

Picture of Conf

Internally Displaced Persons 500 Children Separated from Families

The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) due to conflict, earthquake and floods in Bajaur, Swat Valley, Balochistan and Sindh is as high as .8 million with over .4 million children and these are modest figures while the number quoted is as high as 600,000 only for Swat valley, living in the camps or host families.

Speaking at the National Conference organized by SPARC on the *Impact of Displacement on Children* on November 13, in Islamabad SPARC's Executive Director Mr Qindeel Shujaat said the issue of impact of displacement on children has been neglected. Conflict

Contd. On Page 11



**Happy New Year to Friends and
Partners Working to Promote**

SPARC Helps Boy's Release from Indian Jail

Fifteen years old NS, Shahrukh Khan fan who crossed into India illegally in August to meet his Bollywood hero, says all it took him to sneak across the fenced border between the two countries, was to crawl through a gap in the wires.

N, who is now back home with his family in Dir in the North-Western Frontier Province after the Indian government withdrew charges against him and ordered his release from prison, said he crossed the border within two days of leaving home on August 16.

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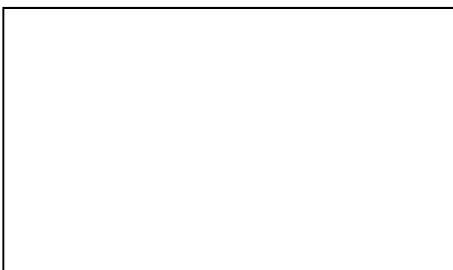
First Children's Parliament of Pakistan Takes Oath

The first ever children's parliament held its first session in Islamabad on Friday, November 14 where children for the first time came together to raise concerns related to the rights of the children in Pakistan.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the children's parliament Executive Director Mr Qindeel Shujaat said that "the idea of this parliament was realized in 2007 when SPARC felt that being a Child Rights organization it was incumbent on us that we should give a platform to the children to voice their demands and concerns relating to child rights and their violations."

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Peshawar Children Give Donation to Obama for Peace



Pakistani schoolchildren who donated money for US presidential candidate Barack Obama's campaign are demanding an end to bombings in the Tribal Areas, calling for the Democrat to "provide us education instead of bombing our land", as reported on October 30.

"Uncle Obama, we expect peace from you," read a placard held by the group of nine children who donated \$261. The children – six boys and three girls aged between eight and 13 – gathered at Peshawar Press Club that their small

donation for Obama's election campaign was meant to highlight the unrest in NWFP and FATA. "We have arranged this donation to invite Obama to resolve the problem," said one of the boys.

Reading out a statement, one of the children said, "We express our sorrow over the deteriorating situation, the bombings and the displacement of families." He said children were one of the worst-affected segments of society, because of the 'senseless violence'.

The children said they did not know who was behind the violence and the reasons for it, but they had been told the "unrest is a result of flawed US policies". They said they had therefore decided to collect the funds to give a practical shape to Obama's campaign slogan 'change we need'. The children said they wanted the US authorities in Pakistan to send the \$261 to Obama on their behalf. ☺

The Right to Die

A 13-year-old terminally ill girl has been allowed by the courts in London to decide whether she wanted to live or die, said a media report on November 11.

She has chosen to die with what she said 'dignity' and spend the remaining days with her parents at home. Hannah won a legal battle against a hospital's attempt to force her to have a life-saving

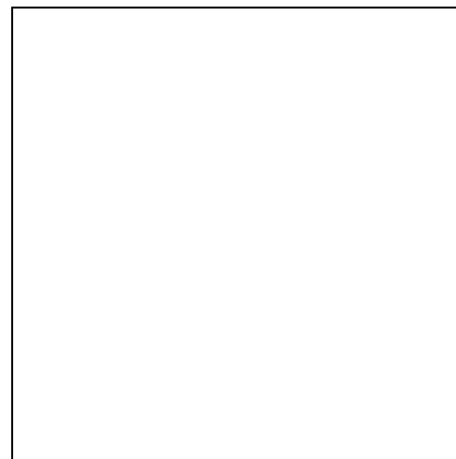
heart transplant against her will. She decided against the surgery.

Her local hospital initiated high court proceedings to remove her, temporarily, from her parents' custody to allow the transplant. The girl was forced to plead her case to a child protection officer from her hospital bed. Her plea was conveyed to barristers at the high court who decided she was mature enough to make the decision for herself and the order was thrown out. ☺

Bangladesh: Hand-washing Saves Children's Lives: More than 16 million children in 73,000 primary and secondary schools in Bangladesh marked the first global hand-washing day on October 15 with a vow to keep themselves free of diarrhea and pneumonia - two major killers of children spread mainly via dirty hands.

