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**REVIEW OF SAVE THE CHILDREN'S *NEW BEGINNINGS*  
*FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE*  
PROGRAM IN SRI LANKA**

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*NEW BEGINNINGS FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT  
AND VIOLENCE* PROGRAM IN SRI LANKA**

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## **DEDICATION**

On March 21, 2006, the DCOF team met with Mr. Pathmanathan Shanmugaratman, project manager of the Caritas project for children, and other members of the Reunification Coordination group in Jaffna. On April 9, 2006, he and a co-worker, Mr. Selvendra Piratheepkumar, were killed by a mine explosion. We wish to dedicate this report to these child protection workers. Their deaths are a sobering reminder of the serious security concerns faced by those in Sri Lanka and elsewhere who work in conflict zones for the protection and care of children.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On behalf of the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, we wish to thank the many people who supported our work in Sri Lanka. From USAID/Colombo, we would like to thank Ben Kauffeld for his active engagement with our visit, Ivan Rasiah for his insights during the Galle field visit, and Anoja Jayasuriya for her continual and thorough administrative support.

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Sithambarampillai Thurairoja, senior state counsel of the attorney general’s office, took the time to explain the intricacies of the legal system as it applies to children in institutions. In Jaffna, the Hon. R.T. Vigna Raja, magistrate judge shared with us the particular concerns of children in the legal system in the context of conflict and violence.

The minister of the Southern Provincial Council, the commissioner of probation and child care (Southern Province), and the district secretary engaged us in a lively discussion about children living in institutions and the possibilities for alternative care. We had similar discussions in the Western Province with W.A.D. Chandrika Rupasinghe, the commissioner of probation and child care (Western Province), as well as the assistant commissioner, and the senior probation officer was also greatly appreciated.

K.L. Kamarasiri, the principal of the Boys Certified School in Hikkaduwe (Southern Province), and Mr. Yasarathne, the warden of the Boys Remand home in Kottawa (Western Province), helped us to understand the roles those institutions play in the legal system, and the challenges they face in caring for children.

Appreciation goes to Beth Verhey and Maggie Brown, consulting for UNICEF/Sri Lanka, for sharing their insights on the situation of children in conflict-affected areas and the impact of current programming.

Particular thanks for such interesting field visits in Jaffna go to, E. Srimonhanan, the Kayts Islands assistant government agent, and the District Child Protection Committee, in particular its coordinator, Stephen Sunthararaj.



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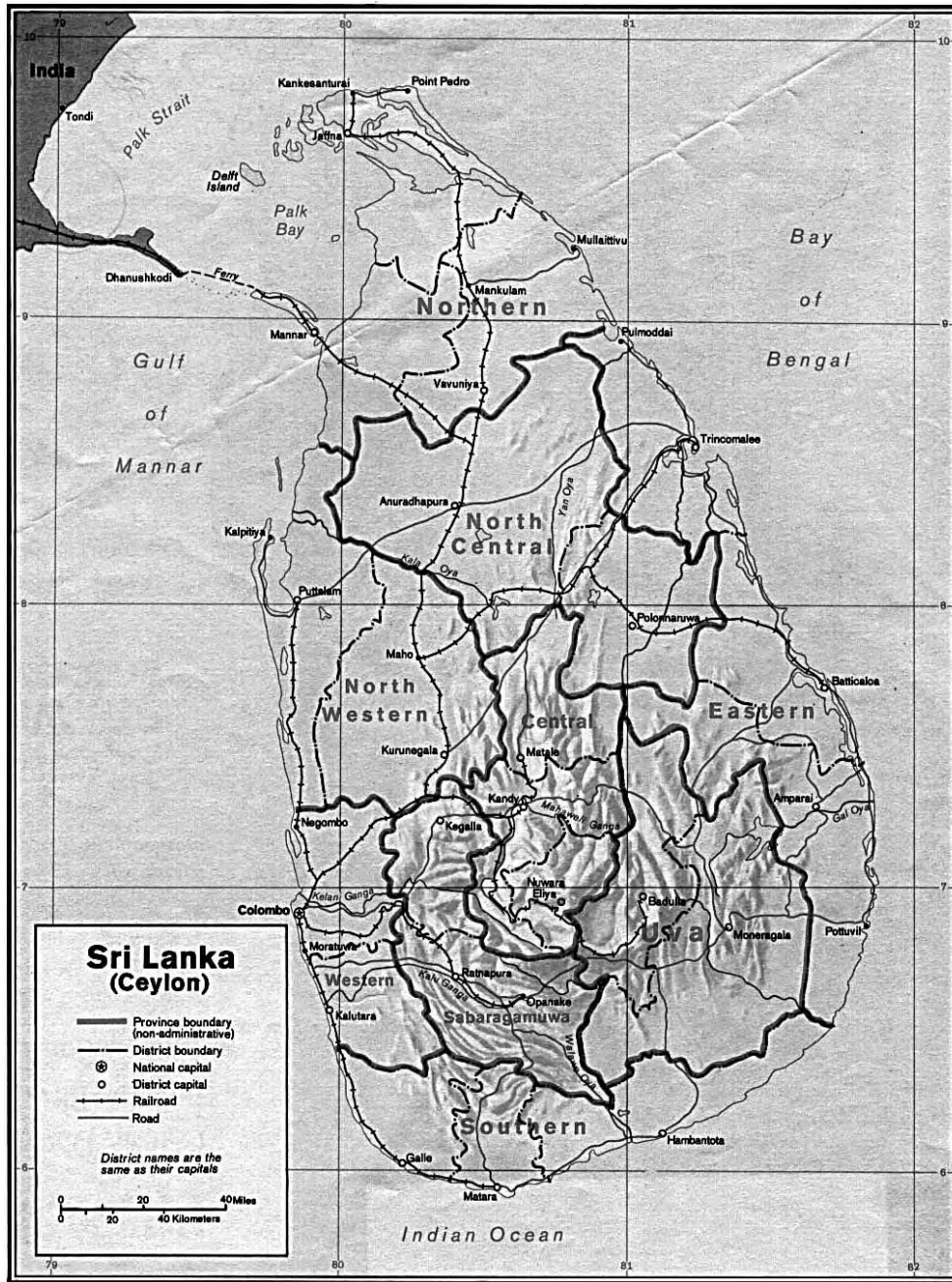
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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CRPO	Child Rights Protection Officer
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
DCPC	District Child Protection Committee
DPCC	District Probation and Child Care
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NGO	non-governmental organization
PO	Probation Officer
SCiSL	Save the Children in Sri Lanka
TfD	Theatre for Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# MAP



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than two decades of conflict have afflicted Sri Lanka, with an estimated 65,000 people killed and hundreds of thousands more displaced since 1983 when the rebel force, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), scaled up its conflict with the Government. Nearly 900,000 children live in the areas most affected by the conflict. They continue to experience disruption in educational and health services, and scarce economic opportunities, as well as the risk of recruitment by the LTTE or other militia groups. Sri Lanka's problems were further compounded by the devastating tsunami that affected much of its coastal area in late December 2004, causing approximately 38,000 deaths and the displacement of 570,968 persons.<sup>1</sup>

In January 2003, Save the Children UK and Save the Children Norway merged their programs under a single management structure to form Save the Children in Sri Lanka (SCiSL), with Save the Children UK as the managing member. In an agreement with Save the Children UK (for Save the Children in Sri Lanka), the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) has provided \$1,135,000 through a cooperative agreement for the *New Beginnings for Children Affected by Violence and Conflict* program. It is a three-year program scheduled to run from November 2004 through November 2007, but the tsunami and the emergency response it required delayed the initiation of the project until April 2005. New Beginnings is currently operating in Southern and Western Provinces, and Jaffna (in North-East Province), with activities concentrating on community mobilization for improved care and protection of children, and reunifying and reintegrating with their parents children who are residing in institutions.

The goal of New Beginnings is, "Children affected by armed conflict and violence in the family or community are protected from further harm and supported in gaining safe access to family and/or government support, as appropriate, and social inclusion in the wider community."

Its strategic objectives are

1. To enable children affected by armed conflict (e.g., former child soldiers, separated or displaced children, children who lost opportunities due to armed conflict) to be resettled and/or reintegrated into their families, schools, and communities
2. In selected project areas, to support children, families, and communities to protect boys and girls from violence and abuse in home and community contexts
3. To develop, test, and replicate alternatives to institutional care (such as family based care) for vulnerable and at-risk children

DCOF sent a team to Sri Lanka, March 12 – 24, 2006, to review New Beginnings in collaboration with USAID Sri Lanka and SCiSL. The team included John Williamson, DCOF's senior technical advisor, and Malia Robinson, an independent consultant. The purpose of the visit was to examine the progress of the program and the relevance of its activities in light of changes in the operating environment. The collaborative review focused primarily on *what*

should be done with *which beneficiaries*, rather than on addressing the specific technical issues of *how* to implement current activities.

## **The Current System of Care for Children without Adequate Family Care in Sri Lanka**

SCiSL is responding to the situation of children affected not only by violence and natural disaster, but also children affected by governmental systems that are built around institutional responses and that treat vulnerable children as criminals and operate without any formal standards. These governmental systems lack mechanisms to prevent family separation and to provide community-based alternatives to institutional care. Also, privately run institutional care for children has been allowed to proliferate in Sri Lanka. It serves in many areas primarily as an inefficient mechanism for poor families to cope with poverty and obtain access to education at the expense of their children's development and social integration. It also serves as the default option for children associated with court cases, whether as victims, perpetrators, or witnesses.

The governmental and private systems of institutional care in the country were extensively researched by SCiSL (independent of New Beginnings) in 2005. The findings of the study, endorsed by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Social Welfare, were published later that year in *Home Truths: Children's Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka*.<sup>2</sup> The study found that over 15,000 children currently reside in state-run and private institutions in the four provinces covered by the study. While the study was unable to prove comprehensive statistics on the number of children in government-run and private care facilities, it did find that of a total of 329 residential institutions in the four provinces covered by the study, 272 (83 percent) were privately run. In the North-East, there is only one small government home and 150 private institutions.<sup>3</sup> In that province in particular, the conflict and related displacement and loss of income are the major reasons for children being in institutional care.<sup>4</sup>

The SCiSL study found that orphaning was a minor cause of institutionalization of children. In institutions visited during the study, of the children for whom information was provided, only 9 percent had lost both parents and 29 percent had lost one parent. Three percent were from single parent families, and the rest, 59 percent, had both parents living. Thus, 88 percent had one or both parents living.<sup>5</sup>

The state system of institutional care appears to be a colonial legacy that has become integral to the Sri Lankan judicial system, but that is not functioning in children's best interests. While state-run remand and certified homes have limits placed on the length of stay for children, these limits are typically exceeded, frequently by years. Children are often placed in a different part of the country than their family, and children in need of "protection," because they have been abused or witnessed a crime, are routinely housed with offenders. Receiving homes for children under the age of five raise concerns about institutionalization of young children, which has long been known to have very negative consequences for children's development.

The proliferation of privately run institutions is another serious concern in Sri Lanka, particularly in the war-affected areas. New Beginnings is focusing in Jaffna on the reunification of children

from private institutions. Displacement, poverty, and the lack of access to services in this area long affected by conflict appear to be the major motivating factors for the voluntary placement of children in the institutions by their parents or family members. Interestingly, while no standards exist for state institutions, there are governmental standards for private institutions, though their implementation is rarely monitored or enforced.<sup>6</sup>

## **The New Beginnings Project**

The primary activities of New Beginnings concentrate on community mobilization for improved care of children, and the reunification and reintegration of children separated from their parents and residing in institutional care. In the Southern Province, the two districts of Neluwa and Thawalama are targeted for community mobilization efforts. These efforts are carried out primarily through Mobile Teams, which are comprised of civil servants with responsibilities concerning children's welfare, including child rights and protection officers, probation officers, and police officers. Another key activity in the Southern and Northern Provinces is Theatre for Development (TfD), a child rights advocacy tool involving creative processes to support children in expressing their views and concerns to community members and key decision-makers.

Family reunification and reintegration of separated children is the largest activity area of New Beginnings, and is carried out in all three provinces. SCiSL is involved in discussions with the relevant government authorities about improvements in institutional care, reunification of and reintegration support to children in institutional care, and the development of appropriate alternative care options for children without adequate family care. SCiSL has developed some impressive training materials to prepare and guide those engaged in arranging and supporting appropriate family reunification for children living in institutional care.

In Jaffna, with the enthusiastic support of government officials, aggressive efforts are underway to reunify children in residential care with their families and to close private institutions. Deinstitutionalization has progressed much more rapidly there than in the other provinces where New Beginnings is operating. The scale and pace of deinstitutionalization, however, was a concern to SCiSL and the DCOF team, because in some cases inadequate assessment had been done regarding family conditions, and the family's willingness and ability to receive and provide adequate care for their children. Also, for some reunited children there was no follow-up. New Beginnings has provided social workers to the District Child Protection Committee to establish a sound reunification process. The project has provided training (Appendix G includes examples of training materials) and worked with the District Child Protection Committee to develop appropriate procedures for assessing whether family reunification is in a child's best interests. Apart from the children being reunified with SCiSL support, though, other children were being deinstitutionalized without these procedures being followed. SCiSL and the DCOF team are concerned that deinstitutionalization may be moving too fast to ensure sustainable reintegration of children. To improve the situation, coordination meetings have been initiated in Jaffna involving organizations engaged in family reunification efforts.

