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'Safe Play Centres'



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plantation sector

THE HUMANITARIAN

Join hands for HUMANITY

Save the Children sets up 'Safe Play Centres' in welfare villages



temporary structure. They have been provided with 117 large containers of play items, including both indoor and outdoor play material, such as cricket and badminton sets, volleyballs, footballs, netballs, soft toys, skipping ropes, building blocks, rubber balls, tennis balls, chess sets, checkers, carom and other board games, dolls, toys, and art material, such as tissue paper, gum, scissors, paint, crayons, and art books. In addition to this, water filters and first aid kits have also been provided. So far, 43 volunteers from among the displaced community have been trained by Save the Children on Play and Art Therapy, health promotion, and managing the play space.

To date, Save the Children in Sri Lanka has setup 47 Safe Play Centres in transitional welfare villages in Vavuniya for the benefit of over 16,000 displaced children.

A total of 26 of these spaces have been provided in cooperation with local NGOs.

Each space is housed in a

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SHADE

works in Sri Lanka

Establishment of SHADE

National Institute of SHADE was established on the 01st of March, 2004, in order to continue services of MSF-H, which concluded its emergency service.

Vision

To help in healing the psychosocial wounds caused by the chronic conflict and provide support in rebuilding our shattered communities without discrimination or prejudice.

Mission

The SHADE staff and management have experienced displacement and horrors of the war deeply. The people who have been affected have said that counselling training has helped them to understand their feelings and find new ways to cope. Our experience has taught us the importance of confidentiality and of being non-judgmental while providing quality and ethical psychosocial services. We want to help heal our communities and ourselves and advocate for our rights by being proximate and continuing to understand the need. We want to do this by being neutral, independent, and impartial not discriminating, taking sides, or being unduly influenced by those working in their own interests.

Objective

1. Professional Psychological Counselling

Professional Psychological Counselling is a function that enables a person to solve his own problem by utilising his resources, skills, and abilities, having identified himself, his problem, and his environment.

During the course of psychological counselling, the Counsellor by building confidence facilitates for those coming forward to reveal their problems. This enables those seeking counselling to profoundly reveal their problems. Impartiality, confidentiality, and non-judgmental approach are required for this.

1.1 Some situations where Psychological Counselling is rendered

Personal Problem suicidal thoughts and attempts, family problems, domestic violence, abuse due to alcoholism, mental stress, extreme mental scars, sexual problems, loss, separation, loneliness, problems due to lack of social support, nightmares, tension, nervousness, panic, depression, learning disabilities, deviant character, disturbing memories, mental disorders, and those with special needs.

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2. Psychosocial Education and Awareness

Problems encountered in personal, family and social life, disasters, challenges, and others have short and long-term impacts on peoples' physical and psychological life, balance, and health. As such, people through related awareness should be encouraged to identify these problems and to seek service from Government and non-governmental organisations.

2.1 Child Empowerment Centres

Encourage and empower the children to depict their knowledge skills and abilities, identification of children subjected to stressful situations through play activities and encourage and direct them to receive further treatment to become exemplary children in the society.

2.2 Other Activities

Identification of assistance seekers and referring them to psychological and other treatment, conducting psychological and social awareness programme, conveying information with regard to health situations to the Medical Officer of Health, developing positive managing ability of people in psychological social aspects, referring patients to psychiatric treatment, coordination with District Child Development Committee for children requiring assistance, education and creating awareness in matters such as stress suicidal attempts, abuses due to alcohol consumption, landmines, sexual health, domestic violence, AIDS, child abuse, health and smoking.

2.3 Alcoholic Anonymous or A. A. Programme

This is an establishment helps men and women affected by alcoholism get to gather to solve their problems and to recover from the malicious drinking habit affecting them so far.

3. Advocacy

Advocacy is to inform officials of the

Government and non-governmental organisation of the psychological social needs of the people and see requirements are fulfilled.

4. Engaging in Provision of Training to develop preliminary mental social skills, Supervision and Research Activities

This provide training in development of basic communication abilities required for officers working among the people with psychological social needs, preliminary psychological counselling assistants, health volunteers, mid-wives, teacher, primary teachers and those engaged in humanity activity in order to identify the problems of the people and to promote managing abilities in stressful situations. Professionally supervise those engaged in above activities. SHADE is engaged in research activities related to psychological social aspects. Main objective of the research is to understand the current trend of the psychological social problems and to plan psychosocial activities accordingly and to make recommendation on psychological social aspects.

5. Strengthen the links among organisation involved in psychosocial activities

6. Establishing networks among organisations engaged in psychological social activities, professionals, and universities and strengthen the network through the network.

