

# Sri Lanka



## General Country Profile<sup>1</sup>



Sri Lanka is an island located in the Indian Ocean southwest of the Bay of Bengal.



Population: 21,803,000 (Annual Report Central Bank, 2019); the sex ratio is 46M:54F (estimates based on Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), 2016).



Child population under 18 years: 6,214,692 (estimates based on HIES, 2016).



Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population): 4 per cent (HIES, 2016).



About a quarter of the population lives just above the official poverty line, and is extremely vulnerable to economic shocks.



Literacy rate: 93 per cent (Labour Force Survey, 2018).



Life expectancy at birth: 75.5 years (Annual Report, Central Bank, 2019).



Income level: Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC); per capita income USD 3,741 (Annual Report, Central Bank, 2019).

[1] Sources of data include: Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, Central Bank Sri Lanka and World Bank.



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## Sri Lanka Key Indicators on Children

Indicator	Value	Year	Source
Neonatal mortality	7 per 1,000 live births	2016	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)
Stunting in under-five children	17%	2016	DHS
Number of children (0-5 years) living in residential care	14,500	2016	Department of Probation and Child Care
Early Childhood Education (participation rate of four-year-olds in organized learning one year before the official primary school age entrance)	50%	2017	World Bank, Sri Lanka Education Sector Assessment, 2017
Secondary education net enrolment (15-16 years)	86%	2016	Estimates based on HIES



## Biggest challenges facing children and UNICEF targets for 2018-2022

- **Malnutrition** remains a major challenge, indicating the acute need for quality and multi-sectoral services. Rates of acute malnutrition (wasting) are exceptionally high, at 15 per cent (DHS, 2016).

- **Poor quality at all levels of education**, indicating that the education system is failing to produce skills that are in high demand in a competitive economy. There are large disparities in learning achievement by province, gender, income and location. Only around 50 per cent of children can access pre-school (World Bank, Sri Lanka Education Sector Assessment, 2017).

- Varying **poverty levels** across the country are a major problem. More work needs to be done to ensure that children are not denied opportunities simply because of the family they are born into or where they live.

- **Corporal punishment** is widespread in Sri Lanka. Encouraging steps have been taken, including the drafting of a Cabinet Policy Paper to ban corporal punishment, however the Paper is has been pending submission to Cabinet for a considerable time. There is still no explicit legal ban on the practice. Existing circulars are poorly enforced and interventions poorly financed.

- Sri Lanka continues to grapple with **ethnic tensions and misunderstandings**. This continues to have a direct effect on national development. Tensions between social and ethnic groups often begin in childhood.

- Sri Lanka is ranked the sixth most vulnerable country in the world with respect to the effects of **climate change**. Children suffer the most from the direct physical impact of extreme weather.

### Key priorities in the new Sri Lanka Country Programme 2018–2022

- Reduce the percentage of stunted under-five children to 13 per cent.
- Increase net enrolment rates in secondary education to 90 per cent.
- Increase the participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary school age entrance to 80 per cent.
- Increase the number of children covered by social protection systems by 5 per cent.
- Reduce the percentage of girls and boys (aged 1-14) who have experienced violent disciplinary practices (target to be determined).
- Implement the National Action Plan on Education for Peace and Reconciliation.
- Invest in communities by prioritizing the resilience and adaptability of education, health and protection services in communities across Sri Lanka.





## Type of UNICEF programme, presence and partnerships and salient issues

- The Country Programme Document 2018–2022 has a budget of USD 57.24 million (USD 4.74 million regular resources and USD 52.5 million other resources).
- Sri Lanka will employ a mix of upstream and downstream strategies i.e. system strengthening, strengthening generation of disaggregated data and integrated service delivery at subnational level.
- Corporate alliances with major businesses will be pursued with the aim of advancing child-centred partnerships and policies and to create mutually beneficial relationships to maximize resources for children.
- Sri Lanka is a pathfinder country for the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children (GP-EVAC) and is part of the Scale Up Nutrition (SUN) movement.
- UNICEF Sri Lanka has established strategic partnerships with the EU and World Bank on Public Finance for Children; the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) on quality education services; and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction and Gender Based Violence.



## Country Management Team

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