

Introduction

'Cultural Connections' supports the Australian Curriculum's focus on intercultural understanding and can be integrated seamlessly with the Geography, English and Civics and Citizenship curriculum. This unique resource was developed by experienced educator Andrew Thomson in conjunction with ChildFund Australia, using interactive lesson ideas and multimedia content created by children for children through the ChildFund Connect program. Andrew has a practical and in-depth understanding of ChildFund Connect, having been an active participant alongside his Year Six pupils at Balgowlah North Public School for two years. In creating these materials, Andrew worked closely with students, teachers and the ChildFund Connect team to create innovative, meaningful and engaging lesson activities.

What is ChildFund Connect?

ChildFund Connect is a global education program for children in their last years of primary school in Australia and developing countries. The program's objective is to provide children around the world with an opportunity to connect and learn from each other. Using a variety of multimedia tools, with a central website acting as the hub for all communications and child-created content, the program facilitates cross-country exchanges and collaborative education projects. By creating these communication links, children learn about the lives of their peers in different parts of the world. They are supported to ask their own questions, form their own ideas and plan their own collaborative projects with their overseas groups. This enquiry-led learning process allows children to explore each other's lives and develop a sense of global awareness and personal connection with children in another country. ChildFund Connect began in 2010 and is supported by Australian Aid and ChildFund Australia. Visit www.childfundconnect.org

Who are ChildFund Australia?

ChildFund Australia is an independent and non-religious international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in the developing world. We implement programs with a range of local partners in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam, and manage projects delivered by partner organisations throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas. Our work is funded through child and community sponsorship, as well as public donations and government grants. ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 12 organisations which assists more than 15 million children and families in 58 countries. ChildFund Australia is a registered charity and is fully accredited by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). Visit www.childfund.org.au



Children in Timor-Leste pose with a pocket camera during their ChildFund Connect activities.

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How to Use This Unit

In 'Cultural Connections', students explore the concept of 'culture' through the focus question: 'How and why is the way we live similar to and different from the way children live in another part of the world?' Students compare and contrast the way they live with students living in South East Asia, specifically in Laos, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. Four main ideas underpin the students' study of 'culture'.



The unit aims to encourage critical thinking and an appreciation of cultural diversity. Additionally, it encourages students to become active and informed citizens in their own country and an increasingly interconnected world.

The activities have been developed to support and extend the ChildFund Connect program. This is a global education program that connects children in Australia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Vietnam, with the aim of exchanging cultures and learning about each other's lives. This unit draws on many of the media resources and films produced by children involved in this program. To get started using the online and media resources, visit www.childfundconnect.org

UNIT STRUCTURE

This unit has been written using the conceptual framework model¹. It aims to provide scope for teachers to differentiate learning experiences to cater to the different learning needs of students. Contributing questions are presented at three levels:

-  A Core Question for the majority of students;
-  A Structured Question for students requiring most support; and
-  An Extended Question for gifted and high achieving students.

Introductory activities are also provided to enable teachers to motivate students and identify prior knowledge and the learning needs of students. Activities can then be selected and/or modified to address such needs. This unit is designed as a term's work. However, teachers should select and modify suggested content in light of existing school policies, programs and priorities. It is not expected that all activities be completed.

1. MacLeod, B. (2005). *Module 5 - Curriculum differentiation*. Sydney. Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and University of New South Wales, GERRIC.

This Unit and the Australian Curriculum

Common to all Australian curricula are seven general capabilities: literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and **intercultural understanding**.

While the scope of this unit is relevant to all capabilities, it has been written primarily to support the Australian Curriculum's focus on intercultural understanding. The Australian Curriculum says that intercultural understanding "involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect".¹

Further, the Australian Curriculum says that intercultural understanding "encourages students to make connections between their own worlds and the worlds of others, to build on shared interests and commonalities, and to negotiate or mediate difference. It develops students' abilities to communicate and empathise with others and to analyse intercultural experiences critically."²

This unit provides a practical context for engaging students in all these things.



PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

1. Teachers can opt to program this unit as a cross-curricular initiative; it certainly fits with the Australian Curriculum's cross-curriculum priority: 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia'. Three organising elements (see diagram) have been provided to assist teachers in planning learning experiences for students.³

2. This unit could also be programmed in the area of IT or media studies. The use of technology is a focus of several core activities within the unit, primarily in photography and film making. The 'Media and the Arts' component of the Australian Curriculum, 'The Arts' (to be implemented from 2014⁴), states:

- Students will undertake preproduction by using storyboards and formal scripts to design ideas for productions.
- They will gather a variety of digital still and moving images, record sound and use software to edit, mix and arrange digital materials.

