



***Reason to Hope***  

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***Seychelles***

**National Council for Children  
Strategic Plan 2022- 2025**

## **Background**

The National Council for Children (NCC) was established in 1980 and a special committee was set up, under the auspices of UNESCO, to organise activities to commemorate the 'International Decade of the Child'. The Council was, at that time, the official body with legal powers to protect and defend the rights of children of Seychelles.

The aim of the Council was primarily to protect the welfare of the children of Seychelles and to assist families who were encountering financial difficulties. In 1981, the Council employed its own social workers to investigate problems being encountered by children. The President also declared, in 1981, that orphans or children abandoned by their parents would receive benefits from the Social Security Fund. In 1982, the Children's Act came into force focusing on the protection of children. In 1984, the social workers of NCC were transferred to Social Services in order to avoid the conflict between social workers working with parents and NCC staff who worked solely with children facing difficulties.

NCC is governed by 'The National Council for Children Act', outlined in Chapter 137 of the Laws of Seychelles. In 1993, NCC was re-launched as a non-profitable government organisation with the mandate to promote and safeguard the welfare and rights of the children of Seychelles. An Executive Committee appointed by the President of the Republic was set up to monitor the work of NCC. The members of the Board were appointed by the President. The functions of the Act were revised in 1991 and amended in 1999.

In 2017, NCC was placed under the newly formed Ministry of Family Affairs and in September 2018, the Children's Foundation was dismantled and the President's Village, a Children Care Home, was transferred to NCC. In October 2020, there was a change of government and NCC was placed under the new Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports. In February 2021 the President announced the cessation of the existence of the Board and NCC has thereafter been led and managed by the new Minister for Family, Youth and Sports.

## **Our Vision**

To ensure all the children of Seychelles are given the best start in life; to be safe, healthy, happy and resilient, and have access to a good education.

## **Our Mission**

Always put children at the heart of what we do.

## **Our Core Values**

We act with integrity

We respect the feelings, wishes and rights of the child

We embrace diversity and equality

We adopt a rights-based approach

## **Executive Summary**

NCC's Strategic Plan 2022 -2025 takes into consideration the country's recovery from the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic and the consolidation and reinforcement of the rights of the child within this context. The Strategic Plan focuses on five interconnected Goal Areas and sets out measurable outcomes for children and their families. It defines the change strategies and enablers that will support their realisation.

The Strategic Plan is geared towards creating opportunities amid crisis and uncertainty as well as galvanizing the transformational change that is needed. It reflects NCC's mandate to promote and protect the rights and interests of the child. It focuses on driving change that will make a difference to the lives of the children of Seychelles. It emphasizes the strengthened engagement with businesses, communities, parents and care givers, children and young people.

## Introduction

### Context

The world has come a long way in advancing the rights of the child to survive, thrive and grow up to contribute to their societies. The under-five mortality rate fell by 5% between 1990 and 2019. Most children now attend school and child marriage has declined. However, the fight to safeguard children's rights remains a global battle and challenge.

In Seychelles the direct impact of Covid-19 can be observed in the increased number of children suffering from mental health issues due to the massive interruption to their education. School closures, over the last two years, have caused significant disruption to children's academic progress, social development and conduct - particularly our disadvantaged and vulnerable learners and children coming from low income families.

Members of local communities and concerned professionals are reporting an increase in the number of children roaming the streets in the evenings, indulging in substance abuse, and displaying disrespectful behaviour and conduct.

NCC's Therapeutic Service has worked with and counselled 104 children between January and June 2021, 60 were boys and 44 were girls, all under the age of 16 years. This is broadly similar to 2020, when 97 cases were dealt with, of which 65 were boys and 32 were girls. The reasons for counselling being sought were principally aggression and behavioural problems at school. The analysis of the statistics collected and collated over the last three years by the therapists, illustrated below, demonstrate the need for more targeted support and behaviour management therapy for boys.

**Table showing number of counselling sessions delivered between 2018 and 2020**

	2018	2019	2020	2021 (Jan- Feb)
<b>Boys</b>	111	164	178	60
<b>Girls</b>	81	107	104	44
<b>Diff between boys and girls</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>16</b>

NCC's Strategic Plan sets out the Council's commitment to reimagine the delivery of its services and its communication strategy through the introduction and use of new digital delivery platforms and toolkits. NCC will continue to promote the safeguarding of children and their protection from violence, discrimination, exploitation, neglect, abuse and other harmful practices.

