

SRI LANKA

Creating a Child- Friendly School and enhancing Child: Centered English Language Classrooms

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1. Introduction

Sri Lanka is widely considered as a Country which has the highest literacy rate among the South Asian countries for many years. The government of Sri Lanka after the freedom from the British Colonization has tried to develop many Educational Reforms which Emphasized “Quality Education” for numerous years. Further the government of Sri Lanka ratified the Child Right Convention on the 12th of July, 1991. Since then it has taken measures to enhance the child rights in the country under many Ministries and Departments.

The National Child Right Protection Authority(NCPA) was established in 1998 and it aims to ensure the psychosocial well-being of the children who become victims of all forms of Child abuse and children those who are in need of care and protection. Furthermore, the NCPA has also introduced a special telephone connection 1929 for the children known as “Child Line” to give information on child abuse and harassment in order to provide protection and treatment for those who become victims of such abuses. The departments of Child protection and Child Care services as well as the Child Burro Authority of Sri Lanka also play a major role for the Protection, Provision and Participation of children to make physically, mentally, socially and emotionally balanced personalities.

Sri Lankan education system has derived from the British Colonial System. Yet with the ratification of CRC some prominent changes occurred in the field of education in order to reach the global standards. In Sri Lanka the formal compulsory education takes place for the children between 5- 16 enhancing basic child rights to the maximum. The main concepts of CRC known as 3P's: Provision (access to food, health care, education, and social security), Protection (from maltreatment, abuse, neglect & all forms of

exploitation) and Participation (having the right to act and to be involved in decision making) are highly applied in the education system of Sri Lanka to enhance the rights of the child.

In Sri Lanka, education is compulsory for the children from age 5 to 16. The free education for all from kindergarten to the completion of the basic degree, free text books, free uniforms and free meals for some selected schools where there is a student population less than 100 are provided by the government to uplift the equality of education and to encourage the students' attendance of the students in poor socio economic back grounds..

The NIE (National Institute of Education) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education has also introduced a fruitful teaching learning approach with the aim of establishing a more child centered teaching learning environment that ensures the maximum participation of the learners in the primary Education.

The primary education which lasts for 5-6 years plays a major role in the education system of Sri Lanka. It plays an essential role in the life of an individual because most of the mental processes occur during this age. The small children are always active, playful and imaginative and they should have opportunities for that. Therefore the syllabus introduced for the primary students should be fascinated with lots of activities. The educationists have introduced number of activities for each and every lesson to give the concepts in an attractive manner, for the little minds. Yet the Grade 5 scholarship examination can be considered as an important milestone in the Primary education. The students who pass grade 5 scholarships in the rural or urban areas where they have poor economic back grounds are given opportunities to enter the popular schools in Sri Lanka together with some scholarship aid till they finish the secondary education. Even though we consider the concept of the scholarship examination is valuable one, in the practical condition some issues are arising related to the violation of child rights and equal education opportunities among the little ones.

The primary curriculum consists of mother tongue, mathematics, environmental studies, aesthetic subjects, life competencies, Religion, and English Language. Activity based oral English is taught in grade 1-2. Normally all these subjects are taught by the class teachers. From Grade 3 onwards, specially trained teachers are assigned to teach English Language. The Formal English language is taught from grade 3 onwards. Even though, in grade 5 scholarship examination only Mathematic and Mother tongue proficiency is tested. Therefore the emphasis and priority is given to those two subjects in the teaching learning process in grade 5 where as a very little attention is given to English language.

But in the secondary layer, in grade 6, English is considered as a compulsory subject so that the proficiency level at the very beginning of grade 6 is very low due to the negligence of the subject in the last stage of primary layer in grade 5, due to the scholarship examination. The students who come from the English speaking families will only find it easy to cope up with the grade 6 text books.

Therefore in long term consideration there is a current need to teach English in a productive and effective way at the primary Layer. In addition there has to be a short

term methodology to bridge the gap between grades 5 to grade 6 student's English proficiency. To achieve this goal, introducing a methodology to teach English at Grade 6 students in a Child Friendly School concept is considered more suitable and appropriate in this study.

In order to create a more child friendly education system, the Ministry of Education has introduced "Child Friendly Schools" Concept in the year 2002 under UNICEF to Wayamba Province of Sri Lanka. Since then several workshops and seminars were conducted by the Ministry of Education to expand this novel concept to all the other provinces in the Island. Providing children to access the equal Educational opportunities, Gender equity, quality Education, Nutrition and Health Protection, and introducing Disaster management system with the involvement and Participation of entire school community to create a better productive learning environment is given prominence in the "Child Friendly School "concept".

Therefore the main aim of our study is to introduce the Child friendly School concept in selected two schools and through it, to introduce new teaching learning process of English in an effective way and enhance the students in Provision, Protection and Participation of CRC to create a better and desirable Teaching and Learning Atmosphere in the respective schools.

