

# Poverty and Perception: Driving Sri Lankan Children's Homes at Multiple Levels

Eshantha Ariyadasa

*Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia*  
eshanthaariyadasa@gmail.com, loku0004@flinders.edu.au

**Abstract** — *In Sri Lanka, many children are housed in institutions for economic, social and cultural reasons, as well as the impacts of the civil war and global climatic change. Children's homes house almost 20,000 children, a huge population who have been denied basic human rights by being deprived of parental care and labelled orphaned, abandoned or destitute. These figures are disturbing in a multi-religious and diversely cultured state where moral rhetoric abounds, but concerns need to be translated into practice.*

*This participatory action research was carried out across all nine provinces in Sri Lanka, involving policy makers and service providers responsible for children without parental care. All commissioners of the Provincial Departments of Probation and Child Care Services were interviewed to ascertain their role in the policy making process. Thirty managers from different children's homes were interviewed concerning their service provision. All 298 probation officers, 287 child rights promotion officers, and matrons and wardens of all 416 children's homes were included in a questionnaire census approach. Of these, approximately half responded. The recruitment of these groups as participants for the study was based on the aim of using their feedback to produce a set of guidelines for the process of policy making and governance of children's homes. The responses to the questionnaires and the narratives of interviews were analysed on the basis of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and the General Standards for promoting the quality of services in voluntary children's homes in Sri Lanka. The answers were separated into several themes and rated to identify the core themes.*

*This participatory action research has identified many issues of policy implication and service provision across agencies charged with care of children. This paper investigates the impacts of socio-economic and cultural environments on*

*children both before and during their institutionalization.*

**Keywords:** Participatory Action Research, children without parental care, agencies.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is titled "**Poverty and Perception: driving Sri Lankan children's homes at multiple levels**". "Multiple levels" means the level of the service user (the child & their family) and the level of the management of the children's home.

Roccella (2007) states that "Institutional care is at present the most common – or, rather, the almost sole – solution for children deprived of parental care in Sri Lanka". The direct impact of 'poverty' and/or the 'effects of poverty' have been identified as the principal cause of a child's entry into institutional care system (Save the Children, 2005; Roccella, 2007).

Roccella (2007) also reveals that the extreme poverty of some households (approximately 50 per cent of the total population of the institutionalized children) leads to the institutionalisation of children by their immediate or extended family. In fact in Sri Lanka, the majority of children in institutional care are there due to the direct and indirect effects of poverty. These arguments well suits with the empirical findings of this participatory action research (PAR).

Taking the empirical and secondary findings into consideration, this paper discusses two aspects of institutional care of children in Sri Lanka. Firstly, it reveals how the economic factor has affected children's institutionalization. Subsequently, this paper identifies how peoples' social and cultural perspectives impact on children and their rights during institutionalization.

## II. OBJECTIVES

This paper addresses two research questions of the PAR. The first section, "Poverty drives the institutionalisation of children" analyses secondary and empirical findings asking the question "How can we prevent children being institutionalized and sustain their lives in their natural birth environments?" The second section on "Poverty or its perception drives the management of children's homes" attempts to identify some of the human rights issues of children's homes. It analyses two case studies provided by service providers and addresses the specific question "How can we safeguard the human rights of children in institutional care?" (Ariyadasa, 2013).

## III. METHODOLOGY

This research is characterised by the strong involvement of members of the agencies that are responsible for institutional care of children, identifying it as Participatory Action Research (Whyte, 1991). Whyte et al. (1989) explain that "*In participatory action research, some of the people in the organization or community under study participate actively with the professional researcher throughout the research process from the initial design to the final presentation of results and discussion of their action implications. PAR thus contrasts sharply with the conventional model of pure research, in which members of organizations and communities are related as passive subjects, with some of them participating only to the extent of authorizing the project, being its subjects, and receiving the results*".

