



Child Action Lanka

Company Profile 2023

www.childactionlanka.org
www.childactionlanka.charity





Our Story

Many children around Sri Lanka start their life at a disadvantage simply because of who they are and where they come from. Children in both urban and rural areas around the country are deprived of education, traumatized by violence and abuse (mental and physical) or suffer from illness mainly due to poverty, war and conflict. In addition to being born into such difficult situations these children also face social stigma that prevents them from coming out of the cycle of poverty, with challenges not only from society but also from their very own families. This was the reason for the inception of Child Action Lanka (CAL).

Our Founder, Debbie Edirisinghe wanted to not only provide a safe haven for children such as these but she also wanted to shed light on the critical issues that these children go through on a daily basis and come up with solutions for them. In 2006 with 8 children in our care, the very 1st CAL centre was set up by renting a basement space in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Today, we have expanded to 8 Child Development Centres around the country with many projects focusing on creating a better future for kids in Sri Lanka and providing protection and support for women that have fallen victim to domestic abuse.

A group of children in a rural setting, some making peace signs. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

Our Vision

“A future of well-being, value and equality for every child everywhere.”

Our Mission

“To protect the most disadvantaged children and provide holistic education, health and nutrition promoting their basic needs, rights and interests to enable them, their families and communities to be individuals who bring positive change.”

Our Culture

At CAL we work with Integrity, being Transparent with our stake holders, championing teamwork and healthy relationships when providing solutions for child centered care and facing challenges.

Our CAL Triangle

The CAL Triangle represents the core areas that we focus on as an organization.



Core Issues

Due to poverty, war and conflict children and women across the island face many issues. Child Action Lanka focuses on 4 main issues that affect the children and the communities they belong to.



Education

Children coming from challenging backgrounds are often neglected and are never given the equal opportunity to have a proper education. Lack of school supplies, uniforms, shoes, funds, and transportation facilities have created many difficulties for children to pursue their education. Poverty, gender-based violence, and early marriage, lack of access to sanitary items and the lack of interest in poor families when it comes to investing in education for girls have led towards girls being under-represented or have a low attendance in school. According to UNICEF, in Sri Lanka, only 40.2% of adolescents aged 17-18 continue at school and from those that dropout, only one quarter participate in vocational training programs.

Health & Nutrition

Many children in the country do not have access to a proper meal or even a glass of milk for a day. Due to this many children in Sri Lanka are at risk of malnutrition during the early stages of their life. These will untimely lead to health issues that cannot be reversed during their adolescence and adult life. This can also impact their ability to learn and generate income in the future. According to UNICEF, in Sri Lanka 39% of children do not consume any iron-rich foods. This number could be more devastating now due to effects of Covid-19.



Child Rights And Protection

When considering children that come from low income families or children living in slum and shanty areas in the country, it is notable that these children are not only vulnerable to threats from outsiders but that they are also very vulnerable to threats that can come from their own family members and surrounding neighbours. During the Covid-19 lock down in 2020 there were very clear indications that many children all around the country are at risk from violence or abuse in their own homes. In 2020 there were 8165 child abuse cases reported to the National Child Protection Authority. That means on average 22 children for a day and at least one child in every 2 hours fall victim to abuse in Sri Lanka.

Women's Rights And Protection

Poverty, war, and conflict have also made women around the country very vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse. Unfortunately, due to the lack of support, ability to be financially independent and social stigma that surrounds women, their experience of abuse is often silenced, and they become isolated from society. The 2019 Women's Wellbeing Survey done by the Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka revealed that, overall, one in four women in Sri Lanka have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner. For many of these women violence is rarely a one-time occurrence. It is constant and long-term presence in their lives. A women's safety at risk does not only puts her life in danger but it also puts her children's lives at risk as well.

Our Goals



Be a provider of employable education

At CAL our goal is to provide children with equal opportunity for education. We aim to provide children with the foundation they need for their education and also to work towards emotional healing and mentally wellbeing. We also take initiative to create awareness about the importance of education for all children.



Be a promoter of sustainable health, nutrition awareness and methods

At our centres we take special initiative to provide healthy & nutritious food for the children under our care. We also work towards providing quality health care and instilling healthy habits.



Advocate of long-term solutions to protection and care for children and youth

Our committed and active supporters of women's and children's rights work towards creating awareness among the communities we work with and protecting vulnerable women and children. We also have initiatives that drive towards improving child and women's rights, protection, and mental health in the country.