"Children are the most powerful agents of change in society," said Carel de Rooy, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative in Bangladesh. "If children learn basic hygiene education and practice from the beginning of their lives, they can work as a catalyst to change the whole society."

In Bangladesh, more than 35,000 children under-five die of diarrhea diseases each year, an average of 100 deaths a day, according to UNICEF. "More than 40 percent of these deaths could be prevented simply by washing hands with soap," said skin cleansing product group manager of Unilever Bangladesh. The company contributed soap for schools to the campaign. ☺



German Parliamentarians Discuss Child Rights

A delegation of German Parliamentarians including Ms Ute Koczy of the Greens Party, Ms Christel Riemann-Hanewickel of the Social Democrat Party (SPD) and Mr CV Hellmut Konigshaus of the Liberal Party, along with staff members visited SPARC on October 29.

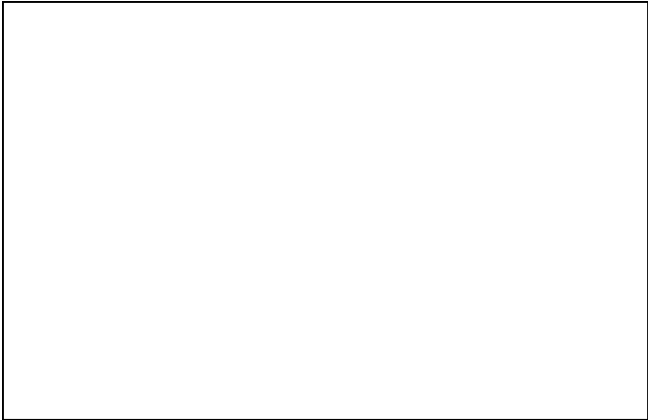
Ms Zarina Jillani welcomed and briefed the delegation on NGO's work and its initiative of bringing forth emerging child right issues such as child militancy. Mr Rafiq Khan briefed the delegation on child rights core issues as child labor (including bonded labor), juvenile justice system and its lacunas and street children.

The guests raised questions regarding children who come in conflict with law and the commonly reported nature of crimes committed as well as bonded child labor and practice of related laws. The parliamentarians showed consensus on need of enforcement of Child Protection Bill. They shared the existing criminal litigation system in Germany and the ongoing debate on whether or not age of criminal responsibility be decreased from 14 to 12 years. On the other hand, in Pakistan this age stands as seven years which can not be justified on any grounds and United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as SPARC constantly demands an increase in criminal responsibility age from seven to 12 years. Bangladesh and Afghanistan have increased this age to nine and ten years respectively. ☺

Tears as Poverty-Stricken Parents Abandon Children

Three women abandoned their children, eight in all, to their fate by placing them under the care of the Edhi Foundation on November 18 in Karachi. Aged between five and 12 years, the children, some in tears, appeared scared and unaware of the reason that had forced their parents to leave them at Edhi center.

Bilquis Edhi said they knew of no precedent that eight children of living parents were left at any of its centers. "The monster of poverty is closing in on the lower middle class, forcing parents to abandon their loved ones," she said. The three women wept inconsolably while saying goodbye to the children. The children, a picture of shock and fear tried in vain to cling to their mothers. "The sight of the women parting from the children was heart-rending," she said. "She (mother) told us that we are being moved to a school where we would learn and live," said 12-year-old F, tears rolling down her cheeks. "We want to go back to our parents. We don't need schooling," she said. ☺



Sufferings Highlighted on Universal Children's Day

Sandwiched between the Convention on the Rights of the Child's 18th and 20th birthdays, Universal Children's Day, November 20, was marked with a flurry of activity across the world.

The World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) issued a press release on children to be protected from torture - particularly in view of the so-called war against terrorism.