2. Frame of Reference

Sri Lanka is a country which provides the compulsory Education to all the Children aged between 5 to 16. Numerous steps are taken to introduce and implement fruitful teaching Learning Processes all over the Island. Provision of updated student learning environment is also in process. Provision of Infrastructure facilities as well as other physical resources is also in process. Unfortunately in practical aspects and considering the results and the outcomes, the expected levels are not achieved due to various reasons.

Though the child centered education is being introduced through various means, implementation of it is not achieved up to the level of the expectations of the system. Most of the teachers in the island still compel to carry out their teaching process in a traditional manner that is to follow the conventional and stereotypical top down approach due to many reasons. There is a tendency for the teachers to carry out old traditional methods because most of them are not willing to update their knowledge skills, and methodologies under any circumstances. The negative attitudes of teachers towards new methodologies have become the main reason in most of the occasions. This has become a negative outlook in the field of education.

The lack of motivation of teachers, lack of workshops and seminars to introduce new methodologies, teaching techniques and strategies' to face the global standards, less adaptation and willingness to face new opportunities and challenges are some of the reasons for the students to get unequal educational Opportunities.

In their teaching, normally the teachers prepare the visual aids and use the other methods in the classroom. But in Sri Lanka, most of the classes are overcrowded. There

are 60 or more than 60 students in a class. Therefore normally the space of the classroom is not sufficient for the number of students. It creates lots of problems for the teachers while carrying out the assigned tasks. So it is always doubtful whether the students gain the relevant concepts correctly which the teacher plans to give them or the teachers reach the expected outcomes.

Moreover, Sri Lankan education system is an examination- oriented one. It is not Life oriented. Teachers are bounded by their duty to complete a prescribed syllabus within a given period of time. So there is a great pressure on the shoulders of the teachers as well. However, under such circumstances, there is less opportunities to build up a good relationship and a rapport among the teachers and the students. At the same time there is very less opportunities for the students to be creative and innovative in their learning process. Even though the schools have introduced many extracurricular activities' such as sports and games , clubs and societies, the students as well as parents hesitate their children to participate in those activities and spend time in them as they think allocating time only for education bring them better result in their examinations. On the other hand considering almost all the examinations in Sri Lanka based on quantitative measurement rather than qualitative measurements. Therefore student like machines used to by heart all the subject matters with great efforts and ultimately ended up in stress, tension and this may leads to suicides among the young ones due to the great pressure they get from parents , teachers and the society.

Especially in grade 5, the teachers, students and parents target the children to pass the scholarship examination. Therefore the students are only taught the needed subjects to face the examination. They obviously neglect English Language because it is not tested in the scholarship examination. Moreover the play and leisure time of the little ones (especially grade 5 students) are almost banned in the whole country. The little ones not only have to work like machines in the school but also at home and in their private tuition classes with the great push made by the parents and adults. Most of the grade 5 classes in the whole Island pay more attention for their children to pass the scholarship examination while they are not encouraged to do any extracurricular activities. As a result Grade 5 students undergo a great stress and tension to face the examination successfully in order to make their parents and teachers happy. They have to sacrifices their leisure time and play time for the sake of their adult's happiness and compel to deal with books and notes on Mathematic and Sinhala language rather than any toys or any other play equipment.

In order to minimize the above mentioned drawbacks and to motivate the teachers as well as the students, we as the Change Agents of batch 20, planned to introduce the project 'Creating a child friendly School and enhancing child centered English language Classrooms' by launching a Child friendly School while enhancing its dimensions. This will enable the quality education in the schools where the students are encouraged to learn by doing, explore and learn, do group work with caring and sharing, build up team spirit, improve leadership qualities while engaging in decision making processes in school activities, and learning in a stress-free environment. Under quality education process they will also enable the gender equity, and learn sustainable

living conditions. In addition providing good health practices and nutritional values through wide school community participation under “Child Friendly School” culture of the two selected schools namely Mahamaya Girls College Kandy and Siddhartha College Ampitiya.

The proposed project is based on the concepts of participation, Protection and the provision in the 3p’s. The article 17, Access to appropriate information (part a and part d), the article 28 the right to education (part 1 cd) and part 3) and the article 29, the aim of education (part 192) in the child right convention were taken into consideration while planning the project. However, this project will not only provide interesting teaching learning experiences and face new opportunities and challenges, but also it will provides opportunities for students and teachers to share their knowledge with the other members in a Child Friendly school.

3. Purpose

The purposes of this project are

1. To convert the school in to a more child friendly and a child centered which enables maximum participation of the students with protection and provision.
2. To motivate the teachers and the students to use English Language lessons and activities effectively and innovatively in their child centered teaching learning process in a Child Friendly School culture.

