

# Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Report on  
Voluntary Residential Institutions  
for Children in Sri Lanka: Statistical Analysis

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Ministry of  
Child Development  
and Women's Empowerment



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## Forewords

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The situation of voluntary homes in Sri Lanka has been discussed for a long time, and several reports have been written. The need to collect precise data on the homes, and clarify once and for all how many homes currently operate in the country, and what kind of services they provide to children, has been repeatedly expressed.

Finally such need has been responded to; this report provides a general overview of the situation of voluntary residential care institutions, which is unprecedented, as the result of a national survey conducted in the past months. The survey focused on the identification of all the voluntary homes operating in Sri Lanka, and on the verification of how they ensure minimum quality standards, as they have been defined by Probation and Child Care Services.<sup>1</sup>

A particular recognition goes to the work of the Probation Officers (POs) and Child Rights Promotion Officers (CRPOs) who conducted the assessment. They have demonstrated that public services can function in an efficient way, when objectives are clearly defined, and action plans are detailed and time-bound.

This report is particularly useful for the definition and implementation of activities in the sector of probation and child care services – in particular those defined within the National Plan of Action for Children in Sri Lanka. It will serve also as a background analysis for the definition of new policies focused on improving the life conditions of children separated from their families, temporarily or permanently. Some actions can be implemented immediately, with the involvement of all the professionals working for the welfare of children. In particular, efforts should be multiplied to:

- ensure the registration of all the homes, and their regular inspection conducted by POs and CRPOs, whose main responsibility is to ensure the welfare of children in need of protection;
- monitor the application of minimum quality standards, as defined in the circular currently enforced, and in the updated document that is being prepared by the Provincial Commissioners of Probation and Child Care;
- ensure the active involvement of POs for every admission to residential care. This provision will be included in the amended version of the Orphanage Ordinance, which will be soon submitted to the Legal Draftsman for the preparation of the Bill to be approved;
- support the preparation of a Case File for each child admitted to residential care, for the development of care plans resulting from the cooperation of Probation and Child Care officers with the management and caregivers of voluntary homes;
- carefully evaluate the need to open new residential institutions, and prioritize the use of available resources for the improvement of the existing facilities, and the development of alternative care services – such as networks of foster families.

My sincere thanks go to UNICEF Country Office in Sri Lanka, which sustained the realization of the survey and the publication of the report; and to Ms. Cristina Roccella, who coordinated the assessment campaign and wrote this document.

A special thought goes to all our children living in institutions, knowing that more work needs to be done to give voice to their wishes, and to take into serious consideration their opinions while defining new policies for their care and protection.

**Indrani Sugathadasa**  
**Secretary**

**Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment**

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Probation and Child Care, *Fixation of General Standards for Promoting the Quality of Services in Voluntary Children's Homes*, S3/Gon/15, 15<sup>th</sup> October 1991 – reported in Annex IV

UNICEF has long been aware of the challenges facing voluntary care homes throughout Sri Lanka. These homes house almost 20,000 children, a huge population who have little contact with their parents, and as such rely on the smooth and humane functioning of systemic care for their daily needs.

This is a quantitative report (that complements other qualitative reports) and as such forms the first complete baseline study of children caught in the web of institutionalization. With this study, we are able to sort fact from fiction, to establish specifics from generalizations, and to form a fairly accurate picture from what has formerly been a series of often grim impressions.

It is a tribute to the Sri Lankan state that the wellbeing of children is held to be of such importance that there exists systemic care at all, whereas in many countries children who 'fall between the cracks' might be left to roam the streets and fend for themselves. Professionals dealing with this issue understand the vast array of potential reasons why a child might find their way into institutionalized care in Sri Lanka. Some children fall foul of the law, while others are placed there in a bid to protect them from abusive environments at home. This report indicates that the two major reasons which account for the majority of these children - poverty and education - means that new and better solutions can be brought to bear which offer children a greater chance of success and happiness in life.

Internationally, UNICEF advocates for alternative remedies for children whose homes don't or can't provide adequate care and support, or whose parents are desperate to provide their children with opportunities they themselves simply can't provide. The preferred solution - given that the best possible environment for children is generally with their families - is to try to prevent children being separated from their homes in the first place. As UNICEF's experience shows, simple and cost-effective support provided in a timely fashion to households reduces the institutionalization of children. In cases where families are simply not capable of taking proper care of children, networks of foster families, themselves provided with additional support from the state, can form the backbone of an alternative care system for children, which is the next-best-thing to family care.

UNICEF welcomes the fulsome support and leadership which the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment has shown over this issue, and we look forward to developing in partnership with the Ministry a series of solutions for Sri Lankan children who are in residential care.

**JoAnna Van Gerpen  
Representative  
UNICEF Sri Lanka**

## Acknowledgments

This report is the result of a national assessment campaign requested and strongly supported by the Secretary of the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment in Sri Lanka, and by all the Provincial Commissioners of Probation and Child Care Services (PCCS).

The campaign has been prepared with the active participation of the staff of the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment, in particular Ms. Kanthi Gunatillake, Senior Assistant Secretary, and Ms. Urani Wickramasinghe, Development Assistant; and of the National Department of PCCS, under the capable coordination of the Commissioner, Mr. Sarath Abeygunawardena.

The questionnaire for the assessment of voluntary homes has been developed with the valuable contribution of representatives of the international NGOs implementing programs of de-institutionalisation and reunification of children in Sri Lanka, in particular Save the Children, CCF, Maltheser, Enfants du Mond and Amici dei Bambini.

The same organizations have given precious suggestions for the preparation of the Case File,<sup>2</sup> which has been finalized through fruitful consultations with several teams of Probation Officers (POs) and Child Rights Promotion Officers (CRPOs).

The survey and the final report could not be realized without the contribution of UNICEF Country Office in Sri Lanka,<sup>3</sup> and without the continuous and friendly support of UNICEF Child Protection Teams in Colombo and in the Zone Offices, during all the steps of the project. Particular thanks to Andrew Brooks and Yasmin Haque for their advice, Lara Scott for her suggestions, Peter Leth for his maps, Sajeeva Samaranayake for the fruitful discussions and the support.

The constant and enthusiastic cooperation of the consultants has been essential: Harshana Nanayakkara for all the legal aspects of the institutional care; Kumudu Perera for the thorough verification of data; and Patricia Purves for the accurate editing of the document.

The database related to the Case File has been designed and installed in all the Probation and Child Care Departments by Reshanthini Kuharajan and Vinoraj Ratnaraj, who demonstrated remarkable professionalism.

The assessment of voluntary homes has been conducted entirely by the team of POs, CRPOs and PAs (programme assistants) mentioned in Annex I, who have demonstrated strong commitment and admirable dedication, despite the difficulties encountered due to the challenging working conditions and the worsening of security situations in some areas.<sup>4</sup>

A final thanks goes to all the managers and the staff of the voluntary homes, who have facilitated the work of the assessors and provided detailed information about their institutions.

This report is dedicated to all the Sri Lankan children living separated from their families,  
out of our sight and out of our minds,  
with the wish that they could soon realize all their dreams, as they deserve.

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<sup>2</sup> A tool designed to facilitate the assessment and the definition of care plans for the children living in institutions and other children in need of special protection. See also the Introduction of this report

<sup>3</sup> Beside providing the funds for the survey and the publication of the report, UNICEF also supports the collaboration of the author of the report with the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment, as Social Policies Advisor

<sup>4</sup> The team includes the UNICEF Child Protection officers working in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, who conducted the assessment directly.





## Findings

- ⇒ **488** voluntary residential homes provide care to children in Sri Lanka; **52** of them are for children with disabilities
- ⇒ **342** voluntary children's homes are registered; most of the others started the registration process, but **36** did not yet take any action in this direction
- ⇒ At the end of 2006 more than **19,000** children were living in these institutions, separated from their families; girls outnumber boys by 8 percent (i.e. they represent **54%**)
- ⇒ The main funding source of voluntary homes is private donations by Sri Lankan citizens; **203** homes receive Government contributions, out of which **20** are not registered
- ⇒ Out of every **10** children living in institutions, **3** have both parents; **5** have one parent; the other **2** are orphans or their family situation is not known
  
- **172 voluntary homes (36%) are fully compliant with the standards related to the essential facilities**
  - ⇒ **3** out of **10** homes do not have enough beds for all the children
  - ⇒ In **3** out of **10** homes children do not have cupboards for their personal belongings
  - ⇒ **3** out of **10** homes do not have running water, but have wells in the premises
  
- **118 voluntary homes (25%) are fully compliant with the standards related to the facilities for free time and leisure**
  - ⇒ In **1** home out of **2** adequate facilities for sport activities are not available for the children
  - ⇒ **2** out of **5** homes do not have a proper library
  
- **240 voluntary homes (50%) are fully compliant with the standards related to the organization of daily activities**
  
- **228 voluntary homes (48%) are fully compliant with the standards related to the maintenance of the general documentation**
  
- **Only 12 voluntary homes (2%) are fully compliant with the standards related to the individual care of children**
  - ⇒ **3** out of **10** homes do not keep personal files for the children. This problem affects more than **4,100** children
  - ⇒ In **2** out of **5** homes not all the children have birth certificates
  - ⇒ More than **9,000** children are not regularly visited by a doctor
  - ⇒ More than **2,000** children do not attend school regularly
  - ⇒ In **4** out of **5** homes children do not have legal custodians appointed while they are deprived of parental care; the lack of legal protection affects more than **15,000** children
  - ⇒ **9** out of **10** homes do not signal orphans to the services for adoption: more than **2,000** children are denied the possibility to have a family
  - ⇒ In **3** out of **10** homes placement committees do not meet regularly, or at all
  - ⇒ Out of every **10** children, **5** see their family every month; **3** a few times per year; **2** never
  - ⇒ **1** child in every **10** never goes home

## Introduction

Institutional care is at present the most common – or, rather, the almost sole – solution for children deprived of parental care in Sri Lanka. Fostering is possible through the issuing of a Fit Person Order, but such an order is utilized only in cases where children can be entrusted to a relative. Furthermore, the recourse to institutional care is frequently practiced also to solve family problems not related to parental care: children are sent to institutions either through an intervention of the officers of the Department of Probation and Child Care Service (DPCCS) - which is the agency providing social services to children<sup>5</sup> - or directly by parents.

Residential institutions run by the State are very limited in number,<sup>6</sup> and admit primarily children who have been in contact with the law for various reasons. Most of the residential institutions in Sri Lanka are run by voluntary organizations (they are officially defined “voluntary children’s homes”), and receive private funds from citizens and non-governmental organizations in the country or from abroad.

The capacity of the public services to monitor the situation of the residential institutions for children - starting from the precise knowledge of their total number, their location and the number of children hosted - has been questioned several times in the last ten years;<sup>7</sup> meanwhile, the number of voluntary homes, and of institutionalised children, has continued to grow in an uncontrolled manner.

Starting from these considerations, the Ministry of Child Development and Women’s Empowerment has promoted, in cooperation with UNICEF, a project for the assessment of all the voluntary homes, with the support of the National and the Provincial Commissioners of Probation and Child Care (PCC).

### Objectives of the assessment campaign

The primary objectives of the assessment campaign were to:

- gather reliable data on the number of voluntary homes operating in Sri Lanka; homes have been identified by PCC officers based on their knowledge of the territory where they work, and on information gathered at community level;
- verify the status of their registration, and the implementation of the minimum quality standards as defined in the circular issued by the DPCCS, which should be the reference document for residential care;<sup>8</sup>
- gather basic information on all the children hosted in homes at present, including their family situation and the kind of contacts maintained with the next of kin.

### Research methodology and tools

A structured questionnaire with a range of pre-defined answers to each question<sup>9</sup> (attached in Annex II) has been designed to collect all the relevant information, with the intention of

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<sup>5</sup> The Social Services Offices, under the Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare, are mandated to assist families as a whole, but are not involved when special protection measures for children deprived (or at risk of being deprived) of parental care are required

<sup>6</sup> The total number of State run homes is 21, and includes 8 Receiving homes (or orphanages), 5 Remand homes, 4 Certified Schools (or juvenile prisons), 1 Detention Home, 3 Rehabilitation centres

<sup>7</sup> Starting with V. Samaraweera, *Report on the Abused Child and the Legal process of Sri Lanka*, submitted to the National Monitoring Committee on the Children’s Charter, unpublished document, 1997

<sup>8</sup> Department of Probation and Child Care, *op. cit.* – reported in Annex IV

achieving a consolidated quantitative picture. The results of the survey, reported in this document, intend to serve as a baseline for the definition of interventions aiming at the improvement of care services provided to children, supported by the qualitative analyses already available in Sri Lanka.<sup>10</sup>

The objectives and methodologies of the campaign have been discussed in a residential workshop involving a representation of POs and CRPOs working in all the Districts of Sri Lanka.<sup>11</sup> The same officers have then conducted field visits to administer the questionnaire to all the children's voluntary homes operating in their Districts and personally verify the information provided. The assessment campaign took place from October 2006 to February 2007. The forms were collected by and analyzed at the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment, and information has been verified either directly with the homes' managers or during a second workshop organized in May 2007 for the assessment team.

## Caveats

The questions for the assessment on voluntary homes were defined on the basis of the minimum quality standards issued by the DPCCS. Therefore, other aspects of child care which would be considered relevant – even essential – for the proper understanding of the life conditions of children in residential institutions are not included.

In order to be able to have data in a timely manner, the assessment was done through single field visits to the homes; it can be assumed that some aspects could be assessed only superficially. POs and CRPOs were asked to verify as much as possible the information personally, but on some issues (for example the participation of children to the programming of activities, or the contacts of children with the families) the questionnaire reflects the answers of the managers and caregivers, which could not be verified further. It ought to be mentioned also that difficulties were faced by all the teams in reaching the homes located in the most remote areas. In addition the efforts of the assessors were seriously hindered in some Districts by the volatile and insecure situation determined by the conflict.

As for any survey, the individual capacity of assessors has to be taken in consideration to evaluate the accuracy of the information gathered. For example, it was noticed that some professionals have the tendency to look more at the gaps in the services provided to children, while others focus more on the positive aspects. Furthermore, despite the verification of most of the uncertain answers, in some cases a lack of information still remains due to the incapacity of the home managers to give an answer, or to the incapacity of the assessors to get it.

Although the assessment is quantitative, rather than qualitative, the information gathered is of considerable value, giving a general overview of the situation of voluntary homes in Sri Lanka. The collection of data on this scale, while complementing the findings of other reports, highlights some issues which should be given further attention towards defining future policies for institutional care.