SHADE undertakes its activities in welfare centres, resettlements, non-governmental organisation, hospital, psychiatric division of the general hospital, homes for children and elders District Child Development Committee, school, Probation Department, and selected villages in the Vavuniya District. Furthermore, emergency functional group and stress managing group are on alert to meet the urgent situations.

SDC funds education in the plantation sector



Not even 15 per cent of children in the plantation sector receive a proper pre—school education. The majority of the currently existing pre—schools are located in temporary sheds or buildings borrowed from benefactors in plantations. With the aim of creating adequate space for young children to begin their education, SDC has funded nine pre-school buildings in the plantation sector since June, 2007.

SDC's project partner

The Plantation Rural Education Development Organisation (PREDO) is an organisation registered with the Social Service Department that works towards the betterment of the living conditions of plantation workers and rural folk. It has been recognised by the Central Provincial Council as a 'best performing' NGO in the plantation sector, for its work with children, early child development, gender promotion, conflict transformation,

and peacebuilding. A member of many networks in the sector and at the national level, PREDO has been in partnership with SDC since June, 2007.

Currently, PREDO has initiated the establishment of 121 pre—schools in the plantation area with a student population of about 3,100. Its work over the last 13 years has resulted in 20,601 pre—schoolers gaining admission to Government schools. In the early days of the programme, its only objective was to ensure the right of

pre-school education to underprivileged children of plantation communities. The majority of preschools run by PREDO are located in temporary buildings, sheds, or buildings borrowed from benefactors in plantations. Borrowed locations are in constant risk of being taken back at any time or being used simultaneously for other purposes, thus, disturbing the smooth run of pre—schools.

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SDC Intervention In June 2007, PREDO approached SDC for funding support to build decent preschool locations. Following the success of a pilot project, SDC has extended the partnership with PREDO and, over the last two years, has co-funded nine pre-school buildings and one toy library in the Nuwara Eliya District.

PREDO's policy is to ensure maximum participation and contribution from the benefitting community.

Projects are, therefore, planned in such a way that upto 30 per cent of expected building costs are contributed by the community itself, which further performs all required unskilled work. Consequently, members of the plantation community would, therewith, always match SDC's contribution.

The Morar Pre-School construction, for instance, had been constructed with an overall budget of LKR 1 million whereas SDC's allocated contribution amounted to LKR 0.5 million. All members of a community without exception, and regardless of whether they are parents of pre-school student or not, contributed a day's earning towards the pre-school building costs. In the case of the Bogawantalawa Pre-School, which further includes a toys library, the total construction costs eventually amounted to LKR 3 million, of which an incredible LKR 2 million have been provided by the community itself.

In short, the PREDO approach centring on community ownership is very successful.

In a further effort, the community's Pre-School Development Society negotiates with the respective

children of neighbouring communities. Though mostly used by the Tamil children from the plantation community, Sinhala children from surrounding villages are given the opportunity to benefit by inviting them to



plantation management for workers being deployed free of charge for construction efforts and for obtaining suitable land for pre-school sites. Finally, maintenance committees ensure proper care of buildings.

Pre-schools are further designed to serve as a meeting place for

organised children's clubs and other activities. The active involvement of communities in the project, and their substantial contributions to it, builds a strong sense of ownership. It is with much pride that they can rightfully claim '*we have done it ourselves!*'

God's Own Children – Interview



God's Own Children (GOC) Foundation is a secular, non-governmental, non-profit organisation, which was established to assist disadvantaged children and their families in the Jaffna Peninsula. GOC Foundation is a non-political entity and provides equal opportunity and access to education to all disadvantaged children who seek our services and does not discriminate on the basis of religion, caste, creed, gender, or other factors. During the last decade, the organisation supported, worked with, and spoke for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children, youth, and their families in the Jaffna Peninsula who have been affected by the tsunami and the war.

Even before the tsunami hit Sri Lanka's northern and eastern coasts in December 2004, most people in the war torn northeast were living below poverty level. A large percentage of people eked out a meagre living.

In a few terrifying minutes, the tsunami took its toll, killing thousands of people and changing the lives of many more by wiping out their livelihoods. Hundreds of thousands of people were left on the verge of plunging into poverty. In its wake, the tsunami left desolate evidence of how vulnerable and poor people in the northeast were forced into the face of shocks and natural disasters.

Most poor people of the Jaffna Peninsula live in rural areas. The civil war in the north and east of the country had a major impact on poverty, leading to the displacement of about 800,000 people from their homes and sources of livelihood. Thousands of children lost one or both parents, and there was an increase in the number of women-headed households, which are more prone to exposure of economic hardships.