"Since 2002, many individuals below 18 years of age have reportedly been captured and detained in US-governed detention centers in Afghanistan, in Iraq and in Guantanamo Bay. Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen who was 15 years old when he was arrested in Afghanistan, has been detained in the US military base since October 2002. Despite his age, he was exposed to the same abuses and violations as adult prisoners." Defence for Children International in Palestine noted how, on Universal

Children's Day, the plight of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children continues to be dire. In Malaysia, although children's welfare had come a long way, four per cent of six to 12 year-olds are not in school and 7,000 under fives die each year from preventable diseases. In Nepal, the National Human Rights Commission issued a press release urging the government to implement all treaties and conventions concerning child rights. ☺

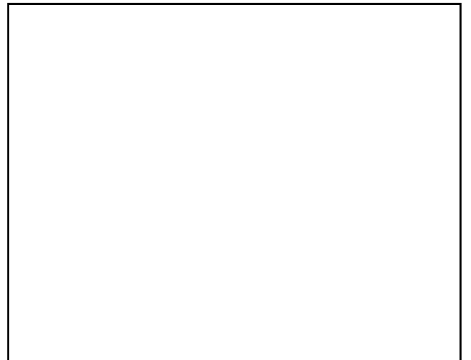


WWSF Prize for Prevention of Child Abuse 2008

Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) announced the five winners of the Prize for *prevention of child abuse 2008* to the international community and the media.

The five Laureate organizations 2008 are: First Prize 2008 (US\$ 3000) The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, Croatia Second Prize 2008 (US\$ 1000) Corporación Gestión Ecuador - GE, Ecuador Three additional awards 2008 (US\$ 500 each) Fairland Foundation - FAFO, Uganda Stairway Foundation Inc. - SFI, Philippines Community Human Rights and Advocacy Center - CHRAC, Cameroon.

We hope that their activities inspire you and encourage others to make their mark in preventing child abuse.



UN Human Rights Award for Benazir Bhutto

Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan has been given the prestigious United Nations Human Rights Award posthumously on December 10, the UN Human Rights Day. Her son received the award.

The award, is given to individuals or organizations once every five years for "outstanding achievements in the field of human rights".

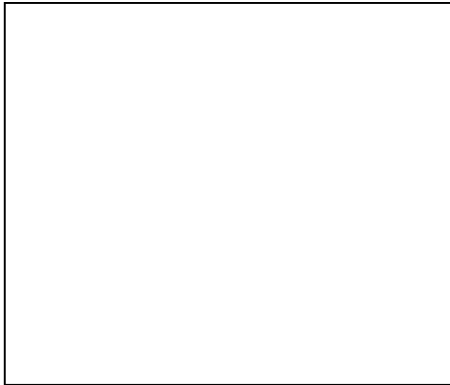
Ironically, Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan, the wife of Pakistan's first prime minister who was assassinated in 1951 in Liaquat Bagh (Rawalpindi), was one of the recipients. ☺

No Home Comforts for India's Construction Site Children

It's not unusual in cities across India to see giggling children chasing each other around piles of sand or playing with shovels as their mothers keep an eye on them from nearby, a report from New Delhi said. But these scenes of childhood glee rarely take place in playgrounds.

Hundreds of thousands of children in India grow up on construction sites, living with parents for whom childcare and workplace safety is all but unknown.

"We just put them down beside us," said a woman working to build a bus corridor in New Delhi. "But one feels afraid. There are always cars passing by."



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The risk of injury is high and school attendance is low as the migrant workers, who often sleep on the building sites, have no idea where local schools are or just do not have the time to take their children there. "We've heard of children falling and

drowning on site," said Mridula Bajaj, of Delhi branch of Mobile Creches, an organization trying to improve conditions for laborers and their children. The group estimates that some 400,000 children accompany their parents on work sites in Delhi alone, and probably millions nationwide.

Mobile Creches estimates that it currently has daycare in place for no more than 2,000 children – largely because of resistance from developers. At the few work sites that do provide care, women workers say they are able to work better without worrying about their children. The children are taught to count and read, and helps prepare them for a proper school – although many of them will never attend one. ☹

97% Indian Kids to Go to School by 2015

India is on track to achieve net enrollment rate (NER) of more than 97% by 2015, reports Unesco's Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report as reported on November 26 at New Delhi.

"Of the 17 countries with most children out of school, just three - Bangladesh, Brazil and India - are on track to achieve NER in excess of 97% by 2015," the report said. As per the Report India had 7.2 million out-of-school children in 2006 and it will be reduced to just 600,000 in 2015.

The enrollment in secondary education in India has increased from 39% in 1999 to 43% in 2006. However there is one good news - India, along with Bhutan and Nepal, has achieved gender parity in primary education. ☹

Students Kidnap a Child

It was fear of bankruptcy which reportedly pushed two 24-year old MBA students, into the kidnapping bid as reported by media on November 25.

Together with an accomplice (Jain) they allegedly kidnapped his 15-year-old cousin (A.V) asked for a ransom of Rs 80 lakh.