Also in Jaffna, in the Kayts Islands specifically, SCiSL has initiated some economic strengthening activities in marginalized communities in order to prevent family separation and provide the means for parents to care for children coming home from institutions.

### *Strategic Framework*

The original strategic framework for New Beginnings included three separate sets of activities that were essentially divided geographically (See Appendix E). As implementation began, however, it became increasingly apparent that there were similarities in the issues faced in the different geographic areas and that the strategic framework presented an artificial compartmentalization of activities that limited the strategic vision and potentially the wider impact of the program. At the time of the DCOF visit, the program manager had made an initial revision to the results framework, and during the visit the team discussed further revision, which we believe presents a more integrated overview of the program and its opportunities for further development (See Figure 1, page 18). It includes two objectives, one focusing on the development and demonstration of good practices in the prevention of separation, deinstitutionalization, family reunification, and reintegration, and a second for wider system and policy changes. Effectively addressing the first objective can provide concrete demonstrations of how improved systems (the second objective) could function.

### *Significant Project Activities*

- 420 children in institutions have been documented to assess the potential for family reunification.
- Thirteen social workers have been hired to work with local governmental structures on deinstitutionalization and family reunification in the three project areas.
- Ten private institutions in Jaffna have been assessed by the District Child Protection Committee (DCPC).
- A family reunification strategy has been developed and is being tested.
- A network of agencies working on deinstitutionalization has been established and is functional in Jaffna to ensure the quality of work and prevent duplication.
- Mobile teams including ten civil servants (CRPOs, POs, and Police Officers) have carried out community mobilization sessions in four communities in the Southern Province aimed at improving the safety and well-being of vulnerable children.
- Forty-six children have been trained in Southern Province and Jaffna in the Theater for Development approach, have developed topical dramas to express their concerns about child protection issues in their communities, and have had performances with follow-up community discussions.

- A total of 280 people have been trained regarding communicating with children, fundamental legal procedures with children, family reunification, preventing alcohol abuse, positive discipline, positive parenting, and presentation skills.
- Clothes, toys, books and recreation items were provided for 250 children in five institutions in Western Province.
- Strong working relationships have been developed with relevant governmental authorities in all operational levels.

### *Project Achievements*

- Seventy-eight children living in residential care in the three operational areas have been reunified with their families with intensive case management follow up.
- Twenty women are participating in a shrimp-processing, income-generating project in Thampaddy Village in the Kayts Islands.

### *Challenges and Opportunities*

In a relatively short period of time, SCiSL has been able to develop strong working relationships with relevant government authorities. In its reunification and reintegration work, SCiSL is actually supervising social workers who are seconded to the Department of Probation and Child Care. While the social workers are supposed to support their government counterparts in carrying out their mandated duties, they acknowledge the challenges to this and thus carry out much of the reunification work themselves. There is a need to consider how to strategically shift “ownership” of these efforts to the appropriate governmental authorities and ensure that they are not creating a parallel system that fails to influence change in the government itself.

SCiSL’s community mobilization work in the Southern Province has fostered collaboration among government offices mandated with child protection. Mobile Teams carrying out community sensitization bring together different government child protection actors who have generally not worked together previously. The initial focus of this community mobilization work has involved identifying and discussing threats to children. This has raised particular concerns about the effects at family-level of alcohol abuse. While this is useful, there is no specific strategy about how to address these concerns as they are raised in community discussions. In the case of alcohol abuse it is not sufficient simply to sensitize communities about the problem. This issue is beyond the expertise of SCiSL, and strategic collaboration is needed with groups having expertise in alcohol abuse treatment, recovery, and related issues.

Another area where SCiSL needs to seek technical assistance is developing alternative approaches concerning children associated with criminal cases (as witnesses, victims, or offenders). This might include diversion from the criminal justice system and, where placement outside of a child’s own family is necessary, development of better care options than institutional placement. While Save the Children Norway had worked on alternative care issues a number of

years ago in Sri Lanka, there appears to be a gap in the institutional knowledge available to New Beginnings on these issues. The needed legal reform presents a complex challenge, and there appears to be a need for in-depth exploration of culturally and socially viable alternative care options.

Some of the most promising work of New Beginnings is in the area of reunification and reintegration of children separated from their families and residing in institutional care. SCiSL has a clear strategy of using the current efforts in reunification and reintegration to develop evidenced-based models, the successes of which can help to motivate the government to take additional action to reform the current system. The approach is to move slowly and ensure quality of care, which is well justified. An intensive case-management style of reunification and follow-up, however, presents certain challenges. A fundamental issue that will need to be addressed is how to continue case-managed follow-up of reunified children as the number of reunified children grows. Also, as there are no specific criteria by which a decision is made to continue or stop follow-up visits, the determinations are made on a case-by-case basis. Follow-up procedures and tools should be developed in order to standardize the reunification and reintegration work, which will help to focus the social workers' attention on the most critical issues.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to effective reunification and reintegration is the lack of coordination and common approaches by the various actors involved. There is some recognition among stakeholders in Jaffna that the current multiplicity of approaches to reunification and reintegration (different criteria and “packages” of assistance) can cause problems and conflicts within families and communities, potentially undermining the success of the reintegration. SCiSL should play a catalytic role in promoting increased coordination, supporting the appropriate governmental authorities to take the lead. The reunification coordination meetings in Jaffna are a good beginning to foster such cooperation there. DCOF can share with SCiSL some experiences from other countries' experiences of coordination mechanisms.

Since poverty is a major factor pushing children into institutional care, for family reintegration to be sustainable and the needs of reunited children to be met, it is essential for New Beginnings to develop its capacity to enable households to improve their economic circumstances. It should be able to tap expertise within SCiSL and will likely also need to explore additional sources of household-level economic strengthening expertise in Sri Lanka. Longer-term system change regarding prevention of family separation, deinstitutionalization, and better forms of care will require that government child protection bodies can access mechanisms for cost-effective household economic strengthening.

SCiSL's initial assessment process identified the Kayts Islands as the focus of community-level economic strengthening work in Jaffna. The residents of the Kayts were displaced by the war, but they returned to the islands starting in 1996. Since these islands were not significantly affected by the tsunami, they had not received much attention from the subsequent influx of NGOs and resources, and there are limited services for children. While development work is needed on the Kayts Islands, the team felt that the needs there are not a good match with DCOF priorities or the aims and resources of New Beginnings.



Having initiated work on the Kayts and raised expectations both with residents and the government, a precipitous withdrawal by SCiSL could damage the credibility of SCiSL and USAID, so a phasing out of the work initiated there, or if possible, a transition to other sectors within SCiSL would be preferable. DCOF resources would be much more appropriately used for household-level economic strengthening work with some of the people currently displaced by the conflict in Jaffna. This focus would also help to better integrate the different program components, since it appears that a significant number of the children in institutions in Jaffna are from displaced populations. These efforts could help prevent inappropriate placements of vulnerable children into private institutions, as well as help promote the reintegration of children returning to their families from institutions or released by the LTTE.

Security is an ongoing challenge for New Beginnings in Jaffna. The situation is fluid, and can change from calm to volatile at any time. The risks are not only to staff, as evidenced by March 21, 2006, deaths of two Caritas staff members,<sup>7</sup> but to the children and families with whom the program works. The application of standard security protocols is difficult, and this may be an area where New Beginnings could use some technical assistance to develop and implement security procedures for such an environment, as well as some programmatic adaptations such as working with children closer to their homes.

The lessons that New Beginnings is learning and challenges it is facing are shared by many of the projects that DCOF is supporting and many other child protection programs around the world. These common issues include deinstitutionalization, family reunification, community reintegration, community mobilization for child protection, child protection policy and system development, support for psychosocial well-being, and the impacts of alcoholism on children and families. DCOF is in a position to facilitate information exchange between New Beginnings and other child protection programs dealing with similar issues through its contacts with projects it has funded; its wider, ongoing exchanges on technical issues; as well as through such mechanisms at the Better Care Network and the Children and Youth Economic Strengthening Network.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to better integrate the project components, there should be a revision of the New Beginnings results framework, to focus on two objectives:
  - a. Better family and community care for children affected by violence and conflict, including reunification and reintegration of children without adequate family care, to improve their well-being and prevent unnecessary family separation
  - b. Improved provincial and national systems for children without adequate family care and children involved with legal proceedings.
2. About half the project budget should be used for work in Jaffna, with the remaining portion divided between the Southern and Western Provinces. Given the existing resources and timeframe remaining for the project, no additional geographic areas should be targeted and the project should focus on strengthening the effectiveness and quality of its work in these areas.
3. The target of child-focused work in communities in Jaffna should shift from the Kayts Islands to currently displaced families with a higher risk of separation of children and other concerns related to children without adequate family care. It would not be appropriate to abruptly cease the work in the Kayts, however, as this would risk undermining the credibility of the project, SCiSL, and USAID. A clear strategy to phase out the work, or preferably, hand it over to other sectors within SCiSL or other organizations, would need to be developed.
4. SCiSL should arrange for technical assistance from a consultant with expertise in better care issues and national systems of care to explore realistic options for better approaches to care as alternatives to institutionalization. The stages of such a consultancy might include an initial visit to identify alternative approaches (e.g. gate-keeping in institutions, diversion from the criminal justice system, prevention of unnecessary family separation, and development of better forms of care), remote technical support, followed by on-site follow-up and technical support.
5. More networking and understanding of referral systems will be needed to address issues identified through the community awareness-raising and mobilization efforts of the program. In particular, Save the Children should seek partnership with an organization specializing in the prevention and treatment of alcohol abuse, as this appears to be a significant factor related to child abuse and family separation in all operational areas and is outside the expertise of SCiSL.
6. New Beginnings should encourage and support relevant government offices, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to develop consistent, effective, better coordinated and sustainable approaches to family reunification and sustainable reintegration for children in institutions. Some of the specific issues to address in the development of relevant policies

and guidelines include material assistance, household economic strengthening, access to school, vocational training, and referral systems. SCiSL should seek information on approaches, methods, and tools from other Save the Children organizations, and DCOF should do likewise through communication with projects it has funded, its wider network of technical contacts, and such mechanisms as the Better Care Network and the Children and Youth Economic Strengthening Network.

7. New Beginnings should develop cost-effective methods for assessing the economic capacities of households where reunification is being considered and strengthening those capacities.
8. To increase the protection of children and staff, SCiSL should develop contingency plans and procedures for ensuring the security of children and other participants involved in New Beginnings' activities, giving priority to Jaffna.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The unresolved armed conflict in Sri Lanka has killed an estimated 65,000 people and caused significant population displacement since 1983 when the rebel force, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), scaled up its conflict with the government. At issue has been the status and treatment of Sri Lanka's 3.2 million Tamils within the country of 22.6 million and the LTTE goal of a separate Tamil political structure in the North. Negotiations begun in 2002 resulted in a cease fire, but were suspended in April 2003. Both parties agreed to resume negotiations in April 2006, though periodic attacks continue. Nearly 900,000 children live in the areas most affected by the conflict, and they continue to experience disrupted education and health services and scarce economic opportunities, as well as the risk of recruitment by the LTTE or other militia groups. Over 350,000 Sri Lankans were displaced due to armed conflict at the end of 2004, the most recent year for which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has made figures available.<sup>8</sup>

UNICEF has documented a total of 5,404 children who were recruited in Sri Lanka since the beginning of 2002. In the last year (March 2005 – February 2006), UNICEF reports that 629 children have been recruited and 159 have been released. These recruitment figures undoubtedly underestimate the extent of the problem in the country, as only 36 percent of the children released since 2002 previously appeared among those whose recruitment had been reported.<sup>9</sup>

Sri Lanka's problems were further compounded by the devastating tsunami that affected much of its coastal area on December 26, 2004, leaving between 31,000 and 37,000 dead.<sup>10</sup> According to UNHCR, over 570,000 persons remained displaced by the tsunami as of the end of 2004.<sup>11</sup> The tsunami affected many children already vulnerable due to the ongoing conflict, taking away family members and increasing economic problems. The interrelated impacts of the war and the tsunami have pushed some children into residential care.

### **The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and Sri Lanka**

Established in 1988 by an act of the United States Congress, the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) is administered by the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance of the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It provides funding and technical assistance for initiatives to benefit especially vulnerable children, especially children affected by armed conflict and children on the streets or at risk of moving onto the street. The Fund was the first arm of the US Government to respond to the issue of children being orphaned and otherwise made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, and it continues to provide technical support to that type of programming, although it is not providing new funding in that area. DCOF is managed by Lloyd Feinberg and is supported by the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, War Victims Fund, and Victims of Torture Fund Technical Support Project managed by Manila Consulting Group, Inc.

DCOF has evolved into a program that seeks to improve and expand interventions to benefit children in the developing world affected by family separation or significant loss or

displacement. It provides funding and technical support for programs and facilitates networking for information exchange and collaboration among organizations concerned with especially vulnerable children. Because annual DCOF funding is limited in relation to the massive problems it addresses, USAID uses these resources very selectively to support promising, innovative projects, to learn lessons that can be applied in other situations, and to share these as widely as possible with practitioners.

DCOF's fundamental approaches are to strengthen the capacity of families and communities to protect and care for their most vulnerable children as well as strengthening children's own capacities to provide for their own needs. In keeping with DCOF's standard approach, "children" in this report are considered to be below 18 years of age.

### **DCOF Support in Sri Lanka**

From 1995, DCOF has provided a total of \$2,221,899 of funding in Sri Lanka, including \$1,135,000 for the current cooperative agreement (386-A-00-05-00007-00) with Save the Children UK (for Save the Children in Sri Lanka) for the project, New Beginnings for Children Affected by Violence and Conflict. The three-year funding period for New Beginnings is November 29, 2004 - November 30, 2007.