3. Alternatively, this unit could be taught within a specific subject area; in particular, Geography or Civics and Citizenship, placing an emphasis on intercultural understanding. The following curriculum statements apply:

Geography (draft – for implementation from 2014⁵)

- Students investigate and explore Asian places, and learn about the ways in which Australia and Asia are interconnected.
- Geography enables students to learn about the diversity between and within the countries of Asia, and helps to counter stereotypes and to foster intercultural understanding.
- By examining the characteristics of Asian places... a study of geography leads to a growing understanding of the varied environments, peoples, economies and cultures of Australia's neighbours.

Civics and Citizenship (draft – for implementation from 2014⁶)

- Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages, religion and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture.
- Students learn about and engage with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.
- Students should have opportunities to engage with their own cultures, values and beliefs and those of others in local, national, regional and global contexts. They should be given opportunities to explore how people interact across cultural boundaries and to consider how factors such as group membership, traditions, customs and religious and cultural practices impact on the function and form of daily life.

1. <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/Intercultural-understanding/Introduction/Introduction>
2. <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/Pdf/Intercultural-understanding>
3. <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/Intercultural-understanding/Organising-elements/Organising-elements>
4. http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_The_Arts_-_Compressed.pdf
5. http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/2_Draft_F-12_Australian_Curriculum_-_Geography.pdf
6. http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_Civics_and_Citizenship_251012.pdf

Concept: Culture

Focus Question:

How and why is the way we live similar to and different from the way children live in another part of the world?
(Vietnam, Laos, Timor-Leste or Sri Lanka)

Main Idea 1:

'Culture is diverse and multifaceted'



Core Question

How do people express their culture?



Structured Question

How are cultures similar and different?



Extended Question

Is it possible to maintain your individuality when you are part of a group and is this important?

Main Idea 3:

'Culture is learned and shared'



Core Question

How are cultures similar and different?



Structured Question

Who and what influences the cultural views we hold?



Extended Question

How and why are people's views on culture similar to and different from their parents?

Main Idea 2:

'Exploring cultural diversity helps to define your own culture and appreciate the value of others'



Core Question

How would your life be similar and different if you grew up in Vietnam/Laos/Timor-Leste/Sri Lanka?



Structured Question

What are the benefits and advantages of growing up in Vietnam/Laos/Timor-Leste/Sri Lanka?



Extended Question

How can you gain a better understanding of your own culture by observing how other cultures live in Vietnam/Laos/Timor-Leste/Sri Lanka?

Main Idea 4:

'Culture changes over time'



Core Question

How important is it to maintain your culture?



Structured Question

How is our culture different from the way it was when our parents were our age?



Extended Question

Is cultural change always a good thing?

Introductory Activities



The following activities aim to:

- Assess prior knowledge of students
- Familiarise students with the geographic locations of cultures being studied
- Introduce students to the concept of 'culture'
- Introduce students to the unit's content and scope

Activities	Resources
<p>1. Pre-test: Administer a pre-test to establish the level of prior knowledge. This establishes background knowledge on the content to be taught. It will allow you to determine the depth at which the unit will be taught and ensure you cater to the learning needs and capabilities of your students. (Adjust suggested activities accordingly.)</p> <p>2. Unit Outline: Introduce the focus question to students outlining the scope of the unit and the individual/group tasks to be undertaken.</p> <p>3. Immersion Day: (see pp11-17).</p> <p>4. Define Culture: Set the question "What is 'culture'?" as a homework task. When responses come in, conduct a THINK/PAIR/SHARE. During the sharing session, establish a class definition for 'culture'. Display this.</p> <p>5. Video: Watch video 'If the world were a village' – 3 mins (whole class). With a partner, discuss what you learned and then share your feelings with the class. Relate to 'culture' definition.</p> <p>6. Survey: Use the class as micro-community to survey the ethnic background of children. Locate these on a map (if time).</p> <p>7. Mapping: In pairs, locate 4 countries on the blank map provided (p18). Colour and label each country linking to Australia with arrows. Individual country maps have also been provided.</p>	<p>Pre-test (pp9-10).</p> <p>Immersion Day Activities (teacher directions) and associated task cards (pp11-17).</p> <p>Think/Pair/Share: http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/think/</p> <p>'If the world were a village' video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6mr12zroxA&feature=related</p> <p>Blank maps (pp18-22), atlases, IWB.</p>

Assessment

- Establish students' prior knowledge through pre-test.
- Teacher observation of student interaction and contribution to class discussion.
- Quality/accuracy of written work.



