



# BATTICALOA SRI LANKA

Road Map towards Ending Poverty  
with the support of ChildFund New Zealand

**ChildFund**

By 2026, communities in Batticaloa will enjoy improved living conditions while actively engaging in decision-making processes from a position of strength, to create an environment where children live healthy lives and achieve their full potential in education and future careers.

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# CHILD FUND'S ROAD MAP FOR BATTICALOA, SRI LANKA



The Vavunathivu Development Organisation (VDO) is the Batticaloa-based partner of ChildFund Sri Lanka. The VDO is a grassroots, community-based federation of local people who are working to improve their lives and solve problems in their community. ChildFund New Zealand has been supporting them as a Dedicated Partner since 2011. Within the district of Batticaloa, ChildFund focuses their efforts in the Division Secretariat of Manmunai West. The VDO will take the lead role in achieving the Road Map.

This plan has been developed by the community, with the goal that by 2026 the community will be well on its way to solving problems on their own. ChildFund will then ease-up on its support and move to another area where help is needed.



The following pages are a plan of what we need to achieve, together.

Any of the activities and infrastructure we describe in this Road Map will contribute to the successful achievement of the plan.

ChildFund's sponsors, Change Creators, and donors will all help to reach the goal with the community.

Talk to us at ChildFund about how you can help the people of Batticaloa get closer to achieving their dream.

Contact ChildFund New Zealand on:  
**0800 808 082**



**WE WANT A COMMUNITY WHERE HOUSEHOLDS HAVE:**

- Income security
- Food security
- Access to early childhood education and development
- A quality education
- Children have good nutrition
- Children are vaccinated
- Access to health services
- Children are safe and protected

# LIVELIHOODS

Batticaloa has an agriculture-based economy, with over 80% of people relying on crops, livestock and fishing to provide income.

Challenges facing farmers have led to food insecurity and poverty. In 2012, the Batticaloa District had the highest level of poverty in Sri Lanka.

Water scarcity is one of the leading issues facing farmers. The annual dry spell from June to September and the impact of periodic droughts mean that pastures are unproductive and livestock are vulnerable. Flooding is also common, damaging irrigation channels, and poor water management by farmers exacerbates the problem. A lack of collective action on farming and maintenance is another drawback.

Many farmers cannot afford adequate inputs such as fertiliser, seeds and tools, and access to capital is limited. Quality seeds are expensive and often unavailable, and farmers do not have the necessary skills to produce the seeds themselves. Fishermen also lack access to capital and inputs. Many people have low savings, indebtedness and poor household financial management, preventing them from accessing loans, which often have high interest rates anyway.

Farmers face difficulties in gaining access to markets for their produce due to poor networking, transport challenges, and weak bargaining power. Farmers and fishermen often have to sell through middlemen, thereby limiting their profits.

Inadequate storage and preservation methods are also problematic for marketing products, and there is inadequate knowledge about how to add value to fish and agricultural products.

The lack of agricultural knowledge among farmers is a serious challenge. Farmers have limited access to modern farming information and extension services are not readily available so innovations and technological improvements are seldom seen. Farmers are reluctant to diversify from traditional crops and livestock.

Self-employment is hindered by a lack of motivation and interest, as well as insufficient marketing opportunities, capital and guidance. The self-employed often lack a proper understanding of demand and supply and are not able to seek the advice of experts.

## Who can help?

ChildFund Sri Lanka and the Vavunathivu Development Organisation have a close relationship with many stakeholders that can support these efforts. The networks, experience and knowledge of these actors is a significant asset in livelihoods development projects. There are a range of government stakeholders that cover agriculture, consumer affairs, natural resource management, marketing and entrepreneurship. There are also microfinance institutions, NGOs and farmer organisations that may provide support.

## How does this align with local plans?

Government stakeholders involved in livelihoods development have prioritised support for people engaged in agriculture, livestock, fishing and unskilled labour. Based on the agricultural context of Batticaloa, the government has proposed upgrading the community's understanding of modern agriculture as a priority action.