The actual start of New Beginnings was delayed until April 2005, as a result of the massive December tsunami. In its wake, the environment in which the project was to operate changed drastically—both in terms of the displacement and devastation it caused and the massive increase in the number of people, organizations, and resources providing humanitarian assistance in Sri Lanka. Some adjustments in the project were necessary regarding the areas where it would work, but the project's focus on strengthening child protection systems only increased in relevance in the changed environment. In Southern and Western Provinces and in Jaffna, the project is working to increase awareness among parents, community members, and government social workers about the impact of violence on children, as well as the devastating effects that institutionalization can have on children, and to explore community-based alternatives for the more than 15,000 children under age 18 who reside in institutions in the country.

### **DCOF Review Mission**

This was the first technical support visit by DCOF since the start of the New Beginnings project, and its detailed Scope of Work is found in Appendix A. It was carried out by a two-person team, John Williamson, DCOF's senior technical advisor, and Malia Robinson, an independent consultant with extensive experience in child protection work in countries affected by armed conflict and disaster. The purpose of the visit was together with New Beginnings personnel to examine the progress of the program to date and the relevance of its activities in light of changes in the operating environment. The focus during the visit was primarily to review with SCiSL and USAID Sri Lanka what should be done with which beneficiaries, rather than to focus on specific technical issues of how to implement current activities. The primary activities of the review process included interviews and formal discussions, reviewing documents, field visits to the

three provinces where project activities are being carried out, and informal discussions. This report includes recommendations on opportunities for program development and technical issues that will require follow-up, however, the recommendations generally address broader program concerns. DCOF can provide ongoing support for more specific technical issues. The team's itinerary is included in Appendix B; the list of its key contact follows in Appendix C; and the key resource documents are listed in Appendix D.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE NEW BEGINNINGS PROJECT**

The program description section of the cooperative agreement that provides funding for New Beginnings is organized around the following goal and objectives.

### **Project Goal**

The final goal of New Beginnings is, “Children affected by armed conflict and violence in the family or community are protected from further harm and supported in gaining safe access to family and/or government support, as appropriate, and social inclusion in the wider community.”

### **Objectives**

The strategic objectives of the project are

1. To enable children affected by armed conflict (e.g., former child soldiers, separated or displaced children, children who have lost opportunities due to armed conflict) to be resettled and/or reintegrated into their families, schools, and communities
2. In selected project areas, to support children, families, and communities to protect boys and girls from violence and abuse in home and community contexts
3. To develop, test, and replicate alternatives to institutional care (such as family based care) for vulnerable and at-risk children

The program description focuses on three categories of especially vulnerable children in Sri Lanka:

1. Children affected by armed conflict
2. Children affected by violence and abuse
3. Children in institutions

The strategic framework from the original program description is included in Appendix E.

### **Assessments Prior to Project Implementation**

SCiSL carried out a series of consultations with key stakeholders in each of the planned operational areas between July and October 2005 to help provide a basis for developing the project. In all, 18 consultations were held with 521 persons including children, probation officers (POs), child rights protection officers (CRPOs), caregivers from institutions, family health workers, teachers, police officers, and community members. The New Beginnings project was introduced to the participants in each consultation, who were then guided in participatory activities to identify their primary concerns regarding children and to make recommendations.

Adults and children alike identified problems of violence in the community as being particularly linked to alcohol abuse. Lack of access to educational and play opportunities were highlighted by children, and both teachers and children indicated that a lack of parental involvement in education was a problem. Poverty, war, the negative influence of media (television and pornographic videos) and lack of access to health care were also commonly identified as leading to the vulnerability of children in community settings in all three provinces.

As for institutional concerns, both children and staff of both state and private institutions cited the lack of staff training in child protection policies and standards, child care, and vocational training as an obstacle to better care. Children emphasized the lack of freedom they have, for instance to practice their religion, and the absence of the love and care they associate with a family setting. Concern for their physical and sexual safety was also cited by the children, given the mixing of victims and offenders in the institutions.

There were many recommendations focusing on training, as well as material and financial assistance to institutions. As a result, SCiSL proposed the following areas of training to be carried out by New Beginnings:

- Working and communicating with children
- Family psychology and working with families
- Positive discipline
- Playing and interacting with children

The consultations informed the development of a community mobilization program involving child participation, parent education, and community sensitization through drama and campaigns. In addition, the consultations highlighted a need to focus on microeconomic support to especially vulnerable families.

Another aspect of the initial assessment process was the decision to select the Kayts Islands as the focus of community work in Jaffna. The residents of the Kayts were displaced by the war, but they returned to the islands starting in 1996. Prior to displacement, the population of the Northern Division of the Kayts Islands was about 24,000 and its current population is just over 14,000. Since these islands were not significantly affected by the tsunami, they had not received much attention from the subsequent influx of NGOs and resources and there are limited services for children. Also, the reported cases of child abuse were higher than in most other parts of Jaffna, most families live at subsistence level, and child labor is an issue.

### **Significant Project Activities**

- 420 children in institutions have been documented to assess the potential for family reunification.
- Thirteen social workers have been hired to work with local governmental structures on deinstitutionalization and family reunification in the three project areas.



- Ten private institutions in Jaffna have been assessed by the District Child Protection Committee (DCPC).
- A family reunification strategy has been developed and is being tested.
- A network of agencies working on deinstitutionalization has been established and is functional in Jaffna to ensure the quality of work and prevent duplication.
- Mobile teams including ten civil servants (CRPOs, POs, and police officers) have carried out community mobilization sessions in four communities in the Southern Province aimed at improving the safety and well-being of vulnerable children.
- Forty-six children have been trained in Southern Province and Jaffna in the Theater for Development approach, have developed topical dramas to express their concerns about child protection issues in their communities, and have had performances with follow-up community discussions.
- A total of 280 people have been trained regarding communicating with children, fundamental legal procedures with children, family reunification, preventing alcohol abuse, positive discipline, positive parenting, and presentation skills.
- Clothes, toys, books and recreation items were provided for 250 children in five institutions in the Western Province.
- Strong working relationships have been developed with relevant governmental authorities in all operational levels.

### **Project Achievements**

- Seventy-eight children living in residential care in the three operational areas have been reunified with their families with intensive case management follow up.
- Twenty women are participating in a shrimp-processing, income-generating project in Thampaddy Village in the Kayts Islands.

### **Current Programming**

The primary activities of New Beginnings concentrate on community mobilization for improved care of children, and the reunification and reintegration of children separated from their parents and residing in institutional care. The table below gives an overview of which kinds of interventions are being used in the three areas where they are currently being used.

<b>Primary Program Approaches</b>	<b>Areas Where Currently Used</b>	<b>Methods Currently Used</b>
Community mobilization to improve the protection and care of vulnerable children	Southern Province Jaffna	Mobile Teams for community sensitization and mobilization; Theater for Development
Deinstitutionalization, family reunification, and reintegration	Southern Province Western Province Jaffna	Southern and Western Provinces – Working through Provincial and District Probation and Child Care (DPCC) structures Jaffna – through DCPC
Policy change regarding placement and care of children without adequate family care	Southern Province Western Province Jaffna	Southern and Western Provinces – Working through Provincial and District DPCC structures Jaffna – Working with the DCPC and with the District Court
Microeconomic strengthening	Jaffna	Forming and training groups for joint income-generating schemes

### *Mobile Teams -- Mobilizing Community Action for Vulnerable Children*

In the Southern Province, the two districts of Neluwa and Thawalama are targeted for community mobilization efforts. One of the primary means of this work are Mobile Teams comprised of civil servants with responsibilities concerning children’s welfare, including child rights and protection officers, probation officers, and police officers. They are beginning with community-awareness raising activities to identify key child protection concerns at the village level, and then will work toward supporting structures such as the village-level Child Protection Committees to carry forward prevention and response actions. What is unique with the Mobile Team concept is that traditionally these actors tended not to work together, and so one of the strategic aims is to foster greater collaboration by the key child protection actors, including governmental authorities mandated to address child protection concerns at the district and community level.

### *Theater for Development*

Another key activity in the Southern and Northern Provinces is Theatre for Development (TfD), a child rights advocacy tool involving creative processes to support children in expressing their views and concerns to community members and key decision-makers. Groups have been established in the two target districts in Southern Province, as well as in Kayts Island in the North. TfD allows for child participation efforts to compliment the community mobilization activities of the Mobile Team in the Southern Province.

### *Family Reunification and Reintegration*

Family reunification and reintegration of separated children is the largest activity area of New Beginnings, and is carried out in all three provinces. Through a semi-governmental structure, the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, SCiSL has supported the hiring and training of eight social workers who work with the DPCC in Southern and Western Provinces. Five more social workers have been hired by the DCPC in Jaffna to carry out the assessment, reunification, and follow-up of children separated from their families. SCiSL provides supervision of the social workers, who review and document children's circumstances, prioritize reunification cases, make family visits, carry out reunifications, and make follow-up visits.

In all three provinces, SCiSL is involved in discussions with the relevant government authorities about improvements in institutional care, reunification of children in institutional care, and the development of appropriate alternative care options for children without adequate family care. Possibilities for piloting foster care projects are specifically being discussed.

SCiSL has developed some impressive training materials to prepare and guide those engaged in arranging and supporting appropriate family reunification for children living in institutional care. Appendix G includes the slides "The Road to Reunification," which give an overview of the process and "Potential obstacles to the Reunification Process," which identifies risks that must be considered when working for reunification.

### *Economic Strengthening Activities*

In the North, in the Kayts Islands specifically, SCiSL has initiated some economic strengthening activities in marginalized communities in order to prevent family separation and provide the means for parents to care for children coming home from institutions. A shrimp drying and product production activity carried out by a group of women on Kayts Island is the first activity, and plans are underway to initiate a palmyra palm production activity for a group of twenty young women on Eluvaithivu Island.

### *Addressing Children's Psychosocial Well-Being*

The original Program Description includes the aim of addressing the psychosocial well-being of 1,500 children ages fourteen to eighteen. Current project activities do address psychosocial needs, but in ways that differ from what apparently was originally conceived. DCOF had some reservations about the original idea of training large number of adults and young people to address the needs of severely traumatized children, and it is not clear why the focus was only on this particular age range. While it is not evident that a large number of children in Sri Lanka are severely traumatized, certainly the war, the tsunami, and related consequences, as well as the apparently high rates of alcoholism and related violence have caused and are causing significant psychosocial distress. Local and international responses to the tsunami have included a significant proliferation of psychosocial interventions in the affected areas. Considering these and the ongoing UNICEF-funded SCiSL project to reintegrate former child soldiers, **it does not**

**seem appropriate for New Beginnings to develop a component specifically to address psychosocial distress and disturbance. It should, however, incorporate attention to the psychosocial well-being of children and families in *all* of its interventions.**

The experience of DCOF and organizations with which it has worked to address the needs of war-affected and other especially vulnerable children indicates that the interventions most relevant to improving psychosocial well-being are family reunification, community reintegration, access to education, and normalization of daily life. These are being addressed through the current approaches of New Beginnings. The fact that the project manager is a clinical psychologist with significant experience working with children affected by conflict should enable the project to incorporate measures that appropriately address psychosocial issues. SCiSL might find useful in assessing the impacts of New Beginnings on psychosocial well-being the information and findings of “Piloting Methods for the Evaluation of Psychosocial Programme Impact in Eastern Sri Lanka,” which USAID Sri Lanka and DCOF supported.<sup>12</sup> There is additional literature which may be helpful in monitoring and evaluating the psychosocial impact of child protection work.<sup>13</sup> DCOF is also able to provide technical assistance in this area.

## **SRI LANKA'S CURRENT SYSTEM OF CARE FOR CHILDREN WITHOUT ADEQUATE FAMILY CARE**

To provide a basis for describing how and why New Beginnings has evolved and in some ways diverged from the program description, we need to provide background on the current system of institutional care in Sri Lanka. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the care system in Sri Lanka for children without adequate family care is its almost exclusive reliance on residential institutions for both protection and rehabilitation. Care outside of institutions does not appear to exist within governmental systems. If it exists among private agency services, it is quite rare, despite the decades of research on the failings of institutional care and the provisions within Sri Lankan law permitting alternative placements. Likewise, for children without adequate family care, there appears to be little in the way gate-keeping activities to prevent inappropriate institutional placements or alternatives to institutional placement for juveniles who have committed minor offenses. Another concern is that there are no standards of care that apply to state residential institutions for children.

In 2005, prior to the initiation of New Beginnings, SCiSL carried out a country-wide study of institutional care, the findings of which are presented in *Home Truths: Children's Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka*. SCiSL produced both a 140-page “full report” and a 31-page “advocacy document.” The latter includes the endorsement of the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Social Welfare and is being widely circulated in the country.<sup>14</sup> The study examined both government and private facilities. It was carried out with the cooperation of the relevant offices of the government offices, and its findings have been endorsed by the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Social Welfare. Some of its key findings include the following:

- While non-state institutions, for example, are largely seen as institutions for “orphans” (both parents not alive), almost 80 percent of the children in non-state institutions had at least one parent living.
- In the non-state institutions where in-depth analysis was conducted, both parents were dead in the case of only 8 percent of the children; and less than 20 percent were orphans if state homes were also included.
- One parent was alive in the case of 26 percent of the children, and as many as 32 percent of the children had both parents living.
- In 50 percent of the cases in non-state institutions, poverty was cited as the reason for admission.
- In the North-East Province, the ability to get a sound education was cited as the reason in 15 percent of cases.<sup>15</sup>

Among the major implications of the study’s findings are that institutionalization has become a mechanism for coping with poverty and securing access to education among poor families, particularly with the war-affected, displaced population in the North and East. Conversations

with the DCOF team during the visit and the SCiSL study also indicate that institutional placement has become the default option for children associated with court cases, whether as victims, perpetrators, or witnesses. It also seems likely that institutional placement is more likely for poor children associated with court cases than those from better-off families.