The research subjects of this PAR are institutionalized children. However, there is not enough information available about them directly. Therefore, this PAR uses expert consultation as sources of data by interviewing policy makers and service providers responsible for institutional care of children. Thus, this PAR also uses exploratory research methods. According to Sarantakos (1998) exploratory Research aims at explaining social relations or events, advancing knowledge about the structure, process and nature of social events, linking factors and elements of issues into general statements and building, testing or revising a theory.

Exploration is a central element of qualitative research and has been useful for developing an accurate picture of the research subjects of this PAR. "*This type of research refers to a number of methodological approaches, based on diverse theoretical principles, employing methods of data collection and analysis that are non-quantitative, and aiming towards exploration of social relations, and describes reality as experienced by the respondents*" (ibid). Nevertheless, this research largely employs methods of data collection and analysis that are non-quantitative aims for exploration of social relations and describes reality as explained by the respondents. Furthermore, this PAR has collected questionnaire data through a quantitative research approach to assist the evaluation of qualitative data using statistical analysis.

Thus in summary, this PAR largely employs qualitative investigations to manipulate the information collected during the study in order to assess and evaluate the findings and arrive at some valid, reasonable and relevant conclusions. In-depth and narrative interviews have been employed for data collection and thus, the responses of the respondents are recorded on papers and subsequently studied and analysed.

## IV. POVERTY DRIVES THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CHILDREN

This section addresses two significant causes of child institutionalisation. Firstly, 'Poverty as a direct reason for institutionalization' is discussed against UN Guidelines. Secondly, 'Parents' migration for working abroad' has been analysed as an adverse effect of poverty that has led to children's institutionalisation.

### *A. Poverty as a direct reason for institutionalization*

The UN Guidelines state that "*Financial and material poverty, or conditions directly and uniquely imputable to such poverty, should never be the only justification for the removal of a child from parental care, for receiving a child into alternative care, or for preventing his/her reintegration, but should be seen as a signal for the need to provide appropriate support to the family*" (UN 2010). Thus, empirical and secondary data which indicates poverty as a major reason for the majority of children in residential care cannot be justified in terms of the policies outlined in the UN Guidelines. Consequently, the UN Guidelines have influenced

UNICEF's role to advocate for alternative remedies for children:

1. Whose homes don't or can't provide adequate care and support and,
2. Whose parents are desperate to provide their children with opportunities they themselves simply can't provide.

Given that the best possible environment for children is generally with their families, i.e. to try to prevent children being separated from their homes in the first place. Thus, the preferred solution to the first situation according to UNICEF's experience is simple and cost-effective support provided in a timely fashion to households. It may well reduce the separation of children from their families and it will further encourage children's re-integration with their families.

This PAR demonstrates that, on some occasions, parents voluntarily request institutionalization of their child. The UN Guidelines insist that separation initiated by the child's parents should be prevented (UN 2010). It is necessary to ensure that all households have access to basic food and medical supplies, education, limit the residential care options and restrict their use to those situations where it is absolutely necessary.

In cases where families are incapable of taking proper care of children as described in the second situation, the preferred solution in UNICEF's experience is the introduction of the next best thing to family care, i.e. the networks of foster families. This is in accord with the UN Guidelines paragraphs 118 to 122 (UN 2010). UNICEF further suggests that additional support from the State to these foster families can form the backbone of an alternative care system for children (UNICEF, 2012). For instance, this system is practiced in South Australia (S.A.). A family which agrees to host a child is regularly acknowledged financially through the relevant foster care agency which is financially backed by the S.A. State government (Source: PAR 2013 by the author, Discussion with a foster care agency).