Jain, a student in Ghaziabad, was into share trading and had incurred huge losses in the stock market due to the global meltdown. Chopra from Indira Gandhi National Open University, had a property dealing business and also suffered losses. "They were desperate for cash to invest in their businesses and incurred losses," said a senior police officer. They had hired a criminal to get professional support. Ironically, both belong to affluent families. ☹

Bullies Burn Girl Alive

A 13-year-old schoolgirl at Delhi was allegedly burnt alive by three of her classmates after she complained about the bullying of another pupil, the newspaper reported.

After she reported the bullying to teachers, she was followed home by the bullies, doused in kerosene and set alight. She died later in hospital, the paper said.

Headmistress of a primary school locked 350 pupils in a classroom for 10 hours without food or water because she found money was missing from her bag, a report said on September 19 in New Delhi. The pupils were freed by their parents, who broke open the doors when they heard them screaming.

Some pupils fainted during the ordeal. The report said the headmistress, furious over losing Rs 500 has been suspended. ☹

Boy Thrown Under Train for Writing Love Letter: *A teenage Indian boy was thrashed, paraded through the streets with his head shaved and then thrown under a train for daring to write a love letter to a girl from a different caste, police said on November 20 in Patna.*

Manish (15) was kidnapped by members of the rival caste on his way to school, had his head shaved and was thrown under a train as his mother begged for mercy. The boy's mother said she watched "helplessly" as the wheels of the train passed over her son. "Love across caste lines is often violently opposed, and it is not uncommon for families to kill to "save the family honor". ☹

Child Traffickers Active in Philippines

Human traffickers were preying on children displaced by the Muslim insurgency in the southern Philippines, an independent monitor said on October 28 in Manila.

The Visayan Forum Foundation, which monitors human trafficking in the Philippines, said groups trawl evacuation camps on Mindanao looking for child laborers to be flown abroad.

About 34 Filipino minors have been rescued by social workers from traffickers who smuggled them out of the conflict zones to work abroad the group's president said. Recently a group of children aged between 14 and 16 were saved while being trafficked to the Middle East from Manila airport on fake passports. She warned that the trend would continue amid chaos in evacuation camps scattered across Mindanao. ☹

Charity School for Child Beggars

A charity school for child beggars was inaugurated in Islamabad on November 4 in a slum adjacent to the Railway Carriage Factory to provide them access to basic educational facilities.

The school is being set up by the National Education Foundation (NEF) in collaboration with the AIMS Foundation Pakistan Bait-ul-Maal.

NEF Project Director said, 14,000 schools have, so far, been set up under the Basic Education Community Schools Project country-wide. He said that every school has 30 students with one teacher and there is no age limit, as the basic aim is to provide education to every child, who does not have access to formal educational institutions. He said that the project is cost effective and highly efficient, as it has produced encouraging results in various parts where these kinds of schools are operating. ☹

Bonded Labor: Minor Girls Freed

In the posh area of F-11, Islamabad, a woman aided by husband had kept three minor girls between the ages 9-15 in debt bondage for two years, until SPARC intervened.

The girls were not allowed to meet their parents who then approached the NGO for help. On behalf of the parents, a case was filed in the jurisdiction of the local police station on November 5, where upon investigation it was found that the woman's claim of giving loan to girls' parents did not have any sound footing. The young girls were made to do household chores and looking after owner's children.

SPARC appreciates the positive role of police officials and media rendered towards liberating innocent children from a life of misery. ☹

Dilemma of a Poor Boy

Javed (15) has been working for the Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) for the past two years. He is employed on contractual basis as a sweeper.

He is one of the hundreds of Christian boys who are working as sweepers for the HDA. "I just want to make my family happy and if I have to work for at this young age then this is my fate (kismet)", he says.

The living conditions in the Colony are poor. There is only one school in the Colony for a population of over 10,000 people. Only a small number of children can attend the school besides most of the parents do not permit their children to go to school because of poverty and illiteracy.

"My hands often get injured while cleaning the drains and gutters but here I earn about Rs 100 per day, and there is also a chance that I may get a permanent job here," Javed said. ☹

10-year-old Battle-Scarred Bullfighter

Michelito is just like any other child who likes playing the guitar, surfing the Internet and watching Spiderman, but at just 10 years old, he is also a star bullfighter and has already killed 160 calves. The pint-sized matador is fearless and dreams of rivaling the best. One of the world's youngest bullfighters, the French-Mexican is also one of the sport's hottest stars in Latin America.