Also, concerning children with disabilities, Sri Lanka's 2003 National Policy on Disability calls for community based rehabilitation for people with disabilities. It recognizes their right to participation in family and community life and the importance of providing parents and other family members with the "knowledge, skills, advice and counselling required to support each child who has disability ... to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities." The study of institutional care, however, found no evidence of this being done. What it did find was that children with disabilities are institutionalized, often for long periods and that measures to enable them to reintegrate them with their families and communities are lacking.<sup>16</sup> This seems both ironic and tragic since Dr. Padmini Mendis, one of the key developers of the World Health Organization's community based rehabilitation approach, is from Sri Lanka and developed methods incorporated in this approach in Sri Lanka.<sup>17</sup>

The SCiSL study found a total of 15,068 children in 329 institutions (including thirty for children with disabilities) in four provinces in the country. Of these, 8,622 were in the North-East Province, which has been heavily affected by armed conflict as well as, more recently, the tsunami. Just over half of those in institutions are girls. Many of the institutions are unregistered. Of the 329 institutions, 272 are privately run and 57 are government facilities.<sup>18</sup>

## **Observations Regarding Institutional Care by the DCOF Team**

### *State Institutions*

The "Home Truths" advocacy document notes that despite the Government of Sri Lanka's active response to its commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, "there is a major gap between policy frameworks for children in institutions and [their] operation in practice."<sup>19</sup> The findings of our brief mission support this view. The state system is a colonial legacy that has become integral to the Sri Lankan judicial system but it is not functioning in children's best interests and is not culturally consistent. A 1997 study by Vijaya Samawwera concluded that the juvenile justice system is "...so fundamentally flawed that ideally it should be scrapped."<sup>20</sup> The legal system funnels children, offenders, victims, or witnesses alike, through the same process, and places them in the same institutions for their "protection." In a meeting with the SCiSL and the DCOF team, S. Thurairaja, senior state counsel in the attorney general's office, observed that "the current court system abuses children."

Remand homes are usually the first step, where children are placed while court proceedings are prepared. The warden of the Boys Remand Home in Kottawa acknowledged to us, however, that child typically stay far beyond the specified two weeks—sometimes for years—and that offenders and witnesses are housed there together. The rationale of the remand homes is to provide an alternative to holding children in adult jails. Once a court order is made, the children are then put in a certified school, which is essentially a detention home, although children are

allowed to go to community schools and to receive on-site technical training. Although legally the certified schools also have maximum periods of detention (three years), 40 percent of the children in these facilities have exceeded the three-year limit set by the Department of Probation and Childcare Services.<sup>21</sup>

The Hikkaduwa Certified School for boys that we visited in Galle District, had spacious grounds and the physical facilities appeared to be in good condition and clean. However, there were significant problems. The facility is significantly under-staffed and there is no supervision at night in the dormitories. Since 2002, there have been thirty-five suicide attempts (two successful) at the facility.

The authorities at the school understood this to be due to fear of physical abuse, not having anyone to talk with, afraid of punishment for the crimes committed and that it affords the children an opportunity to be in the hospital, therefore out of the institution. From the perspective of SCiSL social workers, based on the consultations they have carried out, the suicide attempts reflect a sense of hopelessness and lack of a positive vision of the future.

One boy had spent seven years there as punishment for stealing a piece of cake. Another had been placed there for taking three coconuts. Among the residents, twenty-seven were abandoned children, four were street children, six were disobedient, nine had committed theft, and only three had committed a serious crime.

State receiving homes in Sri Lanka exist to provide care for children under age five. In the light of what is known about the negative impacts that residential care has on young children, this is a serious concern. Such negative consequences have been recognized at least since 1926,<sup>22</sup> and have been reinforced by numerous studies. Studies from 1943 to 1976 found that

In addition to disturbances of growth, cognitive development and language, these studies also documented that children who had been institutionalized during the first 3 years of life demonstrated consistently greater levels of problem behaviors, including feeding and sleeping difficulties, aggressive behavior and hyperactivity, and excessive attention-seeking behavior when compared to children in foster care.<sup>23</sup>

Reports on very sophisticated recent studies that compare young children in residential care institutions with others in foster care in Romania were provided to the Better Care Network prior to their publication. One of the reports found among young children in institutions that

Institutionalized children demonstrated a wide range of deficits including marked delays in cognitive and language development, poorer physical growth, and marked deficits in competence in the context of fewer episodes during which caregivers were available or interacted with them.<sup>24</sup>

Another indicates that

As predicted, children raised in institutions exhibited serious disturbances of attachment as assessed by all methods. Observed quality of caregiving was related to formation and

organization of attachment in children living in institutions, but not for children living in families.<sup>25</sup>

These findings only reinforce what has long been known, and the question may fairly be asked, why do states still permit, much less maintain such services?

Many of the children in the state-run institutions are placed far from their homes, making family contact difficult or impossible and future reintegration more difficult. In the Southern Province, for example, 36 percent of the children in state institutions are from outside the province. The figure for the Western Province is 31 percent.<sup>26</sup> The only certified school for girls is in the Western Province. There are no government institutions in the North-East Province, with the exception of one receiving home for children under five. With respect to institutional placement, the courts send all children over the age of five to other provinces.<sup>27</sup>

Although the certified schools are separated by sex, again there is a mixing of victims, offenders and witnesses. This is a particular problem for girls, of whom a large number in the state institutions are victims of physical and sexual abuse. They are locked up, often for years, ostensibly for their own protection, while the perpetrators are likely free on bail. While the justification for institutionalization of these children is “protection,” the warden of the Boys Certified Home that the team visited acknowledged that physical and sexual abuse occurs between the boys.

### *Private Institutions*

While the focus of New Beginnings in the Southern and Western Provinces is on state-run institutions, the situation in the Northern Province warrants a different focus. Over the last few years there has been a proliferation of privately supported homes operated primarily by religious organizations. In 2004, there were 174 residential institutions for children in the North-East Province, of which 150 were privately run and 70 were in Jaffna.<sup>28</sup>

Poverty and the lack of access to services in this area long affected by conflict appear to be the major motivating factors for the voluntary placement of children in the institutions by their parents or family members. One respondent estimated that 50 percent of the children in institutions are there for these reasons. In the North-East Province, the war and displacement are the primary reasons for children being in institutions, followed closely by parental (primarily fathers’) alcoholism.<sup>29</sup>

Interestingly, while no standards exist for state institutions, there are governmental standards for private institutions, although their implementation is rarely monitored or enforced.<sup>30</sup> The Southern Provincial Ministry has stopped authorizing the opening of new homes and the placement of children in existing private homes, and has developed a “mission statement” regarding improved institutional care that has been submitted for legal status.



## *Family Reunification and Reintegration of Separated Children in Jaffna*

Despite the absence of a clearly designed policy and practice framework, there are aggressive efforts underway in Jaffna to reunify children in residential care with their families and to close private institutions. While SCiSL is supporting family reunification for children in institutions in the Southern and Western Provinces as well, in Jaffna the scale and pace of deinstitutionalization and the enthusiasm of government officials to see it progress is significantly stronger. In Jaffna there is strong support from the magistrate judges, the District Probation and Child Care (DPCC) Office and the DCPC for these efforts. The cases of sexual abuse in private institutions are one of the factors motivating the aim of closing such facilities. In figures presented to us by the DCPC, 116 children have been reunified in Jaffna so far this year, and three homes have closed. While this is very encouraging, SCiSL and the team have some concerns that the process may be moving too fast to ensure sustainable reintegration of children, and that different actors are proceeding with reunification using different approaches, with little coordination.

Before partnering with SCiSL for family reunification, the DCPC had reunified forty children very rapidly, after one discussion with the parents. With support from New Beginnings, they have reunified fifty-one children in a process that involved five visits respectively with the children and the families, and case management follow-up. Some institutions themselves have reunified 25 children this year, and the approach to reunification is not known to us.

### **DCOF Team's Visit to a Private Institution in Jaffna**

Accompanied by the chairman of the DCPC in Jaffna and SCiSL staff, team member Malia Robinson visited the Thayagam Children's Home, a private institution in Jaffna town. The home was started by a Hindu businessman, who established the charity out of a conviction that assisting vulnerable children had made him financially successful and would continue to do so. There have been a few children reunified with their families from this home by the DCPC with SCiSL support. We met the brother of one of the boys who had been reunified. He had refused to go home and continues to reside in the institution.

The two-story structure afforded adequate room for the twenty or so children who reside there, although there was no decent area for recreation except for a part of the backyard. The facilities were Spartan, but clean. Girls and boys have separate sleeping areas, and the children sleep on beds. At the time of the visit, most of the children were away at school, although about eight were at the residence due to illness. Children attend local schools and receive special physical education classes at the home after school, as well as educational tutoring in the evenings.

Children are fed three meals per day. The meals are vegetarian, as strict Hindu practices guide the management of the home. The warden said that some children are unhappy with this, as they are not vegetarians. More to the point, they are not Hindu. Many of the children, and staff alike, are Christian, although the team was told that they have had to convert to Hinduism to reside or work in the home. This would be in basic violation of the right children have to practice their religion.

The greatest concern has to do with the limitations the institution places on family contact. We were told that children are only allowed contact with their parents every three months, although sometimes exceptions are made for urgent family matters on a case-by-case basis. When asked why this was the policy we were told that previously when children could go home whenever they wanted to, those that did not have a place to go got very upset, so now it is somewhat fairer that they are all limited. We were told that the staff also made decisions about when parents could visit. The visit raised concerns that the services offered in the institution are a pull factor causing family separation; services, in effect are used as an incentive for religious conversion; and family contact is restricted.

#### DCOF Team's Home Visits in Jaffna

During the visit to Jaffna, team member John Williamson participated in three home visits, two to households where children had been reunified and one to a household where a social worker had determined that reunification would not be in the child's best interests. These visits provided a perspective on family reunification work in Jaffna and called into question the selection of the Kays Islands as the geographic focus of community work in the North.

All three of the households visited were displaced, probably from the airport area, which is a high security zone under the control of the Sri Lankan military. They were receiving food assistance from UNHCR, and all were in an area where displaced people have been allowed to stay temporarily. The need for an opportunity to earn some regular income was evident in the first households. The single mother was receiving some support from her elderly parents who lived in a hut close to her small house. She was glad to have her son back her from a private institution where he had been living, but she had spent the cash that she had accumulated from a small business (selling "small eats") to enable him to reintegrate in the household and go to school.

The second household was staying in the house of someone who had evacuated to Colombo. Their economic situation was better than that of the first household, as the father earned some income, and two older sons had jobs and provided support, although they lived elsewhere. The reunited son was living with one of these older brothers and was reported to be doing well. One of the older brothers had previously lived in a private institution but had escaped after the manager of the facility refused to release him to his family, reportedly because he was a good student and the facility benefited from Tamil diaspora supporters, based at least in part on the good overall school performance of its children. The facility had been willing, however, for the younger brother assisted by SCiSL to return to his family because he had some mental problems that limited his school performance. Neither of the older brothers lived at home because the father drinks excessively at times and had been violent toward them. The vacant plot next to the family's house was mined and there had been at least one casualty. It had subsequently been marked, but the mines had not been removed.

The visit to the third household was very brief. The family lives in a small room of what was once a small train station. Seven other families lived in the squalid building's other rooms. The parents were not there, and the social worker spoke briefly with an adolescent daughter who was apparently minding a younger child. The social worker indicated that in addition to the very

limited living space that the household occupied, there was a high risk of early marriage for girls living in the building.

The circumstances in which these households were living were precarious. The impression given by these few visits was that conditions of life seemed worse than what was observed during the visit to the Kayts. These were only impressions, however, and the New Beginnings manager indicated that poverty was as acute on the Kayts. He said that SCiSL's assessment on the islands found significant economic hardship and that few agencies were working there. Even so, work with children and families currently displaced by the conflict would be a better match with DCOF's mandate, and it appears that many of the children in institutional care in Jaffna are from displaced and other conflict-affected families. Focusing on those children could improve the project's integration in the North.

### *The Need for National Coordination on Deinstitutionalization and Family Reunification*

The current situation in Sri Lanka is characterized by private organizations, as well as governmental authorities working on deinstitutionalization with different approaches and inconsistent coordination. One example cited to us that raised particular concern is a national project intended to reunify a total of 280 children, including twenty in Jaffna. In this process, the DPCC selects the children, the NGO provides the equivalent of \$30 per child for his/her needs, as determined by the probation assistants. This assistance is provided to the child and not his/her siblings. The equivalent of \$200 per month is also provided to the families for a six-month period for income-generating activities, which are to be developed with the support of probation assistants, who have no expertise in economic strengthening. The DPCC can make additional funds available to the targeted families beyond the six-month period. All three of the DPCC probation workers for Jaffna are assigned to this particular project and work exclusively with these 20 children and their families. There is pressure to rush the reunifications since the NGO funds for this initiative expire in June 2006. The team was concerned that the relatively high costs associated with this approach would prevent its being adopted by the government for implementation on a larger scale, that it appears to be carried out without any coordination with DCPC/SCiSL efforts for family reunification, and that the substantial funding being provided for family economic strengthening (a technically challenging objective) is being implemented without any apparent technical expertise.