4. Methodology

The main purpose of the project is to create a child friendly school and enhance child centered English language teaching learning process using an effective and innovative activity based approach. To achieve this goal following activities were carried out from the first week of July 2014 to the end of August 2015.

4.1- Meeting with Authority and Stake holders

The authority of this project is the Provincial Director of Education Central Province, The Zonal Director of Education Kandy, and The Provincial Coordinator of English Central Province. The Principal of Mahamaya Girls College Kandy and Siddhartha College, Deputy principals of both schools, the Sectional Heads of the two selected schools, the Class teachers, English teachers, Subject teachers, the students, the parents, Members of the School Development Societies, Members of the Old Pupils Associations and the well-wishes are the stake holders.

At first, the Change Agents of batch 20 made a discussion with the Central Provincial Director of Education, Kandy Zonal Director of Education, and the Provincial Coordinator English in order to share the experience we had in the University of Lund

and a brief introduction on the course content on ‘Child rights Classroom and school Management’. We got the permission to carry out the project in two schools. The Discussion was very successful and the Provincial Director has given his approval to implement the project and promised to give his fullest cooperation and support in any future activities if needed. Further they needed us to give a report time to time to see outcome of the project and finally agreed to spread this project in the zone if they see the development and the success of it.

Next was to get the permission from the principals of the two schools. Since our change Agent of batch 20 Mrs. Indra Vithanachchi is the principal of Mahamaya Girls’ college has already agreed to implement the project in the primary section, of her school, we proceeded to Siddhartha College Ampitiya to get permission. After the successful discussion we had together with the positive feedback of Siddhartha College, the decisions were made to launch the projects in the two schools.

The next was to obtain the required resources. We had a meeting with the Principal, deputy principals, Sectional heads, the teachers of English, School Prefects and the officials of the Old Girls’ Association of Mahamaya Girls ‘College Kandy about the project we hope to implement in the both schools and the Old Girls Association of Mahamaya Girls ‘College agreed to supply all the necessary resources to implement the project as they were highly impressed with the activities we hope to launch in the both schools. They agreed to supply the necessary stationary as well as the other required resources from their OGA fund.

We found the necessity of a committee for the fruitful functioning of the program me. Therefore a committee consisting the Principal, Deputy Principals, the Sectional heads, teachers of English, Class teachers, class monitors. School prefects and members of the Past Pupils Association and 20 members of a team were established in both schools.

4.2- Obtaining the teacher’s attitudes

Teachers play an important role in the classroom. Therefore before implementing the project it was needed to identify the attitudes of the teachers regarding student centered learning process in a Child Friendly School Culture. A prepared questionnaire was given to the teachers of the primary section of the two schools to find out their attitudes regarding the above matter. (Annex 1)

4.3-Diognostic test to identify the student’s proficiency level in Language Skills

The paper was designed according to a philosophical method to test all the language skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. A test was conducted in all grade 6 students of the both school for 90 minutes. A demonstration test was conducted in order to give an idea for the teachers of both schools by the Change Agents on how to test Speaking skills because speaking is not tested in any national examina-



Diagnostic test done at Ampitiya Siddhartha College

tions of Sri Lanka. Marking Criteria was introduced clearly to the teachers of the both schools and Marking was done methodically. Annex 3 Diagnostic paper

4.4- Obtaining suggestions from School Community.

The very low marks obtained by the students of both school after the diagnostic test revealed the necessity of activities to develop all the language skills of the both schools. There were numerous suggestions from the Principals, Teachers, Students, Parents, and the members of Past Pupil Associations.

- Awareness raising programs on Child Rights & Child Friendly School Concept
- More knowledge on CRC
- English Language improvement Activities.
- Implementing English Activity Rooms.
- Forming Kiddies English Library
- Holding English Day in Primary section separately.
- Introduction of Visual Aids

4.5- Awareness programmes and consultative workshops.

The main objective of these was to make the teachers aware of Child Friendly School Concept and student centered learning process of English Language. As a requirement to achieve the above task, a workshop on "Child Rights" and "Child Friendly School" was held to the staff of both schools.

Teachers are the key persons in the implementation of the above introduced project. Therefore they should at least have the basic concepts of CRC principles. So that they can practice it during their classroom activities to promote more child friendly learning environment in their classrooms. The Provincial Coordinator of English to the Central province helped the change agents to conduct our first workshop at the Education Centre Ampitiya, not only for the teachers of English of the both selected school but also the teachers of other 10 schools in the province. The workshop was designed totally according to the activities introduced by the Mentors of the Lund



Images Teacher Training workshops on CRC

University while we were studying in Sweden. The CRC concepts were given through Dramas and all the interactive activities. More Group and pair work were introduced. The lessons we gained related to Leadership at the Lund University was highly effective to conduct this workshop and change agents were able to share the experience and Knowledge gained from the University of Lund to its maximum.

