

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Poverty Research in Sri Lanka**

**Child Poverty: an alternative understanding to inform policy and practice**

**4-5 December 2009, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**AGENDA**

**Objective**

This year's thematic focus on child poverty provides an alternative understanding to inform policy and practice. The body of research on children in Sri Lanka is vast, focusing on various contextual factors, and trying to understand the impacts of these factors on various facets of children's lives. As such the Symposium will provide a platform to;

- **Showcase the vast body of knowledge on child poverty** in Sri Lanka by providing researchers a space to share their work with various stakeholders.
- **Enhance the understanding of child poverty** in Sri Lanka in order to inform policy and practice.
- **Build partnerships** amongst children, researchers and decision makers for more effective research communication that would inform child poverty practices.

**Day 1 – 4 December 2009**

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08.30 – 09.00           **Registration**

09.00 – 10.00           **Opening session – Partner Panel**

**Session objective:** The aim of this session is to introduce the purpose of this symposium to the audience and note that there are alternative ways of understanding issues relating to children and how they experience poverty. It aims to highlight that children experience poverty in different ways and that different contexts can result in not just deprivations but also make children vulnerable and prevent them from moving out of poverty.

- Welcome address – Priyanthi Fernando, Executive Director, Centre for Poverty Analysis
- Understanding child poverty: Concepts and experiences, Azra Abdul Cader, Centre for Poverty Analysis
- Prasant Naik, Country Director, Save the Children Sri Lanka
- Lakshman Gunsekera, Associate Country Director, International Alert, Sri Lanka
- Razalia Nizarhil, Representative, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
- Dr. Sarath Samarage, Social Determinants of Health Technical Working Group, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition, Sri Lanka

10.00 – 10.15           **Plenary Address – Child Poverty in Sri Lanka, Dr. Indra Tudawe, United Nation's Children Fund**

10.15 – 10.45           **Tea**

10.45 – 12.00           **Session 1 – Child perspectives**

Facilitator: Rama Kanagasabai Vannyrama, Save the Children Sri Lanka

**Session objective:** The aim of this session is to demonstrate the potential of child participatory information-gathering, research and advocacy in informing policies to alleviate child poverty and vulnerability. The session will be based on a small-scale research on children's poverty and vulnerability conducted in the Akkaraipattu, Ampara district, by children of a nomadic community in Sri Lanka. The aim of this session is for adults and children to engage with concepts of child agency, participation and the added value in terms of new knowledge.

- Perceptions on child wellbeing, presentation by children from Aligambay, Akkareipattu
- Reflections from the research team, Dharshini Seneviratne, Save the Children Sri Lanka and Lakwimashi Perera, Centre for Poverty Analysis

12.00 – 01.15            **Session 2 – Malnutrition: The persisting problems related to child health**

**Session objective:** The aim of this session is to highlight how children cope in times of non-conflict related crisis and to discuss how these can exacerbate poverty.

Chair: TBC

- Impact of economic crisis on child and maternal health in South Asia, Azra Abdul Cader and Lakwimashi Perera, Centre for Poverty Analysis
- Role of Care in Alleviating the Child Malnutrition, Thushanthi Perera, Jeevika Weerahewa Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya

01.15 – 02.15            **Lunch**

02.15 – 04.00            **Session 3 – Children coping with crisis: the post conflict perspective**

**Session objective:** The aim of this session is to discuss children's issues within the current post conflict setting.

Chair: Gowrie Ponnaiah, previously with the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)

- Can we live like this? Aspirations for the future, Poverty and Conflict Programme documentary introduced by Prashan Thalayasingam, Centre for Poverty Analysis
- Poverty, Conflict and Education: A study of schools in selected districts in Sri Lanka, Professor Chandra Gunewardena and Professor Swarna Jayaweera, Centre for Women's Research
- Violation of child rights and its impact on child development: An analysis focusing on Sammanthurai DS area, A. M. Nisar, Research Paper, University of Peradeniya
- Children and displacement, Marsha Cassiere-Daniel, researcher commissioned by Save the Children Sri Lanka

04.00 – 04.15            **Closing – Day 1**

- Presentation of the main issues discussed during the day, Lakwimashi Perera, Centre for Poverty Analysis

04.15 – 04.45            **Tea**

**Day 2 - 5 December 2009**

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09.00 – 10.25            **Session 4 – Working with children – a practitioners' point of view**

**Session objective:** This session aims to engage with non-state organisations/actors who have been working with children/child wellbeing in Sri Lanka and draw out their experience on impacting child poverty.

Chair: PLAN International (TBC)

- Piyawara' - CSR Project on education by Hemas Holdings PLC, Shiromi Maskorale, Manager Corporate Relations/CSR
- Identifying problems faced by children of estate workers and their root causes, K.U.R. Wijayatilaka, Assistant Medical Officer, Polgahawela Central Dispensary
- A practical study of ways to improve lives of under-privileged and orphan children in Sri Lanka, Sylvia Merkel, Friends Kinderhilfe International e.V.
- Protect Children from Child Abuses due to Poverty, Sandamali Ariyaratne and Shevan Gunarathene, Sarvodaya Legal Services Movement

10.25 – 10.45           **Tea**

10.45 – 11.50           **Session 5 – Emerging child issues to be considered**

Chair: Jeganathan Thatparan, Head of Child Protection, Save the Children, Sri Lanka

- Understanding the law with children, Mangala Randeniya and Sajeeva Samaranayake, independent researchers
- Poverty and disability: inclusive education as a challenging option to ensure right to education for children with disabilities, Ali Zakky and Rangapali Ranaweera, Leonard Cheshire Disability Resource Centre
- Poverty and sexual abuse of children: Special focus on teenage mothers, Sandamali Ariyaratne, Sarvodaya

11.50 – 01.00           **Session 6 – Policy engagements**

**Session objective:** This session aims to bring the policy engagements on children and poverty with a view to create synergies and encourage more effective partnerships between policy makers and other stakeholders.

Chair: Dr. Sarath Samarage, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition, Sri Lanka

- Dimuthu Galappatti, Planning Officer, National Child Protection Authority, Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment
- Mr. Wijeyratne, ADdeputy Director, Rural and Social Development Division, Samurdhi Authority, Ministry of Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure

01.00 – 01.45           **Session 7 – Moving forward: Emerging recommendations**

The aim of this session is to develop a series of recommendations for stakeholders and encourage partnerships for organisations to work together to improve child wellbeing in Sri Lanka.

Chair: Priyanthi Fernando, CEPA

- For researchers – Azra Abdul Cader, CEPA
- For practitioners – Dharshini Seneviratne, Save the Children
- For policy makers - Dr. Sarath Samarage, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition

01.45 – 02.45           **Lunch**