## What we've already achieved

- 26 Community Boards established to give people small, low-interest loans
- Over 3,000 loans distributed
- Over 650 people trained in relevant livelihood skills
- Over 99% of loans repaid so they can be revolved to other people



## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Raising awareness about agriculture development and diversification from rice paddies

**COST \$24,000**

### SOLUTION 2

Training farmers on financial management, seed production, and value addition

**COST \$95,000**

### SOLUTION 3

Provision of inputs such as fishing nets, hybrid cattle, and tools

**COST \$157,500**

### SOLUTION 4

Promotion of water storage techniques for irrigation, and creation of collective pasture lands for livestock food

**COST \$72,000**

### SOLUTION 5

Renovate minor irrigation tanks and ponds

**COST \$120,000**

### SOLUTION 6

Improve access to markets and financial services

**COST \$70,000**

### SOLUTION 7

Strengthening farmer organisations and developing capacity of livestock stakeholders

**COST \$27,000**

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$565,500**  
over 10 years

# COMMUNITY CAPACITY



Community capacity refers to the commitment, skills and resources of people to address serious issues and to seize opportunities for the benefit of the community. Well-organised committees, groups, and institutions support communities support communities build their capacity. There are over 10 formal community groups in Batticaloa but few function effectively. The Vavunathivu Development Organisation is one of the well-organised structures, with membership of over 25% of local families.

The organisation has a grassroots foundation with almost 200 small groups of families actively involved. Several interventions have been conducted during the last few years by the Vavunathivu Development Organisation in order to enhance the skills of its members in the areas of leadership, governance, child-care and education.

Building community capacity is one of the most important areas of intervention in the next couple of years. These interventions should focus on supporting community leaders so that they can translate their new skills and into practice.

### Who can help?

A wide range of stakeholders will be called upon to assist with the plans.

## What we've already achieved

- 26 Community Wellbeing Committees established
- Capacity-building in leadership and governance



## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Develop long-term strategic plan for Vavunathivu Development Organisation

**COST \$5,000**

### SOLUTION 2

Capacity-building for members and management

**COST \$5,000**

### SOLUTION 3

Strengthening Community Wellbeing Committees and associated microfinance institution

**COST \$1,300**

### SOLUTION 4

Capacity-building for community leaders

**COST \$2,000**

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$13,300**  
over 10 years

# WATER & SANITATION



Only 25% of the 8,700 families living in Batticaloa have access to adequate clean water.

Most access is via piped water, tube wells, common dug wells and channel water. Only about 15% of wells are protected, ensuring that the water is not contaminated. This low level of access to clean water puts the majority of people in Batticaloa at risk of waterborne illnesses, and means collecting water is often arduous, particularly for women and girls.

The majority of families also don't have safe sanitation facilities, putting them at further risk of waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea.

## Who can help?

The National Water Supply and Drainage Board is the government institute working on improving access to quality and safe water facilities. The government Medical Officer of Health is responsible for providing health education and technical guidance for construction of sanitary toilets.

## How does this align with local plans?

The government's vision for the water sector is to provide access to safe drinking water for all citizens by 2020, with a particular emphasis on increasing the quality of service. This plan is aiming at facilitating the national plan through providing assistance to establish piped water systems at the household level. Although there is no finalised national policy on sanitation, the construction of water-sealed toilets and provision of health education will minimise the risks of health issues in Batticaloa.

## What we've already achieved

- The government has recognised the seriousness of sanitation access and has begun constructing over 200 toilets. ChildFund Sri Lanka has not prioritised water and sanitation to date.



## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Establish or extend piped water systems for 2000 households

**COST \$100,000**

### SOLUTION 2

Advocate to National Water Supply and Drainage Board for improved water supply

**COST \$10,000**

### SOLUTION 3

Educate community about safe hygiene and sanitation practices

**COST \$20,000**

### SOLUTION 4

Build safe sanitation facilities for 2000 families

**COST 400,000** (200 per household)

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$530,000**  
over 10 years

# EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Starting from birth and continuing up to age five, Early Childhood Development (ECD) is the most vital development phase of a person's life.

Research shows that up to 85% of brain development takes place within this period, and a child's social and emotional development during this time has a large impact on their future social functioning<sup>1</sup>. In Batticaloa, most young children do not have an ideal home environment that provides them with age-appropriate stimulation for development. While most homes lack suitable play materials, parents also lack the ability to identify other human and material resources that could be used to stimulate learning. Communication between children and adults is poor. Moreover, many parents are forced to travel out of their villages for work, leaving their children with grandparents, older siblings or caregivers. This often compromises the quality of care these young children receive and may lead to irregular attendance in preschool.

Early childhood education centres, or preschools, are a great place for children to develop skills and for parents to be made aware of age-appropriate child development and positive discipline. There are 37 centres in Batticaloa but 17 are based in temporary shelters such as sheds. The quality of the education is low due to a variety of reasons, including inadequate infrastructure and play equipment, and a lack of electricity, water and sanitation facilities. Batticaloa has a shortage of professionally-qualified ECD teachers. Teachers do not always receive regular remuneration so have little incentive to pursue qualifications. Modern teaching methods and materials are not available in most centres.

## Who can help?

ChildFund Sri Lanka and the Vavunathivu Development Organisation will work with the ECD officers at the Divisional Secretariat Office, as well as the Preschool Education Bureau and the Children's Secretariat.

## How does this align with local plans?

The current plan is closely aligned with the strategic directions of the Children's Secretariat, the national institute working in the ECD sector. ECD officials appointed at the Divisional Secretariat operationalise national plans at the community level.

The Road Map is aligned with 'Seneha Thataka' – a home-based ECD programme that relates to children's immediate environment and household chores. Awareness programmes for parents, public officials and youth groups are conducted under this programme.

'Nenandeevani' is a programme designed to update the knowledge and skills of preschool teachers. This programme is implemented at the Divisional Secretariat level and is also aligned with the Road Map.

## What we've already achieved

- 1,078 students attend early childhood education centres
- 37 centres exist, with 64 teachers
- An ECD officer has been appointed by the government to the Divisional Secretariat office
- 25 centres participated in training programmes on child-friendly teaching methodologies
- Renovation of ECD centres and providing teaching and learning materials
- 850 parents trained on importance of early childhood education
- 330 homes developed as child-friendly homes

## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Improve infrastructure and form Parent-Teacher Associations

**COST \$620,965**

### SOLUTION 2

Train 850 parents on home-based early childhood education

**COST \$110,500** (\$130 per parent)

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$731,465**  
over 10 years



<sup>1</sup> Attygalle, Randima. 'Early Childhood Development Standards For Sri Lankan Children'. The Island 2013. Web. 11 Dec. 2015.

# EDUCATION & LIFE SKILLS

The education statistics in Batticaloa paint a bleak picture. Nearly 15% of primary and secondary school students lack basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Of 528 students who sat for the grade 5 scholarship exam in 2013, only 5 passed. The secondary school leaving pass rate in the same year was a mere 43%. Absenteeism is consistently high and there are a considerable number of school dropouts, with almost half of students leaving school before grade 11.

Batticaloa has a shortage of trained primary school teachers and the workloads of existing teachers are too heavy to adequately attend to children needing remedial help. There is a dearth of teachers for many subjects and it is common for arts graduates to teach maths, for example. Lack of classroom separations; overcrowded classrooms; insufficient facilities such as desks, chairs and IT equipment; and inadequate child-friendly learning materials are serious challenges. Schools offer few opportunities for arts and sports.

Given the absence of role models who have passed exams and developed successful careers, students lack motivation to work hard and pursue their education. Few parents are able to help children with their studies because of their own limited literacy.