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<sup>9</sup> Technically defined "closed answers", this option allows the gathering of uniform reports with data that can statistically elaborated, without giving space to the autonomous interpretation of answers by the assessors. The disadvantage of this kind of questionnaire is that it does not capture all aspects of specific situations, which might not fully correspond to the pre-determined options

<sup>10</sup> In particular, the study published by Save the Children in Sri Lanka: R. Jayathilake, H. Amarasuriya, *Home truths. Children's Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka*, 2005; and the recent *Report on the Human Rights Conditions of State Children's Homes in Sri Lanka*, prepared by the Monitoring and Review Division of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

<sup>11</sup> With the exclusion of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, where the assessment has been conducted by UNICEF Child Protection Officers; and Jaffna, from where the officers could not join the workshop due to the restrictions of movement caused by the ongoing conflict. The same officers managed to conduct the assessment anyway, despite the particularly difficult situation in the area and their data have been incorporated in the statistical charts

## **Beyond the survey: first steps towards case management**

The assessment campaign has represented the occasion also to discuss the role and accountability that PCC officers should have towards children in institutions, and in general towards children in need of special protection – as defined in their list of duties.

Although the relevant laws currently enforced in Sri Lanka<sup>12</sup> do not provide for the obligation to identify legal custodians for children deprived of parental care (temporarily or permanently), it is a common understanding that children who do not live with their parents require more attention from the public services to ensure their protection and the respect of their rights, as well as the fulfillment of their needs.

The role of POs and CRPOs has increasingly assumed the profile of Case Managers, in the awareness that as professional figures they are positioned at the centre of the network of services providing protection and care to children. It is their responsibility to ensure that all the resources available are identified and activated to provide the best care solution to every child, starting from the assessment of needs.

For this reason, a new form has been designed, with the contribution of POs and CRPOs, to guide and standardize the collection of information related to each child falling under the purview of PCCS, focusing on the definition of individual care plans (“Case File: Assessment and Action Plan” – attached in Annex III). The document is divided into three sections. The first contains all the relevant personal data of each child; the second guides towards the definition of an action plan, based on the specific needs identified for each child, with the involvement of all those considered able to contribute to the protection and care of the child (first and foremost the family members). The last section has to be filled with the updates on the implementation of the actions defined and the necessary follow up, to be decided through case conferences.

The form has been endorsed by all the Commissioners of PCCS, and 30,000 copies have been distributed all over the island; it should be utilized to gather information about the children in institutions, but also as the main assessment checklist for all the cases requiring the intervention of PCCS. It aims at becoming the primary working tool for the PCC officers, progressively replacing the forms currently utilized to present cases in Court and to discuss them at the case conferences organized by the District Child Development Committees.

Software with the database related to the Case File has been installed in all the Departments of PCCS, in order to analyze the data collected and define the typologies of the cases followed. While monitoring the work of POs and CRPOs on individual cases, the database can help to identify the major gaps and needs of the public services in providing assistance to children, both at provincial and at national level.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In particular the Orphanage Ordinance, and the Children and Young Persons Ordinance (CYPO)

<sup>13</sup> In consideration of the difficulties to introduce new working methodologies and tools, and of the structural difficulties of the DPCCS (related to the lack of staff and of basic conditions to perform the work) it is understood that the effective use of the database will require a longer period to be in place; however, the campaign was the proper occasion to start introducing these tools and re-orienting the officers' working practices

## Part I. Basic data

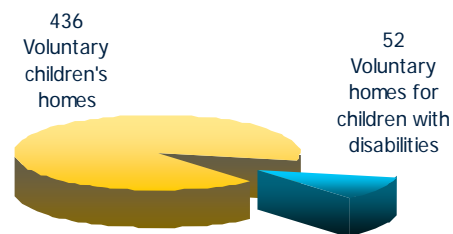
The first part of the questionnaire has been designed to collect basic quantitative data on each voluntary home, and on the children hosted.

### 1. Focus on voluntary homes

#### Number and location

**Chart 1: Number and type of residential institutions assessed**

The assessment team has identified in Sri Lanka **488** voluntary residential institutions, out of which **52** (almost 11%) are homes for children with disabilities,<sup>14</sup> under the responsibility of the Department of Social Services; the other **436** fall under the Department of Probation and Child Care.<sup>15</sup> These include both boarding schools<sup>16</sup> (when education is provided to children within the institution) and residential institutions (where children live, but go to school outside).



It is worth mentioning that the institutions for children with disabilities were spontaneously included in the survey by the POs and CRPOs, despite the fact that those homes don't fall under their responsibility: this would suggest that, despite the administrative division of tasks, children with disabilities are taken in consideration as well as the others in the evaluation of the residential care services and the related policies. The suggestion should be taken in consideration by policy makers at national level, to ensure that children with disabilities are considered like other children, entitled to the same rights, and are not treated separately in the provision of services, as well as in the definition of inclusive and human rights based welfare interventions.

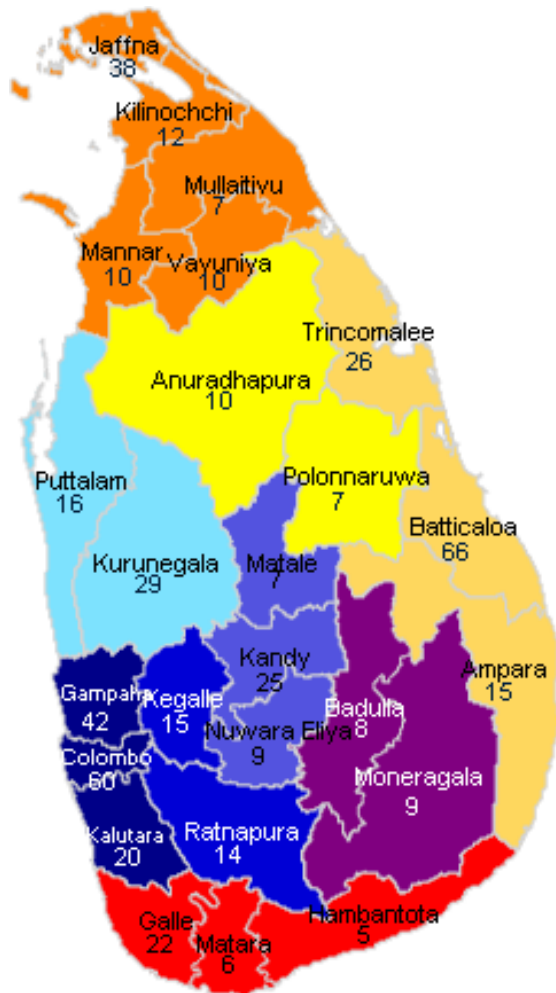
The location of the homes is shown in the following chart:

<sup>14</sup> The institutions for persons with disabilities registered as institutions for adults have not been included in the survey, even when they host some children. In 7 homes for children with disabilities (3 in Galle, 3 in Jaffna and 1 in Anuradhapura) the assessment was not conducted, because the assessors were not informed about the common decision to include these homes, or because the existence of the home was discovered after the completion of the assessment. The information was provided after the database was closed. The assessment of these homes will have to be conducted in future and added to the database for future reference.

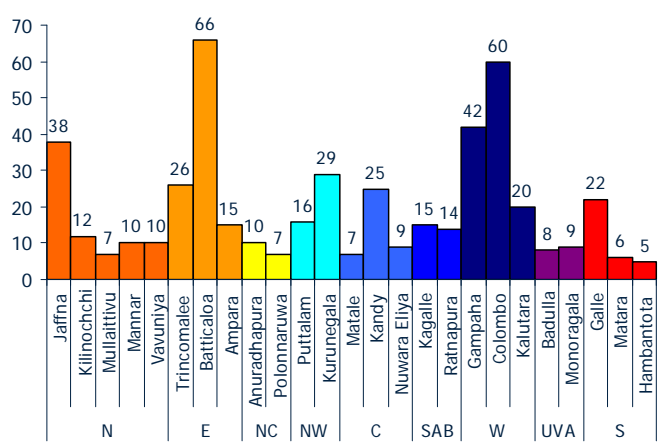
<sup>15</sup> As foreseen, the number is considerably higher than the one reported annually by the DPCCS, registering only 233 voluntary institutions with 11,128 children. See Department of Probation and Child Care Services, *Statistical Report 2005*, Colombo. The numbers are more in line with those reported in the publication of Save the Children, with a slight increase in all the Districts, apart from Jaffna (where the assessors excluded all the school hostels, and reported that 8 voluntary homes have been closed in the past year).

<sup>16</sup> But don't include school hostels, where families pay a fee for the private education of children

**Chart 2: Geographical distribution of voluntary homes in Sri Lanka, by District**



**Batticaloa** is the District with the highest number of homes, followed by **Colombo**; **Hambantota** the one with less homes

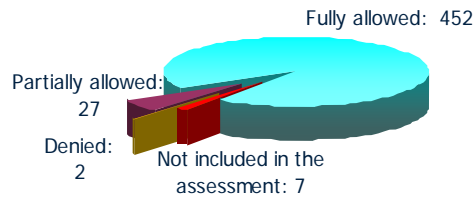


## Access to information during the assessment

The large majority of the homes' managers have given full cooperation to the assessors during the survey, allowing unrestricted access to premises and information, in the awareness that it is a core function of PCC officers to inspect the homes regularly, and to maintain close contact with children – as defined in their list of duties.

**Chart 3: Access of the assessors to voluntary homes**

In two cases it was not possible to conduct the assessment, due to the refusal of the homes managers; in addition, 7 homes for children with disabilities have not been included in the assessment, as previously mentioned.



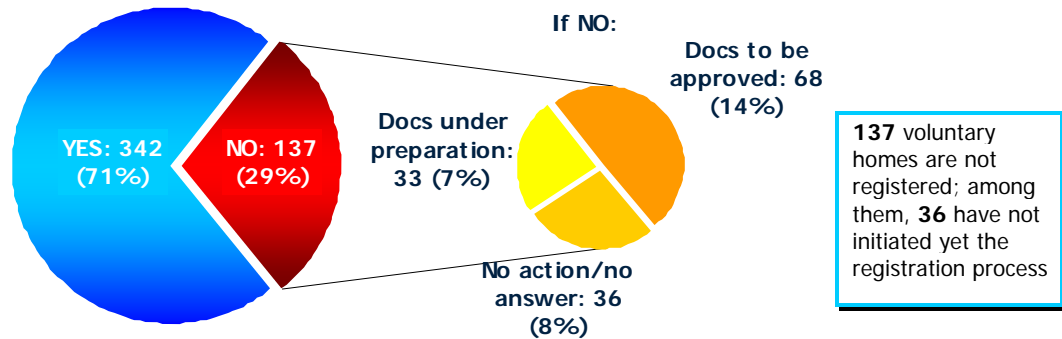
As a result, the total number of voluntary homes considered for statistical analysis from now onwards is **479**.

The access was reported as partially allowed in the cases where not all the information were available, or could not be thoroughly verified.

## Registration

**137** voluntary homes were declared not yet to be registered, as prescribed in the Orphanage Ordinance. The problem regards both the homes under the responsibility of the DPCCS (**123**) and the homes for children with disabilities (**14**). In most of the cases the documents for the registration are under preparation (**33**) or have been already presented, and are waiting for the endorsement of the relevant department (**68**). However, **36** homes declared not to have taken any action to be registered.

**Chart 4: Status of the registration of voluntary homes**



**20** homes were registered before 1960 (2 in the 1920s, 11 in the 1940s and 7 in the 1950s), and **85** between 1960 and 1991, when the circular of the DPCCS on minimum quality standards was issued. **16** institutions were reportedly registered, but it was not possible to verify the documents. If the registration of homes is not only related to the issuing of a certificate, but implies also the evaluation of the living conditions offered to children, a

periodical review of the situation in the homes should be conducted, in consideration of the updates in the requirements for institutional care.

Although, as we will see, the lack of registration does not necessarily mean a lack of contact with the public services, registration is a necessary step not only to comply with the existing laws, but also to ensure the proper acknowledgement and control from public services, and the due protection to the children in residential care.

## Funding Sources

Each voluntary home may receive funds from several sources.

**294 homes (61%)** benefit from private donations of Sri Lankan citizens: **60 homes (13%)** operate exclusively on these donations. **249 institutions (52%)** receive donations from international organizations or citizens living abroad, and this is the only funding source for **65 of them (14%)**. One third of the homes receives funds from faith based organizations, **54 of them (11%)** in an exclusive way.<sup>17</sup>

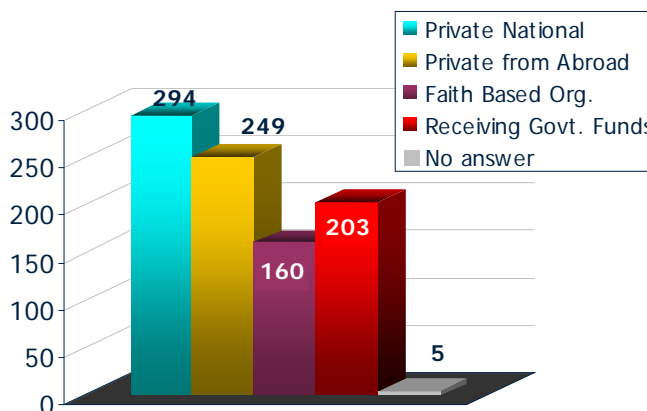
**203 homes, or 42%** of the total, receive a contribution from the Government, in the form of monthly allowances per child (from 300 to 600 Rupees) and in some cases annual *ad hoc* grants for the improvement of the premises (up to 75,000 Rupees, but the amount cannot cover more than the 50% of the budget required).

Among the homes receiving Government contributions, **21** are not registered, and **35** are not in regular contacts with POs/CRPOs.<sup>18</sup> This can be read – together with the total independence of the majority of voluntary homes from public funds - as a first signal of the weakness of the public services in monitoring the situation of children in residential care.



**Chart 5: Funding sources<sup>19</sup>**

**3 homes out of 5** receive private donations in-country;  
**1 home in every 2** receives funds from abroad;  
**1 in every 3** relates to religious organizations;  
**2 homes out of 5** receive Government funds – but not all of them are in contact with public services



<sup>17</sup> But this number doesn't represent the total number of voluntary homes run by faith based organizations

<sup>18</sup> Among these, 19 are homes for children with disabilities, and therefore the lack of regular contact is justified. For the other 16 the issue is significant

<sup>19</sup> In most of the cases the answer given is multiple, since every home receives funds from more than one source; therefore the sum of the answers obviously exceeds the total number of homes



## 2. Focus on children

### Number and sex

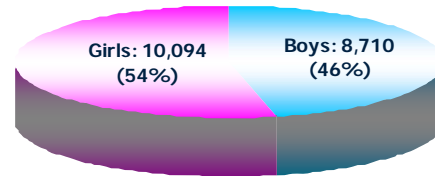
The total number of children residing in institutions at the time of the survey amounts to **18,804**.<sup>20</sup> The number includes **1,491** children with disabilities (8% of the total).

They are hosted in **179** homes for boys (6,351 boys) and **171** homes for girls (6,354 girls); the remaining 6,099 children live in **129** homes for both sexes.

Bearing in mind that 9 voluntary homes have not been included in the assessment<sup>21</sup> (therefore the number of children hosted there is not known), it is possible to assume that **more than 19,000** Sri Lankan children live separated from their families in voluntary residential institutions. Together with the around 2,100 children hosted in State-run institutions,<sup>22</sup> the **more than 21,000** children living in residential care in Sri Lanka represent 0.3% of the population between 0 and 18 years.