The various actors with whom we met in Jaffna agreed that different approaches to reunification and reintegration, with different criteria and "packages" potentially cause problems within families and communities, potentially undermining the success of the reintegration. In the case described above, the approaches are fundamentally donor-driven. As one of the main actors regarding deinstitutionalization and family reunification, SCiSL will need to consider its role in facilitating coordination and collaboration among the different actors. The reunification coordination meetings in Jaffna are a good beginning to foster such cooperation at that level. It might also be useful for DCOF to share with SCiSL some experiences from other countries' experiences of coordination mechanisms. One example would be the Psychosocial Core Team in Uganda, which has Government-approved terms of reference and common definitions of terms and is working to develop consistent approaches to child protection and psychosocial work.

**Recommendation:** SCiSL should encourage and support relevant government offices, as well as NGOs, to develop consistent, effective, better coordinated, and sustainable approaches to family reunification and sustainable reintegration for children in institutions. Some of the specific issues to address in the development of relevant policies and guidelines include material assistance, household economic strengthening, access to school, vocational training, and referral systems. SCiSL should seek information on approaches, methods, and tools from other Save the Children organizations, and DCOF could pursue these issues through its contacts with projects it has funded, its wider network of technical contacts, and such mechanisms as the Better Care Network and the Children and Youth Economic Strengthening Network.

### **Need for a Household Economic Strengthening Methodology**

Since poverty is a major factor pushing children into institutional care, for family reintegration to be sustainable and the needs of reunited children to be met, it is essential for New Beginnings to develop its capacity to enable households to improve their economic circumstances. SCiSL has a unit devoted to economic strengthening whose focus is on the tsunami-affected population. New Beginnings should be able to tap this expertise to begin developing methods for assessing family economic functioning and capacity and determining whether and how a family can improve its economic circumstances – enabling it to ensure that a reunited child can go to school and have his/her other basic needs met.

New Beginnings will likely also need to explore additional sources of household-level economic strengthening expertise in Sri Lanka. Longer-term system change regarding prevention of family separation, deinstitutionalization, and better forms of care will require that government child protection bodies can access mechanisms for cost-effective household economic strengthening. One governmental economic strengthening resource is the *Samurthy* (Prosperity) System, which includes support, savings, and other components that can strengthen household economic circumstances. Undoubtedly, there are also NGOs in Sri Lanka with relevant expertise.

One tool that New Beginnings might use in assessing household economic capacity is mobility mapping. Detailed information on using this tool and how it was used to facilitate family reunification in Rwanda is available from the DCOF Web site at the following address:  
[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/the\\_funds/pubs/irc.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/the_funds/pubs/irc.html)

**Recommendation:** New Beginnings should develop cost-effective methods for assessing the economic capacities of households where reunification is being considered and strengthening those capacities.

## **NEW BEGINNINGS – IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Strategic Framework**

While the original program description for New Beginnings describes relevant action in relation to each of the three areas of concern, what it presents is really three separate sets of activity. Implementation of the project was made more challenging by the major change in the context caused by the tsunami and the massive response to it, and by the fact that the person who drafted the proposal and the senior personnel to whom she reported had left SCiSL by the time that Javier Aquilar, who was hired to manage the project arrived in Sri Lanka. Effectively there was a lack of institutional memory to explain the original program concept and strategy. One of his priorities in starting up the project was to try to develop it into a more integrated and coherent whole. Consequently, the issue of how to accomplish this was one of the primary ones that the team addressed with Javier and Ben Kauffeld, USAID Sri Lanka's cognizant technical officer for the project.

The original strategic framework outlined three separate sets of activities that were essentially divided geographically. From the team's understanding through discussions with the project management, as implementation began it became increasingly apparent that there were some similarities in the issues faced in the different geographic regions, and that the framework presented a sort of artificial compartmentalization of activities that limited the strategic vision and potentially the wider impact of the program.

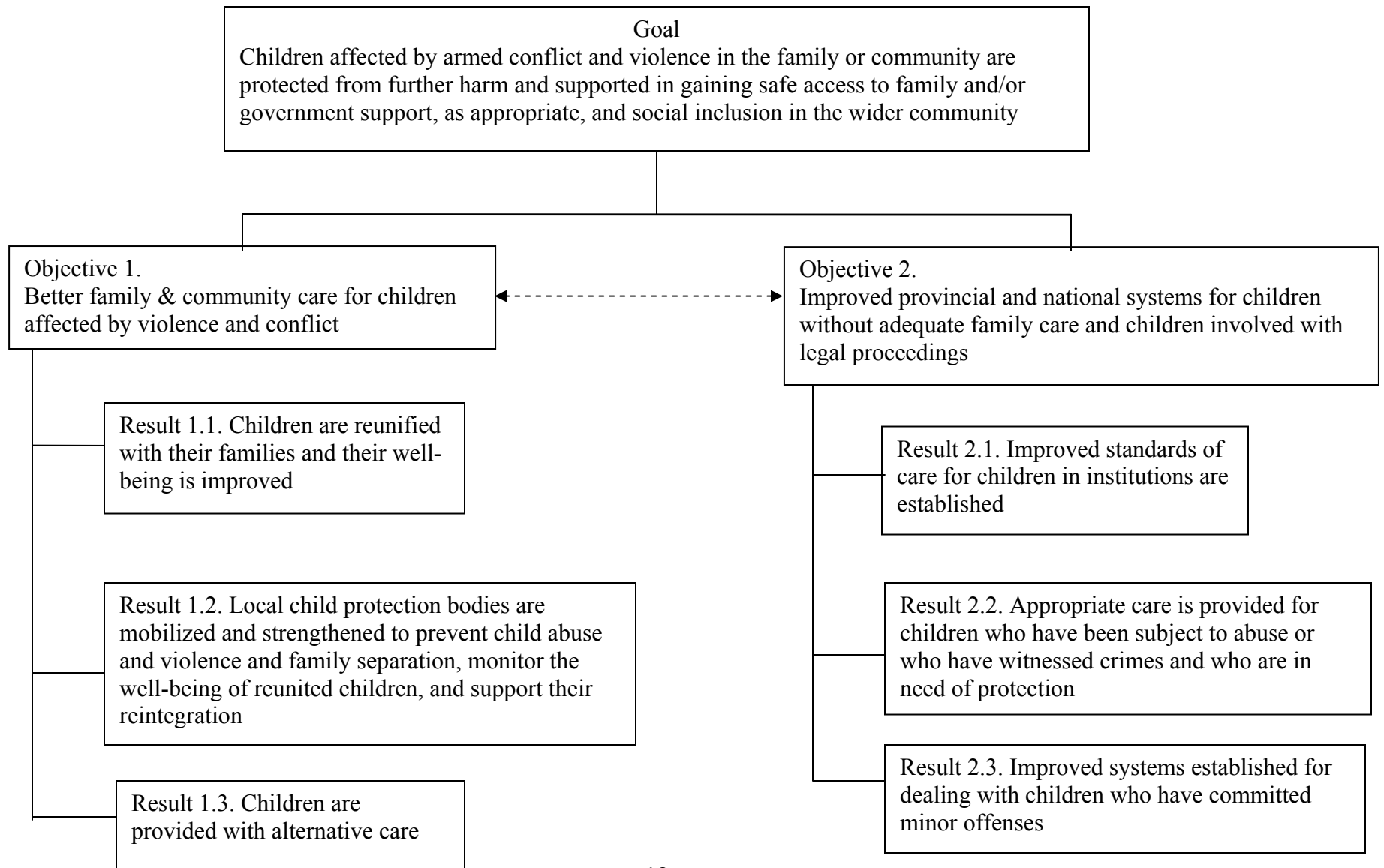
Family reunification and support for community reintegration were objectives of two of the original three result areas (Objectives I and II, see Appendix E). The activities in the Western Province were originally conceptualized as focusing on reunifying children living in state institutions, prioritized because of the dysfunctional ways that the legal system dealt with children, and developing family-based care alternatives. The activities in the North were to focus on reunifying and reintegrating war-affected children. Early assessments, however, raised the issue of the proliferation of private institutions in the North, as a response to the displacement, poverty, and lack of access to services in the conflict-affected areas.

While causes of children's institutionalization differ somewhat between Jaffna and the Southern and Western Provinces, through the preliminary work for the project significant similarities emerged that were not foreseen in the original conceptualization of the project. Clearly the war was a significant cause of institutionalization in the North, but in all three areas, poverty, parental alcohol abuse, and related violence within the home were found to be major factors. The lack of family- and community-based care options means that for children in all three areas who come in contact with the courts (as victims, witnesses, or offenders), institutional placement is a significant possibility. Also, the practical activities involved in reunifying children with their families, supporting reintegration activities, and working toward the development of alternative care models are very similar in all three areas.

In an attempt to better integrate the program components, respond to needs identified in numerous assessments, and develop a more strategic vision for the program, SCiSL proposed a

modified the framework, developing a logframe with two broad result areas, and the originally proposed activities regrouped (See Appendix F). This was a step toward greater integration, but it became evident during the visit that this was something of a compromise between what ultimately would make the most sense and what seemed possible without amending the project description. Together with the New Beginnings manager, the team proposed the framework in Figure 1 to present a more integrated overview of the program and its opportunities for further development.

**Figure 1. Proposed Revision of Results Framework**



Essentially, the preceding framework proposed above reflects what SCiSL's assessments and work on the ground have shown, that there are many more similarities than differences in the fundamental situation of vulnerable children in the three parts of the country. Children in all three project areas are affected by separation, alcoholism, violence in the homes, and difficulties accessing education. Prevention of family separation, reunification, and reintegration of especially vulnerable children are priorities throughout the country. Vulnerable children in the North have the additional burdens of displacement and violence due to the ongoing armed conflict.

Objective 1., above, is essentially drawn from the proposed revision of the project's strategic framework (Appendix F). Our proposed Objective 2. reflects the New Beginnings' opportunities to contribute to significant system changes. An important aspect of the situation as it has evolved during the project's implementation is that the project has a significant opportunity over time to bring about national-level change regarding the institutionalization of children. Establishing evidence-based models that can be replicated can be a catalyst for system changes. SCiSL, rather than simply seeking government permission to implement project activities, is in all three project areas working closely with relevant government officials to ensure that they are significant actors in the planning and implementation of project-related activities. The current development and demonstration of good practices in prevention of separation, deinstitutionalization, family reunification, and reintegration demonstrate how improved systems could function and provide a concrete basis for promoting wider system and policy changes. Changes are needed regarding:

- Systems of care for children without adequate family care (due to the effects of armed conflict, as well as community/family violence)
- Systems for protection and care of victims of abuse and witnesses to crime
- Systems for handling minor juvenile offenses

The project's current work and the active involvement of relevant Government actors in it can provide a basis for eventual country-wide change.

The two objectives in the proposed framework should be seen as linked and interactive, with each influencing the other. The short-term results have the potential to immediately benefit children in the three project areas, as well as to eventually benefit children elsewhere in the country through improvements in policy, practice, and changes in systems of care.

With these considerations, it seems to the team that **SCiSL has an excellent opportunity to develop models of prevention, reunification, reintegration, and development of alternative care that are adaptable to the different contexts and potentially to the rest of the country.**

Though not highlighted in discussions with New Beginnings personnel or USAID Sri Lanka personnel, in the Southern and Western Provinces there may be community level ethnic disparities that leave some children marginalized, for example, regarding access to education or other services and institutional placement far from their families. Such issues could be further



explored through future project efforts that seek to develop systems of care with equal opportunities for access across the country.

SCiSL is collaborating with UNICEF in exploring how to pursue most effectively the opportunities that are emerging for changing policies and systems of care for children without adequate family care in Sri Lanka. It was unfortunate that the UNICEF staff member with whom SCiSL is collaborating on these issues was out of the country at the time of the visit. The approach being used through New Beginnings, as reflected in the revision of the results framework above, is to focus first on developing sound approaches and demonstrating concrete, quality results as a basis for changing policies and systems. The Team endorsed this approach in its discussions with New Beginnings and USAID Sri Lanka personnel. It contrasts with an approach of focusing first on policy change. Too often good words concerning child protection have been enshrined on paper without adequate attention to how they can be translated into reality.

A step that SCiSL is considering which could help stimulate greater progress with developing revised and new systems of care is arranging exchange visits between government officials in the three project areas and, potentially to another country, as well. It seems that the rapid progress with deinstitutionalization in Jaffna, has helped stimulate accelerated action in other parts of the country.

***Recommendation:** In order to better integrate the project components, there should be a revision of the New Beginnings results framework, to focus on two objectives:*

- 1. Better family and community care for children affected by violence and conflict, including reunification and reintegration of children without adequate family care, to improve their well-being and prevent unnecessary family separation*
- 2. Improved provincial and national systems for children without adequate family care and children involved with legal proceedings*

## **Project Challenges and Opportunities**

### *Community Mobilization*

In a relatively short period of time, SCiSL has been able to develop strong working relationships with the government authorities. This is observable at the field level, as well as at the higher levels in the DPCC. As noted above, the Mobile Teams carrying out community sensitization bring together different child protection actors who have tended not to work together in the past, fostering a possibility for a stronger and more collaborative system of care for children without adequate family care. The nascent efforts the team observed looked very promising and there is potential for the Mobile Teams to not only raise awareness, but also to support community-initiated prevention and response activities. **The program will benefit from a clear strategy for moving from awareness-raising to action.** This could immediately begin with developing effective referral mechanisms for the types of problems that the Mobile Teams are identifying

through community discussions. Where appropriate referral options do not exist, this may then become a focus of developing responses, either community- or agency-based. Raising awareness of problems for which there are no responses can create frustration and a sense of futility in the community.

