

# **From Pledges to Practice: Academia's Role in Advancing Child Protection via Sri Lanka's the International Conference on Child Protection 2025**

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This presentation will detail experiences and strategies in promoting child rights and generating related knowledge in Sri Lanka, centered around the International Conference on Child Protection (ICCP'25): "Broadening Perspectives" (July 2025). This pivotal event, hosted by the University of Kelaniya's Centre for Gender Studies, in partnership with UNICEF Sri Lanka and the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA), is crucial for advancing child protection. It strategically aligns with Sri Lanka's renewed high-level commitments made in 2024 at the Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children held in Bogotá. ICCP'25 is particularly vital for translating these pledges, specifically those strengthening the child protection workforce and building child-sensitive services for survivors, into actionable, sustainable strategies through evidence-based policymaking and multisectoral collaboration.

The promotion of child rights leverages key partnerships between academia, government (NCPA), and international organizations (UNICEF). Extensive awareness-raising activities, including national media campaigns and targeted pre-conference workshops for diverse stakeholders, ensure a localized and impactful approach.

Regarding knowledge generation, ICCP'25 serves as a critical nexus for national and international experts to share research and evidence-based solutions. The conference will actively foster multidisciplinary dialogue across law, health, education, and social work to address complex child protection challenges. A key objective is facilitating the use of research outputs to inform policy development and advocacy, directly supporting the operationalization of national commitments. High-level engagement, including from the Prime Minister's office and the SRSG on Violence Against Children, underscores the conference's significant role in mobilizing academic and policy actors to protect child rights in Sri Lanka.

## **Short CV:**

Dedicated child protection professional currently with UNICEF Sri Lanka, enhancing the professionalization of social service workforce and leading child protection research. With a background spanning UNRWA, UNHCR, IFRC, and the European Commission, I've driven impactful initiatives in mental health, juvenile justice, and violence prevention for vulnerable communities. My dual LSE/Sciences Po Paris Master's degrees fuel my commitment to strengthening systems for lasting child protection outcomes.