South Australia no longer runs children's homes as an alternative care for children deprived of parental care. The alternative care system that S.A. has recognized as best next is the foster care system. Thus, S.A. is compliant with UN Guidelines which state that *"the use of residential care should be*

*limited to cases where such a setting is specifically appropriate, necessary and constructive for the individual child concerned and in his/her best interests"* (UN 2010). Yet, the officials of foster care agencies stress that S.A. is in dire need of more foster care families to satisfy the present requirement of children deprived of parental care. They say that *"On most occasions, the child and the social worker have to stay in hotel rooms until they find a permanent care solution. Sometimes, the child travels to school for many weeks or months from the hotel"* (Source: PAR 2013 by the author, Discussion with a foster care agency).

The UN Guidelines state that *"while recognizing that residential care facilities and family-based care complement each other in meeting the needs of children, where large residential care facilities (institutions) remain, alternatives should be developed in the context of an overall deinstitutionalization strategy, with precise goals and objectives, which will allow for their progressive elimination..."* (UN 2010). Care provided in any non-family-based group setting, such as places of safety for emergency care, transit centres in emergency situations, and all other short- and long-term residential care facilities, including group homes represent residential care (ibid). In Sri Lanka the foster care system is hardly practiced and therefore, the alternative is mostly residential care.

Most of the residential care institutions house more than 25 children (Source: PAR 2012 by the author). Most institutions provide dormitory facilities. Children's homes that house over 100 children are not uncommon. However, the UN Guidelines explain that *"facilities providing residential care should be small and organized around the rights and needs of the child, in a setting as close as possible to a family or small group situation"* (UN 2010).

#### *B. An adverse effect of poverty: Seeking work as domestic workers abroad*

Sri Lankan women commonly work as domestic labourers in Middle-Eastern countries to address the issue of household poverty in Sri Lanka. Basnayaka et al. (2012) explains that *"Migration occurs for various reasons such as education, businesses, seeking refuge, training and employment. But the truth behind the migration of Sri Lankan women is mostly poverty and low economic status of salary in Sri Lanka"*.

Furthermore, Save the Children (2005) indicates that well over 30 % of children's institutionalization has been due to a mother's foreign employment.

My own experience as the manager of a children's home, collected as meeting records over five years, highlights a common experience. The mother works abroad often leaves her children behind in her husband's care. The deprivation of care is undesirable and cannot be replaced by her earnings, but this does provide a way to look after the children's physical needs. Mostly this cash falls into the hands of the children's father. The mother expects her husband to use this money in a sensible and efficient way such as feeding the children, material support for the schooling of the children, to address any health issues, savings and hopefully to maintain and furnish their house. These are the priorities that the mother wants to spend her earnings on. Although she expects that the money would bring comfort to her family, it often works in the opposite way. This money is a fortune to her husband. His lack of education on how to manage the money and various unethical practices such as addiction to drugs and/or alcohol, gambling and buying sexual favours simply consume every penny that his wife has sent to him.

Basnayake et al. (2012) describes this situation as such: *"The majority of migrant women belong to disadvantaged communities where the traditional livelihoods are not viable. The reasons for migration are noted as being due to lack of access to regular and substantial income and the inability to bear the rising cost of living. In addition, some of the major aspirations of the migrant women were to build houses, collect dowry and to educate their children. Among the specific problems of the women that force them to migrate are high indebtedness, domestic violence and the alcohol addiction of spouses. Female headed households remain fair segment of the migration population. The complexity of the present day migration stream has intensified with distinctions between migrant workers, trainees, tourists, refugees and displaced persons becoming increasingly blurred. Migrants in this sense include both voluntary migrants and forced migrants"* (Source: The IOM/United Nations World Migration Report 2010).

My own experience, and that of managers who I interviewed as part of this study, highlight a sad but not uncommon scenario. While the mother is

working abroad, the family dynamics become even worse than the situation when the mother was at home. There was some kind of a hold and a voice to advocate the family business when the mother was at home despite their financial difficulties. A father may find loneliness without his wife is intense and may turn to drink or drugs. He further finds that the only thing that gives meaning to his life is her money. He may well fall into bad company which could jeopardise the children's safety. School dropouts, starvation, insecurity, health issues and humiliation become daily burdens. Children become denied most of their fundamental rights.