Promote Social Enterprising as a way of sustainability and community ownership of development

As an organization we aim to create sustainability of development and increase financial sustainability. Our local social enterprise projects generate income as well as provide employment possibilities for those from the communities we work with. All proceeds are utilized towards our projects, contributing primarily towards the education of the children of the local communities we work with.

Our Initiatives

Provide extra tuitions:

In order to cater to their special needs our trained teachers create tailor made personal plan per child and we provide additional lessons on subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

School supplies

We work with the community to provide children, what they need to ensure that they go back to school next year. This ranges from school uniforms, shoes, bags, water bottles, stationery, books and sanity items for girls.

Sponsors / Scholarships:

To encourage further education, we set up scholarship schemes to support children to complete A-Levels, and to attend university or take up other further education options.

Mobile school for street kids:

In February 2020, we partnered with MobileSchool.org to initiate Sri Lanka's very first mobile school. Mobile School values and validates the talents and survival skills of street-connected children. The primary goal and the outreach strategy is to shift the youngsters' attitudes in a positive direction to better steer their future. With our partner StreetwiZe, Mobile school's impact driven approach for talent and leadership growth has catered to learning demands of street children in a business context.

Healthy meals:

At our centre we work towards providing at least a healthy lunch to the children in our care. We also track the growth of children under 5 years old monitoring their health to ensure that they are not malnourished.

A glass of milk for a day:

At CAL we work to provide a glass of milk to the children in our care and the children on the streets, so they will have the nutrition they need.

Life 1K:

To ensure that children are well-nourished in the first 1000 days of their life. We conduct Parental awareness programs and centre programs to offer support for low-income families.

Childcare and hygiene:

At our centres we teach by example, ensuring that the children have a clean environment to learn and play in, while they are in our care and actively engaging parents in cleanliness activities as well.

Medical camps:

Most of the communities that we work with do not have access to quality health care. To fill this gap we organize medical camps with the help of local and foreign volunteers, focusing especially on the treatment of diabetes, blood pressure-related problems and asthma. In addition, they provide an opportunity for parents to seek medical advice and information.

Counselling and therapy:

Many of our staff and volunteers are qualified counsellors and with the support of child psychologists, we have trained our staff in interventions for children experiencing sexual abuse, physical and emotional abuse. Many of these issues can create challenges for children in their education and communication skills. Therefore, at CAL we also provide occupational and speech therapy as well.

Safe home:

Our safe homes provide protection and support for women and girls who have suffered abuse. We aim to create an environment where women and girls find comfort, peace, and acceptance as well as practical and emotional support for them and their families while they rebuild their shattered lives. Our objective is to help them rebuild their lives, their self-esteem and confidence, enabling them to:

- Recover from their experience
- Get used to routines and well-regulated schedules
- Change behaviour and attitudes
- Work on their past
- Face their future
- Become financially independent

Shelter home:

Our shelter home in Kandy is there to provide a safe place for children who are at risk from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. During the lockdown in 2020 this proved to be a necessity for some of the children in our local community.

Awareness programs:

We conduct awareness programs to provide valuable information to the children and the communities we work with in terms of health, protection, education and rights for children and women.

Start-up business support:

The women that come to us for support are very much dedicated to providing a better life for their family. In order to come out of their current status we provide them with the financial support they need to kick start their business ideas.

Guardian angel program

The Guardian Angel program is a sponsorship program that is developed to support the financial needs of the children at our shelter home. Sponsors that registering with CAL as a Guardian Angel, are assigned to support a child for a year. Each sponsor receives quarterly updates regarding the progress of the child they are sponsoring and at the end of the year they will also receive a certificate of sponsorship from CAL.

Income generating projects

WRAP

Our "Sarees for life" concept is a result of our strong belief that sustainable development comes from empowering communities to provide for themselves and their families. Featuring up cycled products made out of used sarees— these unique scarves, shawls, bags, cases and other pieces are sold at the BUONO Café. WRAP is a positive collaborative effort of women from different social, geographical, and ethnic backgrounds – an initiative that bridges peace and harmony among communities. Being made from 100% repurposed material, WRAP products also honour our commitment to protecting the environment.

DONATION - Charity shop

The **DONATION** charity shop situated at our Nuwara Eliya branch is a second-hand goods store. This store consists of a variety of products at affordable prices. All goods at the store are donated by CAL supports, staff or a generous giver. This project not only servers as an income for our centres but it also provides a sustainable solution for managing consumption of products and gives benefits to both goods donator and buyer.