Pre-test

Name: _____

Class: _____

1. Culture: This term we will be discussing the word 'culture'. Write down what you think this word means.

2 Differences in culture: Write down an example of how cultures around the world and within Australia are different.

3. Similarities in culture: What aspects of culture are the same, regardless of where you live?

4. What do you think? Read each statement below and circle a number from 1 to 5 to show what you believe.

Statement	Strongly Agree - Strongly Disagree
A Many of our views about culture come from our parents and friends.	1 2 3 4 5
B Culture changes over time.	1 2 3 4 5
C Children who do not have the opportunities in life that I do are not very happy.	1 2 3 4 5
D It is important to keep the way of life you have and not let it be changed by others.	1 2 3 4 5
E I am interested in finding out how children live in other places around the world.	1 2 3 4 5





Pre-test

5. Locate the following places on the map. Write the numbers where you think they are situated.

①
Timor-Leste

②
Vietnam

③
Laos

④
Sri Lanka

⑤
Australia



6. Draw a line from each place to its national flag.

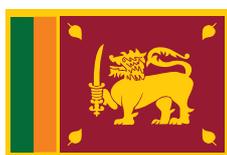
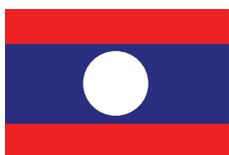
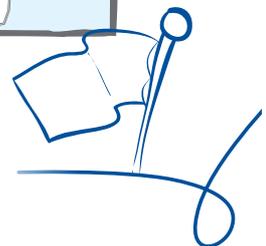
Timor-Leste

Vietnam

Laos

Sri Lanka

Australia





Immersion Day Activities

Aim: To provide an introductory activity (where students have little or no prior knowledge) that will generate high levels of interest and engagement.

Time required: 2 sessions.

You will need: Role-Play Cards (copy and cut one per student (pp12-16), Pros/Cons/Questions (PCQ) Chart (p17), any suitable props.

Instructions: This activity is set up for five groups of five (25 students). Adjust groups to accommodate variations in class numbers. To accommodate average class sizes, a fifth cultural community, Arnhem Land, has been added to the four countries being studied.

SESSION 1: ROLE-PLAY CARDS

- Hand out a Role-Play Card to each student.
- Tell students to read the card and then locate the other four members of their 'family'. (Information on the cards will provide clues.)
- Once 'families' are formed, they should sit together and take it in turns reading their cards to gain an understanding of what their 'family' is like.
- Each group ('family') should then be told by the teacher what country they are from.
- A PCQ Chart is to be completed by each group. Groups detail any pros, cons or questions that come from their discussion. (Individual copies will assist students during class discussion.)

SESSION 2: FAMILY PRESENTATIONS

Select one of the following options:

Option A:

- Groups prepare and present a short improvised play which presents the information contained on the cards.
- Groups present to the class as the family, explaining their lives as described on the cards.
- Students should not introduce humour inappropriately.
- After each presentation, groups present their PCQ Chart completed in Session 1.

Option B:

- Each team is 'hot seated' as a family. They come to the front of the class and are interviewed as a family. Each person is to stay in character.
- Children must divulge the information from Role-Play Cards and PCQ Chart. Questions must include: What do you like/dislike about being a member of your family?
- Class discussion/analysis of presentations concludes the session.



Role-Play Cards: Laos



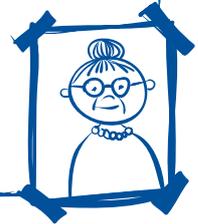
My Identity

- I am a 5-year-old boy.
- I live in a little village.
- I help the family by collecting water from the village well.
- I have a 13-year-old sister. She plays with me and looks after me a lot. I help her with jobs at home too.
- I feed the chickens every day and collect the eggs.
- My grandmother lives with us.
- My house has 2 rooms.
- I speak H'mong at home with my family.



My Identity

- I am a 60-year-old woman (quite old for a woman in my country).
- I live with my daughter and help with the cleaning and cooking.
- I also help by looking after my 2 grandchildren who are 5 and 13.
- I was born in our village and have never left it. I have never travelled to another country, been on a train or an aeroplane.