This situation was expressed by a commissioner of provincial DPCCS as follows:

*"After a mother leaves family behind for working abroad, the circumstances now pave the way for the children's institutionalisation of that family. The school or the community who witness the family deterioration reports to the officials about the threat to these children from their father's acts and behaviour. Or else, the father himself may want to have his children institutionalized so that he can engage in his wasteful ways. He contrives several reasons for such a request. He claims that his wife has gone abroad and he cannot go to work when the children are at home as it would be a significant risk to their security and safety. To justify his reason he may further claim that his wife does not send him any money and that he must find work for the children's sake."*

There are no mechanisms within the system to prove that the father's request is genuine. Thus, officials tend to approve his request and send the children into children's homes. If the officials were to make a comprehensive research of documents and seek evidence from the different agencies and the neighbourhood, there is a distinct possibility that the appeal would be found to be false. The lack of coordination between governmental departments makes such attempts rare and ultimately the children are admitted to children's homes. When children are institutionalized, the responsibility is removed from the father leaving him to behave in whatever the manner he chooses which often leads the family towards a devastating and catastrophic collapse.

Another commissioner's comments on how the system needs changes to address this issue are as follows:

*"In reality, the father could look after his family well from the money his wife sends, but many use the legal loopholes within the system to satisfy undesirable behaviours. When the children are in children's homes the father does not have to spend money on their needs. The children's home and the government provide enough for them. This encourages him to spend and waste his wife's money. There is no proper tracking system to identify how much money his wife sends to him. The government recognises his poverty as a valid reason for child's institutionalization. Therefore, when officials cannot trace a family's income and if the parent's request for institutionalization of their child under the poverty factor, the government accepts the parents request even though it may not be in the best interest of the child."*

#### V. POVERTY OR ITS PERCEPTION DRIVES THE MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN'S HOMES

*"The governance of children's homes for vulnerable children in Sri Lanka has long been regarded as a social welfare activity rather than a social responsibility. For this reason, it has led to the existence of many children's homes lacking even the basic amenities and a few homes with extraordinary infrastructure and a far higher standard of amenities"* (Rocella 2007). In line with this statement, firstly the socio-economic and cultural perspectives of the tradition of 'Dane' were discussed between policy makers and service providers. The word Dane is largely used when giving 'alms' to monks in the Buddhist culture. The charitable giving of money, food, or goods to people in need is also referred to as Dane.

Secondly, the paradox of relative and absolute poverty with regard to the tradition of Dane and the peoples' attitudes towards the governance of children's homes is discussed using two case studies provided by service providers.

##### A. The tradition of Dane: Socio-economic and cultural perspectives

Many Sri Lankans believe that the tradition of almsgiving to children homes helps one to achieve a better future in this life and to create an even better one in the next. This is the belief of the Buddhist and Hindu religions which represents over

85% of Sri Lanka's population. There are local and foreign individuals and some companies who assist children homes by providing or funding meals and/or materials. For their contribution, they choose their own birthdays or any other memorable day to celebrate it at the children's home. This tradition has continued over generations and many children homes have printed applications to promote this custom. This is called 'Dane'. This concept of Dane was researched in this study by keeping a special position in the research questions to explore the positive and negative aspects of this custom in terms of the institutionalized children and their human rights.