Irregular attendance is extremely common due to illness, the long distance to schools, and challenges on the way such as flooding and elephant attacks. Girls are often required to stay home to carry out domestic duties or face early marriage, and boys are encouraged to help with agricultural activities, take over the family livelihood or obtain paid work. Religious festivals and traditional practices can keep both sexes home from school. Economic constraints can prevent school attendance due to the inability to pay fees or buy school meals, materials and uniforms.

## Who can help?

ChildFund Sri Lanka and the Vavunathivu Development Organisation have a very close relationship with local education authorities and schools. A teacher training programme implemented in primary schools by ChildFund involved the training of 'master' teachers, who are able to share their learnings with other teachers.

They are an important resource as they can develop the capacity of their peers.

Other development actors who may assist with the Road Map include other NGOs in Batticaloa, School Development Societies and the International Reading Association.

## How does this align with local plans?

One of the key priorities of the Ministry of Education in the Eastern Province is to improve the education performance of primary school children. To achieve this target, the Ministry will conduct programmes targeting poorly performing children and will develop teacher capacity.

The National Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education are changing the primary curriculum to decrease the amount of desk work undertaken by children and improve play activities, while also making the school environment more child-friendly.

## What we've already achieved

- Provision of books, pens and pencils, and shoes to school children
- Child resource centres and 10 child clubs operating to improve children's education
- Provision of supplementary classes, language classes, and educational seminars
- Building parental awareness on children's education
- Child club activities, life-skill trainings, and art training
- Repairs of school buildings and furniture
- 60 teachers trained under ATLAS (Active Teaching and Learning Approaches in Schools Project)
- Teacher trainings and payments to volunteer teachers



## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Improving school infrastructure, promote child-centred education, and encourage teacher-parent relationships

**COST \$478,500**

### SOLUTION 2

Promoting child-friendly homes and conducting alcohol prevention programmes

**COST \$520,500**

### SOLUTION 3

Encourage child-led projects and societies, and create IT and language centres

**COST \$150,000**

### SOLUTION 4

Support children needing remedial attention for literacy and numeracy and promote peer education

**COST \$585,000**

### SOLUTION 5

Advocate to provincial education authorities

**COST \$20,000**

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$1,754,000**  
over 10 years



# VOCATIONAL SKILLS OF YOUTH

Youth unemployment is a serious issue in Batticaloa. Few youth have access to vocational training opportunities that interest them, and career guidance is limited.

Youth lack the financial and technical support needed for livelihood initiatives or entrepreneurship. Most vocational training courses are conducted in towns and many youth cannot afford the associated travel costs. The opportunity cost of long-term study is also a deterrent as they could be earning income for their family. A combination of poverty, inadequate education for formal employment, and the social stigma of traditional work such as agriculture and fishing is leading increasing numbers of youth to migrate abroad. Unskilled labour migration has many inherent safety risks and poor conditions associated with it. Girls, in particular, experience a lack of employment opportunities and vocational training options in Batticaloa, but are even more vulnerable to the risks of migrant labour.

The absence of recreational activities in the rural setting and the influence of media are believed to be some of the factors that lead youth towards alcoholism and drug abuse. Apart from adversely affecting their employability, these social issues have a devastating impact on their families.

## Who can help?

Vocational training services are offered through both state and non-state mechanisms in Batticaloa, with the major role conducted by the Vocational Training Authority and the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority. Trained career guidance officials are available through these two actors. The National Youth Services Council and the District Secretariat could also assist.

The Zonal Education Offices appointed career guidance officers in 2011 who are expected to visit schools regularly and help students prepare for their exams, select optional subjects based on their aptitudes, and to raise awareness on career and vocational training opportunities. The career guidance services are primarily located in Batticaloa town, with limited facilities available.