My Identity

- I am a 31-year-old man.
- My wife is 28.
- I live with my wife, 2 children and my wife's mother.
- I look after the water buffalo.
- I have never been to school.
- We travel by motorbike, bicycles or foot.



My Identity

- I am a 28-year-old woman.
- I have a 5-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter.
- My husband looks after the water buffalo and trades with the other villages.
- I cannot read or write.
- I cook and clean for my family.
- My mother lives with us.
- Our laundry is away from the house.
- I am lucky my children are all healthy as it is difficult to access hospitals and medicine in my area.



My Identity

- I am a 13-year-old girl.
- I live in a district called Nonghet.
- I help the family by cutting up the vegetables and looking after my brother.
- I have a 5-year-old brother.
- I am learning Lao at school, which is difficult as I speak H'mong at home. I love playing with my friends at school, but class can be hard. I didn't start going to school until I was 9 because I was busy helping my parents at home.
- Like many girls, I will get married when I am 15 or 16. I might have 6 children of my own.





Role-Play Cards: Vietnam



My Identity

- I am an 8-year-old boy.
- I have a 10-year-old sister.
- I attend primary school.
- My grandparents live with us.
- I help my parents by sweeping and cleaning.
- My house is made of wood and we keep cattle under the flooring.
- The roof of our house is made of leaves.



My Identity

- I am a 10-year-old girl and I live in Bac Kan District. This is a rural area in my country.
- I have an 8-year-old brother.
- I am in my last year of primary school.
- Although I walk to school, the most common form of transport is bicycle (for adults too).
- I help my parents by feeding the chickens and looking after the veggie garden.

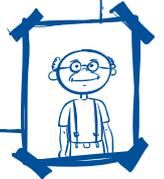
My Identity

- I am a 35-year-old woman.
- Bamboo shoots are a delicacy in our area.
- I have a beautiful daughter (10) and a lovely son (8).
- I am a farmer like my husband.
- We live in the country where there are beautiful green hills.
- I work in our field to grow rice and vegetables.
- My husband's parents live with us.



My Identity

- I am a 50-year-old grandfather.
- My wife and I live with our son, his wife and their 2 children.
- I take my 8-year-old grandson and his older sister to school.
- Even though we do not have electrical appliances or a computer, we are all very happy.
- Our little house with its leaf roof is in a beautiful rural (country) area with green hills.



My Identity

- I am a 40-year-old man. I live in a poor, rural area, which is quite different to the big cities in my country.
- My wife is 35 and our family lives in a small house with a roof made of leaves.
- We raise cattle under the flooring.
- We have 2 children at school so we have to work very hard in our field to support them.
- Everything is done by hand. We do not have washing machines, vacuum cleaners or dishwashers.





Role-Play Cards: Timor-Leste



My Identity

- I am a 12-year-old girl.
- I live with my 2 brothers and parents.
- At home we speak Bunak with our parents. At school we learn Portuguese but speak Tetum (our national language). Our school books are in Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesian, English and a few in Tetum, so we cannot always read our books.
- At break time at school, I play lots of games with my friends like jump rope and clapping games.
- My parents cannot read or write. They are farmers.



My Identity

- I am a 14-year-old boy.
- I live with my parents and my brother and sister. I am the eldest. I love to play soccer with my friends after school!
- At home we have electricity up until lunch time. At night we use kerosene lanterns for light.
- Like the rest of our family, I speak Bunak.
- We do not have a bath so we have to bathe in the river near our home.



My Identity

- I am a 6-year-old boy.
- I live with my brother, 12-year-old sister and my parents. Our family is quite small.
- Most of my friends have 5 to 7 brothers and sisters.
- Clean water is very precious. I help collect it for the family and of course it has to be boiled before we drink it.
- There is not much electricity at my school. If we really need it, we can sometimes use a generator.



My Identity

- I am a 31-year-old woman.
- I am married with 3 children. I had my first child when I was 17.
- We began getting electricity for the first time last year but we only get it for half the day. We hope by next year we will have electricity for 24 hours a day.
- I help my husband to look after the cassava (a root vegetable) and I help tend the animals.
- Our children help with the chores. Even my youngest, who is 6 years old, helps to collect water.



My Identity

- I am a 32-year-old man. My family and I live in Bobonaro District in my country.
- I am married with 3 children. I had my first child when I was 18.
- We grow cassava and farm buffalo and pigs. I didn't have the chance to learn to read or write at school because our country went through some difficult times when I was younger.
- The language I speak is Bunak.
- During the dry season, it is sometimes hard to get water so we wash and bathe in the river.