**Chart 6: Number and sex of children in voluntary residential institutions**

In residential institutions girls outnumber boys of **8** points percent



According to the Census conducted in Sri Lanka in 2001, out of the total population between 0 and 19 years, males represent 50.9%, and females 49.1%.<sup>23</sup> The fact that in voluntary homes the number of girls is considerably higher than the one of boys, tells us that the likelihood to be sent to a residential institution is much higher for a girl than for a boy. But this is not true for children with disabilities, among whom the share by sex (50% each) almost corresponds to the national one.

The distribution by sex varies considerably in the different Provinces: if in the Central, Eastern and Uva Provinces the share of girls is around **60%**, in the North Central and Southern Provinces it almost reaches **70%**. In the North Western, Western and most of all in Saburagamuwa Province the number of boys in residential institutions is higher than the number of girls.

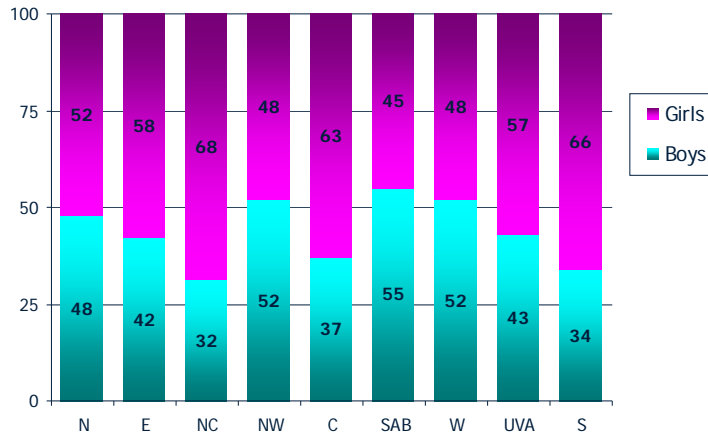
<sup>20</sup> Numbers are likely to vary very often, due to the continuous movement of children in and out of institutions, and in the last months especially due to the mass movement of the population in some Districts, as a consequence of the resumption of hostilities

<sup>21</sup> See note 13

<sup>22</sup> Statistics for 2005 report 1,418 children in remand homes, 179 children in certified schools, 340 children in receiving homes and 401 children in other state run institutions, for a total of 2,159. But the number of children admitted in remand homes should be revised, since every time one child returns to the home after attending a Court session he/she is registered as a new admission. See Department of Probation and Child Care Services, *Op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Elaboration on crude data of the National Department of Statistics. See [http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Abstract\\_2006/Tables/chap%202/AB2-6.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Abstract_2006/Tables/chap%202/AB2-6.pdf)

**Chart 7: Children in institutions by sex and Province (%)**



Whatever might be the reason for this imbalance, a more in-depth analysis is required to better understand the gender dynamics of institutionalization, and define specific interventions to address it.

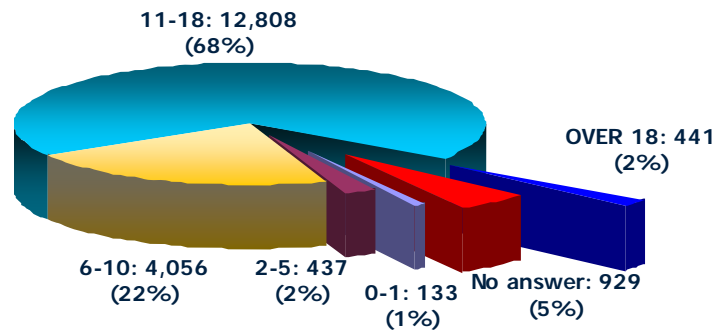


## Age groups

**Chart 8: Age groups of children in residential institutions**

**Out of 10 children** in residential institutions, 2 are between 6 and 10 years old, 7 are more than 11 years old.

**2 young adults out of every 100** don't leave the institutions after reaching the age of 18



The large majority of children in institutions are aged between 11 and 18 years; this finding supports the idea that after the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of school, in several cases, families are obliged to send children to residential institutions to ensure the continuation of their education, due to the lack of education facilities in remote villages.

The chart shows that the percentages of infants and young children in institutions are very small. This serves as confirmation that in the majority of cases children have families who can take care of them until a certain age.

The share of infants is slightly higher than average (2%) in the Western Province (mostly in Colombo District); the highest concentrations of children between 2 and 5 years are located in the Southern and in the Western Provinces (5% in both).

The highest shares of children between 6 and 10 years are located in the Southern (31%) and North Western Provinces (29%). Since these two regions are among the most developed areas of the country, it is unlikely that those children had been sent to voluntary homes due to the lack of school facilities in the proximity of their houses, or because of a

weaker economic situation of their families. Once again, numbers suggest that a more in-depth analysis is needed to understand the causes of institutionalisation.

Children between 11 and 18 years represent the large majority in all the Provinces, with peaks in the Eastern (78%) and Saburagamuwa Provinces (76%).

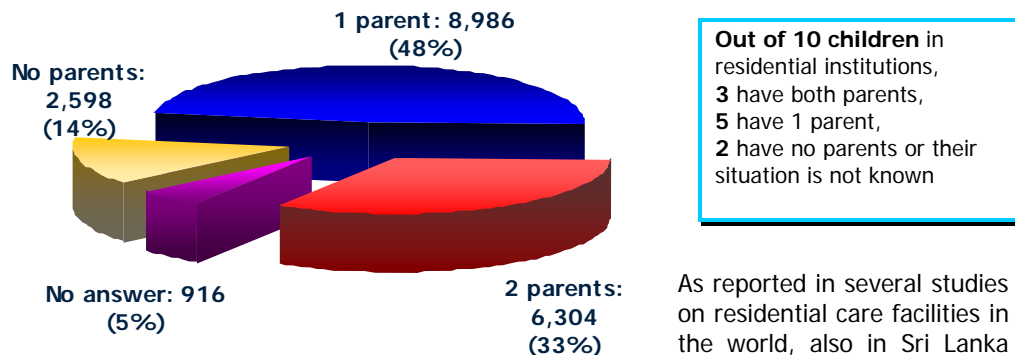
For around **1,000** children (mostly located in the Northern Province) it was not possible to obtain data about their age. This doesn't necessarily mean that their age is not known, but rather that data are not collected or kept in a way that allows for the provision of immediate answers.

It is important to note that **2%** of children do not leave residential institutions after their 18<sup>th</sup> year of age (with peaks over 3% in the Eastern, Western, and North Central Provinces). It is very likely that these young adults do not have a family to whom they may return, and also it is clear that life in residential institutions did not allow them to strengthen or re-create links with their communities, which could help them to find their place in society on return there. It is a globally well documented fact that – by being closed environments - residential institutions tend to weaken the already labile connections of children with their environment of provenance. In this way, young adults continue to present a problem for society even after their childhood, and may be less capable than others to provide for their livelihood. In a society like the Sri Lankan one, where gender differences are evident still in the life style and traditional culture, the possibility of living a protected and independent life out of a family is even smaller for girls, if they have spent the large part of their childhood in a residential institution.

### Family situation

The data collected on the family situation of children confirm the fact that residential institutions are not only or mainly providing care to children who lost their parents:

**Chart 9: Family situation of children in residential institutions**



the large majority of children living in institutions do have a family. In most of the cases, it is the family who takes children to voluntary homes, for a wide range of reasons. Therefore, it may be presumed that a large number of cases of institutionalization would be avoided if there is in place a clearly defined and implemented policy to support families. Family should be considered the primary unit not only of society, but more specifically of care and protection "services" for children – and not a passive beneficiary, whenever the capacity of the family to cope with problems and to find solutions is weakened or not activated at all. A more clear focus on family in child care policies could strengthen awareness about the rights to protection and care to which every child is entitled.

It should be mentioned that the findings show that for 1 child in every 20 (i.e. for **916** children) the situation of the family is not known: if in the case of the children's age the lack of answers was most likely due to a weakness of the homes' management in maintaining

data, in this case the information concerning family is more likely to be completely unknown to them. It is not uncommon to find cases where the movement from one service to another during the years caused the complete breaking of links of children with their kinship. These cases, together with those of the children who lost both parents, and those who have been abandoned, should call for the highest attention of public services, since these children are in fact deprived of parental care.<sup>24</sup> These are the cases where the need for care and protection is most evident, and residential institutions cannot represent the most appropriate solution for children in the long run, if we pay attention to their best interests.

### 3. Staff

A total number of **3,241** persons work in residential voluntary institutions in Sri Lanka, on a professional or voluntary basis: **67%** is composed by women, the remaining **33%** are men. **44%** provide direct care to children (i.e. are classified as “caregivers”); **35%** work as support staff, and **21%** deal with the administration of the homes.<sup>25</sup> In **441** homes (92% of the total) the majority of caregivers has passed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of school, i.e. possesses the Ordinary Level Certificate, as required by the minimum quality standards; 38 homes have declared the contrary.

The average children-to-staff ratio is **16** children per caregiver. The proportion increases in institutions for girls only, where on average one caregiver takes care of 19 girls, and is slightly lower in mixed institution, where there is one caregiver for 13 children.

The ratio decreases importantly in the 9 institutions hosting only children from 0 to 5 years, where there is one caregiver for every 4 children. The average is better in institutions for children with disabilities, where the ratio is one caregiver for every 11 children (which may not be sufficient to provide the required care).

In **140** voluntary homes the ratio of children per caregiver is less than 10; in **74** institutions the ratio is higher than 25 (which is the highest quota defined by the existing minimum quality standards); among these, in **44** homes one person provides care to more than 30 children, including **13** homes where there is one caregiver every 40 children and **4** homes where one person takes care of more than 50 children.

In general, it seems that the personnel entirely dedicated to the care of children is not sufficient to provide all the attention that children require, at any age; the problem has been repeatedly mentioned in other studies focusing on the quality of care in residential institutions. Indicatively, the homes with less than one caregiver for every 10 children should be required to increase the number of their caregivers.

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<sup>24</sup> Not only temporarily, as it is assumed for children having contacts with parents

<sup>25</sup> The answers on professional roles could vary from home to home, depending on the understanding of the definition of “caregivers”, “support staff” and “administrative staff”. In some cases no caregivers were mentioned, probably interpreting the definition as a specific professional profile not present in the home; in other cases, although distributed in the three categories, all the staff were reported to provide direct care to children. The ratio of children per caregiver has been calculated according to the number of caregivers declared, and not based on the calculation of the interviewed. In some cases, adjustments were required, which have been verified with the assessors or with the management of the homes.

## Part II. Minimum quality standards

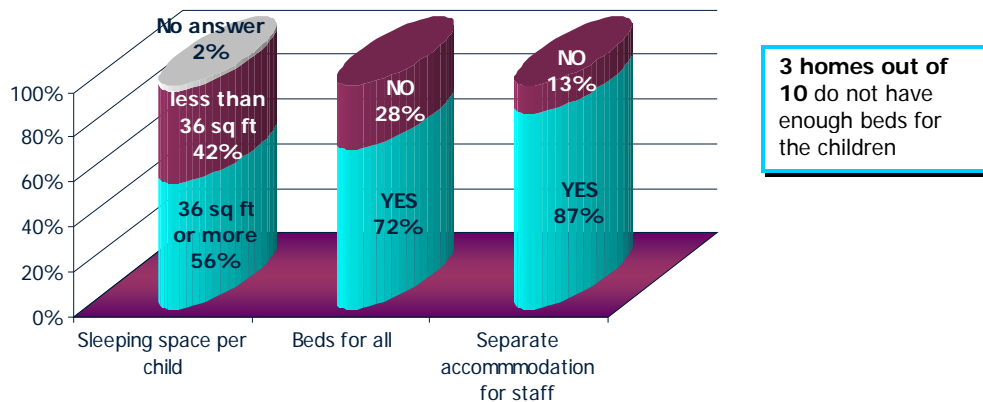
The second part of the questionnaire focuses on the verification of the application of minimum quality standards in the homes, as defined in the circular issued by the DPCCS (attached in Annex IV). The questions have been drafted focusing on those indicators which have been considered more relevant for the understanding of the quality of daily life offered to children by the single residential institution. Although analyzed from a quantitative point of view, the findings help to define a quite clear picture of the life conditions in residential care in Sri Lanka.

These aspects should be constantly under the attention of PCC officers, since they are the primary indicators of the welfare of children in institutions, and of the respect of their rights. Furthermore, as mentioned in the circular, the regular monitoring of compliance to the standards should be a matter of consideration for the annual approval of public maintenance assistance and *ad hoc* grants to voluntary homes.

### 4. Essential facilities

#### Sleeping areas

Chart 10: Minimum quality standards in the sleeping areas



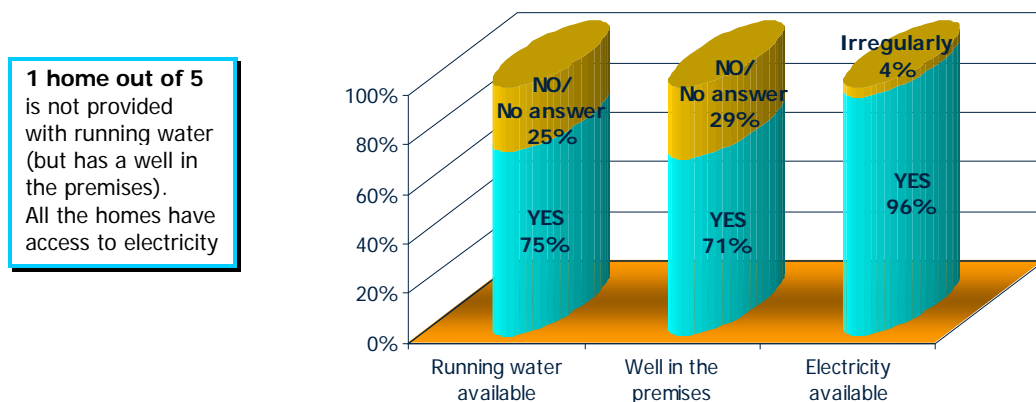
The majority of residential institutions claim to provide an adequate space to each child in the dormitories (defined by the DPCCS as 36 square feet). However, in most of the homes dormitories are equipped with bunk beds; therefore the space around the bed has to be shared by two children.

**136** voluntary homes (including **12** for children with disabilities) admitted not to have a sufficient number of beds for all the children: children reportedly sleep on mats on the floor. Despite being considered a common habit, the lack of adequate sleeping facilities – which can negatively affect the capacity to rest during a crucial age for the physical development of boys and girls – concerns around **6,000** children, mostly in the North and Eastern Provinces.

In the large majority of homes, caregivers have separate accommodation; the opposite is true in **62** homes. In most of these cases the choice has been justified with the need to exercise a closer control over children during the night. This would be expected to be more so in homes for children with disabilities, while only 10 of these do not have separate accommodation for the staff.