Michelito, who began fighting bulls when he was just five years old, is following in the path of his father. Bull-fighting "is my passion. My father is a famous bullfighter and I want to be more famous than he is and I want to fight bulls all my life," boy said. ☹

Teacher Accused of Kidnapping Girl Student

The father of a 12-year-old girl accused a schoolteacher of kidnapping and sexually abusing his daughter in Dera Ismail Khan on October 14.

The man has filed an application before the court of the district and sessions judge, alleging that the police had been supporting accused teacher Hameedullah and were reluctant to register an FIR regarding the offense.

The man, claimed that his daughter was studying in fifth grade at a private school. He said the girl had complained about the advances of the accused teacher following which they admitted her to a seminary from where the accused abducted her. ❧

Militants Take Control of School in Mohmand

Militants took control of Government High School Sandokhel in Upper Mohmand region and started digging trenches in its building to strengthen their position, officials and residents said on November 2 in Ghalanai.

Political administration officials confirmed the report and said that local Taliban stormed the high school for boys and took its control without any resistance. The militants also set up bunkers at the school and took positions.

An official of education department said that militants occupied that portion of the school which was under construction with the financial assistance of USAID. ❧

140 Schools not Functioning in Swat

Around 140 schools are non-functional in Swat Valley as mostly the buildings were badly damaged due to bomb explosions or fire during the last one year, a report on October 31 disclosed in Peshawar.

According to a survey conducted by SPARC CRC Coordinator, Swat, estimated population of Swat was around two million out of which 600,000 to 700,000 children were of primary school going age. He added that the government estimates showed that 527,893 children of primary school age were enrolled in schools whereas more than 100,000 children were engaged in different forms of labor.

Among the destroyed educational institutions, 95% are those of girls depriving around 148,000 females of education facilities. His survey shows that on various occasions the militants had blown up or put to torch multiple schools on a single day. The worst hit day was June 25, 2008, when the militants burnt 10 schools in the district. Recently, these militants have targeted some very prominent educational institutions of excellence in the valley. ❧



Muhammad Anwar

Over 8,000 Teachers do not Turn up in Schools

Minister for Food said absenteeism was behind the mess in the education department in Manshera district, saying over half of teachers have been receiving salaries without performing their duties.

“The government spends over Rs1 billion annually on salaries and other expenses of the district, but absenteeism has marred performance of government schools and that is why most of the students fail board examinations,” he

said on November 19 speaking at the Degree College.

The minister said 8,000 of 14,000 male and female teachers had remained absent from their duties for many years, but had been receiving salaries every month.

He said if the federal government wanted to develop the country it should cut the defense budget and increase the budget for education and health. ❧

Training on Child Protection Issues and Legal Framework

A five-day training workshop on “Introduction to Child Protection Issues and Legal framework in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.” was conducted by SPARC for UNICEF in Bhurban from October 27-31. There were 35 participants from AJK. The training covered important Child Rights issues including child labor, corporal punishment and juvenile justice. The strategies to address these issues were also covered under topics such as advocacy, lobbying and child rights monitoring. Laws and their gaps as well as problems in their implementation were also discussed with special reference to AJK. Overall, the workshop helped to develop an understanding of the Child Rights Legal Framework amongst the professionals who participated in the workshop from diverse backgrounds. ❧

Norway Gives \$35.54m for UN Health Projects

Norway has provided the UN in Pakistan over \$35.54 million for a UN project in Pakistan for maternal, newborn, and child health projects for the poor in Sindh, a media report from Islamabad said on November 27.

Dr Sissel Volan, Norway's deputy head of mission in Pakistan, said: "The Norwegian government is committed to improving the quality of health care for pregnant women and infants."

Swat: USAID signed a \$0.5 million grant to 11 local NGOs for mother child healthcare in Swat as reported on November 21 at Islamabad.

The grant will be given under the USAID's six-year \$93 million worth of Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns (PAIMAN) project, says a US statement. It said the NGOs would use the grant to train midwives, establish birthing centers and vaccinate mothers against tetanus. ☞

6 Babies Died from Tainted Milk?

China's Health Ministry said six babies may have died after consuming tainted milk powder, up from a previous official toll of three, and announced a six-fold increase in its tally of infants sickened in the scandal — to nearly 300,000.

The ministry said on December 1 that authorities across the country found that 294,000 babies had suffered from urinary problems after consuming milk powder tainted with melamine. ☞

UN Pushes Pakistan for Better Allocations

UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Hilde Johnson pressed the Pakistani government for enhancing health and education budgets in the next fiscal year and approaching international donors to seek assistance for upgrading health and education facilities, according to media reports on November 27.