During the Visit of the Mentor for Sri Lankan Mrs. Agneta Wangdahi for batch 19 , we the batch 20 were able to organize a discussion on” Child Rights “for the staff of Mahamaya Girls’ College Primary, During December 2014. Mrs. Agneta was able to introduce 3 Ps in a very effective way and as a result the staff members were able to express their ideas and views on Sri Lankan situation very openly on Child rights and the discussion was very fruitful for the participants to get a thorough knowledge on CRC and how to change their attitude and develop positive teaching Learning atmosphere in their classrooms. Further the friendly discussion made by the Mentor with the school prefects of Mahamaya Girls’ College was indeed and “Eye-Opener“ for the students



Images; Workshop on introducing a Child Friendly School.



Image; Awareness program for the teachers and Students of Siddhartha College

By observing the very effective delivery of our Mentor Mrs. Agneta at Mahamaya Girls. College, the change agent was able to conduct a similar discussion at Ampitiya Siddhartha College for their staff taking all the important facts delivered by Mrs. Agneta as a model.

There were two workshops conducted on “What is a Child friendly School” in the two schools including the representative of the entire school community. Six dimensions of the “Child friendly School” concept was introduced through interesting activities by the change agents. Dimensions were Rights based and productively inclusive / Gender responsive /Promoting quality learning outcomes relevant to child’s needs for the knowledge and skills /Health safe and proactive of children/Child Friendly system policies, practices and regulations.

Further the practical ideas we gained at the Lund University was bought out for the effective delivery of the workshop. Moreover it was emphasized that a wide knowledge of CRC helps the teachers to practice the Rights of the child in the classroom while they are engaging in the above type of workshops.

Similarly during our Mentor Agneta’s Final visit, the meeting held at Siddhartha College for the Principal and the staff and the students was indeed very effective for further implementation of the project. The interactive session has led to solve many issues with the principal, staff and student enhancing CRC based activities in the school created more CFS concepts in the school.

4.6- Launching the program me - *Language Camps*

After conducting the awareness programmes and the consultative workshops, the three Change Agents discussed with the Principals, Sectional Heads and the teachers of English, regarding the alternations to be made in their time tables to get the help of the English teachers to conduct English Language camps to improve all the language skills. In order to create a child friendly atmosphere, the students were taken out to the playground of the school to engage in activities enjoyably and in a stress-free environment. The following activities were done in the language camp using English Language.

Songs and Rhymes/Action songs /Story telling/ video telling/Language games. (Running Dictation/ fruit salad game/ onion circle/Chinese whispers/ Image theatre/



Image; Language camp at Siddhartha and Mahamaya Girls' College

) /Role plays and Mini dramas /Writing posters / invitation/ Greeting cards/Making things e.g. Birthday cards/dolls/ kites/ Birthday Card/Demonstrations e.g. How to make a fruit salad/ sandwich

After the first language camp there was a discussion session on feed backs and the priority was given to the student to decide what they would like to include in the future camps. The students requested to conduct competitions such as solo singing, group singing, drama and poster making. The change agents were highly enthusiastic to adapt the language camp activities according to the decisions and requests made by students and allowing them for their maximum Participation in future activities.

The next Language camps were decided according to decisions and suggestions made by students and were conducted by the participation of the teachers of the respective schools.

4.7- Modal Lessons

Modal lessons were done twice in every month in both schools to cater to all the learner styles namely Auditory, visual, logical, mucical, linguistic, and Kinesthetic learners. Different teching techniques and strategies were demonstrated in classrooms. Adaptation of test books by adding, replacing, removing, and amending the prevailing text book materials were demonstrated in the lessons. How to use Visual Aids and the whiteboard in a effective way is also demonstrated in the modal lessons. More pair and group work was introduced in every lesson to take the maximum.student participation. Using of Supplementary materials effectively on lessons also was demonstarted. Teachers as well as the students were given opportunity to give feed backs after every lessons. The suggesions were taken into discussion and consideration.

By this model lessons the change agent's expectation was to encourage the teachers to deviate from traditional teaching methods but share some ideas to conduct more child –Centred lessons in a Child friendly atmosphere.



Image;Child Centred Modal lesson at Mahamaya Girls College

4.8- Forming English Activity Rooms

Permissions were taken to take a separate classroom for the English Activity room by the School development Society of the both schools. The Old Girls Association of Mahamaya Girls College have taken steps to color wash the Activity room using the OGA Fund. The equipment also was provided with them according to the request made by students. While implementing the project we encountered a major problem due to lack of resources available at Siddhartha College. That is to find an effective way to provide equal opportunities for students at Siddhartha College. Since they do not have a strong Old Pupil Association and Funds like in Mahamaya, we found it difficult to start an Activity room. As a result the three agents forward this issue to the Project team of Mahamaya Girls College. We are very pleased to inform the Prefect board and the OGA of Mahamaya College agreed to act as a Foster School for Siddhartha college



Images; Activity room at Mahamaya Girls' College



Image: Wall paintings of Siddhartha College Ampitiya

for providing all the necessary resources not only to build the Activity room but also for the other funds for all the project work.