## Electricity, water and sanitation

**Chart 11: Minimum quality standards for basic utilities**



Basic services do not seem to be a major problem for voluntary homes:

- the quasi totality of homes is always provided with electricity, except in **17** cases where it reportedly comes irregularly;
- the large majority of homes (**356**) has access to running water; in the other **122** homes (located mostly in the North and the East, but with several cases in all the Provinces but the South and the Centre) water is not provided through pipes, but they all have a well in the premises.

The situation appears to be generally positive also with reference to sanitation facilities: the average number of children using the same toilet, and the same shower, is **7**.

However, it should be noted that in **62** homes (including **6** for children with disabilities), the number of children per toilet exceeds 10, which is the minimum quality standard defined by the DPCCS. The same standard should be required for the washrooms, but **86** institutions are not compliant with this.

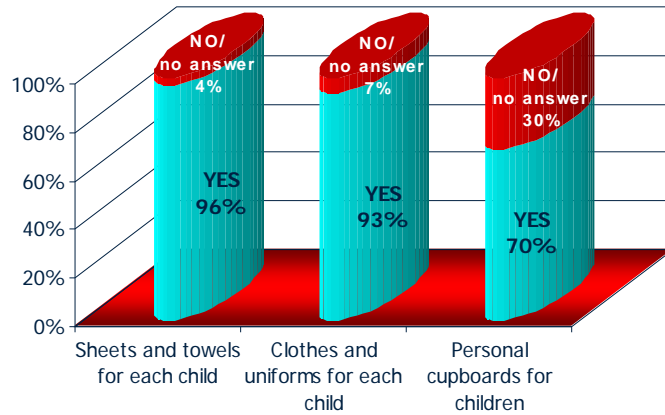
Furthermore, **99** homes (representing **21%** of the total) reported not having washrooms in the premises at all: in most cases, children have been reported to bathe using tanks outside the buildings. Despite being considered a culturally acceptable and common habit, this kind of arrangement does not seem to guarantee the privacy required to deal with one's own personal hygienic needs in an appropriate way.



## Personal belongings

**Chart 12: Minimum quality standards and personal belongings**

**3 homes out of 10** do not have separate cupboards for the children's personal belongings



The large majority of children are reportedly provided with the necessary linen goods, clothes and school uniforms: **18** homes out of the total (hosting **554** children) reported not having enough bed sheets and towels; **32** (with **840** children) reported not having sufficient clothes/uniforms, including **13** homes for children with disabilities where reportedly uniforms are not necessary because the children do not have access to education.

What raises more concern is the fact that **142** homes declare they do not provide cupboards for the personal belongings of children: in environments where privacy and due attention to individual children is reduced because of the collective life-style, the possibility of having a safe space to keep personal belongings becomes a basic requirement to safeguard children's perception of their individuality.

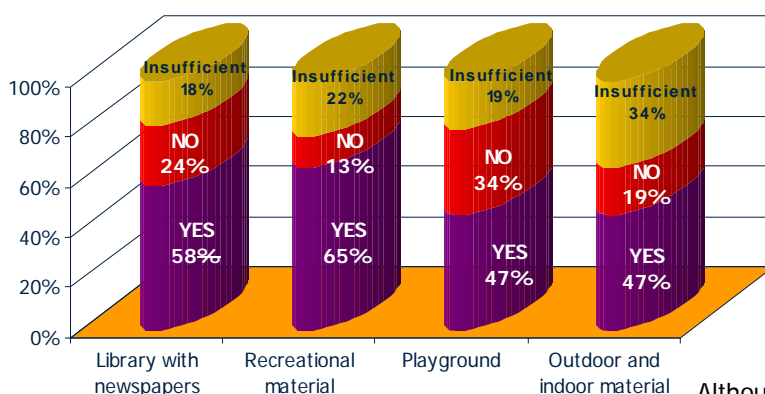


### Full compliance

**172** voluntary homes (representing **36%** of the total) declared themselves to be compliant with all the standards related to essential facilities mentioned in this chapter.

## 5. Free time facilities

Chart 13: Minimum quality standards and leisure and sport facilities



**Out of every 10 voluntary homes:**  
**4** lack sufficient books and newspapers;  
**3** lack sufficient toys and recreational materials;  
**5** lack a proper playground;  
**5** lack enough outdoor and indoor sport material

Although specifically required in the circular on minimum standards, facilities and material for sport, leisure and free time seem to be considered not a priority in the voluntary homes.

**202** homes report to have insufficient reading materials for the children, or no library at all (**166** cases). Although most of the children attend school (as reported later on), the lack of other intellectual *stimuli* – appropriate to their age – amounts to a failure to contribute to the full development of children's life skills and interests. This inadequacy affects more than **6,200** children living in residential institutions in Sri Lanka.

The situation is slightly better as far as recreational material is concerned; however, **106** voluntary homes do not have it in sufficient quantity, and **60** not at all. The opportunity to play and enjoy free time in a constructive way is denied to around **6,000** children, among whom are more than **500** children with disabilities.

Also of concern is the reduced possibility for children in institutions to practice sports: more than half of the voluntary homes declared they do not have a playground, and/or indoor and outdoor materials for sport activities. Besides contributing to the full and healthy development of the body, physical activities are very important also for the development of children's personalities, and of their social interaction and coping skills. Access to such opportunities is reduced for - or totally denied to – around **10,000** children.

### Full compliance

**118** voluntary homes (representing **25%** of the total) declared themselves to be compliant with all the standards related to free time facilities mentioned in this chapter.

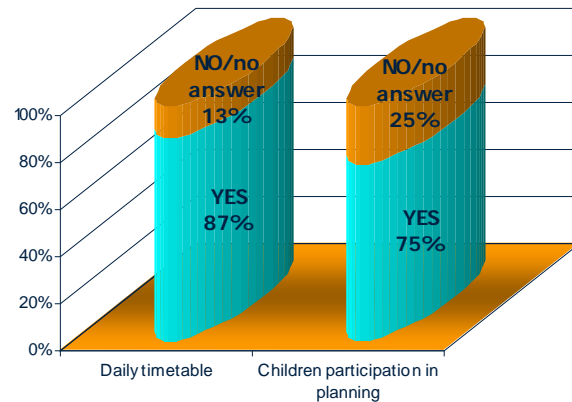


## 6. Organisation of daily activities

**Chart 14: Daily activities and children participation**

Daily activities seem to be regulated according to a defined and shared schedule in the majority of residential institutions.

Reportedly, the participation of children in decision making is very high: **361** voluntary homes (including **27** homes for children with disability) answered positively to the question on the formal involvement of children in planning activities. No more specific data are available to verify such information; however, considering the children's



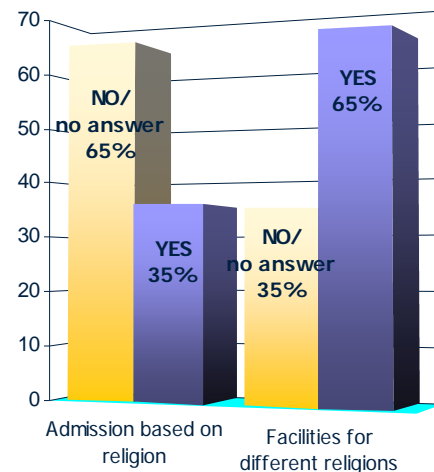
views on this matter reported in the publication of Save the Children,<sup>26</sup> it seems quite unlikely that the personnel of voluntary homes has a full understanding of the meaning and implication of the participation of children in decision making processes.<sup>27</sup>

As part of their daily activity, children should be granted the right to practice their religion. This does not seem to happen in all the homes.

**Chart 15: Practice of different religions in voluntary homes**

In the questionnaire, two questions focus on the religion of children: voluntary homes were asked if they select children based on their religion,<sup>28</sup> and **170** institutions admitted that they do so. The second question verifies the availability of facilities to practice different religions in the voluntary homes: **166** of them answered negatively.

The two data seem to correspond, but the comparison is misleading, since among the homes not provided with facilities for different religions **105** host children of different faiths. Many among the **3,700** children living in these homes are denied the right to practice their religion;



although not specified in the circular on minimum standards, the lack of attention of some homes to this matter contradicts the principle of non-discrimination expressed in Article 2 of the Convention of the Right of the Child, which should be considered the primary reference for any welfare institution dealing with children.

<sup>26</sup> See R. Jayathilake, H. Amarasuriya, *op. cit.*, page 68 and following

<sup>27</sup> It has to be noticed that the requirement is not specified in the minimum standards document of the PCCS

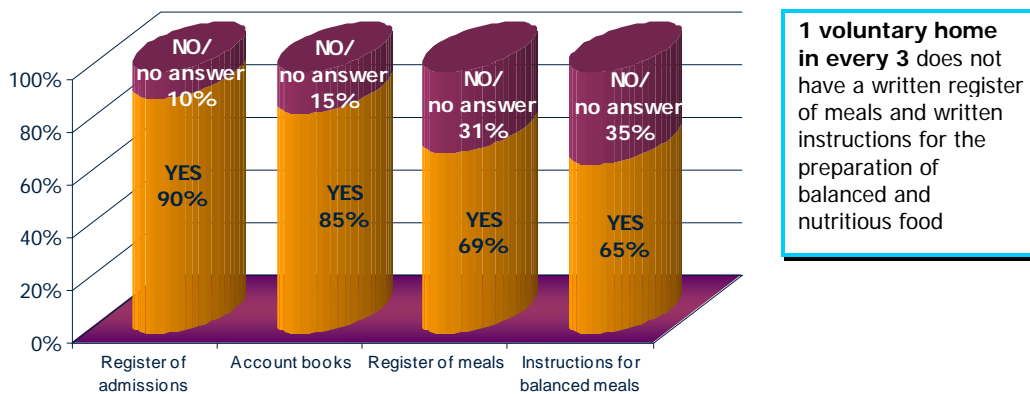
<sup>28</sup> The question has been formulated in this way to investigate if any form of separation of children belonging to different groups was happening in the homes; due to the specific sensitivities on this matter in Sri Lanka, it was not considered opportune to ask questions related to the ethnicity, to avoid inducing a defensive attitude in the persons interviewed

## Full compliance

240 voluntary homes (representing 50% of the total) declared themselves to be compliant with all the standards related to organization of daily activities mentioned in this chapter.

## 7. Documentation

Chart 16: Minimum quality standards and documentation



The majority of voluntary homes declared that they possess the documentation required by the DPCCS minimum standards guidelines. However, while the large majority of homes keeps a register of admission of children (431) and account books (405), 30% of homes admits not to have a register of meals – specifying the kind and quantity of food served. The proportion reaches 35% regarding the absence of written instructions on the preparation of balanced and nourishing meals according to the children’s age, as prescribed by the minimum quality standards document.

Without a written record of the food provided, it is almost impossible for those appointed to monitor the situation of voluntary homes (PCC officers, but also health officers) to verify that children are provided with proper nutrition to ensure their full and healthy development. Frequent complaints of children about the quantity and quality of the food in residential institutions<sup>29</sup> would suggest that this aspect is not given due attention in several voluntary homes.

## Full compliance

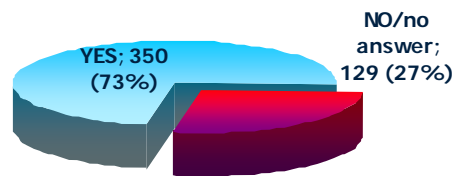
228 voluntary homes (representing 48% of the total) declared themselves to be compliant with all the standards related to documentation mentioned in this chapter.

<sup>29</sup> Reported in R. Jayathilake, H. Amarasuriya, *op. cit.*, pages 52-53

## 8. Individual care for children

Of major concern is the matter of documentation kept by voluntary homes on every single child. The maintenance of personal files is a clear indicator of the capacity of residential institutions to develop individual care plans for children in a structured and verifiable way. **27%** of institutions declare they do not keep a file for each child. The lack of properly recorded personal information affects more than **4,100** children.

**Chart 17: Availability of a personal file for each child**

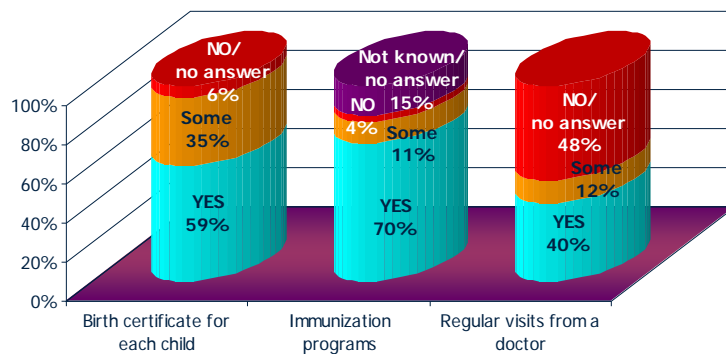


According to the circular on minimum standards, each file should be updated every 6 months, and every month for children requiring special attention. This does not seem to be the case in the large majority of homes, in consideration of the data reported in the following paragraphs.

### Access to health services

**Chart 18: Birth certificates and health care**

**More than 1,000 children** in institutions do not have a birth certificate; **more than 2,000 children** are not monitored for vaccinations; **more than 9,000 children** are not regularly visited by a doctor



Less than the **60%** of voluntary homes declare they possess the birth certificate of every child hosted. **169** homes admit to have it only for some children, and in some cases declared to have initiated the procedures to obtain the missing ones, encountering a series of difficulties. **27** homes declared they do not request such certificates, thus denying a basic right, and the access to several services, for more than **1,000** children.<sup>30</sup>

Of equal concern are the data on the immunization of children. The circular on minimum quality standards specifies the need to conduct immunization programs in residential care institutions. **70%** of voluntary homes declare that the children hosted are immunized, but the remaining 30% provide different answers. In particular, **53** homes declare that only some children have been immunized; **18** homes (hosting **761** children, all above 6 years) declare not to have any immunization program – however it is not specified whether the children have been immunized prior to being admitted to these voluntary home.

Furthermore, the fact that **71** homes admit not to know the immunization status of children is of concern. While it could be questionable whether immunization programs should be conducted within residential institutions, it should be mandatory for all the homes to be fully

<sup>30</sup> These children belong to all age groups, have various family conditions, are located in various areas of the country and only in few cases have a disability. This tells us that there is not a specific reason for the lack of birth certificate, other than the inaccuracy of the voluntary homes

informed about the vaccination status of each child. However, among the **2,430** children living in the 71 mentioned homes, a small group is below 5 years of age.

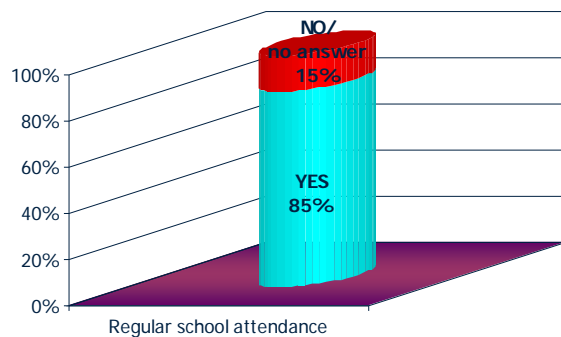
The widespread lack of attention to the status of vaccinations of children is confirmed by the alarming data on the contacts of voluntary homes with health services. Children are regularly visited by a doctor in less than the **40%** of homes. In **289** residential institutions doctors pay occasional visits when needed, or have no contacts with children at all.