Johnson said Pakistani women and children were vulnerable to poverty, insecurity and natural disasters. She said 2007 had reported death of 400,000 children under five and the numbers were likely to swell this year. She said the UNICEF would try to secure more funds from donor countries for Pakistan. She pushed Islamabad for arranging more funds from donor agencies.

She said delicate security situation had displaced over 200,000 locals from Bajaur Agency and thousands more from Swat since August. She said about two thirds of the displaced persons, mostly living in camps, were children. She regretted killing of civilians, especially children, in fight between security forces and militants and urged quarters concerned to do the needful for preventing such fatalities.

She said 94 in every 1,000 infants died before reaching the age of five, and over half of them would not even survive for a single month due to complications at birth and diarrhea, pneumonia, nutritional deficiencies and preventable diseases. She said exclusive breastfeeding to infants, could reduce high mortality by 13 percent. She said 36 mothers died in birth a day, more than one death every hour, which could be prevented by checkups during pregnancy and got advice on nutrition and the importance of skilled care for a safe delivery. She said under current hard times, poor families and vulnerable people, also children, especially girls, suffered. ☞

267, 269 Children Deprived of Polio Drops

An official of the Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI) said that during the polio vaccination campaign in the NWFP 267,269 children could not be immunized in parts of the province.

"We have recorded 9,858 refusals while 257,411 children were inaccessible," said acting deputy director EPI, during a briefing in Peshawar on November 25.

NWFP Health Minister appealed to parents to help the polio teams in administering anti-polio drops to their children of below the age of five years to protect them from permanent disability..

Statistics: The figure of new cases of Polio has reached 100 in 2008 throughout the country with 29 cases from the Punjab. ☞

Medical Aid for Diabetic Children

The National Institute of Child Health (NICH) in Karachi is extending education and disease management support to about 500 registered children suffering from diabetes with the cooperation of an NGO.

Speaking On World Diabetes Day on November 14 Prof Raza said there were more than 61,000 diabetic children with type-1 DM though only a few thousand of those had been diagnosed so far. He highlighted NGOs' role in the healthcare facilities and said that this Welfare Society had been launched to provide free treatment to diabetic patients registered at the NICH. ☞

SPARC CRC ACTIVITIES

PUNJAB

Media Consultations on Violence against Children

October 20: In connection with the International Day on Violence against Children, Punjab CRCs held media consultations to discuss child rights violations prevailing in their respective districts. CRC Faisalabad CRC Dera Ghazi Khan, CRC Toba Tek Singh and CRC Muzaffargarh actively pursued media to ensure sensitized reporting on the issue. The participants vowed to initiate change process from home and spread the message to other communities as well.

CRC Faisalabad Monthly Meeting

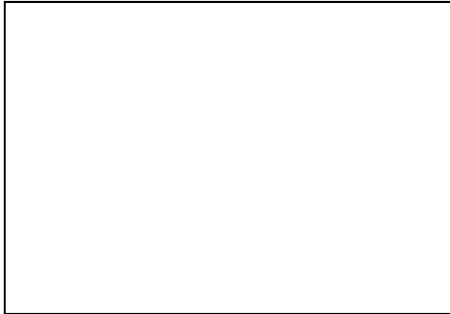
October 20: CRC Faisalabad conducted its monthly meeting in which 22 members participated. During the meeting all the members decided that a children's fair will be arranged on November 20- Universal Children's Day. The legal coordinator of the CRC provided free legal aid to three juvenile prisoners who were then released on bail.

Protest against Live Burial of Girls

September 15: CRC members, lawyers, media and representatives from the NGOs staged a protest in front of the Faisalabad Press Club to condemn live burial of girls and women hailing from Naseereabad, Balochistan. They said that such inhuman acts damages the country's image

CRC Muzaffargarh Jail Visited

October 3: CRC Muzaffargarh held a meeting with the superintendent jail and



visited the juvenile ward to observe the living conditions of juvenile prisoners living there. During the visit, jail authorities demanded a teacher and books so that education could be provided to the inmates. An ailing inmate was sent to hospital by the coordinator with the consent of the superintendent.

CRC Sialkot Concern over Camel Jockeys

October 25: CRC Sialkot during its monthly meeting discussed the issue of camel jockeys. A resolution was unanimously passed demanding the Government to provide funds for the rehabilitation of the camel jockeys and legislation for preventing such abuse in future.