According to service providers, whatever the belief of the public, the positive aspect of Dane is that it eases the ongoing maintenance cost of a children's home. The number of people gathering to undertake an almsgiving varies from a few family members to a larger community group. Thus, it provides institutionalized children with a chance to mix with the public. Six policy makers out of nine consider the chance of mixing with the public as a result of 'Dane' is a positive aspect. The policy makers, who see it as positive, believe that by keeping a children's home with easy access to the public, it protects the children from abuse. They believe that the public can observe the children's well-being and report to officials if they find any misbehaviour of the staff within the homes. This is based on the assumption that those who observe Dane do so for altruistic reasons. Furthermore, the policy makers suggest that by keeping a contact list of the public donors, the staff can record potential personal donors and possible routes for future support for socializing the children from their children's homes. The vast numbers of people that can participate in Dane are often regarded as a nuisance for the daily timetable of the home. Three policy makers point out that the Dane is a huge process. It consumes vital time that can be utilized for the future prospects of the charges of the home in many aspects. After the meal donation, children have to sing songs and dance as a sign of gratitude for the generous thoughts of the public. Most of the time, while the public is around, children have to sacrifice their evening rest, recreational activities, school homework and sometimes most important extra classes" (Source: PAR 2012 by the author, Commissioners' interviews, No. 6).

Another negative aspect of this tradition according to the policy makers and policy officers is that the public sees these institutionalized children as helpless and hopeless. They have recognised that the public have naturally become donors to these institutions and provide facilities in terms of materials (food, clothes, books, stationery etc.) to satisfy children's physical needs rather than satisfying their psychological needs such as recognition, respect, belonging, achievements and confidence. However, policy makers urge that care should be taken when organizing a Dane. There is a real danger that children may come to believe that this is their fate – to be fed and supported by others and they have to live with it. This makes them more vulnerable as it does not encourage them to develop their own potential and stand with a positive attitude to confront the challenges in their lives (Source: PAR 2012, summary of the answers from commissioners).

Six service providers out of the thirty interviewed point out that when organizing a Dane, the public tends to look for children's homes that have fewer facilities and more desperate children so they, the donors, earn more virtues. This attitude is highly contentious. When the staff of a children's home maximise infrastructure and keep their charges happy by utilizing funds properly and promptly, it adversely affects the public donations. Well managed children's homes from the general public's perspective need no further support. Their decision for 'Dane' is mainly based on the infrastructure facilities at homes and the appearance of the children. These attitudes of the public inevitably lead the managers of some children's homes to misuse public funds without utilizing them within the homes. Paradoxically, the public unwittingly encourages managers to showcase much less than regular/perfect homes and to keep the children in desperate conditions simply to attract more funding. This unfortunate paradox of relative and absolute need is well illustrated by the following two case studies.

#### *B. Paradox of relative and absolute need*

1) *Case study 1:* One manager of an 'A' graded children's home explained this paradox by using his example of 'two different beggars' as follows:

*"Suppose you are travelling in a bus with a friend. At one station, two female beggars get into the bus and start begging simultaneously. One woman is*

*looking dirty and unkempt while holding an infant with a running nose and unattended wounds. The other woman is wearing relatively clean clothes and her baby is hygienically attended. To which beggar would you offer some money? Isn't that the terrible looking beggar with the child likely to get your attention? Wouldn't that be the reaction of most of the other passengers as well? After the women left the bus, wouldn't you comment with your friend justifying your action and that of the others, saying that there is no need to offer money to a cleanly dressed woman with a healthy looking baby? His argument is quite obvious as the other woman is the one that appears in every manner to deserve support from the general public. We accept the truth as what we see it, but the reality could be a totally different story"* (Source: PAR 2012 by the author, Managers' interviews No. 1).

When asked why he thought that the reality could be a different story, the manager justified his argument with:

*"The woman may not wear clean clothes because clean clothes look odd for a beggar. She does not attend the running nose or the wounds of the baby, because these characteristics influence the passengers to offer money to the one they perceive as needing most. In reality she should be able to wear clean and tidy clothes from her earnings as a beggar and of course attend her baby, but she does not do so. She may be uneducated but she is well versed in the peoples' attitudes. She knows that clean clothes or healthy looking babies either reduce her earnings or bring no income at all. That is why we hardly see well-dressed beggars on the streets. Toned or deliberately dirty and/or dusty, rotten clothes are beggars uniform. Miserable faces and unattended wounds are their ornaments. Disabilities are their unveiled blessings".*

In this description the manager sees the issue of relative and absolute need through the common eye and explains the current situation of the general public's attitude towards the children's homes. Public's attitude is that the children's homes are usually poorly managed and difficult to run. Furthermore, the public have very rarely experienced thriving, well-educated, properly behaved and well-nourished children in institutional care. They presume that institutionalized children are orphans, abandoned and destitute as categorised by DPCCS (2010). Thus, the public is reluctant to contribute to children's homes that are

well managed and where the residential children showcase similar life styles to those children living in natural birth environments.