## How does this align with local plans?

The Vocational Training Authority was established in 1995 to make vocational training more accessible to rural youth and socio-economically disadvantaged communities. The Road Map is aligned with this goal. The proposed interventions are also very closely aligned with the National Youth Development Plans and will be implemented jointly with relevant stakeholders.

## What we've already achieved

- 8 career guidance centres established with job information for youth
- Vocational training services offered to youth who drop out of school
- Providing livelihood and employment skills to youth as they complete school



## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Conduct job market survey and assess training environment

**COST \$2,175**

### SOLUTION 2

Support self-employment initiatives

**COST \$10,150**

### SOLUTION 3

Support vocational training opportunities for youth

**COST \$294,725**

### SOLUTION 4

National advocacy in training sector and advocacy with the Foreign Employment Bureau

**COST \$14,500**

### SOLUTION 5

Advocacy for youth and training youth and their communities in bargaining skills

**COST \$29,000**

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$1,655,550**  
over 10 years

# HEALTH

## There is a high prevalence of malnutrition among young children in Batticaloa.

Over 27% of children under five years are underweight and the rate of children with Severe Acute Malnutrition is double the national rate. Children with malnutrition are more likely to suffer from a range of diseases and it can affect their normal growth and development. Many young girls and expectant mothers in Batticaloa also suffer from problems relating to low weight.

Most parents are unaware of children's nutritional needs, such as the importance of milk, eggs and green leaves, and the fundamentals of preparing nutritious meals. They are often guided by food norms and taboos which can be detrimental to the nutrition of children, as well as new mothers. The limited adoption of hygienic practices such as washing hands and boiling water for drinking exacerbates the problem by aiding the spread of disease. Children often don't receive proper nutrition when they are sick, which increases the severity of disease.

Malnutrition is also related to poverty, as a lack of money constrains dietary diversity and quantity. People are often left with no choice but to feed their children rice and fish as complementary foods are not affordable. Fruit and vegetable consumption is therefore low. Home-gardening is not always viable because of natural disasters, such as floods and drought, cause frequent crop damage.

Poor health services for mums and children is another factor that affects child nutrition in Batticaloa. The rural population faces transport problems and bottlenecks for accessing services. Cultural differences also contribute, with the Tamil-speaking community of Manmunai West serviced by a Sinhala-speaking Public Health Midwife.

## Who can help?

The district Ministry of Health office is responsible for providing essential health services through clinics established at the field level and at the domiciliary level. Services including nutrition and family planning, school health services, health education and health promotion. Public Health Midwives and Public Health Inspectors from the office can help ChildFund achieve health goals. ChildFund and the Vavunathivu Development Organisation have already implemented a number of programmes to improve the quality of health education.

## How does this align with local plans?

This is closely aligned with the strategic direction of the Ministry of Health.

## What we've already achieved

- Home gardens established and families training in gardening and water management
- Milking cows supplied to families
- Cattle houses established and families training on effective cattle rearing
- Parental-awareness programs about child nutrition
- Nutrition rehabilitation program for malnourished children



## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Nutrition education for more parents and caregivers  
**COST \$292,220**

### SOLUTION 2

More support for home-gardening to promote household food production  
**COST \$255,692**

### SOLUTION 3

Working with government actors to advocate for child nutrition and working with the community to make them aware of how to access existing services  
**COST \$182,638**

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$730,550**  
over 10 years

# SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH)



Early marriage and teenage pregnancy are key concerns in Batticaloa.

The Family Health Bureau Report 2009 indicates that the rate of teen pregnancy in Batticaloa district is around 12.7%, which is the second highest in Sri Lanka. The rate of teenage pregnancy is highest among females who have not completed schooling.

Youth need accurate, comprehensive, and age-appropriate sexual health information and services to inform them about sexually transmitted illnesses and keep them safe. In Batticaloa, sexual and reproductive health issues are not reported or openly discussed, and unsafe abortion, commercial sex work and sexual abuse are increasing. Youth have little knowledge about internet safety. Schools and community mechanisms do not provide sexual health information and there are no youth-friendly health services that can address these issues. Knowledge on child protection, human rights and how to address sexual violence is also very low in the community.