Where We Work

From Kandy in 2006, we have expanded our reach across the island and currently operate in 8 key towns.



Kandy:

In Kandy we mainly work with street kids and their families with the main goal of keeping the children off of the streets. Most of the parents of these children are beggars on the streets and therefore these kids are vulnerable to threats from the surrounding environment and are in danger of being denied of their basic rights and needs.

Akkarayan:

In our centre here, we work with children and families that were affected by the war and now struggling with poverty, mental health issues, protection for women and children. Our main efforts here focus on rehabilitation and creating a way for these families to move forward.

Batticaloa:

This area of the country has faced loss and trauma due to the war. Our work here since 2012 has been focused on reaching out to rural communities that struggle with high poverty and difficulties in getting access to resources to fulfil basic needs. Our after-school program here now has around 650 kids attending each week.

Kelaniya:

Named Antonio Bianchi's House after its generous patron, our centre in Kelaniya opened in September 2009. We currently run a pre-school for 3 to 5-year-olds with academic classes and activities. As many children come from difficult backgrounds and are in need of emotional support, we provide counselling as well as conducting workshops for their parents on life skills and parenting. Our main focus in this centre is to provide the healing and mental strength these children will need to proceed to school and advance in their academics.

Kilinochchi:

All of the families that we work with in this centre have suffered from the war and are still on a long road to recovery. Many of them are displaced and have suffered mental and physical trauma. Our main goal here has been to provide a space for reconciliation and rehabilitation.

Nuwara Eliya:

Children in this centre are mostly from families where the parents work at tea estates. Due to this these children most often are left alone at home which makes them vulnerable to many risks. Being part of low-income families also means these children do not have access to basic facilities, electricity or running water and most of them are from families that also deal with alcohol abuse and domestic violence. Our main goal at this centre is to provide a safe place for the children to stay while parents are at the estates, help to overcome trauma and abuse and have access to healthy meals, education, and health care.

Colombo:

The Tima Lazarus Centre is CAL's latest Centre which commenced activities in Colombo on the 14th of September 2020. Within two weeks the centre drew 32 Children. Main focus here is to support education and protection of the children in our care.

Galle:

While being a wonderful attraction location due to its high demand and inflow of tourists, Galle has a higher tendency for child abuse, corruption, and trafficking. Therefore, in this region we especially we work towards providing solutions and mediation to protect the most vulnerable children in Galle.

Director Profiles



Debbie
Edirisinghe

Debbie Edirisinghe is the Founding Director of Child Action Lanka. She also holds the position as Director at Anugra Asia (Pvt) Ltd, Asia Director at Epiphany Trust and she also actively works with Global Goodwill Ambassadors, Female Wave of Change and ALL (All Ladies League). Currently reading for her PHD at Durham University she also holds a BA (hours) in Business management and administration from Birmingham City University and Master of Business Administration from Cardiff Metropolitan University and MBA in Human Resource Management with the Open University of Sri Lanka.

Debbie is the recipient of many awards such as Keerthishri Deshamanya (by The Government of Sri Lanka), Zonta Centennial Award - Sri Lanka, Lifetime achievement award (Women World Awards 2019), Female Achievers-Lifetime Achievement Award (Women World Awards - USA 2019), Champion of the year and Female Entrepreneur of the Year (Women World Awards – USA 2018).



Dilshan
Edirisinghe

Dilshan Edirisinghe completed his education in Christian theology in Australia. Currently he is the senior pastor of the c3 church Kandy, Sri Lanka and has been serving in ministry for over 20 years. He also has a business background working in aqua culture and specialises in prawn breeding. With a deep passion for construction that he acquired from his family business, Dilshan also has a keen eye for planning, layouts and building structure.

Being a part of the Child Action Lanka pioneering team Dilshan has been a key leader for CAL from the very beginning. He also has been essential in maintaining strong ties with Australia for CAL.



Dian
Dishantha Gunatilake

Dian Gunatilake is a Senior HR professional with a MBA in HR, and accounting for more than 40 years of experience of which 13 years in Managerial capacity and 22 years in Director capacity. He is presently the Regional HR Director of Trelleborg Wheel Systems (a Swedish multinational company) overlooking the Manufacturing Plants in Sri Lanka and also overseeing the APAC region Sales & Marketing covering 9 countries including; Australia, New Zealand, China, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea & India.