The initial consultations for project planning and current mobilization work have shown that **the impact of alcohol abuse on families and children is a major issue in all three areas where New Beginnings is working. However, it is beyond the project's capacity or the expertise of SCiSL to address this issue adequately.** In the Southern Province, the team attended a community session led by the Mobile Team in which problems related to alcohol abuse came up strongly. Alcohol abuse was also a major issue in the dramas presented by a TfD group. Although awareness-raising is a worthwhile endeavor, it is not sufficient to deal effectively with alcohol abuse or its impacts on children and families.

***Recommendation:** More networking and understanding of referral systems will be needed to address issues identified through the community awareness-raising and mobilization efforts of the program. In particular, Save the Children should seek partnership with an organization specializing in the prevention and treatment of alcohol abuse, as this appears to be a significant factor related to child abuse and family separation in all operational areas and is outside the expertise of SCiSL.*

### **Alternative Care**

Although Save the Children Norway had worked on alternative care issues a number of years ago in Sri Lanka, there appears to be a gap in the institutional knowledge available to New Beginnings on these issues. The needed legal reform presents a complex challenge, and there appears to be a need for in-depth exploration of culturally and socially viable alternative care options.

***Recommendation:** Save the Children in Sri Lanka should arrange for technical assistance from a consultant with expertise in better care issues and national systems of care to explore realistic options for better approaches to care as alternatives to institutionalization. The stages of such a consultancy might include an initial visit to identify alternative approaches (e.g., gate-keeping in institutions, diversion from the criminal justice system, prevention of unnecessary family separation, and development of better forms of care), remote technical support, followed by on-site follow-up and technical support.*

### **Reunification and Reintegration**

New Beginnings has a strategy of using the current efforts in reunification and reintegration to develop evidenced-based models. The successes of these can help to influence the government to reform the current system, which uses institutional care as its main response to children. **There is a need, however, to consider how to strategically shift “ownership” of these efforts to the appropriate governmental authorities.** For example, the eight social workers supervised by SCiSL are intended to work within the DPCC. However, they acknowledge challenges to being accepted by the POs and assisting them in their work, and, consequently the social workers carry

out most of the reunification activities on their own. The situation seems similar with the five social workers assigned to DCPC in Jaffna. Clearly, there are practical choices to be made between trying to work within the system and ensuring timely and effective results for children, but New Beginnings should avoid creating a parallel system that does the work of the PO's without influencing a change in the DPCC itself.

With regard to reunification, the approach of New Beginnings is to proceed carefully and ensure quality of care, which is well justified. An intensive case-management style of reunification and follow-up, however, presents certain challenges. A fundamental issue that will need to be addressed is **how to continue case-management style follow-up of reunified children as the number of reunified children grows**. Currently, the social workers in the Western and Southern Provinces only have a couple of cases each. However, given the difficult travel involved in family visits, their time is already stretched. While there is discussion of increasing the numbers of social workers, at some point there will always be a limit as to how many children each can work with.

A related challenge is that there are no specific criteria by which a decision is made to continue or stop follow-up visits. Therefore, the determinations are made by individual Social Works, though with the support of others through case meetings. While there is a need to develop a safety net for each child, there will be differences in the intensity of case management and the resources (human, financial, and material) needed to create that safety net from child to child. **Follow-up procedures and tools should be developed in order to standardize the reunification and reintegration work, which will help to focus the social workers' attention on the most critical issues.**

Another issue is **how to foster increased coordination and collaboration among the various actors implementing differing approaches to reunification and reintegration** to standardize systems and ensure quality. There are some cross-program learning opportunities available with the UNICEF-funded SCiSL underage recruits program, which has been operational for a longer period and has undoubtedly gained some valuable lessons. New Beginnings may be able to apply some of these.

### *Reconsideration of the Project's Selection of the Kayts Islands*

**Development work is needed on the Kayts Islands, but the needs there do not seem to be a good match with DCOF priorities or the aims and resources of New Beginnings.** Priorities relevant to children on the islands include increasing post-primary educational opportunities, enabling teachers to live on the islands instead of having to commute from Jaffna (thus reducing the number of hours that they teach), re-establishing a regular ferry service, and developing better economic opportunities. The assistant government agent for the Northern Division of the Kayts Islands, who accompanied the team on its visits to project sites, was actively working to bring development opportunities to the islands.

In addition to the shrimp-processing project that is already underway in Thampaddy Village, SCiSL has initiated plans for an income-generating scheme on Eluvaitu Island that is based on producing products from the palmyra palm. Though a building has been rented for the project

and twenty young women identified as participants, before proceeding Javier Aguilar had decided that a marketing assessment is necessary, which seems to a very sound decision.

The DCOF team believes that New Beginnings should phase out its work in the Kayts and, if possible, facilitate a transition to other sectors within SCiSL or other organizations. However, having initiated work on the Kayts and raised expectations both with residents and the government, a precipitous withdrawal could be damaging to the credibility of SCiSL and USAID. The education-related and economic issues on the Kayts would seem potentially to be a good match with the education and livelihoods components of the overall SCiSL program, which might be able to take on some development work there.

DCOF resources would be much more appropriately used for work with families currently displaced by the conflict in Jaffna. As the displaced population is scattered throughout Jaffna and often “hidden” within permanent communities, careful assessment is needed to identify areas where there are gaps in current service provision by other organizations. A focus on families displaced by the war would also help to better integrate the different program components, since it appears that a significant number of the children in institutions in Jaffna are from displaced families. Targeted household economic strengthening and community mobilization in the most vulnerable communities in Jaffna could help prevent inappropriate placements of vulnerable children into private institutions, as well as promote a successful reintegration of children returning to their families from institutions or released by the LTTE.

***Recommendation:** The target of child-focused work in communities in Jaffna should shift from the Kayts Islands to currently displaced families with a higher risk of separation of children and other concerns related to children without adequate family care. It would not be appropriate to abruptly cease the work in the Kayts, however, as this would risk undermining the credibility of the project, SCiSL, and USAID. A clear strategy to phase out the work, or preferably, hand it over to other sectors within SCiSL or other organizations, would need to be developed.*

### **Security in Jaffna**

**The uncertain security situation in Jaffna is a serious challenge.** DCOF was concerned to read in New Beginnings’ third quarterly report the account of a training workshop for children in Jaffna held in December 2005 that had to be terminated. The start of the workshop was delayed by a day due to the deteriorating security situation. It began on Saturday, December 3rd and by Monday

The security situation became increasingly volatile, with bomb blasts and shootings in Jaffna town; deaths; retaliations; threatened hartals and army-imposed curfews. However, the young people eagerly returned to their residential accommodation for the workshop on the Monday evening, excited to resume the training. We arranged a recap session with them, in preparation for resuming the workshop on Tuesday.

Although we worked energetically throughout Tuesday morning, and the young people themselves showed commendable concentration and commitment, it became clear by lunchtime, from hourly reports, that it was perhaps now no longer safe for them to be in

Jaffna city and away from their families on Kayts Island. The decision to close the workshop was taken straight after lunch. Nevertheless, we took the participants through some new exercises and techniques which the young people found really interesting; and then we closed the workshop on an upbeat note, promising to resume it once the political and military situation had calmed down.

Clearly, the situation in Jaffna is unpredictable and the application of standard security protocols may not be sufficient. This may be an area where New Beginnings could use some technical assistance, perhaps from Save the Children UK or Norway, to develop and implement security procedures for such a fluid environment. Some programmatic adaptations may also be needed, such as working with children closer to their homes. Emergency preparedness might even become a part of the work with children and communities, perhaps involving training and community-based security planning.

***Recommendation:** To increase the protection of children and staff, SCiSL should develop contingency plans and procedures for ensuring the security of children and other participants involved in New Beginnings' activities, giving priority to Jaffna.*

### ***Need for Ongoing Exchange***

The lessons that New Beginnings is learning and challenges it is facing are shared by many of the projects that DCOF is supporting and many other child protection programs around the world. Common issues among projects that DCOF has funded include deinstitutionalization, family reunification, community reintegration, community mobilization for child protection, child protection policy and system development, psychosocial well-being, and the impacts of alcoholism on children and families.

As indicated above concerning the need for coordination on deinstitutionalization and family reunification, DCOF is willing to facilitate information exchange between New Beginnings and other child protection programs dealing with similar issues. It can do this through its contacts with projects it has funded, its ongoing exchanges on technical issues, as well as through such mechanisms at the Better Care Network and the Children and Youth Economic Strengthening Network. Also, New Beginnings is learning lessons and developing tools that are important to share, as well as learning from programming efforts in other countries

## **APPENDIX A: SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Draft Scope of Work for the Displaced Children and Orphan Fund's Visit to Sri Lanka March 12-24, 2006**

In response to a Annual Program Statement for the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, the proposal of Save the Children in Sri Lanka (SCiSL), New Beginnings for Children Affected by Conflict and Violence, was accepted for funding. A cooperative agreement (386-A-00-05-00007-00) was issued for the period November 29, 2004 – November 30, 2007 for \$1,256,986. On December 26, 2004, the tsunami hit and a portion of the funds were re-directed to responding to the disaster.

DCOF will send John Williamson, its Senior Technical Advisor, and Malia Robinson, a consultant engaged by DCOF, to visit Sri Lanka for the period March 12 – 24, 2006 for the general purposes of a joint review, together with SCiSL and USAID/Sri Lanka, of current and planned program activities and the results being achieved among especially vulnerable children. It will also be important to jointly assess the relevance and significance of current and planned program activities in relation to the evolving situation in the country. The visit will provide opportunities for technical exchange on program issues relevant to the program in Sri Lanka and other programs supported by DCOF.

Specific issues to be addressed during the visit by the DCOF team, SCiSL, and USAID/Sri Lanka:

1. Ways that the tsunami and related funding have affected the implementation of this grant and its intent
2. The impacts on the program of heightened insecurity and logistical constraints and adjustments or contingency plans that may be needed in the program as a result
3. Making explicit the technical foundations and operating assumptions underlying program approaches and specific interventions, for example:
  - Mechanisms being used to increase the safety and well-being of children.
  - Roles that the government of Sri Lanka is playing in relation to child protection, placement, care, and monitoring.
  - What are the respective roles, short and longer terms of SCiSL in relation to these?
  - To what extent can psychosocial needs be addressed effectively through the program among children directly affected by conflict, and if so, how?
  - How can the most appropriate and viable opportunities for economic strengthening be identified and implemented in the various contexts where they may be used within by the program?

4. Jointly review the conceptual reorganization of the program proposed by SCiSL, which is intended to integrate the three original objectives a coherent program strategy with two core areas:
  - Better family and community care for children affected by conflict and violence.
  - Better community based services for children.
5. Jointly consider what role advocacy should play in the program and respective roles of SCiSL and USAID.
6. Jointly review current reporting requirements, with particular attention to indicators, in relation to their value to program management and eventual program evaluation
7. Discuss the operational implications of the possible development by DCOF of standard results indicators.
8. Discuss the Scope of Work for a full mid-term evaluation of the program, likely to take place in late 2006.
9. Throughout the visit exchange experience and technical resources on such program areas as:
  - Alternative ways to work with communities to improve the safety, well-being, and development of especially vulnerable children
  - Challenges and solutions in the reintegration of children who have been separated from their family.
  - How to implement economically successful livelihood interventions, with the aim of improving children's safety, well-being, and development

## APPENDIX B: ITINERARY

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS (Unless otherwise indicated, both John Williamson and Malia Robinson were among participants for each activity)
<b><i>Sunday, March 12, 2006</i></b>		
DCOF team arrived at Bandaranaike International Airport	Colombo	
<b><i>Monday, March 13, 2006</i></b>		
Security briefing and booked tickets for travel to Jaffna	US Embassy, Colombo	Anoja Jayasuriya
Overview and Update on SCiSL project	USAID Mission, Colombo	Javier Aguilar, Ben Kauffeld, Anoja Jayasuriya, Ivan Rasiah
Meeting with Senior State Counsel to discuss procedures and practices regarding children in the legal system	Attorney General's Office, Colombo	Andrew Dunn, Javier Aguilar, Shamana Rajabdeen, Sithambarampillai Thurairoja
Discussion with SCiSL Child Protection and Livelihoods heads	SCiSL Office, Colombo	Andrew Dunn, Jose Lopez, Javier Aguilar
<b><i>Tuesday, March 14, 2006</i></b>		
Travel from Colombo to Neluwa by road	Southern Province	Javier Aguilar
Observe community mobilization exercise and meeting with Mobile Team to discuss child protection issues in the Division.	Sariputra School, Halwitigala, Neluwa	Javier Aguilar, Ivan Rasiah, Ranjith Endera, Chandra Ranjani, 3 members of Mobile Team
Meeting with Neluwa <i>Theatre for Development</i> group and observe community performance	Ruwanpura Temple, Halwitigala, Neluwa	Javier Aguilar, Ivan Rasiah, Ranjith Endera, Chandra Ranjani, Samanthi Poddiwala, Gayani Pushpalatha
Travel from Neluwa to Galle by road		
<b><i>Wednesday, March 15, 2006</i></b>		
Discussion about child protection issues, particularly institutionalization in the Southern Province	Ministry of the Provincial Council, Galle	A.P.C.Piyasiri, S.C.Silva, Mr Buddapriye, Javier Aguilar, Ivan Rasiah, Ranjith Endera, Chandra Ranjani
Visit to the certified school	Hikkaduwe	K.L Kamarasiri, Mr A.P.Upul, Ivan Rasiah, Ranjith Endera, Chandra Ranjani,
Visit with boy reunified by SCiSL from the certified school and his mother	Lelwala	Chandra Ranjani, mother, son, (Malia),