English Activity Rooms were designed with the full participation of students. The students were given opportunities to decide what sort of materials and visuals they like to demonstrate and most of them were designed and painted by the students. Teachers were also given opportunity to guide the students and add their suggested displays.

4.9- Wall paintings

This is another major event of our programme to bring the Child Friendly School Atmosphere in the School Premises. The two project teams of the respective schools decided to have wall displays which can reveal some of the impressive concept of CRC using attractive wall paintings. The students were given opportunities to decide to draw



Images: Wall paintings of Mahamaya College Kandy



Images; The meeting & the Discussion with the Chief Minister of the Central Province

any picture that they think to convey messages on Child Rights. They were given opportunities to select suitable drawings according to their ideas and select any place in the school premises to draw and display them. Similar to the English Activity Rooms the Mahamaya Girls College took the responsibility to provide all the necessary wall paints, brushes, sand papers, Cement etc. to Siddhartha College to finish their wall displays. Since these wall paintings were done for many days the change agents prepared a schedule to pay regular visits to both schools in order to encourage and motivate the students as well as the teachers.

4.10- Meeting the Chief Minister of Central Province

The meeting of the Chief Minister to the Central Province Mr. Sarath Ekanayaka was done during the visit of our mentor Agneta, and the Sri Lankan network and the batch 20 change agents. Getting permission to establish School Councils and expanding CFS schools in the central province was discussed as future plans. The Sri Lankan network discussed with the Chief minister to expand all the SIDA projects in the future.

4.11- Forming a Kiddies Library in Grade 6 class

To inculcate the habit on reading among children this activity was implemented in grade 6 classes of the both school. At first the challenge we faced was the lack of motivation of the class teachers to keep a space in their respective classrooms. To overcome this issue the project team members of the both school had a discussion in order to build up a small library in the respective classrooms. When the realization of the importance of the library, some class teachers agreed to leave out some unwanted furniture in the classes as well as in the corridor and supply places to maintain a small library. The Parent Teachers Association of the both schools were agreed to supply a cupboard and books for each class. The students were given opportunities to select books according to their wish. The decisions to buy different sort of books for each class was taken by the students. Their choices were given priority. The students selected children's story books.



Image; Library corner at a corridor of Siddhartha College Ampitiya

Cartoon series, coloring books puzzles and many more “Read and do activity” books for their classrooms. Change agents made a book report to be given to children and fill it when they have read any story books. This was very effective on students as they were self motivated to read constantly and the students who produced the most number of Book reports were highly appreciated.

Annex 2 – Book Report

4.12- Distribution of toolset to Child Friendly Schools

The Non formal Education Unit of the Central Province under UNICEF programme was able to distribute a tool set of visual materials to CFS schools in the Central Province. Since Batch 20 Change Agent Mr. Sidath Wipularathne is the director in charge of UNICEF was able to donate two toolset packs to the Mahamaya and Siddhartha College. Since these packs consists of alphabets. Numbers shapes and other visual materials it was very useful for the teachers to use in lessons especially with the slow learners.

4.13- First cross country Summit with the Indian Net work

During the Sri Lankan Mentor Ms. Agneta’s Final visit of Batch 20 in March 2015, the Change agents were able to organize the visit of Indian Net Work to the schools we implemented the project and to have a network meeting with the entire school community and the stake holders of the both school. Change agents from India, our Mentor Ms.Agneta,

students from 6 schools in the Central province. The Sri Lankan network including Change agents from the whole Sri Lankan Batches. Educationalists, Members of Past Pupils Associations of the schools, teachers, parents, education officers of the Central Province were the participants. The discussion was based on Child Rights on Sri Lankan and Indian schools and the experiences shared by the students in different situation. The discussion was extremely fruitful and effective due to the presence of our Mentor Agneta while she was contributing her long time Global experience on Child



Images of the visit of our Mentor Agneta & Indian Network for the 1st cross country summit

Rights, classroom and school management courses conducted at the University of Lund Sweden. Also the different perspective on different topics she dealt with was highly effective among the whole audience and it was very well revealed in the feed backs we got after the meeting. The impact was very impressive since the students and the parents of the both schools responded to the project more effectively after the meeting. The children were able to express themselves more freely and effectively after the network meeting.

This meeting helps to build a very strong and a friendly rapport among the school administration, the children and parents than earlier and to move ahead with new and future implementations of the project to a great extent.