2) *Case study 2*: One service provider explains his experience as follows:

*“When I decided to take the risk of managing and running an orphanage, I was quite sure about the Dane from public donors. Especially the meal donations, because I knew about a few children’s home where you cannot easily reserve a date for a meal donation. The meals for most of the year have been reserved in those children’s homes. Therefore, I relied upon public donations for meal costs even before I started my orphanage. I thought, once started, within two to three years, I would not need to prepare many meals in my children’s home and I could reduce the number of cooks from two to one. I was totally mistaken. It has been six years since the inception of my home, but I have not been able to cut down even 25% of the meal cost from the public funding”* (Source: PAR 2012 by the author, Managers’ interviews No. 8).

According to this manager, the public’s attitude towards the children’s homes is an issue that has to be addressed immediately. He explains the reasons why he thinks meal donations are lacking in his children’s home as follows:

*“I constructed the children’s home from the generous funding of an overseas organization. It consists of most of the key infra-structure facilities that a children’s home must have. We have sufficient staff members and a manageable number of children. It is situated in a rural village and the children go to the village school. Our children wear relatively good clothes and eat relatively good meals compared with the children from the village. That is one reason why we receive only a few meal donations from the village where the children’s home is situated. The other reason is a very crucial one. It is known that the donors who come from distant areas rarely continue their donations. When they see the infrastructure and the satisfied faces of the institutionalized children, they think that our children’s home is a well-off one and needs no constant support. We need their financial and material support to keep the ongoing functioning of the home as good as it is now. Many, who promised regular donations, withdraw them and transfer them to other children’s home, where they find less*

*facilities and miserable faces of charges. Public does not understand that some managements of other children’s homes pretend that they lack facilities and use children to showcase the varying needs of the home. Although I am still struggling with financing strategies and process for my children’s home, I cannot misuse children in my care to attract public funding”.*

The manager in case study 1 tries to compare the life of a beggar with the characteristics of children’s home. It is well expressed as both the above parties (beggar and children’s home) depended upon public donations. The manager in case study 2 tries to explain that the good appearance of a children’s home and a well-kept children paradoxically cause the public to think that no funds are needed.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The existing system for the alternative care of children who are denied parental care Sri Lanka, does not satisfy the policies expressed in the UN Guidelines. Specifically, the common use of children’s homes rather than a family environment for alternative care is in contravention of these guidelines.

Poverty and effects of poverty have significantly contributed to children’s institutionalization in Sri Lanka. The government should regulate a system for children’s well-being from the inception of the story of parents’ decisions to work abroad. This can lead to an agreement between the parents and the government to decide who is going to take over the well-being of the child while the parent works abroad. This type of mechanism avoids unnecessary institutionalization and maintains family integrity.

Policy makers and service providers describe that the custom of Dane has both positive and negative aspects. Policy makers keen to identify negative aspects as they assume that Dane could be interpreted as teaching students to think in terms of welfare and dependency rather than thinking about their own rights and responsibilities. However, service providers find Dane as positive in some aspects, particularly as it eases the running cost of the children’s homes.

Socio-economic and cultural perspectives of Sri Lankan society have influenced the management of children’s homes and the way the human rights of

the institutionalized children have been translated into practice. Thus, institutionalized children are at risk as a result of a range of socio-economic factors. It has been a difficult task to erase the attitude of society that these vulnerable children ought not to be treated as 'welfare cases'; they have rights. While acknowledging the thoughts and deeds of the public as donors, governance practices of homes should be adapted to minimize the negative impacts on the rights of children and their needs.

