service providers, data related to grassroots-level programs and implementation plans, etc. A computerized system may provide extra protection for sensitive data and can also generate periodic reports to increase the quality of service provisions. Different stakeholders can be given different levels of access related to data depending on their roles and responsibilities. Having a centralized system will also be helpful in centralized monitoring and evaluation of the services as well.

## 7. Grassroot level awareness raising on child protection services

It is important to educate children, parents, and other community members about existing grassroots level child protection services. Providing details of various officers who are providing these services along with their roles and responsibilities and contact details of officers in the respective divisional secretariate level will enhance the knowledge of the public and children. This will also result in maximizing the use of existing services. This can be easily done through the VDCs and schools with the support of CSOs at the grassroots level. Youth can take leadership in this awareness-raising campaign. This must also be balanced with a program to empower the grassroots level service providers as there can be an increase in reported incidents and identified vulnerabilities as a result of such a campaign.

## 8. Mobilize grassroots level change makers to ensure accountability

It is recommended to establish a community-level accountability mechanism to maintain and ensure the quality of services provided to children and their families. Empowered change-

makers, who are well aware of the duties and responsibilities of service providers and the expected service standards and quality, can function as a community-level accountability group. Constant communications between this group and service providers and children and families who receive services will be very useful in ongoing research, learning, and application. Active youth members in the community can be involved in this process and with their firsthand experience they can also support the planning and implementation of different programs within their capacity.



## ANNEXURES

### Annexure 1: Details related to youth who took part in the exercise.

Name	Age	Gender
R.K.H.D. De Soysa	27	Male
W.P. Ayesch Madushanka	27	Male
S. Nirosan	22	Male
U. Krishankumar	21	Male
S. Sagila	21	Male
M. Rashanthan	23	Female
S. Kuganeshwary	21	Female
K.Vishalika	22	Female
A.G. Sanduni Lakmali	21	Female
G. Ashmi Kawya	20	Female
Sathsarani Wickramasinghe	20	Female
E.G. Sujith Susantha	21	Male
Arunika Chathurangi	26	Female
I.A.R. Rasnjalee	25	Female
S.M. Sunendra	20	Male
S.M. Arosha	18	Male
Navodya Sewwandi	18	Female
S.M. Hirushika hansamali	18	Female
A.H.M. Gaurawee Niklesha	17	Female
Sandeswaran Deluxshan	23	Male
Supramaniyam Vithushan	23	Male
Ravi Vithushan	18	Male
Krushnaraja Yaliny	20	Female
Kenthirathan Sanjeevan,	23	Male
Sathiyalingam Sowmiya,	22	Female
Loganathan Nilaxshana	29	Female
Suntharalingam Pravena	25	Female
T.M. Sachini Kavidya	22	Female
R.M. Udeshi Abesinghe	22	Female
L.M. Danushika Hansamali	23	Female
D.M.U.D. Nandasena	21	Female
K.M. Paramee Hansika	21	Female
R. Suvarnas	23	Male
K. Kenthuja	24	Female

Name	Age	Gender
A.G. Dilshani	20	Female
M. Abhimana	17	Male
P. Kristan	21	Male
S. Cheruby	20	Female
S. Roshani	20	Female
K.V. Gayani	20	Female

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