His areas of expertise are the following; Human Resource Management & Development covering Recruitment and Selection, Talent Management, Competency based training & development , Performance Management Systems, Formulation of HR policies, Grievance handling, Industrial Relations, handling of Labour Tribunal cases and Labour Department inquiries, Disciplinary Management, Staff Welfare, Personnel Administration, preparation of HR Budgets and HR plans and identifying HR requirements of new acquisitions. His career has led him to work with many global leading companies such as Taj Samudra Hotel, Senok Group of Companies, MAS Bodyline Private Limited , John Keells Holdings Limited and Richard Peiris & Company Limited.



Roshanie
Jayasundera-Moraes

Roshanie Jayasundera-Moraes, Executive Vice President of the John Keells Group, currently serves as the President of the Council for Business with Britain and the Chairperson of the Association of Shopping Malls in SL. Initially, she held the position of Joint Managing Director of the Airline Division of the Transportation Group and, before taking over the current role in the Property Sector, led the Retail Sector as its Sector Head. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK) and holds a MBA from the Post Graduate Institute of Management (PIM) of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura SL.



Carina
Nesbitt

Carina Nesbitt is currently the Global Talent Development Manager for Ingka Centers (IKEA – Ingka Group). She previously has worked as the Group Talent Management Director for Trelleborg AB, before joining Trelleborg she has worked as Human Resource Director at John Bean Technology Corporation, Learning & Development Manager, at Vestas Northern Europe AB and prior to that she has also worked as HR Business Partner at AstraZeneca, in Sweden.

She is a dedicated Senior HR leader with over 20 years of experience in Human Resource Management, having a strong drive and passion for leadership development, talent management and diversity & inclusion. She holds a Higher Diploma in Strategic Human Resources and Coaching Certification. She is also an active speaker at different events within the area of Leadership, Talent Management and Diversity & Inclusion. She is speaker at both Nordic as well as Global forums.



Jonathan
D. C Lewis

Jonathan Lewis is the Director of Pastoral Education at Nord Anglia Education, China. He has 30 years of experience in the education field which includes working as the Director of Student Affairs and Head of Boarding at Basis International School, Nanjing, China, Deputy Head Pastoral at Wellington College, Tianjin, China, Director of Learning Support at Tonbridge School, UK.

Over the course of his career Jonathan has played many roles such as Rugby Coach, Professional Development Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator, Outreach Programme Lead, tutor and mentor giving him the opportunity to work with children ranged from those with profound and multiple learning difficulties to candidates securing positions at Oxbridge and Ivy League Schools. He also has experience in dealing with issues regarding to child protection and welfare of children.



Janek
Jayasekara

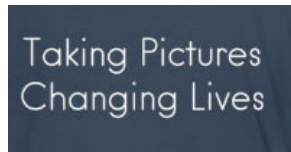
Janek Jayasekara is a Director and Group Chief Operating Officer of the Akbar Brothers Group of Companies. He is a Senior Management Professional and Chartered Accountant by profession with over two decades of experience. Janek is also a Director at AB Group companies, Sunshine Healthcare Lanka Ltd, Healthguard Pvt Ltd, Akbar Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd, Lina Manufacturing Pvt Ltd, Lina Spiro Pvt Ltd.

He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Colombo, and a Master of Science Degree in Accountancy and Finance from the UK, a Fellow Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants UK, an Associate Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, a Fellow Member of the Certified Practicing Accountants of Australia and an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK.

Janek has worked at Ernst & Young, John Keells Group, the Richard Pieris Group, Standard Chartered Bank and Al Rajhi Bank covering multiple sectors such as Banking, Financial Services & Audit, Manufacturing, Transportation & Logistics, Retail & Distribution, Food & Beverage, Leisure, Exports, and Construction having worked in both global and local institutions which are leaders in their respective sectors.

He serves on the Advisory Committee on Training and Development of the International Chamber of Commerce Sri Lanka. Further he serves as the Honorary Treasurer of the Alumni Association of the University of Colombo, a Mentor for the Members of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants–UK, among other honorary appointments.

Our Partners



Canadian Red Cross

Croix-Rouge canadienne

" Child Action Lanka has actively been a part of saving children & women at risk of mental, physical and sexual violence and abuse, and those on the verge of suicide and mental break downs. We look to continue this service effectively with the support of our donors, partners, volunteers and community we serve."

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