Travel back to Galle by road		
<b>Thursday, March 16, 2006</b>		
Travel from Galle to Matara by road		
Meeting with SCiSL staff and social workers about family reunification and follow up processes in the Southern Province	SCiSL Regional Office, Matara	Ivan Rasiyah, Ranjith Endera, Chandra Ranjani, Samanthi Poddiwala, Gayani Pushpalatha, P.M. Menaka Samanth, B. Rweendra Blasureya, U. Ayane Wasanthi De Silva, Samanthi Ranathunga, R.M. Samanmalee Kumare,
Travel from Matara to Colombo by road		Javier Aguilar
<b>Friday, March 17, 2006</b>		
Presentation and discussion about SCiSL reunification program and childcare standards in the Western Province	SCiSL office, Colombo	Javier Aguilar, Vimala Periyannapillai, Shamana Rajabdeen
Meeting with Western Province social workers and discussion about family reunification and follow up processes	SCiSL office	Javier Aguilar, Shamana Rajabdeen, Marasinghe Mudiyansele Athula, Thenuwara Archarige Chandima Dilhani, Liyana Archchige Mala Priyadarshani Pathirana, Rathnayake Mudiyansele Nilusha Kumari Rathnayake
Meeting with the Commissioner of Probation and Child Care to discuss child protection issues, particularly institutionalization and alternative care	Western Province Dept. of Probation and Child Care Services, Colombo	W.A.D. Chandrika Rupasinghe, Mr. Ananda, Mr. Mendis, Javier Aguilar, Shamana Rajabdeen,
Discussion about SCiSL advocacy work on children in institutions in Sri Lanka ( <i>Home Truths</i> research)	SCiSL Head Office, Colombo	Javier Aguilar, Darshini Seneviratne, Phil Esmonde
Dinner discussion about the review of the <i>Action Plan for Children Affected by Conflict</i>	Cinnamon Grande Hotel, Colombo	Beth Verhey, Maggie Brown
<b>Saturday, March 18, 2006</b>		
Visit to Boys Remand Home and discussion with Warden	Kottawa	Javier Aguilar, Shamana Rajabdeen, Mr. Yasarathe
<b>Sunday, March 19, 2006</b>		
Travel from Colombo to Jaffna by air	Palaly Airport, Jaffna	Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar, Ashokkumar Amarnath
Observe reunification meeting with District Officials, parents and children	Asirvatham Hall, Jaffna	Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar, Ashokkumar Amarnath,

		Verlini Valliupuram
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<b><i>Monday, March 20, 2006</i></b>		
Travel from Jaffna to Kayts Island by road		Ashokkumar Amarnath, Subramaniyam Yasothan, Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar
Meeting with Assistant Government Agent and visit to the child friendly park construction site	Kayts Island	Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar, Ashokkumar Amarnath , E. Srimonhanan
Visit to community economic strengthening project (shrimp drying and production)	Kayts Island	Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar, Ashok Kumar, E. Srimonhanan
Travel from Kayts Island to Eluvaithivu Island by boat		Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar, Ashok Kumar, E. Srimonhanan
Visit to school	Eluvaithivu Island	Eluvaithivu Island Principal of Hindu School, Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar, Ashokkumar Amarnath, E. Srimonhanan
Discussion with 20 prospective candidates for palm production economic activity, and village-style lunch	Eluvaithivu Island	Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar, Ashokkumar Amarnath, E. Srimonhanan, 20 young women candidates for income generating project
Return from Eluvaithivu to Kayts Island by boat, then to Jaffna by road		Javier Aguilar, Ben Kauffeld, Ashokkumar Amarnath
<b><i>Tuesday, March 21, 2006</i></b>		
Presentation by and discussion with District Child Protection Committee (DCPC) and social workers about institutionalization of children in Jaffna and reunification and reintegration process	DCPC Office, Jaffna	Ben Kauffeld, Javier Aguilar, Ashokkumar Amarnath , T. Kamaleswary, P. Kirubalini, T. Sathiyashankar, S. John Kulenthiran, K. Pirakalathan, Stephen Sunthararaj, F.R. Rajany Chandrasegaram, T. Sarumathy, T. Komathy
Visit to Thayagam children's home	Jaffna	Ben Kauffeld, Ashokkumar Amarnath , Stephen Sunthararaj, (Malia)
Visit to families with reunified children	Jaffna	Javier Aguilar, (John)
Discussion with SCiSL Jaffna staff about observations of the DCOF team	SCiSL Regional Office, Jaffna	Javier Aguilar, Ashokkumar Amarnath, Verlini Valliupuram, Subramaniyam Yasothan
Meeting with District Judge to discuss child protection issues within the legal	Magistrate Court, Jaffna	Hon. R.T. Vigna Raja, Javier Aguilar, Ashokkumar

system		Amarnath
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<b><i>Wednesday, March 22, 2006</i></b>		
Participation in the Reunification Coordination meeting	Asirvatham Hall, Jaffna	Javier Aguilar, Ben Kauffeld, Ashokkumar Amarnath, Verlini Valliupuram, Subramaniyam Yasothan, representatives of UNICEF, Caritas, DCPC, Ahavoli
Meeting with Jaffna Senior Probation Officer to discuss reunification and reintegration of institutionalized children in the North	Asirvatham Hall, Jaffna	Mrs. Ksivarata, Javier Aguilar, Ben Kauffeld, Ashokkumar Amarnath, Verlini Valliupuram, Subramaniyam Yasothan
Debriefing with SCiSL staff	SCiSL Regional Office, Jaffna	Javier Aguilar, Ben Kauffeld, Ashokkumar Amarnath, Verlini Valliupuram, Subramaniyam Yasothan
Discussion with SCiSL Program Manager about visit observations	SCiSL Regional Office, Jaffna	Javier Aguilar
Planned air travel back to Colombo postponed due to technical problems with the aircraft	Jaffna	
<b><i>Thursday, March 23, 2006</i></b>		
Travel from Jaffna to Colombo by air		Javier Aguilar, Ben Kauffeld
Meeting with SCiSL Management	SCiSL Head Office, Colombo	Richard Mawer, Prasant Naik
Discussion with SCiSL Program Manager about follow up to visit	Galle Face Hotel, Colombo	Javier Aguilar
<b><i>Friday, March 24, 2006</i></b>		
Debriefing with USAID and SCiSL	USAID Mission, Colombo	Javier Aguilar, Ben Kauffeld
<b><i>Saturday, March 25, 2006</i></b>		
John Williamson and Malia Robinson departure from Bandaranaike International Airport at 2:45 am	Colombo	

## **APPENDIX C: LIST OF KEY CONTACTS**

### **USAID/Sri Lanka**

Ben Kauffeld – Health & Humanitarian Assistance Program Manager  
Ivan Rasiah – USAID Program Management Specialist

### **Save the Children in Sri Lanka**

Richard Mawer – Country Programme Director  
Prasant Naik – Director, Programme Operations  
Jose Lopez – Livelihoods Advisor  
Phil Esmonde – Director, Policy & Communications  
Darshini Seneviratne- Head of Advocacy & Research  
Andrew Dunn – Child Protection Consultant  
Javier Aguilar – Program Manager, Colombo  
Vimala Periyannapillai – Project Specialist, Colombo  
Shamana Rajabdeen – Partnership Management Officer, Colombo  
Ranjith Endera – Partnership Development Manager, Mathara  
H.W. Chandra Ranjani – Project Development Officer, Mathara  
P.M. Menaka Samanth – Project Development Officer, Mathara  
Gayani Pushpalatha – Field Assistant, Mathara  
Ashokkumar Amarnath – Project Development Manager, Jaffna  
Subramaniam Yasothan – Project Development Officer, Jaffna  
Verliny Valliupuram – Project Development Officer, Jaffna

### **SCiSL/Probation Department/ Sri Lanka Foundation Institute Social Workers**

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Thenuwara Archarige Chandima Dilhani – social worker, Colombo  
Liyana Archchige Mala Priyadarshani Pathirana – social worker, Colombo  
Rathnayake Mudiyansele Nilusha Kumari Rathnayake – social worker, Colombo  
B. Rweendra Blasureya – social worker, Mathara  
U. Ayane Wasanthi De Silva – social worker, Mathara  
Samanthi Ranathunga – social worker, Mathara  
R.M. Samanmalee Kumare – social worker, Mathara  
T. Kamaleswary – social worker, Jaffna  
P. Kirubalini – social worker, Jaffna  
T. Sathiyashankar – social worker, Jaffna  
S. John Kulenthiran – social worker, Jaffna  
K. Pirakalathan – social worker, Jaffna

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– Minister of Social services and Child Care Mr A.P.C.Piyasiri  
– Commissioner of Probation and Child Care, Southern Province Mr S.C.Silva

– Provincial secretary of Social Services and Child Care, Mr Buddapriye Nigamuni

**Boys Certified School, Hikkaduwe, Southern Province**

K.L Kamarasiri, Principal

Mr A.P.Upul– Assistant Principal

**Department of Probation & Child Care Services, Western Province**

W.A.D. Chandrika Rupasinghe – Commissioner of Probation & Child Care (W.P.)

Mr.Ananda – Assistant Commissioner

Mr. Mendis – Senior Probation Officer

**UNICEF/Colombo**

Beth Verhey – Action Plan Review Team Leader

Maggie Brown – Action Plan Review Consultant

**Boys Remand Home, Kottawa**

Mr. Yasarathe – Warden

**Kayts Islands**

E. Srimonhanan, Assistant Governemnt Agent

**District Child Protection Committee, Jaffna**

Stephen Sunthararaj – Coordinator

F.R. Rajany Chandrasegaram – Administrator/Secretary

A. Jeniberd – Workshop Coordinator

G. Prashath – Data Entry Operator

T.Komathy – Data Entry Operator

T. Sarumathy – Accountant

**Magistrate Court, Jaffna**

Hon. R.T. Vigna Raja – Judge

**Department of Probation and Child Care, Jaffna**

Mrs. Ksivarata – Senior Probation Officer

## APPENDIX D: KEY RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

“Alternative Care, Fostering and the Fit Person Procedure Under the Children and Young Persons Ordinance (CYPO)” Media Release 12/2/2005.

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*Home Truths: Children’s Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka, Advocacy Document*, Save the Children in Sri Lanka, 2005.

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“An Ordinance to Make Provision for the Establishment of Juvenile Courts, for the Supervision of Juvenile Offenders, for the Protection of Children and Young Persons, and for Other Connected Persons.” (Children and Young Persons Ordinance in Sri Lankan legal statutes).

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Save the Children in Sri Lanka, “New Beginnings for Children Affected by Violence and Conflict: Project Proposal for the U.S. Agency for International Development, Bureau for Democracy Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, Displaced Children and Orphans Fund Annual Action Statement (Revised Technical Application),” September 2004.

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“Sri Lanka Displaced Population by District,” UNHCR, Geneva, November 2004

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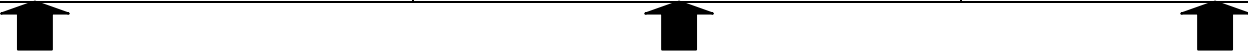
Michael Wessells, “Report on the Workshop on Long-Term Strategic Planning for the Psychosocial Sector in the Post-Tsunami Context, December 8 – 10, 2005.”

