Sri Lanka: Three-Year Strategic Plan
Introduction

The Care and Protection of Children (CPC) Network in Sri Lanka was established in 2009 as a mechanism to strengthen and systematize child care and protection in crisis-affected settings through collaborative action of international child rights agencies, government and other local institutions and academic partners. The CPC Network in Sri Lanka is hosted by the Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development (IPID). The Network brings together policy makers and practitioners to determine learning priorities and find ways to collaborate so that the results of these endeavors are utilized productively.

Strategic Priorities

Child protection systems development

The CPC Network aims to strengthen child protection in Sri Lanka by establishing a centre for child protection located within a university to enhance the quality of research and evidence-based planning in this sphere.

Building capacities and institutionalising child protection training in curricula

The CPC Network will support the incorporation of child protection courses/modules within existing degree programmes offered by universities. This includes training to build the capacity of academic leaders, and offering curriculum development support to prepare future generations of individuals dedicated to improving the security and well-being of children.

Mission Statement

CPC Sri Lanka is committed to professionalizing the field of child protection through the development of academic partnerships, practitioner trainings and operational research.

Strategic Partnerships for Change

The CPC Network in Sri Lanka functions under the guidance of an Advisory Group consisting of senior level government officials and representation from international and local agencies working in the field of child protection. The Secretary to the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs is the ex officio chair of the Group. The Advisory Group meets twice a year. At the operational level the Network consists of representatives from the key child protection institutions within government, international and local organizations, and academia. The Network meets once every two months to share learning from research and other activities the different organizations are engaged in, and to identify areas of further interventions, which CPC could initiate or support. The Network tries to ensure that learning translates from knowledge to change by selecting focus areas where there is a national thrust for reform and a commitment on the part of implementers to change the status quo.
Recognizing that child protection is a crosscutting issue that encompasses child rights, social welfare reform and broader social sustainability, we address child protection from a broad multi-disciplinary perspective. The CPC Network in Sri Lanka is committed to professionalizing the field of child protection by a variety of methods, including strengthening academic curricula. The CPC Network in Sri Lanka subscribes to a field-based research approach, informed by demand at the national and community level. They involve inclusion of relevant stakeholders from the concept stage onwards to ensure a focus on the priority areas where research, leading to change, is needed. Findings and outputs are shared with key stakeholders and are disseminated both nationally and internationally. Key partners include government ministries, research institutions, international child rights organizations and the United Nations.

The challenge
Inadequate attention is given to child protection concerns within existing academic and training programmes followed by individuals looking for employment opportunities or service involvement in the child protection sector. Many child protection practitioners face gaps in learning and service involvement in the child protection sector. Many by individuals looking for employment opportunities or within existing academic and training programmes followed. They include involvement of relevant stakeholders from the concept stage onwards to ensure a focus on the priority areas where research, leading to change, is needed. Findings and outputs are shared with key stakeholders and are disseminated both nationally and internationally. Key partners include government ministries, research institutions, international child rights organizations and the United Nations.

Critical Areas of Enquiry

Priority One: Institutionalising child protection training in academic training and skills development

The challenge
Inadequate attention is given to child protection concerns within existing academic and training programmes followed by individuals looking for employment opportunities or service involvement in the child protection sector. Many child protection practitioners face gaps in learning and skills development in their work with children, whether in direct service provision, policy planning or programming. They involve inclusion of relevant stakeholders from the concept stage onwards to ensure a focus on the priority areas where research, leading to change, is needed. Findings and outputs are shared with key stakeholders and are disseminated both nationally and internationally. Key partners include government ministries, research institutions, international child rights organizations and the United Nations.

What we have achieved to date
The CPC Sri Lanka Advisory Group and the Network have identified the above as an issue needing urgent attention. Discussions at successive meetings with the participation of organizations and individuals who have been involved in child protection training, have made clearer the way forward to meet this challenge.

A three-month certificate course on Care and Protection of Children has already been completed with the Open University, and this course content would provide a basis to proceed to the next stage of curriculum development.

The Global Classroom on “Protection of Children in Disaster and War” was offered with the participation of Columbia University, the University of Indonesia, and CPC Network Sri Lanka. The collaborative certificate course was based at the National Online Distance Education Services (NODES) Access Centre at the Open University. NODES Access Centre functions directly under the Ministry of Higher Education though located at the premises of the Open University.

What we will do
1. The CPC Network will work with the Open University of Sri Lanka to develop a course/module on child protection to be included within the existing degree programmes offered by the University. The degrees recognized for entry into child protection work include Sociology, Psychology, Law, and Education.
2. The CPC Network will work with UNICEF and the National Institute for Social Development (NISD) to develop and expand the geographical reach of the Diploma in Child Protection designed with UNICEF assistance and run by NISD. The diploma is aimed at frontline government employees and UNICEF has supported delivering the course in a limited number of provinces. The CPC Network will explore expansion of the course to other areas to enhance capacities of service providers across the country.

Priority Two: Establishing a centre for child protection at the Open University of Sri Lanka

The challenge
There is no dedicated research and resource centre on child protection in Sri Lanka. The need for such a centre has been increasingly felt by child protection practitioners as well as decision makers and academics. The purpose of such a centre would be two-fold: to generate research using state of the art methodology and tools; to serve as an evidence base for advocacy and change; and to be a repository of up-to-date resource material on children’s issues. The centre will also link to Priority One (above), taking the lead in maintaining high standards in the academic curricula relating to child protection and ensuring inclusion of current thinking and international good practice.

What we will do
The CPC Network in Sri Lanka will support setting up the centre – including identification of staffing needs, establishment of the research agenda and addressing sustainability concerns. In order to achieve this goal, CPC Network Sri Lanka will support a two year planning phase, working on strengthening the Open University course and relationships as well as linking with various stakeholders in planning for the establishment of the center. Ultimately, in the third year, the Center will come to fruition after a comprehensive planning and implementation phase. It will facilitate the channeling of the funds necessary to set up such a centre and oversee its establishment jointly with the Open University. It is envisaged that the CPC Network as such will be located at the centre thus providing a secure base and a degree of sustainability for the Network and its activities.
Support Structures

Currently the CPC Network is hosted in Sri Lanka by the Institute of Participatory Interaction in Development (IPID). The Institute provides office space, administrative and technical support for the CPC Network Coordinator. Funds for Network activities provided by CPC Global Secretariat are channeled through IPID. Details of the Advisory Group (under whose guidance the Network functions) and the membership of the Network as listed above under the heading “Strategic Partnerships for Change”.

Budget

Concept Notes on the two priorities are available for a more detailed description of resource requirements. These will indicate where and to what extent required contributions will be made other than through direct monetary input. These include human resources and physical facilities consisting of personnel time of Open University and Columbia University staff; and office space, furniture, equipment, utilities and supplies of the Open University.

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<tr>
<th>3 Year Annual Budget</th>
<th>Year 1 - USD</th>
<th>Year 2 - USD</th>
<th>Year 3 - USD</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Project related Expenses:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Open University Child</td>
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<td>Protection Course</td>
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<td>• NISO Course Expansion</td>
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<td>• Establish Center on CP</td>
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