During a crucial phase for the development of their full physical and intellectual potential, more than **9,000** children of all age groups – including more than **900** children with disabilities – are not regularly monitored by a doctor; as specified in the minimum standard document, arrangements for the regular check of children should be made with health services as a primary requirement in every care service.



### Access to education

**Chart 19: Regular school attendance of institutionalised children**



**15 children out of every 100** living in a residential institution do not attend school regularly

Although the proportion of institutions ensuring children have regular access to education is very high, in **73** voluntary homes (including **23** for children with disabilities) children reportedly do not attend school regularly.

Among the **2,109** children living in these 73 homes, there are **176** children between 2 and 5 years (**40%** of all the children of this age group living in institutions), **1,727** children between 6 and 18 years (**10%** of their age group) and **73** youngsters above 18 years (**17%** of their age group).

Furthermore, the issue affects **536** children with disabilities - or 36% of the total number of children with special needs living in institutions. This tells us that access to education is more likely to be denied to them than to other children, but also that they do not represent the majority of children not going to school.

Equally interesting is the fact that almost half of these children are concentrated in the Western Province, mainly in Colombo District – where undoubtedly all kinds of education facilities are available. The datum seems to suggest that the problem is not related to the lack of services, but to the lack of accountability of residential institutions on this matter – for reasons which should be further investigated.



If we consider each Province separately, of particular note is the situation in North-Central, where **62%** of children's homes do not guarantee a regular school attendance to children.

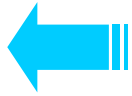
### Contacts with families

As already mentioned, it is clear that the large majority of children are not placed in institutions because they do not have a family. On the contrary, in most of the cases the

admission in voluntary homes happens through a direct contact between the family and the management staff of the homes, without the intervention of the PCCS.

Reportedly from the homes' managers, more than half of the children receive regular visits from their parents or relatives, in some cases more than once a month.<sup>31</sup>

However, a large number of children suffer from the lack of regular contacts with their next of kin, thus being deprived of love and affection which might encourage their sense of protection and self esteem. As repeatedly mentioned in all studies on residential care, the weakening of contacts with families and the original communities is one of the main causes of distress during the time of institutionalization, and explains the difficulties of reintegration when children leave residential institutions.



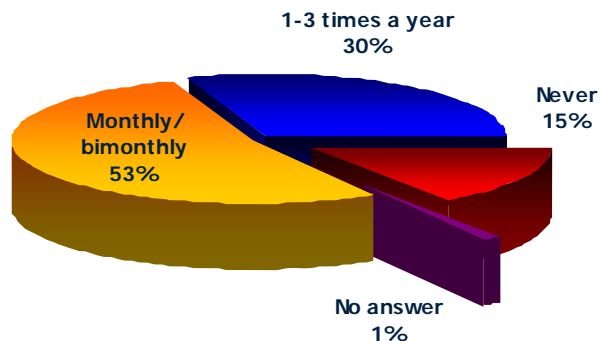
This is true for the more than **5,600** children who reportedly are visited by their parents a few times per year, and especially so for the more than **3,000** children who never receive a visit (including the cases where no answer was provided on this matter).

It is not possible to disaggregate further the answers to this question, and to provide a more in-depth analysis. However, it is worth mentioning that the lack of contact with relatives affects children without parents as well as children with one or two parents; furthermore, the percentages are similar for children with disabilities.

As underlined in the report of Save the Children,<sup>32</sup> in some cases visits are explicitly not allowed by some voluntary homes, due to a perceived need for protection from abusive family members. This might not take into consideration the best interests of individual children.

**Chart 20: Frequency of the visits of relatives to the children in institutions**

**Out of 10 children, 5 receive visits from their family every months, 3 a few times per year, 2 never**



Just as contacts with families within voluntary homes are determined largely by the behaviour of relatives themselves, so also the possibility for children to spend days out of the residential institutions, and to return home, depends on decisions of the management.

The large majority of the institutions allow children to spend time at home only during school vacations, i.e. three times per year. **24** homes declared that children can go home every week; **75** allow them to go home every month; **48** institutions never allow children to exit the premises (including those that did not answer to the question). As a result, **1,646** children are obliged to spend their entire childhood and adolescence within a residential institution, whether or not they have a place to which they may return ultimately. Among these, around **700** never receive visits within the institutions, and their bonds with family and the community of provenance are completely broken.

<sup>31</sup> It has to be noted that in this case the question required a breakdown of the number of children according to the frequency of the visits, but in several cases the answer provided was generic for all the children. It is very unlikely that all of them are visited by relatives with the same frequency, so most probably several cases of children who don't receive visits remain "hidden"

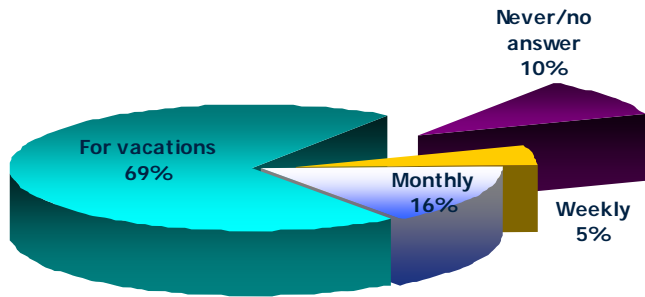
<sup>32</sup> R. Jayathilake, H. Amarasuriya, *op. cit.*, pages 71-74

These are the children for whom the identification of an alternative care solution should be given absolute priority, in the attempt to recreate for them the affection network that every child deserves.



**Chart 21: Permission to spend time out of the institution**

**Out of 10 children, 7 go home on school vacations, 2 go home weekly or monthly, 1 never does**



### Legal protection and alternative care options

Out of all the services provided to children in residential institutions, legal protection seems to receive very little attention both from the voluntary homes' management and the PCCS.

This is due mainly to the fact that current legislation does not provide for precise and binding measures in this sense: children can currently be admitted into institutions without the involvement of PCCS; they legally remain under the care of their parents, even when the contacts are interrupted for years,<sup>33</sup> and parents are not involved in any decision taken for the welfare of the child during the time of institutionalisation.

Furthermore, the lack of personnel and of proper working conditions of the PCCS impacts to prevent a constant monitoring of the situation of children in homes, and even those legal measures in place are often not implemented, without major negative consequences for the services providers involved. For example, the DPCCS has the authority to declare the abandonment of children when parents do not keep any form of contact with them;<sup>34</sup> children could then be included in the lists for national or international adoption, but the measure is rarely used.

The data emerging from the assessment are particularly clear in this matter: when asked if legal custodians are appointed for children, only **77** voluntary homes answered affirmatively. The information is particularly interesting, since at present there is no defined legal provision for the appointment of legal guardians, but in some cases there seems to have been a certain degree of concern on this matter: out of the **3,500** children living in these 77 homes, less than **500** are without parents, which means that the measure has been taken (by magistrates, or POs) also in other cases. The datum gives more value to the fact that, on the contrary, no legal custodians have been appointed in the remaining **84%** of residential institutions. In practice, the management of voluntary homes can take decisions

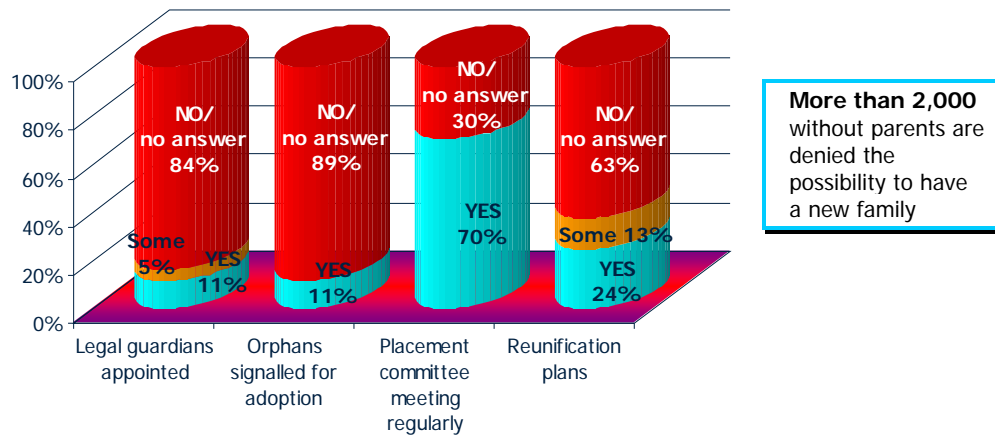


<sup>33</sup> Especially when parents – generally the mothers - migrate abroad to work, a notoriously widespread phenomenon in Sri Lanka

<sup>34</sup> The Adoption Ordinance recites: "(3) An adoption order shall not be made except with the consent of every person or body who is a parent or guardian of the child in respect of whom the application is made, or who has the actual custody of the child, or who is liable to contribute to the support of the child: Provided that the court may dispense with any consent required by the preceding provisions of this subsection if satisfied that the person whose consent is to be dispensed with has abandoned or deserted the child or cannot be found or has been adjudged by a competent court to be of unsound mind, or, being a person liable to contribute to the support of the child, either has persistently neglected or refused to contribute to such support or is a person whose consent ought, in the opinion of the court and in all the circumstances of the case, to be dispensed with." See *Adoption of Children, Ordinance No 24 of 1941, Part I, 3. Restrictions on making of adoption orders*

related to the lives of children under their care without any form of control. Undoubtedly in the majority of cases, decisions taken will be in the best interests of children; however, the lack of such an important measure dangerously opens the door to various potential violations of children rights, without an appropriate system in place to avoid or control this.

**Chart 22: Legal protection and reunification plans**



The first evident consequence of this is that only 1 voluntary home in every 10 reportedly signals the children who are permanently deprived of parental care to the services in order to initiate procedures for adoption.

As a result, **2,097** orphans out of the **2,595** registered in total are denied the right to ever have a family – without considering those whose parents are still alive, but have been *de facto* abandoned. In some cases those interviewed firmly defended their decision, being convinced that children are better protected and cared for in their institutions, rather than in an unknown family, whose intention to adopt a child could be motivated by condemnable reasons, such as the use for child labor. According to the caregivers, in such cases adoption could become an unintentional way of “legalizing” child exploitation. Although this is a recognized risk factor, it does not seem to be a sufficient reason to exclude the possibility for a child to have a family. Once again, the decisions taken by the management of residential institutions and PCCS, although with the best protective intentions, risk not taking into consideration the best interests of children.



### Placement committees

Placement committees should meet at least twice a year, with the participation of POs, and decide about the admission of new children, and the reunification of children with their families. Their function and responsibilities are specified in detail in the circular on minimum quality standards of the PCCS. The document repeatedly underlines that children should not remain in institutions for more than three years, and that every possibility should be investigated to provide alternative care options to the children.

Despite this, **30%** of voluntary homes declare they do not hold placement committees. For around **5,000** children there seems to be no formalized mechanism to review their situation and facilitate exit from the institutions. Moreover, out of the **335** homes that declare to organize such meetings, **45** do not keep written records of the decisions taken regarding the placement of children.

The general impression is that residential institutions – and often PCC officers – perceive themselves as the best welfare and protection option for children; the result of this

understandable position is that not much is done to facilitate the reunification of children with their families, and reintegration with the community.

It is interesting to notice that measures prescribed by the current regulations are not in place despite the interaction of the homes with the PCC services: the contact with POs and CRPOs was reported to be regular in **389** voluntary homes – out of which **96** do not have placement committees. Furthermore, among these homes there are also **14** institutions for children with disabilities – despite the fact that such homes are not under the purview of probation and child care services.

The information seems to suggest that in several cases contact with public services remains at a formal level. The existence of regulations does not seem to be particularly effective in the definition of the care and protection measures that should be granted to every single child living separated from the family. In an environment where the accountability of services providers is not ensured through the enforcement of disciplinary measures, the only ones paying for the consequences of these inefficiencies are the children. And the price they pay is very high.



**Chart 23: Contact with POs and CRPOs**



### **Full compliance**

Only **12** voluntary homes (representing **2%** of the total) declared to be compliant with all the standards mentioned in this chapter on individual care provided for children (with the exclusion of the legal protection component, since it is not included in the minimum standards document).



## 10. Concluding remarks

Numbers show that voluntary residential institutions in Sri Lanka are considered by families and services providers as a suitable location to ensure the welfare of children, even when they are not permanently deprived of parental care.

In several cases institutionalization is the result of lack of support to the families when they face a difficult situation: poverty does not seem to be the only reason to send children into institutions, neither does the access to education facilities.

The quantitative findings resulting from the assessment conducted by the PCCS, even without a more in-depth analysis, reveal that several aspects of the lives of children – during crucial years for their development – are negatively affected by the conditions offered in residential homes, despite the best intentions of managers and caregivers.

Whether basic life conditions – and access to basic facilities – can be considered acceptable if compared with the standard life in a family (although in many instances these fall short in relation to the minimum quality standards defined by the PCCS), children do not receive in residential institutions the necessary individual attention and affection that every child needs to develop his/her full potential and self confidence.

In too many voluntary homes the number of caregivers is not sufficient to provide adequate care to children, with consequences in every aspect of their daily life.

Furthermore, all the components related to individual care plans and legal protection are not given the required attention by services providers, either working in the voluntary homes or in the PCCS.

Often children are abandoned in institutions without the knowledge of the PCCS, and in absence of their parents are not protected through the formalized appointment of legal custodians, who would be held accountable for the attention provided during the institutionalisation period.

Even in cases of ascertained abandonment, the network of services appointed to protect children does not seem to focus on the identification of alternative care options as a priority: the traditional recourse to residential institutions makes them the primary protection measure, and the best interests of individual children are not taken into consideration, nor is their need to grow up in a family-like environment.

Personal files of children, even when available, are not used as a monitoring tool to ensure that children have proper access to health, education and social services; individual care plans are not defined according to identified needs.

By providing services to children with high protection needs – and often with special needs – welfare services (whether public or voluntary) should make sure that all the rights children are entitled to are granted, and that every effort is made to respond to their physical, intellectual and emotional needs.

The focus of services on the best interests of children requires a shift of perspective towards the maintenance and strengthening of the links of children with their families and communities, which are the primary social networks they need to be able to develop adequate skills to enjoy an appropriate upbringing.

Life in residential institutions, even when it is the best solution for the temporary protection of children, inevitably tends in the long term to weaken the contacts with their community of provenance; the price of this is paid by children daily in the affective sphere, and later on in their capacity to conduct an independent life out of the institutions. This is more so for girls, whose perspective in most cases is to move into the house of a husband they do not know, without having access to any coping network if problems arise.

The time when all children are able to grow up in a family-like environment is not near in Sri Lanka; but it is the duty of all those who work for the welfare of children to make all efforts to move in this direction, in the attempt to ensure that equal rights and possibilities are given to all the children of Sri Lanka, without any discrimination.



