

# *Conducive Environment to Achieve Proper Growth and Development for Infants and Young Children – “Lead Mothers as Change Agents”*

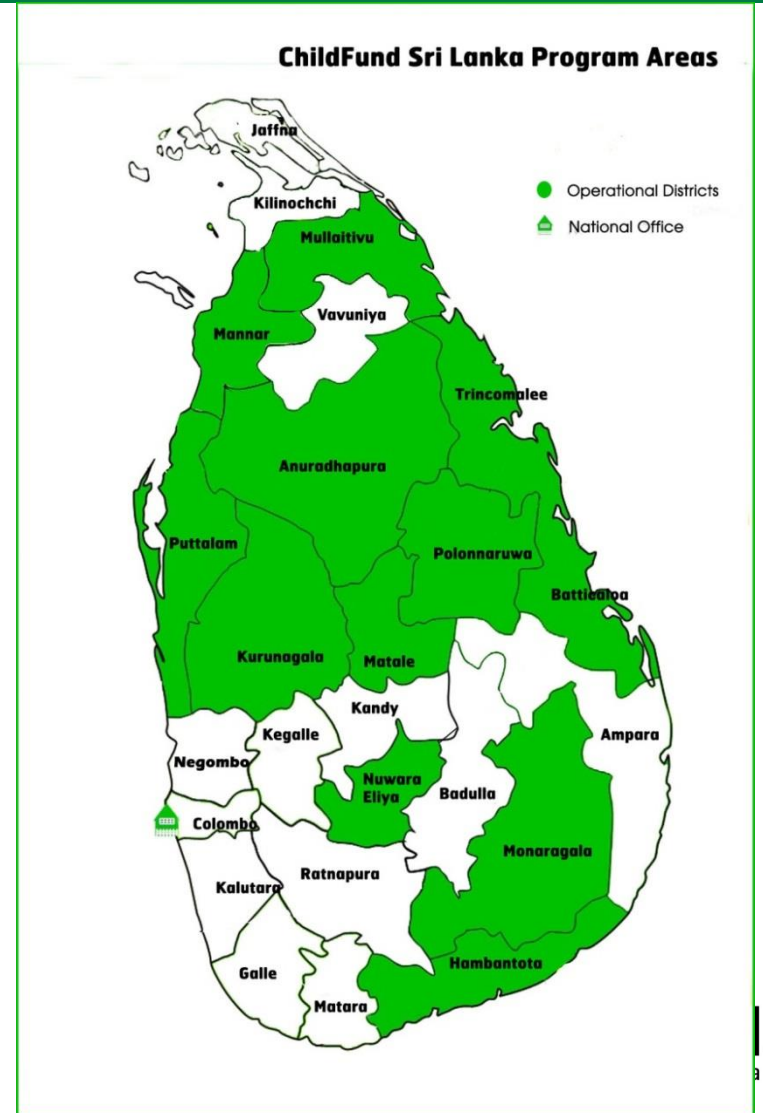
*“Brining positive change to the world’s children since 1938”*

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**ChildFund Sri Lanka**



# ChildFund Sri Lanka

- ✓ Working in 12/24 districts
- ✓ Assisting 20,000 children & their family members
- ✓ Working on life stage approach
  - LS 1: 0-5 years- Healthy & Secure IYCs'
  - LS 2: 6-14 years- Educated & Confident Children
  - LS 3: 15-24 years- Skilled and Involved Youth



# LS 1 program - Healthy & Secure IYCs'

Early childhood often categorized as the age of 0-5 years old, is a critical stage of life.

This is also the stage of life where humans are most vulnerable to conditions such as malnutrition, illnesses, neglect, violence and lack of early childhood stimulation.

Therefore IYCs' should be provided with the enabling environment for them to reach their full potential and grow into healthy adults.



# LS 1 program - Healthy & Secure IYCs'

ChildFund has recognized

The importance of mothers' and other caregivers' knowledge, skills and capacity in children's' health, nutrition and development

AND

The problems associated with existing government services in our working locations

We created a program approach which involved strong community participation called **"Lead Mother"** program.