4.14- Student Leadership in organizing school events.

In a Child Friendly School it is necessary to give opportunities for the students to take leadership and involve in decision making in school events. Since one of our Change Agent of Batch 20 Mrs. Indra Vithanachchi is a Principal of leading school which has over 4000 student body was able to change her school gradually to a “Child Friendly School”. The Annual Sports meet organized by the students of Mahamaya G. C. 2015 is a magnificent and a massive effort of the students. For the first time in the history of the school the school management has given the prefect board and the students to plan and organize the sport meet. The student decided and involved in inviting the chief guest An Olympics winner the Seri Lankan Athlete Mr. Sugath Thilakarathne to encourage the fellow students in sports and games. The students have taken the full responsibility to practice the Drill Display, Band Display and all the other important events of the sports meet. The English announcement of the event was done by grade 6 student was done for the first time to motivate them to use the target language effectively To show the brotherhood and to balance the gender equity the students were able to invite some relay teams of the neighboring schools including some Boy’s schools in Kandy to participate in the event. This event has become a role model for the other schools in Kandy to show Peace and Unity among the schools. Since the students, the principal and the staff of Siddhartha College were invited to view this event, they too have decided to give the opportunity for the students of their school to organize their



Image: The Presence of the chief guest, an Olympic Participant was decided by the students



Image; Student centered approach and maximum participation of the students in school activities (Annual Sport meet of Siddhartha College- the English Announcer of grade 6)

Annual sport meet. As a result of this attempt, the students of Ampitiya Siddhartha College have decided to do all the announcements of the sport meet to be done both in Sinhala and English Language. It was really praiseworthy to see the little ones do the announcements of a special event of the school.

5. Results

As a whole, it is a pleasure to mention that we have succeeded in achieving the two main purposes of the project. Through the interviews and the questionnaires provided to the teachers, we came across that the majority of the teachers have a positive attitude towards the newly introduced concept, which is to creating a Child Friendly School and Child Centered approaches in their teaching learning process.

Moreover, it was evident that the data collected through the interviews and the questionnaires the outcomes of the project have become a reality, because we observed that the teachers and the students work enthusiastically throughout the period towards

Child friendly School environment and a positive teaching and learning atmosphere in their real classroom setting.

As change agents, our vision was to transfer the existing school into a more Child Friendly and the English language lessons into child centered thereby establishing rights based approach which ensures maximum participation of students in decision making process of the school management. By observing the school activities and lessons, we found out that these new techniques, methods, and strategies have provided ample opportunities for the performances of the students by empowering CRC principles. The observations also proved that it has enhanced the relationship among students by providing opportunities for the students interact with the entire school community, and to learn collaboratively and cooperatively in an enjoyable manner.

Furthermore it was interesting to notice that the students were waiting eagerly until they get the next opportunity to organize school events and to join their English lessons and English

Activities. The principals and the Teachers of both school also cheerfully talked that they were able to achieve their targets easily and effectively through this new concepts and methods.

At the same time, we encounter some unexpected outcomes as well. The first one is the need of the improvement of the Teacher Training programs including broad concepts related to CRC in governmental teacher training and refresher courses.

The lack of materials and instructions in teacher training modules in Sri Lanka for English language teacher training as we have found the concept like “Language camps, forming Kiddies Libraries, and English activity rooms are there in those manuals but methodology of “How to DO them” are not included so that teachers find it difficult in implementing the ideas find in training manuals in real classroom conditions.

Therefore we are happy because we were able to raise interest and motivation of Students teachers and the entire school community to do these activities easily in a CFS environment.

6. Discussion and Reflections

The reasons compelled us to select the pilot school are as follows.

1. Mahamaya College is a well reputed Girls’ College, situated in the heart of the Kandy town and the Principal Mrs Indra Vithanachchi is one of our batch 20 change agents and she has lot of authority to change the school into a Child Friendly School.

Any high official can easily visit and monitor our project if necessary. (Being a pilot project, we wanted the higher officials to visit it). There is also a very strong old Girls’ association of the school so that we thought getting the initial funding for both school with the discussion of OGA of Mahamaya Girls’ college and fostering an under-privileged school could be done

without much difficulties. Since there is a strong Pupil teacher Association of the school we thought our target could be achieved easily. Therefore, we thought that it would be a motivation for the other schools to visit and observe the new concepts of

CFS as well and the effective lessons conducted in English Activity rooms. Even though the students of Mahamaya Girls College have exposed to English language they are not equally good at the four language skills. The careful study of the Diagnostic test revealed this.

2. The students of Siddhartha College are not equally developed when comparing to Mahamaya Girls' College. The school does not have a strong past pupils association and facilities. Therefore introducing CFS concept and enhancing child centred English language lessons in activity room seems a totally new experience to them. Moreover, being a mixed school, we felt that we can provide equal opportunities for both male and female students.