## Annex I: The Assessment Team

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**Annex II:**  
**General table of the answers to the questionnaire, by Province.**  
**Values and percentages**

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**Note:** The numbers in bold italics represent the percentage calculated over the total value (national level); the others are percentages calculated with reference to the single province.

Question Number			1e				2d					3a		3c		
Subject	Number of homes	Of which for children with disabilities	Access				Funding source					Registration		If NO		
Province			denied	partially allowed	fully allowed	not assessed	Private National	Private from Abroad	Faith Based Org.	Receiving Govt. Funds	No answer	YES	NO/no answer	No action/no answer	Docs under preparation	Docs to be approved
<b>Northern</b>	77	4	2	17	55	3	20	40	22	13	2	57	15	0	7	8
%	16	1	3	22	71	4	28	56	31	18	3	79	21	0	10	11
<b>Eastern</b>	107	3	0	1	106		47	60	65	41	1	77	30	1	10	19
%	22	1	0	1	99	0	44	56	61	38	1	72	28	1	9	18
<b>North Central</b>	17	5	0	0	16	1	14	6	2	12	0	12	4	3	0	1
%	3	1	0	0	94	6	88	38	13	75	0	75	25	19	0	6
<b>North Western</b>	45	3	0	0	45		35	25	7	22	0	35	10	1	4	5
%	9	1	0	0	100	0	78	56	16	49	0	78	22	2	9	11
<b>Central</b>	41	6	0	0	41		25	23	12	17	0	15	26	9	2	15
%	8	1	0	0	100	0	61	56	29	41	0	37	63	22	5	37
<b>Saburagamuwa</b>	29	10	0	2	27		27	14	6	21	0	19	10	5	2	3
%	6	2	0	7	93	0	93	48	21	72	0	66	34	17	7	10
<b>Western</b>	122	15	0	6	116		101	48	28	61	2	94	28	12	6	10
%	25	3	0	5	95	0	83	39	23	50	2	77	23	10	5	8
<b>Uva</b>	17	3	0	1	16		8	11	8	6	0	10	7	2	1	4
%	3	1	0	6	94	0	47	65	47	35	0	59	41	12	6	24
<b>Southern</b>	33	3	0	0	30	3	17	22	10	10	0	23	7	3	1	3
%	7	1	0	0	91	9	57	73	33	33	0	77	23	10	3	10
<b>Total</b>	488	52	2	27	452	7	294	249	160	203	5	342	137	36	33	68
%	100	11	0	6	93	1	61	52	33	42	1	71	29	8	7	14

Question Number	4a			4b						4c				4d		
Subject	Children			Age Groups						Parents				Admission based on religion		
Province	Number	Boys	Girls	0-1	2-5	6-10	11-18	OVER 18	No answer	No parents	1 parent	2 parents	No answer	YES	NO	no answer
<b>Northern</b>	4041	1934	2107	7	46	502	2568	66	852	455	1677	1285	624	25	39	8
%	21	48	52	0	1	12	64	2	21	11	41	32	15	35	54	11
<b>Eastern</b>	3919	1644	2275	1	30	708	3064	116	0	362	2190	1367	0	35	63	9
%	21	42	58	0	1	18	78	3	0	9	56	35	0	33	59	8
<b>North Central</b>	549	173	376	0	15	147	366	21	0	104	258	187	0	6	7	3
%	3	32	68	0	3	27	67	4	0	19	47	34	0	38	44	19
<b>North Western</b>	1653	861	792	0	20	477	1138	14	4	221	773	636	23	16	27	2
%	9	52	48	0	1	29	69	1	0	13	47	38	1	36	60	4
<b>Central</b>	1392	516	876	13	35	305	1015	24	0	234	523	635	0	18	19	4
%	7	37	63	1	3	22	73	2	0	17	38	46	0	44	46	10
<b>Saburagamuwa</b>	783	431	352	0	16	167	597	3	0	99	269	290	125	13	14	2
%	4	55	45	0	2	21	76	0	0	13	34	37	16	45	48	7
<b>Western</b>	5004	2596	2408	104	226	1319	3135	179	41	951	2727	1307	19	47	72	3
%	27	52	48	2	5	26	63	4	1	19	54	26	0	39	59	2
<b>Uva</b>	648	278	370	5	10	178	447	8	0	58	201	377	12	4	13	0
%	3	43	57	1	2	27	69	1	0	9	31	58	2	24	76	0
<b>Southern</b>	815	277	538	3	39	253	478	10	32	114	368	220	113	6	20	4
%	4	34	66	0	5	31	59	1	4	14	45	27	14	20	67	13
<b>Total</b>	18804	8710	10094	133	437	4056	12808	441	929	2598	8986	6304	916	170	274	35
%	100	46	54	1	2	22	68	2	5	14	48	34	5	35	57	7

Question Number	5a			5b			6a			6b		6c		6d	
Subject	Staff			Professional role			Sleeping space per child			Beds for all		Children per toilet		Children per lavatory	
Province	Number	Males	Females	Care-givers	Support staff	Admin staff	Less than 36 sq ft	36 sq ft or more	No answer	YES	NO/no answer	average	NO toilet	average	No lavatory
<b>Northern</b>	583	204	379	252	196	135	25	44	3	41	31	9	0	10	17
%	18	35	65	43	34	23	35	61	4	57	43		0		24
<b>Eastern</b>	597	230	367	246	225	126	43	61	3	50	57	9	0	9	25
%	18	39	61	41	38	21	40	57	3	47	53		0		23
<b>North Central</b>	87	26	61	52	25	10	8	8	0	9	7	8	0	8	5
%	3	30	70	60	29	11	50	50	0	56	44		0		31
<b>North Western</b>	246	101	145	97	95	54	6	39	0	33	12	7	0	5	20
%	8	41	59	39	39	22	13	87	0	73	27		0		44
<b>Central</b>	272	60	212	111	106	55	22	15	4	39	2	6	0	7	2
%	8	22	78	41	39	20	54	37	10	95	5		0		5
<b>Saburagamuwa</b>	183	76	107	66	69	48	18	11	0	23	6	6	0	7	2
%	6	42	58	36	38	26	62	38	0	79	21		0		7
<b>Western</b>	899	238	661	441	294	164	62	59	1	109	13	6	0	6	15
%	28	26	74	49	33	18	51	48	1	89	11		0		12
<b>Uva</b>	151	59	92	79	43	29	6	11	0	11	6	6	0	4	6
%	5	39	61	52	28	19	35	65	0	65	35		0		35
<b>Southern</b>	223	77	146	85	89	49	9	21	0	28	2	5	0	5	3
%	7	35	65	38	40	22	30	70	0	93	7		0		10
<b>Total</b>	3241	1071	2170	1429	1142	670	199	269	11	343	136	7	0	7	95
%	100	33	67	44	35	21	42	56	2	72	28		0		20

Question Number	6e			6f		6g		6h		7a		7b		8a		8b	
Subject	Running water available			Well in the premises		Electricity available		Separate accommodation for staff		Register of meals		Instructions for balanced meals		Sheets and towels for each child		Clothes and uniforms for each child	
Province	YES	NO	no answer	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/irregularly	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer
<b>Northern</b>	36	31	5	50	22	61	11	63	9	62	10	59	13	69	3	66	6
%	50	43	7	69	31	85	15	88	13	86	14	82	18	96	4	92	8
<b>Eastern</b>	49	47	11	88	19	104	3	86	21	74	33	78	29	101	6	104	3
%	46	44	10	82	18	97	3	80	20	69	31	73	27	94	6	97	3
<b>North Central</b>	8	6	2	15	1	16	0	16	0	7	9	7	9	16	0	12	4
%	50	38	13	94	6	100	0	100	0	44	56	44	56	100	0	75	25
<b>North Western</b>	45	0	0	43	2	45	0	43	2	35	10	29	16	43	2	43	2
%	100	0	0	96	4	100	0	96	4	78	22	64	36	96	4	96	4
<b>Central</b>	41	0	0	14	27	40	1	40	1	32	9	30	11	39	2	39	2
%	100	0	0	34	66	98	2	98	2	78	22	73	27	95	5	95	5
<b>Saburagamuwa</b>	23	6	0	9	20	27	2	17	12	13	16	19	10	27	2	27	2
%	79	21	0	31	69	93	7	59	41	45	55	66	34	93	7	93	7
<b>Western</b>	110	12	0	94	28	122	0	109	13	76	46	63	59	120	2	112	10
%	90	10	0	77	23	100	0	89	11	62	38	52	48	98	2	92	8
<b>Uva</b>	15	1	1	5	12	17	0	14	3	9	8	6	11	16	1	14	3
%	88	6	6	29	71	100	0	82	18	53	47	35	65	94	6	82	18
<b>Southern</b>	30	0	0	24	6	30	0	29	1	23	7	22	8	30	0	30	0
%	100	0	0	80	20	100	0	97	3	77	23	73	27	100	0	100	0
<b>Total</b>	357	103	19	342	137	462	17	417	62	331	148	313	166	461	18	447	32
%	75	22	4	71	29	96	4	87	13	69	31	65	35	96	4	93	7



Question Number	9a		9b			9c			9d			9e			10a		10b	
Subject	Personal cupboards for children		Library with newspapers			Recreational material			playground			Outdoor and indoor sport material			Register of admissions		Accounts book	
Province	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO	Insuf-ficient	YES	NO/no answer	Insuf-ficient	YES	NO	Insuf-ficient	YES	NO/no answer	Insuf-ficient	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer
<b>Northern</b>	35	37	43	14	15	37	11	24	26	24	22	19	15	38	67	5	54	18
%	49	51	60	19	21	51	15	33	36	33	31	26	21	53	93	7	75	25
<b>Eastern</b>	57	50	55	33	19	70	19	18	34	52	21	26	39	42	94	13	98	9
%	53	47	51	31	18	65	18	17	32	49	20	24	36	39	88	12	92	8
<b>North Central</b>	8	8	5	7	4	9	3	4	7	5	4	5	2	9	16	0	13	3
%	50	50	31	44	25	56	19	25	44	31	25	31	13	56	100	0	81	19
<b>North Western</b>	33	12	28	9	8	39	5	1	28	14	3	30	7	8	42	3	28	17
%	73	27	62	20	18	87	11	2	62	31	7	67	16	18	93	7	62	38
<b>Central</b>	35	6	24	7	10	34	1	6	27	6	8	28	2	11	37	4	40	1
%	85	15	59	17	24	83	2	15	66	15	20	68	5	27	90	10	98	2
<b>Saburagamuwa</b>	19	10	12	12	5	6	6	17	13	11	5	10	7	12	27	2	24	5
%	66	34	41	41	17	21	21	59	45	38	17	34	24	41	93	7	83	17
<b>Western</b>	111	11	83	26	13	84	10	28	64	37	21	74	12	36	111	11	111	11
%	91	9	68	21	11	69	8	23	52	30	17	61	10	30	91	9	91	9
<b>Uva</b>	12	5	6	4	7	9	2	6	7	3	7	6	4	7	10	7	12	5
%	71	29	35	24	41	53	12	35	41	18	41	35	24	41	59	41	71	29
<b>Southern</b>	27	3	21	4	5	25	3	2	18	10	2	26	2	2	27	3	25	5
%	90	10	70	13	17	83	10	7	60	33	7	87	7	7	90	10	83	17
<b>Total</b>	337	142	277	116	86	313	60	106	224	162	93	224	90	165	431	48	405	74
%	70	30	58	24	18	65	13	22	47	34	19	47	19	34	90	10	85	15

Question Number	10c		10d		10e	10f			10g				10h			10i	
Subject	Personal file per each child		Majority of caregivers passed the 8th grade		Children per caregiver - average	Birth certificate for each child			Immunization programs				Regular visits from a doctor			Regular school attendance	
Province	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer		YES	NO/no answer	Some	YES	NO	Some	Not known/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	Some	YES	NO/some/no answer
<b>Northern</b>	39	33	67	5	17	48	2	22	50	4	6	12	47	16	9	68	4
%	54	46	93	7		67	3	31	69	6	8	17	65	22	13	94	6
<b>Eastern</b>	40	67	99	8	18	90	3	14	66	10	11	20	45	41	21	102	5
%	37	63	93	7		84	3	13	62	9	10	19	42	38	20	95	5
<b>North Central</b>	9	7	14	2	18	3	4	9	9	0	2	5	2	14	0	6	10
%	56	44	88	13		19	25	56	56	0	13	31	13	88	0	38	63
<b>North Western</b>	42	3	41	4	19	26	2	18	37	1	5	2	10	31	4	43	2
%	93	7	91	9		58	4	40	82	2	11	4	22	69	9	96	4
<b>Central</b>	37	4	39	2	16	24	1	16	28	0	1	12	15	25	1	38	3
%	90	10	95	5		59	2	39	68	0	2	29	37	61	2	93	7
<b>Saburagamuwa</b>	22	7	27	2	12	11	4	14	20	2	3	4	4	24	1	21	8
%	76	24	93	7		38	14	48	69	7	10	14	14	83	3	72	28
<b>Western</b>	117	5	112	10	14	60	7	55	94	1	19	8	52	52	18	90	32
%	96	4	92	8		49	6	45	77	1	16	7	43	43	15	74	26
<b>Uva</b>	16	1	17	0	12	7	1	9	11	0	0	6	4	12	1	11	6
%	94	6	100	0		41	6	53	65	0	0	35	24	71	6	65	35
<b>Southern</b>	28	2	25	5	15	14	3	12	22	0	6	2	11	17	2	27	3
%	93	7	83	17		47	10	40	73	0	20	7	37	57	7	90	10
<b>Total</b>	350	129	441	38	16	283	27	169	337	18	53	71	190	232	57	406	73
%	73	27	92	8		59	6	35	70	4	11	15	40	48	12	85	15

Question Number	10j		10k		10l		11a				11b				11c		
Subject	Daily timetable		Children participation in planning		Facilities for different religions		Visits from parents/relatives				Permission to spend a full day with family				Reunification plans		
Province	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	Monthly/bi monthly	1-3 times a year	Never	No answer	Weekly	Monthly	For vacations	Never/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	Some
<b>Northern</b>	64	8	59	13	59	13	2915	874	228	24	4	14	49	5	20	39	13
%	89	11	82	18	82	18	72	22	6	1	6	19	68	7	28	54	18
<b>Eastern</b>	99	8	79	28	92	15	3208	444	267	0	13	15	76	3	22	79	6
%	93	7	74	26	86	14	82	11	7	0	12	14	71	3	21	74	6
<b>North Central</b>	12	4	6	10	4	12	91	314	74	70	0	2	11	3	0	14	2
%	75	25	38	63	25	75	17	57	13	13	0	13	69	19	0	88	13
<b>North Western</b>	42	3	42	3	29	16	908	511	231	3	2	0	36	7	19	24	2
%	93	7	93	7	64	36	55	31	14	0	4	0	80	16	42	53	4
<b>Central</b>	38	3	35	6	17	24	503	601	288	0	0	15	23	3	4	32	5
%	93	7	85	15	41	59	36	43	21	0	0	37	56	7	10	78	12
<b>Saburagamuwa</b>	18	11	15	14	8	21	123	493	167	0	0	5	20	4	9	19	1
%	62	38	52	48	28	72	16	63	21	0	0	17	69	14	31	66	3
<b>Western</b>	102	20	88	34	76	46	1857	1870	1242	35	3	20	83	16	28	68	26
%	84	16	72	28	62	38	37	37	25	1	2	16	68	13	23	56	21
<b>Uva</b>	14	3	16	1	6	11	171	303	80	94	1	2	12	2	6	9	2
%	82	18	94	6	35	65	26	47	12	15	6	12	71	12	35	53	12
<b>Southern</b>	26	4	21	9	22	8	182	304	303	26	1	2	22	5	9	15	6
%	87	13	70	30	73	27	22	37	37	3	3	7	73	17	30	50	20
<b>Total</b>	415	64	361	118	313	166	9958	5714	2880	252	24	75	332	48	117	299	63
%	87	13	75	25	65	35	53	30	15	1	5	16	69	10	24	62	13