Role-Play Cards: Sri Lanka

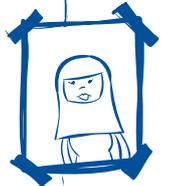
My Identity

- I am a 4-year-old boy. I live in a district called Puttalam.
- I live close to the beach. I love to look for dolphins with my sister. I don't go to preschool because there are not any close to where I live. I stay at home with my grandmother and play with our dogs and goats.
- At home I am learning to speak our language called Tamil.
- I have a 10-year-old sister.



My Identity

- I am a 30-year-old woman. I have a son and a 10-year-old daughter.
- I pray that our son will go to university but that will be very hard as only about 1 in 30 students who qualify actually get the chance to go.
- Our family is very poor. My husband works hard to catch prawns but his wages are low.
- My husband loves cricket.
- Being Muslims, religion is very important to us. We worship several times a day. It sets our minds free.



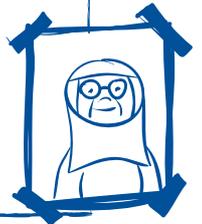
My Identity

- I am a 30-year-old man. I have a wife the same age as me, a son and a daughter.
- I work in the shrimp industry. Shrimps are prawns.
- It is very warm where we live. The temperature gets to 30 degrees Celsius almost every day of the year.
- I pray several times a day. It helps to set my mind free.
- My 49-year-old mother lives with us. She was forced by a group of rebels to leave her husband and relatives in the north and come here to live. She was 22 at the time. I came with her. I was 3.



My Identity

- I am a 49-year-old grandmother. I have 2 grandchildren.
- I live with my son and his family. My son works in the shrimp industry.
- I help with the chores and looking after my grandchildren.
- I am a Muslim.
- I have lived in Puttalam for nearly 30 years. I came here as a refugee when I was forced to flee from my home in the north by rebel fighters who tried to take over the country.



My Identity

- I am a 10-year-old girl. I live in a district called Puttalam with my little brother, my parents and grandmother.
- Like most of the people in my town, we are Muslims. Grandmother says that about 20 years ago, many Muslim women and children were forced to leave their homes in the north of the country to come here.
- We have a beautiful lagoon near our home.
- My father is in the fishing industry. He catches prawns.
- I spend 2-3 hours daily helping with housework.
- Doctors are hard to find so if you get sick you have to find a car to take you to the hospital.





Role-Play Cards: Arnhem Land

My Identity

- I am a 33-year-old woman.
- I grew up around Goulburn Island. This is the land of my ancestors and we have so many stories about this land.
- Ceremony and culture are part of our way of life.
- We teach our children Dreamtime stories about life, law and our culture.
- I work at the school teaching the kindergarten class.



My Identity

- I am a 12-year-old boy. I have a 14-year-old sister.
- I attend Warruwi School. We have over 100 people at our school. Sometimes students move about and visit other islands to take part in ceremonies.
- There are 400 people on our island.
- I love fishing, bike-riding and going mud-crabbing.
- I speak Maung language at home and English at school.



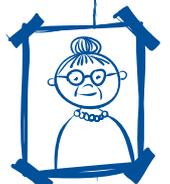
My Identity

- I am a 40-year-old man. I am married with two children, 14 and 12.
- I work as a gardener in our Warruwi gardens growing cassava and other vegetables.
- In the afternoons I often go fishing with my family and catch fish for dinner.
- We have to look out for crocodiles if we go down to the ocean early in the morning. Sometimes they are on the beach, sunbaking.
- We go to Darwin on long weekends and holidays to see friends and other family.



My Identity

- I am a 58-year-old grandmother.
- I am an elder in our community and know many stories about our land.
- Our island has changed as new government policies change.
- I look after my grandchildren but many of the children here call me Grandma as we have extended families.
- I like to collect oysters with my granddaughter.



My Identity

- I am a 14-year-old girl. I have a 12-year-old brother.
- I love singing, swimming and playing basketball.
- I sometimes help my mother collect oysters and yams. Grandmother sometimes comes too.
- I like hanging out with my friends, just listening to music or talking.
- Sometimes when I go to the beach, I see turtles and dugongs.
- We often have visitors coming to our island, like Balandas (white people) coming to work or relatives or friends coming to visit.