The students of Siddhartha College come from poor families and they have a less exposure to English. For them it's not so common to engage in activities related to English language learning. So we wanted to provide that experience along with the modern technology and facilities while creating a Child Friendly School Atmosphere.

Though we are satisfied with what we have done so far, we had to face some challenges while implementing the programme.

Firstly, convincing the parents of Siddhartha College towards child Friendly School concept was a challenge due to the poor economic back grounds and the uneducated parent's attitudes. At first they came out with very negative attitudes but the fostering concept brought by the OGA of Mahamaya Girls College was a very effective and a motivation for them. The teachers of both schools pay a less interest at the beginning due to the load of paper work in their classroom and specially the large number of student population in Mahamaya girls' College. While doing model lessons and conducting language camps using new techniques and visual aids we found out that the capabilities of teachers can always be improved by providing well equipped classroom situations. . Teachers also suggested including more interesting activities related to language learning because the given content and instruction in the prevailing teachers manuals are not sufficient to meet the requirements of the levels of the students. Secondly, as change agents, we have no power or authority to make our own decisions at Siddhartha College. For example, it was very difficult to summon up the Principal teachers and parents to separate a space for the English ActivityRoom and make the Child Friendly School environment in the school premises because most of the parents do not have permanent jobs and are daily paid low wage employers and they refused to come on weekdays as well as weekends to the school. So we had to convince the entire school community with the immense support they are going to get from the officials of Old Girls Association. Lack of facilities and funds were some other major problems.

Thirdly, though we are from the same district, the duties and responsibilities we have towards our own departments and institutions caused problems. So we found it difficult to find time to meet, to plan our activities and to work together all the time as all of us were busy with our own schedules. So conducting workshop and seminars and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the project was also became an issue for us.

In spite of all these challenges, the teachers and the learners of both pilot schools showed a keen interest towards this new concept of CFS and the methods of Teaching and learning under new circumstances. Due to the visit of our Mentor Ms Agneta and her awareness raising meetings and discussion has led enormously to change the attitudes of all the stake holders in implementing the project. Due to the 1st cross country Network meeting we had with the Indian network, a rapid change in student participation in school activities of the both schools to an unexpected extent. The students of the both schools and the project team members were highly enthusiastic in independent decision making processes in organizing most of the special school events of both schools. The collaborative and cooperative activities were implemented by caring and sharing the experience of children empowering their rights to the maximum. And we see a vast different in the school administration with the active participation of students and the how they are paved the venues to express their views attitudes, suggestions and contribute in decision making process in all the school activities fruitfully.

7. The Way Forward

The project has already been implemented successfully in the pilot schools, and the observations show that the project outcomes have achieved than our actual expectations.

Therefore our plan is to do a presentation about our project to an audience including the Chief Minister of the central province, Provincial Director, Zonal Directors, and English Directors, Master trainers, Principals and teachers of selected schools covering the 16 Zones in the Central Province. Thereby we intend to give an open invitation to visit and monitor our pilot schools, have discussion with the project team members and students.

We hope to conduct the teacher training workshops on CRC based school activities and child centred classroom activities to enhance effective teaching learning atmosphere in real classroom situations.

According to the plan, we hope to continue the project with the new grade 6 students of the pilot schools, and also wish to promote the effectiveness of the project through regular visits demonstration of modal lessons.

We have planned to prepare activities which cater to the different levels and different learner styles of the students, because while implementing the project we understood that there are different levels and abilities of students in the same class. Furthermore, we hope to provide opportunities for the students to prepare their own planning of activities done in the school to bring CFS environment by encouraging students to participation in decision making process in school activities. They will be given opportunities to plan organize and implement their own ideas and activities with the help of the school administrative bodies.

Not only that but also we will take actions to expand the project to the other schools in the province. While discussing the progress of the project with the teachers, we also hope to take remedial measures to overcome the drawbacks.



We have planned to collect the ideas of the students through informal interviews, thus hope to make the necessary adjustments in order to fulfil their requirements. In conclusion, we, the change agents of the 20thBatch would like to thank the SIDA and all the mentors of the Lund University for their immense contributions and support. At the same time we appreciate the motivation and the continuous support provided by our mentor Agneta in order to make our project a success. THANK YOU SIDA!!!!