Question Number	11d			11e		11f		11g		11h	
Subject	Legal guardians appointed			Orphans signalled for adoption		Contacts with POs-CRPOs		Placement committee meeting regularly		Minutes of the meeting available	
Province	YES	NO/no answer	some	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer	YES	NO/no answer
<b>Northern</b>	18	45	9	15	57	64	8	47	25	40	7
%	25	63	13	21	79	89	11	65	35	85	15
<b>Eastern</b>	24	81	2	9	98	102	5	96	11	87	9
%	22	76	2	8	92	95	5	90	10	91	9
<b>North Central</b>	0	16	0	0	16	11	5	9	7	9	0
%	0	100	0	0	100	69	31	56	44	100	0
<b>North Western</b>	4	41	0	2	43	42	3	30	15	26	4
%	9	91	0	4	96	93	7	67	33	87	13
<b>Central</b>	0	40	1	5	36	30	11	20	21	20	0
%	0	98	2	12	88	73	27	49	51	100	0
<b>Saburagamuwa</b>	2	27	0	5	24	21	8	15	14	14	1
%	7	93	0	17	83	72	28	52	48	93	7
<b>Western</b>	3	113	6	12	109	77	45	92	30	73	19
%	2	93	5	10	89	63	37	75	25	79	21
<b>Uva</b>	2	14	1	1	16	13	4	10	7	7	3
%	12	82	6	6	94	76	24	59	41	70	30
<b>Southern</b>	1	25	4	6	24	29	1	17	13	15	2
%	3	83	13	20	80	97	3	57	43	88	12
<b>Total</b>	54	402	23	55	423	389	90	336	143	242	39
%	11	84	5	11	88	81	19	70	30	72	27

**Annex III:**  
**Questionnaire for the Assessment of Voluntary Homes;**  
**Case File**

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## Assessment of Voluntary Homes

1a	PROVINCE	• NE	• NW	• NC	• C	• Sab	• Uva	• S	• W
1b	DISTRICT code	DIVISION code				Serial Number			
1c	Date of assessment	DD	MM	YY					
1d	Name and profession of the author of the report								

1e The access to the facilities of the voluntary home and to the children's data has been:

Denied                     
  Partially allowed                     
  Fully allowed

### BASIC DATA

2a Name of the Home \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Village/Division/District \_\_\_\_\_

2b Name of the Organization Managing the Home \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details \_\_\_\_\_

2c Name of the Home Manager \_\_\_\_\_

2d Source of funding    
  private national donations            
  private donations from abroad  
 sustained by faith based groups            
  receiving government funds

3a Is the Home registered?    
 Yes    
 No

3b If Yes, Number of the Registration    
            
Year    

3c If No, status of the registration process:    
 No action                     
 Documents under preparation  
 Documents presented, waiting for approval

4a Number of children hosted    
            
Males             
Females

4b Number of children for each of the following age groups:    
    
    
    
  
0-2             2-5             5-10             10-18

4c Number of children:    
            
            
  
With no parents     With one parent             With two parents

4d Is the admission of children based on ethnicity/religion?    
 Yes    
 No

5a Number of staff employed    
            
Males             
Females

5b Of which    
            
            
Administrative staff   
Caregivers                      Support staff

## MINIMUM QUALITY STANDARDS

6a	Sleeping space per child	• less than 36 sq ft		• 36 sq ft or more
6b	Beds available for each child		• Yes	• No • Some
6c	Number of children sharing the same toilet		<input type="text"/>	
6d	Number of children sharing the same lavatory/shower		<input type="text"/>	
6e	Running water available		• Yes	• No • Sometime
6f	If NO, well available in the home's premises		• Yes	• No
6g	Electricity available		• Yes	• No • Sometime
6h	Separate accommodation for all the employees available		• Yes	• No
7a	Register of meals (quality and quantity) available		• Yes	• No
7b	Instructions available for the preparation of balanced and nourishing meals (according to age)		• Yes	• No
8a	Sheets and towels available for every child		• Yes	• No
8b	Clothes and school uniforms available for every child		• Yes	• No
9a	Cupboards available for personal belongings of children		• Yes	• No
9b	Library available with newspapers		• Yes	• No • Insufficient
9c	Recreational material available		• Yes	• No • Insufficient
9d	Playground for sport activities available		• Yes	• No • Insufficient
9e	Outdoor and indoor materials available		• Yes	• No • Insufficient
10a	Register of Admission available and accessible		• Yes	• No
10b	Accounts books available and accessible		• Yes	• No
10c	Care plan (File) for each child available and accessible		• Yes	• No
10d	Has the majority of caregivers passed the 8th grade of school?		• Yes	• No
10e	Ratio caregivers/children: 1 caregiver every <input type="text"/> children			
10f	Do all the children have birth certificate?		• Yes	• No • Some
10g	Have the children been immunized?	• Yes	• No	Some • Not known
10h	Is a doctor regularly visiting the children?		• Yes	• No • Some
10i	Are all the children regularly attending school?		• Yes	• No • Some
10j	Is there a timetable for daily activities, including reading and play?		• Yes	• No
10k	Are children formally involved in the planning of the activities?		• Yes	• No
10l	Are there facilities available for children of different religions to practice their faith?		• Yes	• No
11a	Number of children visited by parents/relatives: monthly <input type="text"/> once/twice a year <input type="text"/> never <input type="text"/>			
11b	How often are children allowed to spend a full day with family?		• weekly	monthly • only on vacation
11c	Is there a written plan for the reunification of each child with the family?		• Yes	• No • Some
11d	Have legal guardians been appointed for children without parental care?		• Yes	• No • Some
11e	Have orphans been signaled for adoption?		• Yes	• No • Some
11f	Is the management in contact with POs and CRPOs in the area?		• Yes	• No
11g	Is there a placement committee meeting regularly?		• Yes	• No
11h	Are the minutes of the meetings available?		• Yes	• No



# Case File: Assessment and Action Plan

PROVINCE      • NE      • NW      • NC      • C      • Sab      • Uva      • S      • W

DISTRICT code       DIVISION code       Serial Number

Date of opening of the file       /  /       File Code   
DD      MM      YY

Date of closure of the file       /  /   
DD      MM      YY

Date of last update       /  /   
DD      MM      YY

Case Manager

Other team members

Case signalled by:      • police      • court      • local government  
    • education services      • health services      • religious leader  
    • family      • neighbors/friends      • other \_\_\_\_\_

## ASSESSMENT

### 1 Personal Data

1.1 Full name of the Child

1.2 Residential Address \_\_\_\_\_

Village/Town  Division  District

1.3 Date of Birth       /  /       Age   
DD      MM      YY

1.4  Gender      • Male      • Female

1.5  Ethnicity      • Sinhala      • Tamil      • Muslim      • Other \_\_\_\_\_

1.6  Religion      • Buddhist      • Hindu      • Muslim      • Christian      • Other \_\_\_\_\_

1.7  Civil Status      • Married according to law      • Married according to tradition      • Not married

**2 Birth/health conditions**

(attach copy)

- 2.1  Does the child have a registered birth certificate? • Yes • No
- 2.2  Has the child received the compulsory vaccinations? • Yes • No
- 2.3  Is the child regularly (yearly) visited by a doctor? • Yes • No
- 2.4  Has the nutrition status of the child been monitored? • Yes • No
- 2.5  Does the child have a disability? • Yes • No
- 2.5.1  If Yes, has it been certified? • Yes • No Please attach medical certification
- 2.5.2  Kind of disability • Physical • Learning (mental)  
 • Visual impairment • Mental health  
 • Hearing/language impairment • Multiple
- 2.5.3  Degree of disability • Mild • Moderate • Severe • Profound
- 2.5.4  Is the child regularly monitored by a specialist? • Yes • No  
 Name and title \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.5.5  Has the family been supported to assist the child? • Yes • No
- 2.5.6 By whom? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.6  Other health problems \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.6.1  Has the child been hospitalized in ward in the past? • Yes • No  
 If YES  
 Date  Reason \_\_\_\_\_ Result \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date  Reason \_\_\_\_\_ Result \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.6.2  Has the child been frequently admitted to hospital in the last year? • Yes • No  
 If YES Reason \_\_\_\_\_

**3 Education**

- 3.1  Is the child attending school at present? • Yes • Irregularly • No  
 If YES or irregularly:
- 3.1.1  Level of school:  • Pre-school • Primary • Secondary • College
- 3.1.2  Grade:
- 3.1.3  Kind of school: • Public • Private • Religious • Boarding school  
 Name of the school: \_\_\_\_\_
- If NO:
- 3.1.4  Last grade of school completed:  In which year   
 Name of the school: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.2  If not or irregularly attending, why? • economic difficulties • long distance • domestic labor  
 • personal refusal • learning difficulties  
 • illness/disability • other \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES

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**4 Family composition**

- 4.1  Current living circumstances
- With biological family
  - With not-related family
  - With another related family
  - In a State-run home
  - In a voluntary home
  - Alone, living on the street
  - In an institution due to contact with the law

4.2 Family members and/or other persons living or closely associated with the child (even if the child is in institution)

Name and Surname	Relationship	Age	Education	Employment	Living with the child: Y/N	In contact with the child: Y/N

**CODES:**

- Relationship: 01: Father; 02: Mother; 03: Grandfather; 04: Grandmother; 05: Uncle; 06: Aunt; 07: Brother; 08: Sister; 09: Wife; 10: Husband; 11: Son; 12: Daughter; 13: Step father; 14: Step mother; 15: Step brother; 16: Step sister; 17: Father-in-law; 18: Mother-in-Law; 19: Not related; 20: Employer
- Education: 01: None; 02: grade 1-5; 03: grade 6-10; 04: grade 11-13; 05: Higher education
- Employment: 01: Manager; 02: Clerk; 03: Self-employed; 04: Farmer; 05: Industry Worker; 06: Domestic Worker; 07: Occasional Worker; 08: Working abroad; 09: Unemployed; 10: Student
- Legal relationship: 01: guardian 02: deprived of legal guardianship; 03: adoptive parent/sibling; 04: titular of the fit person (foster order); 05: foster relative; 06: other beneficiary of the fit person order

- 4.3  If the caretakers are not the parents, specify the reason (for foster parents, see also section 5D)
- father deceased
  - mother deceased
  - parents separated
  - parents deprived of parental rights
  - neglective/abusive parents
  - child sent to study far away from the family
  - child sent to work in another family

- 4.4  Total income of the family:
- less than 1\$ per day per person
  - less than 2\$/day/person

- 4.5  Self production of food:
- yes
  - no
- if YES specify: \_\_\_\_\_

- 4.6  Characteristics of the house:
- isolated/distant from services
  - in inhabited area
  - In a IDP camp
  - privately owned property
  - rented

- 4.7  Basic living conditions:
- |  |                |                |        |
|--|----------------|----------------|--------|
| Hygiene                                  | • insufficient | • satisfactory | • good |
| Facilities (space per person)            | • insufficient | • satisfactory | • good |
| Access to utilities (water, electricity) | • insufficient | • satisfactory | • good |
| Food security                            | • insufficient | • satisfactory | • good |

- 4.8  Family problems
- economic/housing problems
  - abusive/neglectful family
  - alcohol/drug abuse
  - no specific problems
  - highly conflictive situation
  - criminal problems
  - other
  - socio/educational difficulties
  - abandonment of the child

Short Description \_\_\_\_\_

**5 Social care intervention**

- 5.1 Intervention already in place:
- 5.1.1 • economic contribution to the family (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
Starting date \_\_\_\_\_ duration \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.1.2 • disability allowance \_\_\_\_\_  
Starting date \_\_\_\_\_ duration \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.1.3 • psychosocial support/involvement in NGO activities (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
Starting date \_\_\_\_\_ duration \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.1.4 • admitted in a children home (see section 5A)
- 5.1.5 Previous admissions in residential institutions: • yes • no  
Starting date \_\_\_\_\_ Duration \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason of discharge \_\_\_\_\_  
Starting date \_\_\_\_\_ Duration \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason of discharge \_\_\_\_\_  
Starting date \_\_\_\_\_ Duration \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason of discharge \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.1.6 • the child is in contact with the law (see section 5B)
- 5.1.7 • Fit Person Order activated (see section 5D)  
Starting date \_\_\_\_\_ duration \_\_\_\_\_

**5A Child in institution - checklist**

- 5a.1 Name and address of the institution \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a.2 Admission date 

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 Child caregiver \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a.3 The home is registered • yes • no
- 5a.4 The home complies to the minimum quality standards • yes
- 5a.5 A procedure has been activated to improve the service delivery in the home • yes
- 5a.6 Reason for the institutionalisation  
• abandonment • death of parents • poor living conditions  
• separation decided by probation services • disability • disruptive family  
• other \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a.7 Legal guardian • parent • other adult (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
• service provider (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a.8 Visits from the case manager  
• annual • every 6 months • monthly • none
- 5a.9 Visits from guardians/family members  
• annual • every 6 months • monthly • none
- 5a.10 The child returns home  
• during holidays • monthly • weekly • never
- 5a.11 Possibilities of de-institutionalisation  
• the family has to be traced  
• the family needs another kind of support  
• a non-related foster family has to be identified • other intervention needed

**5B Child in contact with the law - checklist**

5b.1  The child is a  victim  alleged offender  sentenced offender

5b.2  Crime committed/suffered \_\_\_\_\_

5b.3  In case of victims, the perpetrator is  the father  the mother  another relative  
 a caregiver  a known person  an unknown person

5b.4  Starting date of the case  Responsible officer \_\_\_\_\_

5b.5  At present the child is  detained in the remand home of \_\_\_\_\_  
 released on bail  in probation period  
 sentenced to custody at (specify the institution) \_\_\_\_\_

Starting date \_\_\_\_\_ duration \_\_\_\_\_  
By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

5b.6  The child is legally assisted  yes  no

5b.7  The parents/guardians are informed  yes  no

5b.8  The social report has been submitted to the magistrate  yes  no  
Date 

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**5C Child at risk of separation from the family - checklist**

5c.1  Reason for the risk of separation from the family:  
 violence/abuse from a family member  neglect  inadequate life conditions  
 involved against a case with a family member (see section 5B)  
 temporary incapability of parents  other