## Who can help?

The Ministry of Health, schools, police, family planning associations, and the National Youth Services Council will be the primary partners.

## How does this align with local plans?

The proposed interventions are aligned with the objectives of the National Strategic Plan for Adolescent Health. There are few interventions currently occurring for the sexual and reproductive empowerment of youth, but the Ministry of Health regularly conducts awareness sessions on teenage pregnancy and early marriages.

## What we've already achieved

- This issue has not previously been prioritised in Batticaloa so little has been achieved so far.

## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Situational analysis to determine the best way to address sexual and reproductive health

**COST \$2,175**

### SOLUTION 2

Training youth about sexual and reproductive health

**COST \$50,967**

### SOLUTION 3

Advocacy for youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services

**COST \$17,400**

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$70,542**  
over 10 years

# CHILD PROTECTION



Statistical information on child abuse and neglect in Batticaloa is not available since the majority of cases go unreported.

However, community consultations suggest many children are exposed to neglect and abuse. There is also a high prevalence of child labour and exploitation protection officers report that they respond to 5-8 cases of sexual abuse each month.

In Batticaloa, village community-based child protection committees were formed and supported by Save the Children. Presently these committees are not functioning. Overall, there is a limited number of child protection programs as there are few NGOs working in the area of child protection.

## Who can help?

The Department of Probation and Child Care has the primary responsibility for investigating cases of child abuse or neglect, providing legal assistance, and supporting schools in child protection. The National Child Protection Authority also conducts programmes to raise community awareness on child rights and protection through Child Rights Promoting Officers, and operates a nationwide child helpline. Other NGOs and church-based organisations may also be able to provide assistance.

## How does this align with local plans?

This aligns well with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs plans to build the capacity of child protection officers and limit children living in institutions. The National Child Protection Authority is working towards internet safety and reducing corporal punishment in schools. The government is looking to strengthen community-based child-protection mechanisms and improve case management systems.

## What we've already achieved

- Child-protection training for staff
- Child-protection training in 11 schools



## What still needs to be done

### SOLUTION 1

Strengthening the child-protection system, including referrals and response, through capacity-building for children, families and stakeholders

**COST \$48,384**

### SOLUTION 2

Advocacy around corporal punishment in schools, internet safety, and child marriage

**COST \$64,512**

### SOLUTION 3

Support vulnerable families with children at risk of abuse or neglect

**COST \$48,384**

### SOLUTION 4

Develop a sustainable community-based mechanism for addressing child protection

**COST \$14,400**

TOTAL COST OF WHAT'S REQUIRED

**NZ\$175,680**  
over 10 years

# REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY VISION

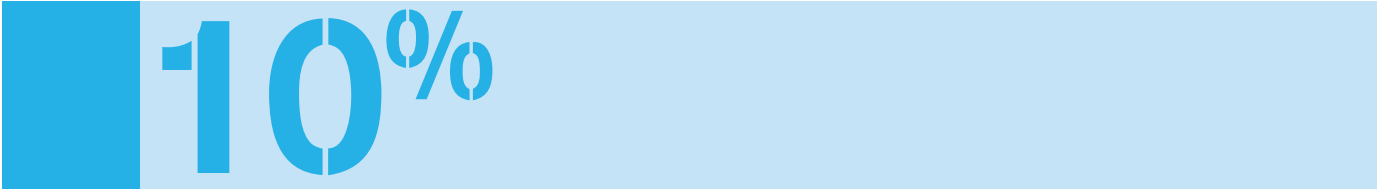
In 2016, here's where we're at...

## LIVELIHOODS



59%

## WATER & SANITATION



10%

## EDUCATION



11%

## HEALTH



49%

## CHILD PROTECTION



2%