# Hambantota District in Sri Lanka

- ✓ Hambantota District is located on the southern coast of Sri Lanka.
- ✓ Over half (55%) of the population is dependent primarily on agriculture.
- ✓ Many people cultivate seasonal crops and rear livestock as their main source of income.
- ✓ One of the areas subject to frequent and prolonged droughts.
- ✓ 4/11 DS Divisions where ChildFund is operational reported high incidence of poverty and child Malnutrition.



# Problem Analysis

- ✓ Poor parental awareness on health & nutritional care of children.
- ✓ Low Parents' knowledge to identify the development stages of children.
- ✓ Poor knowledge regarding learning situations in the home and maximizing the use of limited human and material resources available in the home environment.
- ✓ Parents having no time to engage with children since they are to work full time on income generation.
- ✓ Absence of opportunities available for mothers and other caregivers in rural communities to gain new knowledge and skills relevant to child growth & development.

# ***“Conducive Environment to Achieve Proper Growth and Development for Infants and Young Children ”***

ChildFund Sri Lanka, in partnership with Ruhunu Wellassa Area Federation – A local community based organization, implemented the project called ***“Conducive Environment to Achieve Proper Growth and Development for Infants and Young Children ”*** benefiting 429 children aged 0-5 years, 1307 parents and other caregivers during the period of June,2012- June,2015.



# Objective of the project

## Ensuring conducive environment for infants and young children

Through improving knowledge, skills and capacity of mothers and other caregivers about health, nutrition and early childhood development

Using

**“Lead Mother” concept as the key project approach.**





# Implementation of project activities

- Selected 33 mothers who have children 0-5 years old and are ready to serve as volunteers.
- Program interventions were planned to make them technically equipped, active, knowledgeable, and skillful.



- The key role of Lead Mothers'
- Act as peer educators to improve knowledge, attitudes, and practices of mothers and other primary caregivers.

# Implementation of project activities

## Mothers Discussion Groups

- Lead Mothers were expected to have meetings with a group of mothers and other caregivers in their respective community.



- Mothers and other caregivers in these groups learnt through discussions and games about factors and conditions influence a child's nutrition, health and development.

# Implementation of project activities

## Home Visits

Lead Mothers are expected to visit individual households to ensure both parents get trained on child health, nutrition and developmental practices.



Once a month all the families in each group met at one members house to share their experience and learn from each other and to provide opportunity for children to eat and play together.

# Assessment

An assessment was conducted at the end of the program to examine the relevance, effectiveness, main outcomes, issues and concerns of the program.

**Special objective- To assess the outcomes in relation to changes in skills, behaviors and practices of parents and caregivers resulting through “Lead Mother” approach.**

Variety of tools were used to gather required data and information including

- Literature reviews
- Interviews ( KII)
- FGDs
- Observations

# Findings

- **Mothers have changed their approaches and behaviors** in working with children giving them more freedom and recognizing their needs as children
- **Fathers also have changed their negative habits or controlled their behaviors** in respect to their children.
- **100% recovery of underweight children** among families who participated in the program
- **90% of households built play houses for children** and allocated separate place within their home for children called "**Child Friendly Corner**"
- The program **effectively network with government** health officials and supplements their work.

# Limitations

1. Getting the fathers participation for program activities as they are out of homes most of the time for income and economic reasons.
2. Available trainings were not customized to the context and capacity of Lead Mothers
3. Peer to peer interaction is limited since mothers who have children 0-5 were given the high priority at the selection of Lead Mothers

# Conclusion

- ✓ Unique value of this program is its' **emphasis on home based early childhood care and development** and popularizing this concept among the wider community.
- ✓ This program interventions are filling an important gap in application and reaching out ECCD programs articulated at the national level to the application at local level.
- ✓ This program has a demand and is also required by families with special needs irrespective of their socio-economic status and there is an **opportunity of developing social service delivery mechanism based on social enterprise model.**

Thank You  
Any questions?