5c.2  Alternative care solution identified

- support provided to the family (specify)  
starting date  duration
- fit person order for a relative (specify)  
starting date  duration
- foster family identified (specify)  
starting date  duration
- admission in an institute (specify)  
starting date  duration

5c.3  Legal guardian appointed \_\_\_\_\_

**5D Child in foster family - checklist (please refer to section 4 for the description of the family)**

5d.1  Reason of selection of the fit person \_\_\_\_\_

5d.2  Has the fit person been trained?  yes  no By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

5d.3  Is the family regularly supervised?  yes  no By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

5d.4  Is the family involved in community care projects?  yes  no  
If YES specify: \_\_\_\_\_

5d.5  Is the family participating in a peer-support group?  yes  no

5d.6  Is the child in contact with the biological family?  yes  no  
If YES specify periodicity: \_\_\_\_\_

5d.7  End date of the fostering period \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

# ACTION PLAN

## 6.1 Needs/problems to be addressed:

- housing/basic facilities
- disability
- abused/neglected by (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- sexually abused by (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- socio/educational difficulties/school drop out
- deprivation of parental care
- institutionalisation
- malnourishment/chronicle disease
- disruptive behaviour/ deviance risk
- drug/alcohol abuse
- request of adoption
- request of fostering
- juvenile justice case
- property rights

Short description of the situation/specific needs \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 6.2 Planned intervention:

- economic support
- birth registration/immunisation
- assistance for disability
- school reintegration
- psychosocial support
- deinstitutionalisation (see section 5A)
- family tracing
- separation from the family (see section 5C)
- fit person order
- resolution of case in court (see section 5B)
- referral to other services

Professional figure to be involved (name, position, service):

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other resource persons to be involved

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Role/relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Role/relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Role/relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES

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## 6.3 Details of the action plan - follow up meetings

Meeting date

Participants \_\_\_\_\_

Action	Responsible Person	Timeframe	Expected Outcome

Meeting date

Participants \_\_\_\_\_

Action	Responsible Person	Timeframe	Expected Outcome

Meeting date

Participants \_\_\_\_\_

Action	Responsible Person	Timeframe	Expected Outcome

Meeting date

Participants \_\_\_\_\_

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Action	Responsible Person	Timeframe	Expected Outcome

Meeting date

Participants \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Action	Responsible Person	Timeframe	Expected Outcome

Date of closure of the file

Final notes \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Annex IV:  
Circular on Minimum Quality Standards**

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My no. S3/Gen/15,  
Dept. of Probation and child care  
P.O.Box 546  
Colombo  
15<sup>th</sup> October, 1991

To:  
Provincial Council Commissioners  
Probation Officers in charge  
Probation Officers  
Managers, Voluntary Children's Homes.

FIXATION OF GENERAL STANDARDS FOR PROMOTING THE  
QUALITY OF SERVICES IN VOLUNTARY CHILDREN'S HOMES

The services rendered by the voluntary organizations through Voluntary children's homes amidst numerous difficulties to orphaned, abandoned and destitute children admitted to these Homes are commendable. In order to improve the quality of such services the Department has laid down the minimum standards that should be maintained by the Voluntary children's homes run by the voluntary organisations with state assistance. The general standards required are given below.

You are kindly requested to take necessary steps to improve the standards in compliance with this circular in order to provide best and maximum services to every child. This aspect will be taken into assistance and ad-hoc grants.

1) STANDARDS RELATING TO BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT

- 1.1 Sleeping space of 36 square feet per child should be available in dormitories
- 1.2 In addition to the adequate space for sleeping, buildings should have sufficient space needed for the number of children for purpose of bathing, eating, reading and meeting with visitors.
- 1.3 Doors and windows should be at 1/7 of the area of the building, to provide necessary light and ventilation.
- 1.4 Accommodation for employees should be available separately
- 1.5 Buildings must be kept clean and nice and the garden should be maintained nicely and usefully.
- 1.6 Arrangements for supply of water should be made to meet the needs of the home.
- 1.7 If water is supplied from a well, the well should be protected safely
- 1.8 Bathing facilities with sufficient safety and care should be made available for the children and the employees
- 1.9 There should be one lavatory for every 10 inmates
- 1.10 Arrangements should be made to clean the toilets and drains regularly, using disinfectants

- 1.11 Adequate light should be provided at night to meet the needs of the entire home
- 1.12 In places where kerosene oil lamps are used only safety lamps should be used.

## 2) STANDARDS RELATING TO THE FOOD

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- 2.1 The food supplied to the inmates should be balanced and nourishing and be in prescribed quantities
- 2.2 Diet rolls should be prepared to suit the respective age groups.
- 2.3 A register should be maintained to indicate the kind of food and its quantity given daily.
- 2.4 Rice, coconut, sugar, flour, and the curry stuff etc. required at least for a week and vegetables for 03 days should always be in stock.

## 3) STANDARDS RELATING TO CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

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- 3.1 Each child should be provided with a covering cloth and a towel. Bed sheets should be kept clean.
- 3.2 Each child should have at least 02 dresses for domestic use, and 03 dresses for school use and at least one occasional dress of good quality.
- 3.3 Shoes and socks of children should be provided in accordance with the standard requirement of the school they attend.

## 4) STANDARDS RELATING TO EQUIPMENT

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### (A) FURNITURE

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- 4.1 Each child above 06 years of age should have a separate cupboard for himself/herself to keep his/her personal belongings such as clothes, books etc.
- 4.2 Common *almirahs* to keep clothes and other articles of children below age of 06 years should be available.
- 4.3 If no beds are available for each child, at least a mat or a canvas and a pillow should be provided to each. Possibility should be explored to provide these requirements by collecting donations if funds are not available.
- 4.4 Tables and chairs sufficient for the inmates for purpose of dining and reading should be made available.

### (B) CROCKERY

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- 4.5 Every child above the age of 10 years should have a plate and a cup that can be easily cleaned.
- 4.6 A feeding bottle with teats must be provided for each infant.
- 4.7 Adequate goods and kitchen utensils sufficient for all inmates and the staff should be made available.

### (C) EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

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- 4.8 Required school books and material should be provided to the children.
- 4.9 Library facilities necessary for the children must be made available.

- 4.10 Arrangements must be made to make at least 1 daily news-paper and 1 weekly paper available for children
- 4.11 Materials required for recreation should be provided to meet the requirements

(D) TO MAKE AVAILABLE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WILL BE USEFUL TO ENHANCE CHILDREN'S CREATIVITY AND TALENTS

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- 4.12 A radio
- 4.13 Musical instruments
- 4.14 A minimum of one toy for each child below the age of 03 years
- 4.15 Material to be used during spare time of the children

(E) SPORTS FACILITIES AND MATERIAL

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- 4.16 There should be play- ground large enough for the total number of inmates for their out-door games
- 4.17 In the absence of a play-ground belonging to the Home, arrangements should be made to make use of public or school play grounds situated close by
- 4.18 Adequate out door sports material should be made available for children.
- 4.19 Adequate in-door sports materials should be made available for children

5) SERVICE STANDARDS

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Following steps should be taken to provide protection and care to the inmates in the best way

(A) COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

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- 5.1 The Committee of Management should meet at least once a month and at least once in three months. A meeting should be held within the premises
- 5.2 Systematic planning should be made for efficient management of the Home; efforts should be made to collect funds; placement of children should be done cautiously.
- 5.3 Necessary arrangements should be made to maintain the Home adhering to the directions and the reports required by the Department should be forwarded in time.
- 5.4 The manager and the staff should possess good character.
- 5.5 Ad-hoc grant and the maintenance grant allocated by the Department should be expended adhering to the instructions; a statement of accounts should be forwarded to the Department by the Manager certified by a recognized auditor prior to the payment of annual Government Grants; if there is a difficulty in finding a registered auditor for this purpose it may be done by a civil list officer.
- 5.6 The following registers must be maintained in the Home:
  - Register of Admissions
  - Register of Daily Attendance
  - Accounts books
  - A Log book (for Departmental officers)
  - Visitor's book
  - A separate file for each child
  - Diet book

- 5.7 Every article and material given by the Department should be entered in the Inventory Book and should be annually verified.

(B) STAFF STANDARDS

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The staff of the Children's Home should attend the training course organized by the Department.

- 5.8 There should be a trained House Mother/ Father in every Children's home. House mother/father in charge must have the following qualifications:
- I. G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) certificate (not applicable to those who are already working)
  - II. Be above 25 years of age
  - III. Should have acquired a suitable training in child work
  - IV. Be of good conduct
- 5.9 Every House mother/father in charge should be resident in the Home itself
- 5.10 There should be one House mother for 05 children under 02 years
- 5.11 There should be at least one House mother for 10 children between 2-6 years
- 5.12 There should be a house mother/father in charge and an Assistant House mother/father for 25 children above the age of 06 years

QUALIFICATIONS OF A HOUSE MOTHER/MASTER

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- I. Should have passed grade 8 (not applicable to those who are already working)
- II. Be above 21 years of age. (if matured children of the home are employed they should have completed 18 years of age)
- III. They should be of good character. There should be employees for cooking and cleaning the Home and the premises etc. if a watcher or garden labourer is employed he should be of good character and be above the age of 45 years.

(C) STANDARDS RELATING TO ADDITIONAL SERVICE FACILITIES

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- 5.13 The Children's Home should be located close to Health and Medical Services Centres
- 5.14 Arrangements should be made with a Doctor of Medicine of the Department of Health Services or a private Doctor to visit the Children's Home from time to time and look into the health and medical needs of the children. Whenever it would be necessary arrangements should be made to take the children to such centres for treatment.
- 5.15 A programme must be in operation for immunization and inoculate vaccination
- 5.16 Children without birth certificates should be produced before a nearest Government Doctor through the Probation Officer in charge of the division and certificates of probable age be obtained

- 5.17 On admission to the children's home a medical report in respect of each child should be obtained. Every child should be subjected to a medical test annually, and an entry in his personal file should be made to that effect. Child's height, weight, marks of identity etc. too should be recorded in his/her file
- 5.18 Steps should be taken with the approval of the Provincial Commissioner to refer children suffering from malnutrition to the Nutrition Centres according to the medical advice.

(D) STANDARDS OF EDUCATION

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- 5.19 Steps should be taken to send every child above 05 years of age to a recognised school.
- 5.20 Arrangements must be made to send all the children who are less than 05 years and more than 03 years of age to the nearest pre-school or to conduct pre school classes for them.
- 5.21 Sufficient time should be allocated in the time table of the Children's Home for reading and playing daily.
- 5.22 Arrangements should be made to provide vocational training for the children
- 5.23 Arrangements should be made to provide vocational training to children particularly above the age of 14 years, who have not been successful in school education or who have a liking towards a specific trade. In consultation with the Provincial Commissioner in charge of the division suitable children can be sent to the Children's Homes which have special vocational training centres. A list of such centres is given in the annexure 2

(E) SPECIAL SERVICES CONDUCIVE TO CHILDREN'S GROWTH

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- 5.24 A personal file in respect of each child should be maintained to keep records about him from the time of his admission to the home. Entries should be made once a month in respect of weak children and once in 06 months in respect of other children. The personal file of each child should contain the following
- 5.25 Birth certificate. If Rice Ration books are available the particulars about them should be recorded in the file. Action should be taken with PO in charge of the Home to get certificates of probable age in the absence of birth certificates.
- 5.26 Child's height, weight and other medical information must be recorded (once in 06 months in respect of the children below 02 years)
- 5.27 Records should be kept on the physical, mental and spiritual behavior of the child
- 5.28 Records should be kept regarding his meeting the parents, guardians etc
- 5.29 Records should be made regarding the placement committee decisions
- 5.30 Vaccination and inoculation dates. If any questions arise about the conduct of a child, Probation Officers must be consulted. A special programme for treatment is drawn up where necessary and the particulars thereof are recorded.

## 6) PLACEMENT

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The Committee of Management of the Children's Homes must make every possible effort to provide necessary care and protection to every child admitted to the Home and to make the child integrate into the society at the correct age. Placement means to review the position of children in the Home from time to time and to plan activities oriented towards their future well-being in whatever ways mentioned below.

- 6.1 Entrust every child back to his/her parents or guardians if they can be found and where special difficulties are not encountered.
- 6.2 Where parents or guardians are unable to look after the child even if they are found, keeping the child under a fit person.
- 6.3 Giving adoptable children in the lawful manner for adoption. Children orphaned or abandoned will be treated as adoptable. Destitute children will be treated as adoptable if the parents give their written consent for adoption.
- 6.4 Placing the children with foster parents with approval of the Provincial Commissioner
- 6.5 Selection of sponsor parents who can support the child for his/her well-being
- 6.6 Finding employment.
- 6.7 Providing vocational training to enable him/her to secure a job
- 6.8 Giving the child in marriage.
- 6.9 Prior approval of the Provincial Commissioner of Probation and Child Care Services should be obtained before transferring or shifting a child in any manner out of the Home. Placement Committee comprised of the following persons should meet once in 06 months for the above purpose and action should be taken in respect of each child in terms of the decision taken therein.
  1. Provincial Commissioner PCCS of the Division/ PO in charge of the Home
  2. Manager/ Representative of the Board of Management
  3. Mother/ Father in charge of the Home
  4. House Mother/ House Master

With regard to the children who were decided by the Placement Committee to be kept in the Home for more than 03 years, the Provincial Commissioner, Probation and Child Care Services should be informed and his/her approval be obtained 03 months prior to the expiry of such 03 year period. Failure to do so will render the maintenance allowance not being paid for them.

## 7) GENERAL MATTERS

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- 7.1 A suitable atmosphere should be created and arrangement should be made in every Home for the children to follow their respective religion.
- 7.2 Arrangements should be made to take all the children in large or small groups on educational/excursion tours once in few months
- 7.3 It would be in the interest of the children to have Boy Scout/ Girl Guide teams in every Home.
- 7.4 There should be Programmes to strengthen relations of children with their parents or guardians.
- 7.5 The Minister in charge of the subject has statutory powers to appoint an Advisory Committee to examine the affairs of each Children's Home from time to time and to direct properly. The names of two or more persons with knowledge, experience and interest in child welfare and Children's Homes should be forwarded to the Provincial Commissioner and approval be

obtained. Facilities should be extended to them to examine the activities of the Home, whenever it would be necessary.

- 7.6 All monies and goods received by Children's Homes from local or foreign philanthropists must be properly entered in the official register.
- 7.7 Prior approval from the Provincial Commissioner should be obtained with regard to all dealings the Voluntary Children's Home will have with foreign institutions and any such dealings that are already in operation should be reported to him/her.
- 7.8 The children should be trained in group activities in order to promote team spirit and some responsibility.
- 7.9 When Children's Homes are badly managed and functioning in a manner detrimental to the children, the Department is compelled to take stern corrective action. If no steps are taken by such a Home to improve the conditions, the Department will have to take legal steps under the Orphanage Ordinance to close down such Homes and transfer the children to other Homes.

S. Padma Ranasinghe

Commissioner

Probation and child care services