SINDH

CRC Hyderabad Eid Gifts Distributed

October 27: Eid gifts were distributed in Youthful Offender and Women Jail Hyderabad. Manager Child Protection SPARC Kashif Bajeer, Shafique Kandhro and legal adviser Shahzado Saleem also collected the data of young offenders and held a meeting with the Deputy Inspector General Jail. During October, five juvenile offenders were released through legal support from SPARC Hyderabad.

DIG Visits Bonded Laborers' Camp

October 27: Deputy Inspector General Police Hyderabad visited Azad Nagar bonded labor camp on SPARC's request. During the visit, 350 brick kiln workers submitted applications against the brick

Good Practices

CRC Muzaffargarh traced families of two missing children who were found at a bus stop in Muzaffargarh.

The CRC also provided free medical aid to a deserving boy of Mohalla Gaziabad Muzaffargarh. Moreover, CRC coordinator visited district hospital to see the children injured in a bus accident.

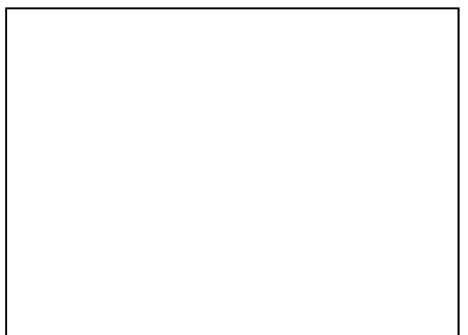
kiln owners and demanded action against them. DIG Police Hyderabad ensured that he will take actions against the culprits who had made their captives to suffer in bondage.

Police Training

October 20: SPARC and CRC Hyderabad arranged police training at Police Training School Hyderabad. 23 Sub Inspectors of Hyderabad Division participated in the training. Kashif Bajeer delivered a lecture on the JJSO (Juvenile Justice System Ordinance) 2000, UN CRC and Probation system. He said under the JJSO, cases pertaining to under-18 children should be dealt by exclusive courts. When a child is arrested it is mandatory on the Station House Officer to inform the probation officer as well as parents. The level of knowledge among officials was later assessed by a questionnaire. It was found that awareness level increased from 20 percent to 80 percent after the training.

Rally against Torture of Minor Child

November 17: CRC Hyderabad conducted a rally against torture of minor child Sarmad Noor. Bonded Labor project coordinator Shafique kandhro and others



rallied in front of the Hyderabad Press Club and demanded that a case be registered against the culprits. They said on the midnight of November 10, Atif Shaikh, a relative of Pakistan Peoples Party leader Fida Dero entered forcibly in the house of Noor Muhammad Bajeer, a social activist and tortured his wife and their minor son Sarmad, but the police refused to register complaint.

Birth Registration

A survey of Sikandarabad Hari Camp Kotri was carried out by CRC coordinator Shafique Kandhro in October. Birth registration forms of children were filled. In 2007 CRC Hyderabad had facilitated 161 children in receiving birth registration certificates and now CRC has planned to process 200 certificates in 2008, out of which 181 forms have already been filled. Later the coordinator also met with Union Council Nazim for processing of birth certificates.

Meeting with NADRA Staff

CRC Hyderabad conducted a meeting with Nadra Kotri staff for processing Computerized National Identity Cards of haris at Hari Camps. Project coordinator submitted application for CNIC of 600 freed bonded laborers. Nadra Kotri MRV 7 received the application and sent it to Karachi office for approval.

CRC Jamshoro

October 29: A meeting of CRC Jamshoro members was held at Union Council-1 Nazim office. Union Council Nazim and SPARC Sindh representatives mutually decided that CRC will conduct survey of children that are working in factories at Kotri.

CRC Dadu

Violence Against Children

October 15: CRC Dadu organized media consultative workshop at its office with the support of Save the Children, Sweden. People from different walks of life as well as religious clerics gathered in the office of CRC Dadu, to observe the Day on Violence Against Children .

The participants also signed a petition with a demand to chalk out strategies and formulate policies for the well-being and welfare of children. They called upon the government functionaries to fulfill their

commitment on child rights, and enforce the laws in letter and spirit.

CRC Mirpurkhas Media Consultation

October 17: CRC Mirpurkhas organized a media consultation workshop at Press club Mirpurkhas. The participants, in a joint resolution, stressed upon the government to approve the draft National Child Protection Bill.

Coordinator CRC presented case studies on corporal punishment in schools and child right scenario in government schools of the district. A local doctor and social worker shared the information he got from the ailing patients. He linked poverty with poor child health and stated that due to government's negligence the children of the rural areas suffer from preventable diseases.