8. List of References

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List of Appendix

1. The questionnaire given for the teachers.
2. My Book report
3. Diagnostic test paper

Appendix

Questionnaire

A questionnaire for The Teachers

Please tick (√) the cage if you agree with statements and if disagree put the (×) mark

1. How long have you been a teacher?
0-5 years 6- 10 years 11-20 years More than 20 years
2. The way you teach
 - i. Always I use the lecture method
 - ii. use group and pair work and guide them to innovate
 - iii. Build up the lesson trough brainstorming or discussions
 - iv. I use Different methods
3. The resources used for teaching
 - i. Only the text book
 - ii. Resources available in the classroom
 - iii. use audio/ visual aids
 - iv. Other resources.
 - v. Please Specify.....
4. Do you like to use different methods for teaching and learning process
 - i. Yes ii. No
5. Have you noticed the interest of the student for your teaching methods
 - i. Yes ii. No
6. Do you like to teach using language games ,storytelling and songs in your English lessons
 - i. Yes ii. No
7. If you use language camps and other stimulations, will it affect to make the lesson interesting?
 - i. Yes I think so ii. No idea iii. Have to check
8. Have you got any training on maintaining English activity rooms or kiddies library?
 - i. Yes ii. No
9. If you have knowledge on Child Friendly School concept, do you like to use these concepts teaching and learning process?
 - i. Yes ii. No
10. If you are provided the above facilities, how would you use them?
 - i. In the classroom
 - ii. In a separate place

Annex 2

My Book Report

The title of the book.....

Name of Author

Characters of the Story.....

Do you like this story book.....

If So Why

.....
.....

Draw a picture of the most interesting part of the story

Your name..... Class.....

Annex 3 Diagnostic Paper

DIAGNOSTIC TEST
ENGLISH LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2014 -2015
SIDA - UNIVERSITY OF LUND SWEDEN

Name :- Time - 1 hour

1) Write the words in -

Simple Letters

CAT =

BOOK =

RABBIT =

TRUNK =

GRASS =

Capital Letters

milk =

worms =

peacock =

lion =

toffees =

2) How many balls are there?

Circle the correct word.



milk - water



ice cream - tea



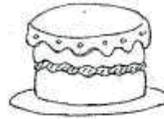
brinjals - beans



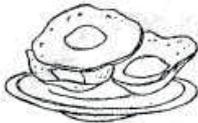
papaw - orange



carrots - pumpkin



cake - rice



hoppers - rice



apple - rice



noodles - bread



beans - carrots



cake - toffees



chocolate - cake

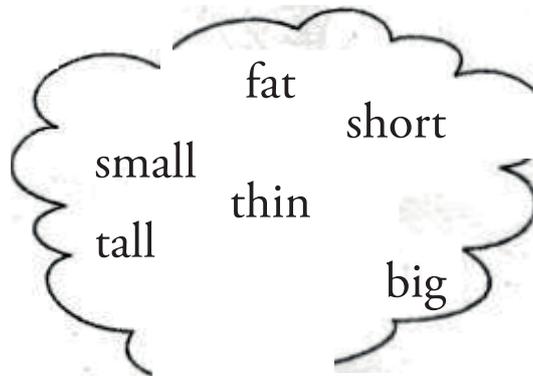
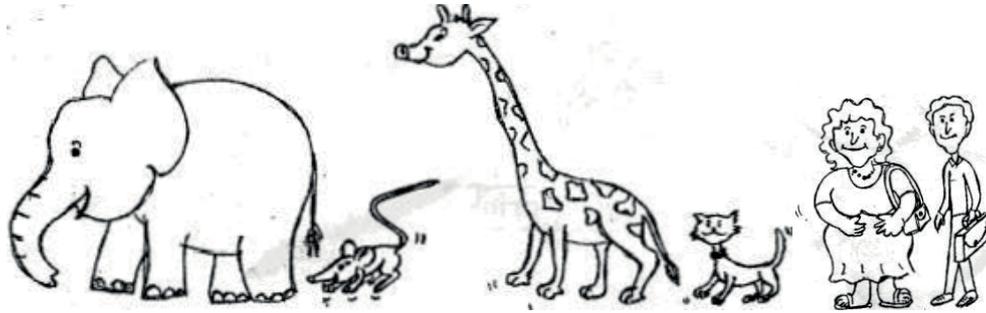


bananas - apples



tea - milk

Look and answer

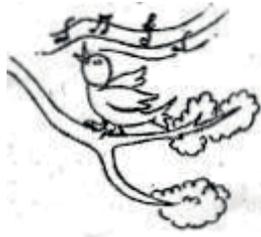


1. The elephant is
2. The rat is
3. The giraffe is
4. The cat is
5. The woman is
6. The man is

Write the opposite

7. big
8. fat -

Circle the correct verb .



The bird can | sing | run |



Gayan can | run | drink |



Uncle can | read | paint |



Lilanga can | sing | dance |



Zayan can | swim | run |



Hansaka can | eat | jump |



Siripola can | drive | paint |



Nirali can | eat | cook |



Yohara can | read | sing |



Nipuna can | play | swim |

Write.

1. What's your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Are you a girl or a boy?
4. In what class are you?
5. What can you do?.....
6. What do you like to wear?