Pros/Cons/Questions (PCQ) Chart

Country _____

Family Members _____

Male/Female: _____ Age: _____ Male/Female: _____ Age: _____ Male/Female: _____ Age: _____

Male/Female: _____ Age: _____ Male/Female: _____ Age: _____

Directions: Appoint a scribe and a reporter for your group. Then, as you discuss your family, the scribe should note down anything you decide would be a 'pro' (good thing) about your family, 'con' (negative) about your family or 'question' you have about your family.

Pros

Cons

Questions



South East Asia





Vietnam



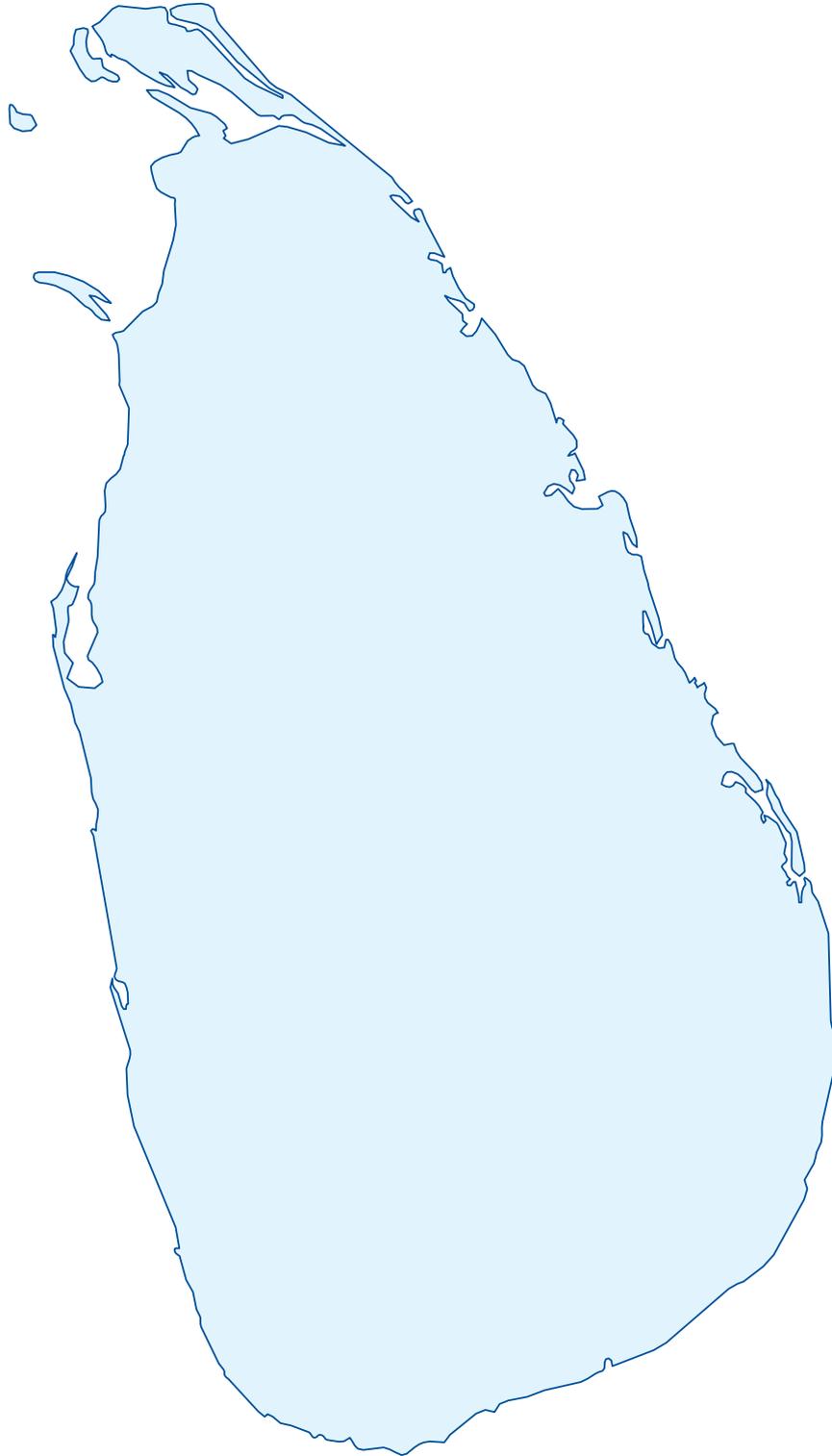


laos





Sri Lanka





Timor-*leste*