### Moving Forward

The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan will build on the 2020-2021 plan and incorporate the findings from evaluations and reviews undertaken by staff. A key focus will be the use of gender and district related data analysis to design and deliver tailored made and personalized training programmes. Initiatives such as the 'Empowering Boys' project will be further rolled out in targeted districts.

NCC will make more effective use of remote service delivery and flexible community-based approaches that have emerged as essential adaptations for service continuity during the pandemic. NCC will strengthen its public and private partnerships in order to empower children and their communities to adopt the concept of 'local solutions to local problems'.

The Strategic Plan places a stronger emphasis on the achievement of measurable outcomes for children and their families tied to selected child rights-related goals.

## Guiding Principles

NCC is driven by the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and therefore **non discrimination** is a guiding principle of all NCC's work. The Council works with, and offers support to, children regardless of their backgrounds, creed, race, sexuality, gender or socio-economic status.

**Equality** is at the heart of everything NCC does. It aspires to address inequalities and empower children. It strives to understand the root causes of the violation of the rights of the child and aims to influence institutions and social norms so that no child is left behind.

## Goals and Strategies

Building on the 2020-2021 plan, NCC will continue to work towards achieving long-term results in the five interconnected Goal Areas linked to rights of the child under the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Living through a global crisis has taught NCC that it must strengthen collaboration and partnerships in order to provide a more principled, timely, quality assured and child centred service. It has made the Council reflect on its engagement with children and the need to provide more opportunities for children to speak out and influence our politicians and decision makers. It has also made the Council further appreciate the need to celebrate children's achievements and talents using more innovative and creative approaches.

The Plan articulates the change strategies and enablers which will contribute to systematic change, helping NCC determine where best to invest its resources, identify and resource which capacities need to be developed and which partners and tools can most help make a positive difference to the lives of the children of Seychelles.

Advocating for the rights, protection, interests and voice of the child				
Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Every Child to feel safe and protected (in line with UNESCO Agenda 2030)	Provide diverse, quality assured and innovative services	Celebrate the achievements and talents of our children	Give children a voice	Create a happy and safe Children's Care Home
<p><b>Goal Area 1 Every Child to feel safe and protected</b>            This goal aims to ensure that every child feels safe and protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices. The right of protection is articulated in numerous articles of the CRC. NCC will use its membership on the National Commission for Child Protection (NCCP) to influence policies and legislations which advocate the rights and protection of the child. It will further develop its working relationships with Education, Social Services, Health, the Police, Legal, NGOs and other professionals to strengthen protective environments for children and address the multidimensional nature of child protection issues.</p> <p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Contribute and influence decision making on Child Protection matters, including policy and legislation</li> <li>1.2 Evaluate and improve the quality of therapy support, safeguarding and child protection training</li> <li>1.3 Advocate and use research to promote and improve the safeguarding and protection of children</li> </ol>				

## **Goal Area 2 Provide diverse, quality assured and innovative services**

This goal aims to provide a more diverse, inclusive and innovative service to children and their families. It will strengthen existing Public Private Partnerships (PPP) as well as create new ones that will enable the development of projects that will help empower and build the capacity of the more vulnerable and disadvantaged children and their families. The pandemic has made NCC review and address the process of using digital tools and advances such as social media, analytics and mobility to transform three key areas –

- the changing customer experience and relationships landscape
- its internal operational processes.
- its business model.

Developing a better understanding of the needs of our clients and the children that NCC serves will help NCC provide a more personalised programme of support and empowerment.

### **Strategies**

2.1 Build upon our present capacity to advocate, research, promote and provide training on safeguarding and child protection to professionals who work with children

2.2 Make more effective use of the digital landscape to educate and empower parents, carers and professionals who work with children, particularly those with a focus on the rights of the child

2.3 Use evidence-based research to improve services as well as provide a more personalized programme of support and empowerment to children and their families in targeted districts

2.4 Improve the Performance Management system to meet the new national expectations of results-based performance.

## **Goal Area 3 Celebrate the achievements and talents of our children**

This goal aims to give children the opportunity to celebrate their achievements and talents in safe and secure settings and contexts. The pandemic and the introduction of Festival Zanfan in June 2021 gave children of all age groups the opportunity to learn and acquire new skills as well as develop and celebrate their formerly hidden talents. The use of child-led working groups for the delivery of future Festival Zanfan and similar projects will continue to enrich and enhance the Seychellois children's leadership skills and entrepreneurship potential.

