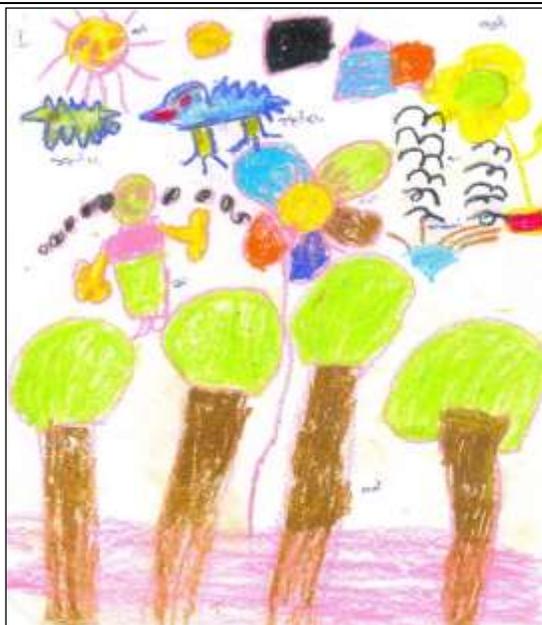


Challenges¹

- Limited awareness of ECCD's benefits among parents and communities.
- Limited access to ECCD programs for the poorest.
- Lack of quality physical structures with insufficient equipment.
- Limited ECCD materials.
- Early childhood teachers lack training and do not meet the minimum requirements.

Sri Lanka Country Profile: Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD)



© Mauri, age 4

General information about ECCD in Sri Lanka^{2 3}

ECCD has not received much attention in the public with limited participation among parents and communities. The government has tried to reinforce the importance of the early years through the National Policy on ECCD in 2004.

The term ECCD is preferred in Sri Lanka and usually means pre-primary education for children between the ages of 3 and 5. Provisions are generally provided by NGOs and private institutions with a limited number of government-funded preschools. Coordination between ECCD programs and services remains poor and inconsistent with varying models and standards.

Sri Lanka has made progress on reducing its child mortality rates. However, child malnutrition continues to be a main challenge for the country with one out of five children born with low birth weight and nearly a third of children below 5 are underweight.

Priorities

- Implement the National Policy on ECCD.
- Implement guidelines and standards on ECCD.
- Develop physical infrastructure of ECCD centers.
- Develop programs to raise awareness on early childhood, including the ECCD week program and children's art exhibition.
- Capacity building of personnel to increase quality.

Key policies

- ✓ ECCD national policy was approved and adopted in 2004.
 - [National Policy on ECCD](#)
 - [Action Plan for Ministry of Women and Child Affairs 2016](#)

Ministry in charge: Ministry of Women and Child Affairs

For more information, please contact: ARNEC Secretariat

✉ secretariat@arnec.net 🌐 www.arnec.net/country-pages/

Key data: A life cycle approach for ECCD

Demographics (Source: World Bank⁴ unless specified)

Indicator	Data	Source (year)
Total population (million)	20.77	World Bank (2014)
Rural population (%)	81.68	World Bank (2014)
Under-5 population (million)	1.643	UN Population Division (2015 ⁵)
Population below the global poverty line of US \$ 1.90/day (%)	1.69	World Bank (2012)
Population growth rate (annual %)	0.93	World Bank (2014)
Total fertility rate (births per women)	2.08	World Bank (2014)

Prenatal

Indicator	Data	Source (year)
Annual number of births (thousand)	380	SWOC (2013 ⁶)
Birth registration (%)	97	SWOC (2005-2013)
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	31	World Bank (2014)

Birth to 5 years

Indicator	Data	Source (year)
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	8	UN IGME (2015 ⁷)
Exclusive breastfeeding under-6 months (%)	76	SWOC (2009-2013)
Under-5 stunting prevalence (moderate and severe) (%)	15	SWOC (2009-2013)
Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	10	UN IGME (2015)
Full immunization coverage (%)	N/A	-
Violent discipline (Children aged 1-14 exposed to violent disciplinary methods during the last month) (%)	N/A	-

School readiness

Indicator	Data	Source (year)
Early Childhood Development Index or ECDI (%)	N/A	-
Father's support for learning (%)	N/A	-
Availability of children's books (%)	N/A	-
Gross enrollment ratio or GER in pre-primary (%)	94.99	UIS (2013 ⁸)
Gender parity index of GER; F/M (%)	0.99	UIS (2013)
Children entering Grade 1 with ECD experience (%)	93.87	UIS (2013)
Gender parity index of children with ECD experience; F/M (%)	1.03	UIS (2013)

Noteworthy practices

1. [Inclusive ECCD for children with disabilities](#)

(Implemented by Directorate of Social Services in the North Western Province)

- *Noteworthy aspects:* Children with disabilities remain at the center until they are ready for regular schools. Centers are situated at convenient locations with adequate accommodations for indoors and outdoors (in a fenced area) activities. Preschool teachers are professionally trained on education for children with disabilities.
- *Achievements:* Parents are satisfied with progress made of their children following participation at these centers. School readiness level of children with disabilities are raised.