Charles H. Zeanah et al. *Attachment in Institutionalized and Community Children in Romania*. Available on request from the Better Care Network (Available on request from the Better Care Network. Contact Aaron Greenberg: [agreenberg@unicef.org](mailto:agreenberg@unicef.org) )

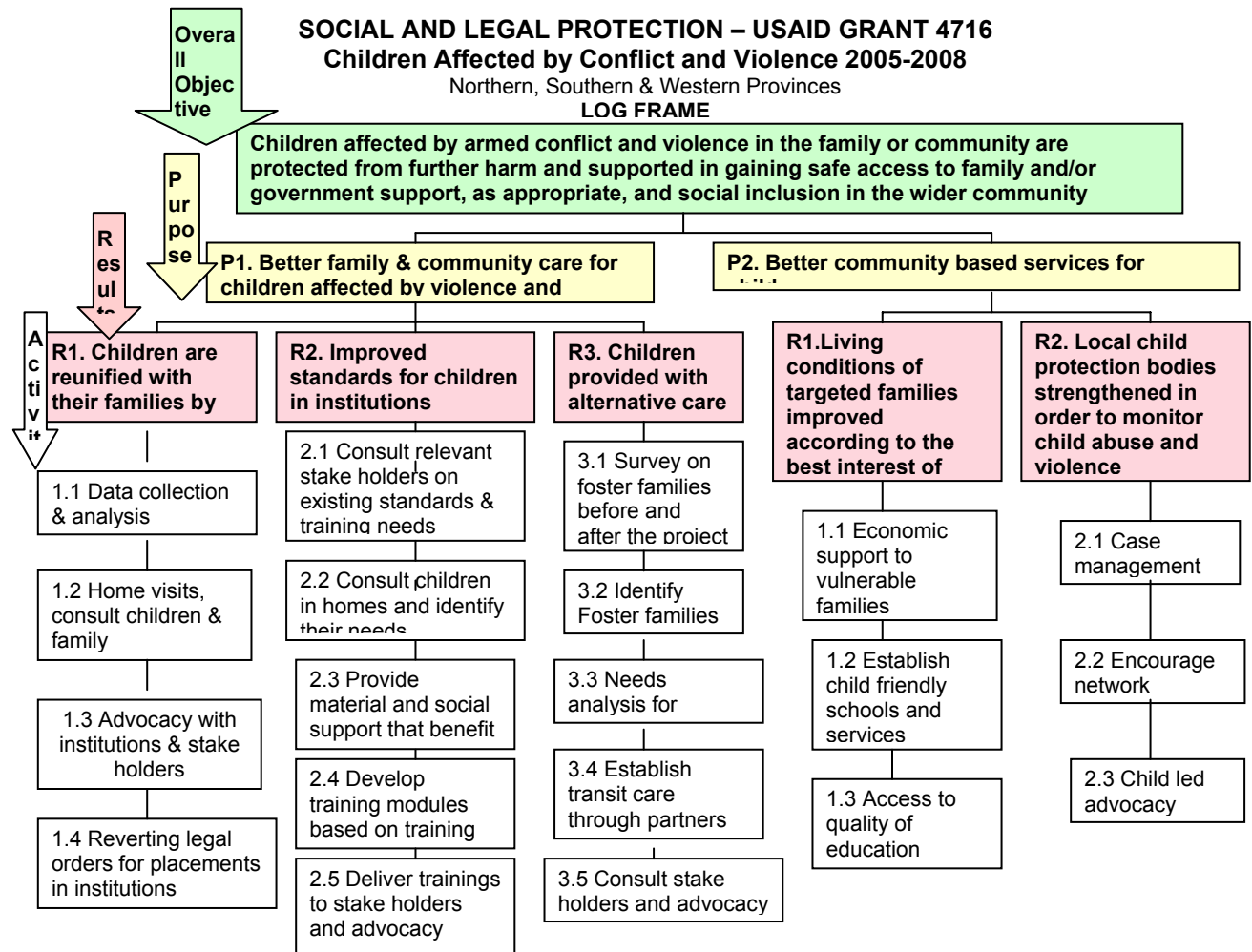


## APPENDIX E: ORIGINAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

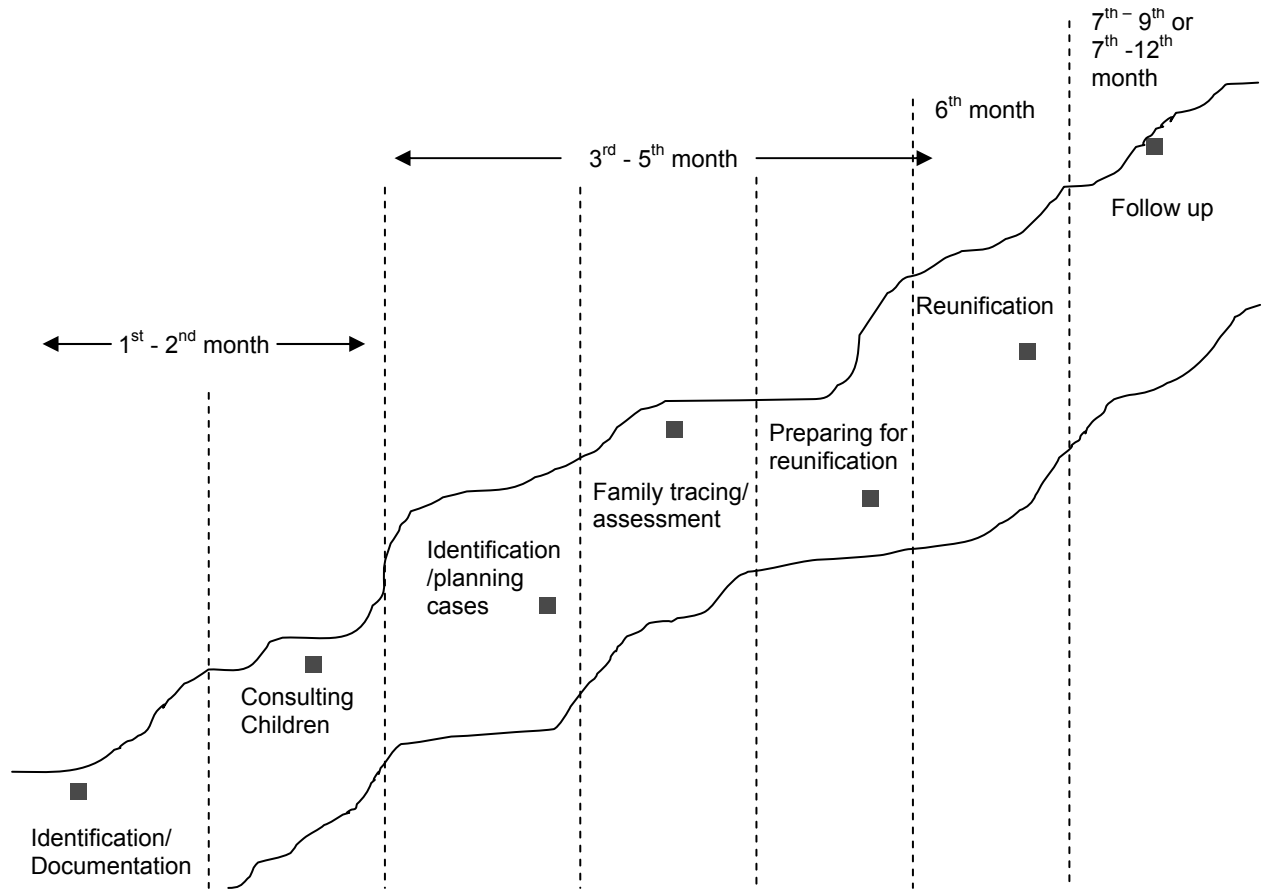
<p><b>FINAL GOAL:</b> Children affected by armed conflict and violence in the family or community are protected from further harm and supported in gaining safe access to family and/or government support, as appropriate, and social inclusion in the wider community.</p>		
		
<p><i>Strategic Objectives</i></p>		
-I-	-II-	-III-
<p>To enable children affected by armed conflict (e.g. former child soldiers, separated or displaced children, children who lost opportunities due to armed conflict) to be resettled and/or reintegrated into their families, schools, and communities.</p>	<p>In selected project areas, to support children, families and communities to protect boys and girls from violence and abuse in home and community contexts.</p>	<p>To develop, test and replicate alternatives to institutional care (such as family based care) for vulnerable and at-risk children.</p>
		
<p><i>Intermediate Results</i></p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) AT LEAST 1,500 CHILDREN IN NEED OF PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED; SUSTAINABLE AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO THEIR PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED.</li> <li>2) At least 1,200 children between 15-18 years of age have been offered opportunities to undertake formal vocational training, apprenticeships with local businesses, or to receive support from the vocational training scheme provided by the AP.</li> <li>3) Catch-up-education implemented through the zonal education offices is now available to 1,200 children in selected districts.</li> <li>4) CHILDREN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES EMPOWERED TO SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE, BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND HAVE GREATER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES. AT LEAST 10 CHILDREN GROUPS ESTABLISHED.</li> <li>5) SCiSL has a system in place to incorporate vulnerable families into existing income generation schemes. At least</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Efficient and integrated child rights monitoring mechanism in place.</li> <li>2) Child centered data collected.</li> <li>3) Child Forums and Groups established.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) ALTERNATIVE CARE MODULES DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED.</li> <li>2) COMMUNITY SUPPORT IDENTIFIED AND INITIATED.</li> <li>3) VULNERABILITY OF SELECTED FAMILIES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED.</li> <li>4) Government and relevant institutional authorities understand and support alternative care models.</li> </ol>

<p>150 families have been recommended for income generation activities.</p> <p>6) A NETWORK OF PARENTS SOCIETY GROUPS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO SUPPORT AND ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN.</p>		
		
<p><i>Activities</i></p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Provide psychosocial care and training for children between 14 and 18 years of age.</li> <li>2) Provide vocational training for children over 15 years that can't go back to school.</li> <li>3) Create opportunity to catch-up on missed education.</li> <li>4) Setting up Children Groups.</li> <li>5) Provide income generation opportunities to most vulnerable families.</li> <li>6) Setting up parent society groups.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Strengthen NCPA/DCPC's monitoring and surveillance mechanisms.</li> <li>2) Strengthen the role of 'Women and Children Desk' in DCPC function.</li> <li>3) Establish Children Forums at district level and Children Groups at provincial level.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Relevant alternative and preventative strategies developed and implemented.</li> <li>2) To initiate community forums to assist in the implementation of alternative strategies.</li> <li>3) Countrywide awareness activities initiated.</li> <li>4) Relevant Government bodies and institutions involvement in (a) policy and procedures review and revision (b) awareness activities.</li> </ol>

# APPENDIX F: SCISL LOGFRAME



# APPENDIX G: THE ROAD TO REUNIFICATION



## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> “Sri Lanka Displaced Population by District”, UNHCR, November 2004.
- <sup>2</sup> Ramanie Jayathilake and Harini Amarasuriya, *Home Truths: Children's Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka, Full Report*, Save the Children in Sri Lanka, Colombo, 2005 and *Save the Children in Sri Lanka Home Truths: Children's Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka, Advocacy Document*, Colombo, 2005.
- <sup>3</sup> Ramanie Jayathilake and Harini Amarasuriya, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.
- <sup>5</sup> Calculations are based on Table 5:1, Ramanie Jayathilake and Harini Amarasuriya, p. 41.
- <sup>6</sup> *Save the Children in Sri Lanka Home Truths: Children's Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka, Advocacy Document*, 2005, p. viii.
- <sup>7</sup> The DCOF team met with one of these workers, Mr. Pathmanathan Shanmugaratman, Project Manager of the Caritas project for children, on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, a few days before he and his co-worker, Mr. Selvendra Piratheepkumar were killed by a Claymore mine. This report is dedicated to their memory.
- <sup>8</sup> *Sri Lanka Displaced Population by District*, November 2004 and *The State of the World's Refugees 2006: Human displacement in the new millennium*, UNHCR, Geneva, p. 210
- <sup>9</sup> Under-age Recruitment as of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006, UNICEF Sri Lanka.
- <sup>10</sup> “National Rapid Environmental Assessment – Sri Lanka,” United Nations Environment Program, p. 58.  
[http://www.unep.org/tsunami/reports/TSUNAMI\\_SRILANKA\\_LAYOUT.pdf](http://www.unep.org/tsunami/reports/TSUNAMI_SRILANKA_LAYOUT.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> “Sri Lanka Displaced Population by District,” *op. cit.*
- <sup>12</sup> Miranda Armstrong, Jo Boyden, Ananda Galappatti and Jason Hart, “Piloting Methods for the Evaluation of Psychosocial Programme Impact in Eastern Sri Lanka: Final Report for USAID,” March 2004.
- <sup>13</sup> Some possible resources for the development of well-being indicators might include: Jason Hart, *Participation of Conflict-Affected Children in Humanitarian Action: Learning from Eastern Sri Lanka*, Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford with The International NGO Research and Training Centre, 2002; Joan Duncan and Laura Arntson, *Children in Crisis: Good Practices in Evaluating Psychosocial Programming*, Washington, DC: Save the Children Federation, 2003; Martha Bragin, *The Community Participatory Evaluation Tool: a guide to implementation*, 2005.
- <sup>14</sup> Jayathilake and Amarasuriya, *op. cit.* and *Home Truths, op. cit.*
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21
- <sup>17</sup> E. Helander, P. Mendis, G. Nelson, and A. Goert, *Training in the Community for People with Disabilities*, WHO, 1989. Geneva
- <sup>18</sup> *Home Truths, op. cit.* pp. 7,8&24.
- <sup>19</sup> *Home Truths, op. cit.* p. vii
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. vii
- <sup>22</sup> Research by Henry Dwight Chapin described in Henry Dwight Chapin, *Family vs. Institution*, 1926 ( <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adoption/archive/ChapinFvI.htm> ) with the original source cited as: Henry Dwight Chapin, “Family vs. Institution,” *Survey* 55 (January 15, 1926):485-488.
- <sup>23</sup> From the literature review in a recent study provided to the Better Care Network: Anna T. Smyke et al. “The Caregiving Context in Institution Reared and Family Reared Infants and Toddlers in Romania.” Available on request from the Better Care Network. Contact Aaron Greenberg [agreenberg@unicef.org](mailto:agreenberg@unicef.org).
- <sup>24</sup> Smyke et al. *op. cit* p. 3.
- <sup>25</sup> Charles H. Zeanah et al. “Attachment in Institutionalized and Community Children in Romania,” p. 2. Available on request from the Better Care Network. Contact Aaron Greenberg [agreenberg@unicef.org](mailto:agreenberg@unicef.org).
- <sup>26</sup> Jayathilake and Amarasuriya, *op. cit.* p. vii
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.
- <sup>28</sup> R. Surendrakumar, Stephen Sunthararaj, N Sivarajah “Children in Institutional Care in North-East Province of Sri Lanka,” University of Jaffna in collaboration with Save the Children in Sri Lanka, 2004, p. 16.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.
- <sup>30</sup> *Home Truths, op. cit.* p. viii.

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