### **Strategies**

3.1 Provide a range of opportunities for recognising and celebrating the achievements and talents of children, particularly the more vulnerable ones

3.2 Continue to develop partnerships and leverage from the public and private sectors for the celebration of children's achievements

3.3 Create new and innovative ways of showcasing children's success

## **Goal Area 4 Give children a voice**

This goal aims to give children more opportunities, utilizing different platforms through which they will be able to share their views and feelings on issues that matter to them as well as those that are impacting on the national and global economy such as the pandemic and climate change

### **Strategies**

4.1 Create platforms and opportunities for children to express their feelings and views on issues that matter to them

4.2 Create a safe, child friendly and accessible digital environment that enables children to communicate their wishes and concerns

## **Goal Area 5 Create a happy and safe Children's Care Home**

This goal aims to create a safe and happy residential Children's Care Home for children who are removed from their families by Social Services due to neglect or other form of abuse. The provision of a caring home and family environment for abandoned, neglected and abused children will help save the lives of some as well as get them to enjoy experiences and take advantage of opportunities which they would never have had with their families.

### **Strategies**

- 5.1 Provide a safe and stimulating living environment for the children placed in the care of the President's Village
- 5.2 Provide personalized care that meets the needs of the children living in the care home
- 5.3 Support the children in their development of resilience and related skills that prepare them to reintegrate into society
- 5.4 Value and nurture each child, emphasizing the maximization of their learning within and outside school and their ambitions for the future
- 5.5 Operate a staffing structure that makes explicit the high expectations of the children they work with

## **Key Performance Indicators**

- Increased and improved quality of services for children and their families living in targeted districts (**Goal 2**). By December 2022, identified children and their families from the schools in two districts will have received training or alternative support on 'managing difficult boys'. By December 2025 six districts will have benefitted from support and intervention by NCC therapists and training section staff.
- Increased participation of children in projects and programmes on offer – from 250 children in 2021 to 500 in 2022 and 1000 by 2025 (**Goals 1, 2 ,3 and 4**)
- Increased number of parents and other members of the public accessing services offered by NCC – from 75 parents in 2021 to 95 in 2022 and 200 by 2025 (**Goal 2**)
- Reduction in the number of different types of abuse reported – by December 2025 (**Goal 1**)
- Production and implementation of 'Keeping Children safe in Education' guidelines by December 2023 (**Goals 1 and 2**)
- Designated Safeguarding Leads trained by December 2025 (**Goal 1 and 5**)
- Reduced number of abscondments at the President's Village by December 2023 (**Goal 5**)
- Increased number of happy and contented children residing at the President's Village – from 30% in 2021 to 60% in December 2022 and 100% to report being happy by December 2025 (**Goal 5**)
- Improved accommodation and facilities at the President's Village by December 2023 (**Goal 5**)
- Increased number of President's Village children gaining IGCSE certification and thereafter progressing to post-secondary education to at least 5 by December 2025 (**Goal 5**).

## Change Strategies and Enablers

NCC has identified five **change strategies** as key to accelerating our progress towards advocating for the rights, protection and interests of the child. These are;

- Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public
- Developing partnerships and leveraging resources and income from the public and private sectors for the benefit of children
- Removing structural barriers, changing harmful gender norms and empowering disadvantaged children and their families
- Using the power of evidence to drive change
- Communicating with and educating professionals working with children
- Boosting the capacity of staff across various disciplines to advocate for the rights and protection of every child.

NCC has identified four **organizational enablers** that will help it become more effective and efficient as well as enable it to respond to change and uncertainty. These are;

- Empowering decision making by strengthening the accountability of individual staff members to deliver results for children
- Improving the Performance Management System by increasing the focus on outcome and competency based performance
- Creating relevant, safe and secure knowledge and information management systems
- Creating a user-friendly, accessible and relevant digital enabling environment, with multiple real-time communication channels, high-quality virtual meetings and events and analytics.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

NCC's Quarterly and Annual reports will be the means for reporting on the progress of the realization of the Strategic Plan. Regular internal reviews using surveys, questionnaires and feedback comments will provide NCC with first hand evidence on its progress against the expected outcomes.

The use of staff from other sections within the Ministry and/or external consultants to review and quality assure systems, processes and the impact of initiatives will enable NCC to continually improve its approaches and learn from its mistakes. The use of research and the collation and analysis of data and other findings will help NCC refine and change its practices.