More than half of the rural poor people of Jaffna are small scale farmers and agricultural growth in the Jaffna Peninsula has been sluggish. A significant lack of infrastructure (i.e. roads, electricity, and irrigation) and communication facilities limits people's opportunities to earn an income through off-farm activities. Malnutrition among children is also common. In some areas, seven out of ten people have no access to electricity and almost half the population does not have access to safe drinking water. Agriculture is the major employer in rural Jaffna and an important stimulus for other sectors of the economy. Small scale farmers produce most agricultural output, but their production systems are hampered by neglect, poor economies of scale, low investment levels resulting from poor financial services, and inappropriate or limited technology. Other factors that affect farmers' livelihoods include fragmented landholding, post-harvest losses, inconsistent produce pricing and trade policies, and

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market constraints. GOC currently provides the following services to children:

1. Special Needs Schools for Disadvantaged Children

GOC accommodates children who do not attend mainstream schools, as their development is backward and are unable to fit into mainstream schools. A nine-year-old child who should be in Grade 05 does not have the knowledge to be in that level, but can only be placed in Grade 02. GOC accommodates all such children and address their individual needs, in addition to needs of intellectually and physically disabled children. Currently, approximately 400 special needs children benefit from the schools established in Ariyalai, Siththankerny, and Point Pedro.



2. Employment Training Centres for Disadvantaged Youth

GOC operates three Sewing Training Centres in Manipay, Nallur, and Point Pedro with the benefit being reaped by more than 200 adult females, to-date. GOC intends to expand the Employment Training Centres to accommodate a wider section of disadvantaged youth of the Jaffna Peninsula. It has ambitious plans to add-on training programmes in computer and electronics, poultry farming and animal husbandry, and many other employment oriented skills training programmes, in order to ensure that disadvantaged youth learn vital skills to secure income generating opportunities and lead an independent life. These ventures have been put on cold storage, awaiting availability of funds.



3. Re-Integrating 'School Drop-Outs' into the School System

During the weekends, GOC also accommodates slow learners in mainstream schools, who are very backward in class. This is mainly due to malnutrition, lack of facilities at home to study, and the lack of encouragement and motivation from home. The project has contributed towards a significant improvement in the children's performance. A child who should be in Grade 04 previously started off their education in Grade 01, but are now just one grade behind

after four years of Special Education in GOC. Teachers in mainstream schools have also reported excellent progress and performance on the part of the children who were identified as 'slow learners' and were sent to the GOC schools for 'catch up' education. In addition to the education service GOC provides, it also provides milk and a

mid-day nutritional meal or lunch. This has ensured that malnourished children are fed properly and an increase in their nutritional levels, resulting in better concentration in studies and improved levels of performance.

4. Support Rendered to the Department of Education in Identifying Needs of Disadvantaged Children and Fulfilling their Needs

GOC supports disadvantaged children who do not have access to its regular special needs schools, by liaising with officials from Zonal Departments of Education who help GOC identify needs of poor and disadvantaged children in mainstream schools. As a result, GOC has provided needy children with reading spectacles, wheel chairs, school supplies, clothes, shoes, medicines, and other items.

5. Co-Curricular Activities for Neglected and Disadvantaged Children to Enhance their Inherent Talents

GOC conducts co-curricular activities for disadvantaged children, so that they can realise their full potential. These events are conducted annually and include arts and crafts exhibitions, sports days, cultural concerts, debates, dramas, and dance events.

Future Ventures

- ◆ Administration of children's village-type residential facilities for orphaned and IDP children; and
- ◆ Arranging and implementing a micro-finance project scheme for poor and disadvantaged young adults to help with employment ventures.

Joining our Efforts

Interested parties are welcome to join in our ventures by sponsoring a project, sponsoring a child, sponsoring a special meal on the occasion of a birthday, anniversary, other special events, in memory of a loved one, and/or contributing financial assistance.



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Child friendly space activities are in progress and children are engaged in play and recreational activities with comprehensive psychosocial care support. "Even my smallest child is asking me to take him to the play centre. When we see our children happily playing in a safe place, we are relieved and


happy," said the mother of one of the children. Save the Children continues to support efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka in providing relief to displaced communities in Vavuniya, Trincomalee, and Jaffna. Distribution of essential household items, clothes, educational material, setting up temporary learning spaces, and provision of supplementary food are also a part of Save the Children's relief work.

View in: http://www.ckc.lk/Best_of_ckc


Best of
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 [Invitation from HSBC to invest in returnee IDPs.pdf](#) - 61K

 [National Peace Council of Sri Lanka Media Release Provide for democratic choice of displaced population.pdf](#) - 14K

 [SDC Press Release Switzerland donates urgently required essential drugs for IDP treating health facilities in Sri Lanka.pdf](#) - 19K

 [South Asians for Human Rights press release Rain wreaks havoc in IDP camps in the North of Sri Lanka.pdf](#) - 33K

 [UN Press Release India contributes relief items towards UN operations in Sri Lanka 17 August 2009.pdf](#) - 17K