2. [Senehe Thataka home-based ECCD program](#)

(Implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs' Children's Secretariat)

- *Noteworthy aspects:* Awareness programs for parents, public officials, and youth groups on importance of child-friendly environment at home.
- *Achievements:* Children are involved in household chores and engaged at home to develop their holistic development.

3. [Poshana Manpetha food and nutrition program](#)

(Implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs' Children's Secretariat)

- *Noteworthy aspects:* Program creates awareness among parents and teachers on the importance of food and nutrition to a growing child. Clear instructions to prepare healthy meal in the right portion are provided.

4. [Model ECCD Village Program](#) (Implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs' Children's Secretariat)

- *Noteworthy aspects:* Preschools are developed in a selected village by making sure that there are sufficient child-friendly amenities (e.g. parks and libraries) for demonstration as a model to sensitize villages on the useful ECCD services.

Testimonies

"Quality early childhood education is a mandatory factor which has a direct influence towards the development of a country. A good

Grade 1 repetition rate (%)	0.89	UIS (2013)
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foundation in early childhood education has an impact as it is these children who will become decision makers in future and they can give a better start to the next generation.” – Minister of Women and Child Affairs [Chandrani Bandara](#), Sri Lanka.

Additional photos

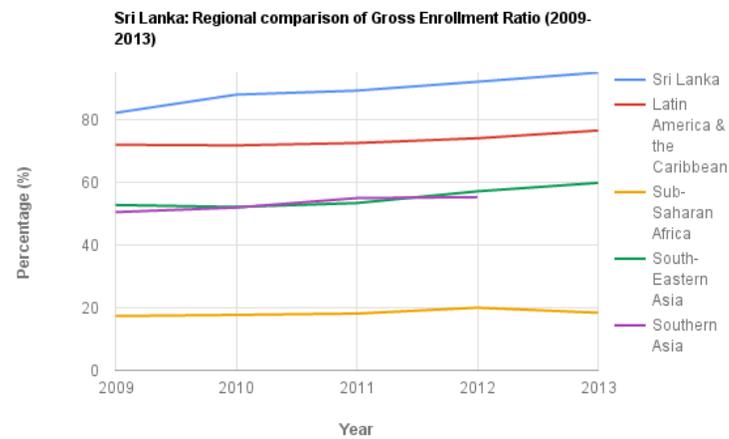


@ University of Colombo

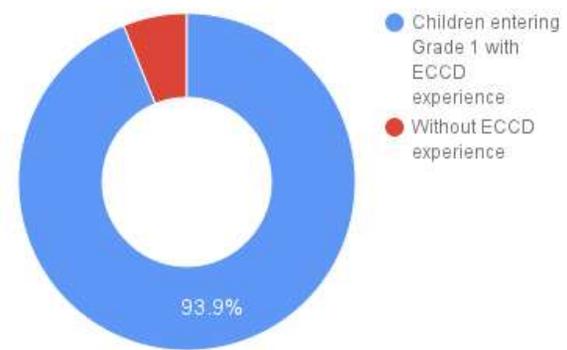


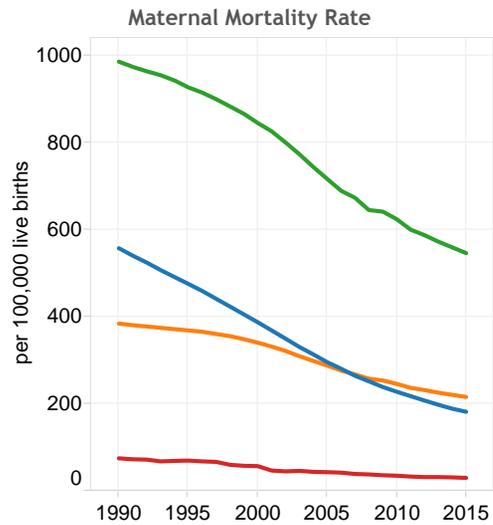
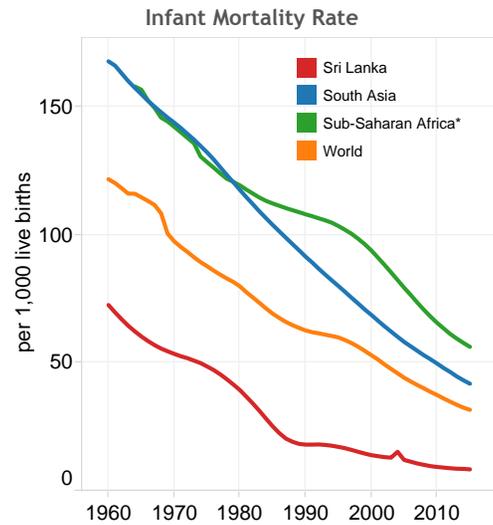
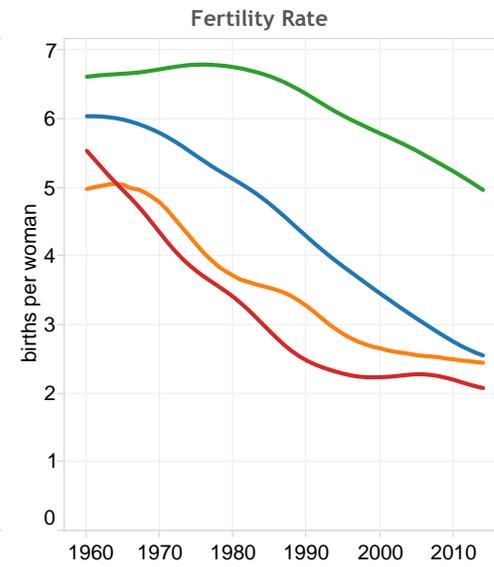
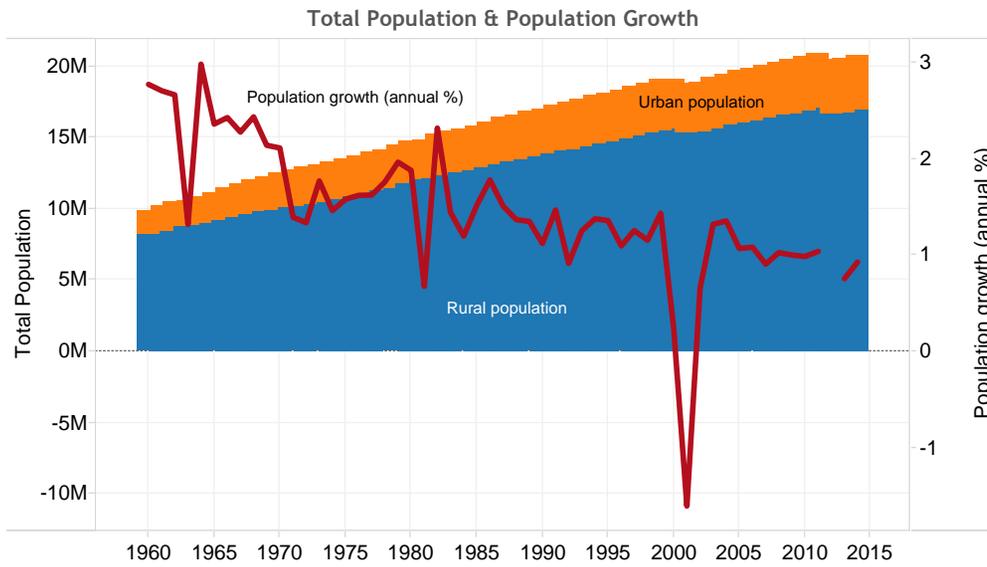
@ ChildFund project in Polonnaruwa

Selected graphs on key data



Source: UIS, 2013





Source: World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2016) * Sub-Saharan Africa only includes Low and Middle Income countries defined by the World Bank as of July 1st 2016.

References

- ¹ UNESCO. (n.d.). [Sri Lanka: Early childhood education system profile](#) (accessed May 2, 2016).
- ² Krishnakumar, P. (2009). [Early Childhood Care and Development for All in Sri Lanka](#) (accessed May 2, 2016).
- ³ UNICEF. (n.d.). [What we do: early childhood](#) (Accessed May 2, 2016).
- ⁴ World Bank. (2015). [World Bank Open Data](#) (Accessed May 4, 2016).
- ⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2015). [World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision](#), DVD Edition (Accessed May 4, 2016).
- ⁶ UNICEF. (2015). [State of the World's Children 2015 Country Statistical tables](#).
- ⁷ United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). (2015). [Level & trends in child mortality: Report 2015](#) (pp. 23). New York: UNICEF.
- ⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2016). [Education dataset](#) (Accessed May 4, 2016).