

## Children's Parliament

Kalal Ella – Kahawatte

Sri Lanka

Children's Parliament is one of the outcomes of the Exposure Programme of the Temporary Professed Sisters and Novices in 2014 at Kalal Ella Estate.

The reality of this estate is that most of the children here discontinue their studies at an early age due to various reasons. Then, too young, they migrate to Colombo with the hope of earning a living. But sad to say they are unable to secure good jobs due to lack of proper qualifications. The parents of these children work mainly in Tea Estates or they are domestic workers in and around the city of Colombo.

***Our Vision is to 'Empower children to live their fullest with a holistic growth'***

Having seen the reality of the situation we were motivated to empower these children to face the future with confidence and instill in them good qualities and skills. In order to attain this vision one of the tools we use is the "Children's Parliament".



Children's Parliament is like any other parliament equipped with different Ministries. In our Children's Parliament we have three ministries – **Education, Health, and Media and Communication**. The children are allocated ministries according to which they sit in parliament, and are well informed of their roles and responsibilities.

After the welcome speech by the President of the Children's Parliament, each minister shares his/her experiences and success stories. They discuss their problems and find solutions for them. At the same time they confront each other when things are not in proper order.

***Through this Children's Parliament we hope to achieve the following:***

- Cultivate values and duties as children and citizens.
- Make them aware of their rights as children, not with the idea fighting for them, but to promote in them dignity and help them live life to the fullest.
- Overcome timidity and develop confidence in themselves.
- Develop Leadership qualities.
- Learn to express their views and opinions.
- Learn to take responsibilities.



***We have been able to achieve the following up to now:***

- Through house visiting identified children who have dropped out and encouraged them to come to school.
- Set up three garbage places (bins) to dispose of garbage in the school.
- Maintain the school notice board publishing different articles.
- Held a cool drink dansal on Vesak Day to unite with the Buddhist brethren in the village.

We are blessed to be supported by the Vice Manager of the Estate, Principal and the teachers of the school, President of the Union and the parents as well. May we be able to risk together to set the fire of compassion with hope to illumine the lives of these children in Estates.



*Submitted by the Sisters in  
Kahawatte – Sri Lanka*