Since many children's homes in Sri Lanka are funded by donations from the public, there is an urgent need for open debate to convince the public donors of the relative and absolute reality of how their funds should be utilized by the children's homes. Furthermore, service providers should encourage and provide access for the general public to participate (to some degree) in management to maximise the public awareness of how their funds being utilised. They should be convinced that their continuous support assists not only the initial generation of facilities but also to keep these facilities functioning. Thus, they should continuously support the home to maintain its status quo.

The public should assist social welfare organisations that run children's homes with no personal agenda, but as a social responsibility to support institutionalized children. This helps the children to achieve their full potential with upward mobility, and to integrate into society as effective, productive and fully rounded citizens where they can also contribute positively to the social and economic development of Sri Lanka.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research is funded by the Australian Government's Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships. The ideas and philosophies presented in this paper draw on the expertise of my supervisors; Prof. Janet McIntyre, Dr Helen McLaren and Dr Leonie Solomons. Insights and feedback offered by Dr Greg Collings were invaluable. The specific comments from the anonymous reviewers also helped immensely to improve the manuscript. The author would like to acknowledge their contributions.

#### REFERENCES

Ariyadasa E (2013). Systemic Approaches to Persistent Poverty and Disadvantage, *Life chances of children*

and young people in institutional care in Sri Lanka, <<http://journals.iss.org/index.php/proceedings57th/article/viewFile/2088/699>> Accessed 22 April 2014.

Basnayaka et al. (2011). *Reports of the Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE)* <<http://www.kdu.ac.lk/faulty-of-defence-and-strategic-studies/images/SCRIPT.pdf>> Accessed 30 April 2014.

Department of Census & Statistics, Sri Lanka (2010), *General Standards for the promotion of Quality of Services in Voluntary Children's Homes in Sri Lanka, Statistics Statistical Abstract 2010*. Sri Lanka.

DPCCS, (2010). *Statistical Report 2010, Department of Probation and Child Care Services*, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

International Organization for Migration, (2014). *The Global Economic Crisis and Migration: Where do we go from here?* <[http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&products\\_id=696&zenid=cooi59v396i2fe6fkecheipfj5](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=696&zenid=cooi59v396i2fe6fkecheipfj5)> Accessed 27 June 2014.

Rocella C (2007). *Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Report on Voluntary Residential Institutions for Children in Sri Lanka – Statistical Analysis*. Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment, Sri Lanka and UNICEF.

Sarantakos S (1998). *Social Research*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London.

Save the Children, (2005). *Home Truths: Children Rights in Institutional care in Sri Lanka*, Save the Children, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

UNICEF, (2012). *Education in emergencies and post-crisis transition: 2011 Programme Report* <[http://www.educationandtransition.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2011\\_SriLanka\\_EEPC\\_report.pdf](http://www.educationandtransition.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2011_SriLanka_EEPC_report.pdf)> Accessed 12 May 2014.

United Nations, (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child 44/25 of 20 November 1989*, United Nations, New York.

United Nations, (2010). *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, A/Res/64/142*. United Nations, New York.

Whyte WF Ed. (1991). *Participatory action research*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.



Whyte WF, Greenwood DJ & Lazes P (1989). *Participatory action research through practice to science in social research*, *American Behavioural Scientist*, 32(5), 513–551.

#### BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR



Eshantha Ariyadasa is currently studying for his PhD at Flinders University, South Australia. Through his research he plans to create policy proposals which address the issues of children’s rights and their needs within children’s homes in Sri Lanka. He participated in the World Conference of the International Society for the System Scientists in Vietnam in 2013. Eshantha pioneered the Sputnik International Organization to promote world peace through languages, sports and cultural education. He is the founder of Sputnik Girls’ Children’s Home in Sri Lanka.