Speakers also demanded the immediate recruitment of probation officers in all districts of the province, especially in the remote areas of Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar and Umerkot.

NWFP

Media Consultations on Violence against Children

SPARC CRC Mardan, Swabi, Malakand and Nowshera with the cooperation of Save the Children, Sweden held media consultations from October 13- 20, on violence against children focusing on corporal punishment as a major thematic area. Around 100 journalists from print and electronic media representing their respective press clubs in these three districts attended the event.

Participant were briefed on the evils and dangers of violence against children. Focusing corporal punishment as a major threat, speakers said that in order to eliminate the menace of corporal

punishment joint and concerted efforts need to be made. Participants agreed that corporal punishment is a major factor in high drop out rate from schools.

They also expressed concern over the growing number of cases and trends of violence against children whether sexual, physical or mental.

CRC Chitral Chitral Jail Visit

October 11: CRC Chitral and SPARC's Said Afzal visited District Jail Chitral and held a meeting with the superintendent jail and discussed problems and needs pertaining to juvenile inmates. There were 11 juvenile inmates in the prison. During the visit SPARC also provided recreational and sports goods.

CRC D I Khan Consultative Meeting with Civil Society

November 20: On Universal Children's Day, CRC Dera Ismail Khan held a consultative meeting with civil society members on child rights and issues of child protection. State of child rights, issues of child protection particularly children in jails were also debated. They demanded a separate ministry for children and enactment of Child Protection Bill.

CRC Mansehra Mansehra Jail Visit

November 7: CRC Abbottabad lawyer and SPARC NWFP manager visited District Jail Mansehra. There were 43 inmates in the juvenile section. All of them were under trial. Three of them were without services of a lawyer. CRC Advocate committed to deal with legal aid. Moreover, inmates demanded that the windows should be properly sealed to protect them from cold weather. There was only one female juvenile prisoners.

CRC Chitral Role of Elected Representatives for Child Rights

October 12: CRC Chitral and SPARC Peshawar jointly organized a one-day consultation with the representatives of the local government. Participants of the workshop urged the district government to earmark a handsome amount for the protection and promotion of child rights

in its budget and provide all concessions and facilities guaranteed by the Convention on Rights of the Child. The district government was also asked to work for the provision of health facilities and education to the out-of-school children so that the State's future is secured.

The Nazimeen assured of their support and use of their influence in the district council for getting funds for the purpose. They said that they will raise the issue at their own sessions and will try their best to appoint labor inspectors'. They also said that in order to know the exact number of child laborers in the district, child labor survey will be carried out in the district.

CRC Bunner

Resolution Banning Child Labor Passed

November 3: Due to CRC Bunner concerted efforts, District Assembly on November 3, passed a resolution banning child labor in marble factories in Bunner. According to the CRC Bunner there are some 260 marble factories functioning in Bunner with 1,200 child laborers.

Universal Children's Day in Jail

November 20: Universal Children's Day was observed by the CRC Bunner with juvenile prisoners in the jail. Songs, religious sermons and other colorful activities were performed by the children.

CRC also organized an awareness walk catering to general public on the issues and problems of juvenile prisoners which was joined by a large number of people from different walks of life. ☞

CRCs Awarded

SPARC Child Rights Committees were awarded for their work during the year for the well being of children in their respective districts.

CRC Faisalabad grabbed award of best CRC across Punjab. CRC Swabi was awarded for consistent work on child rights throughout the year. CRC Mithi from

Sindh was declared the winner owing to dedicated work towards bonded labor. ☞

SPARC NWFP Legal Aid To Juvenile Inmates

Providing free legal aid to juveniles is the major goal of SPARC. To achieve this task SPARC Manager Law NWFP provided free legal aid to 24 juveniles while volunteer lawyers from child rights committees of NWFP provided free legal aid to 27 juvenile prisoners.

S #	Name of CRC	Cases
1	Swabi	9
2	Swat	2
3	Mardan	8
4	Bunner	5
5	Karak	3
6	SPARC Peshawar	24
	Total	51

SPARC PUNJAB Legal Aid

SPARC Punjab provided free legal aid to 12 juvenile prisoners whereas CRCs provided legal help to 22 inmates.

District	Cases
Okara	2
Jhelum	4
Kasur	8
Rajanpur	4
Muzaffargarh	1
Rahim Yar Khan	3
Lahore	12
Total	34

Cricket Match Played in BI&JJ Faisalabad

To promote recreation and sports within premises of jail, a cricket match was organized for the juvenile prisoners of the Borstal Institute and Juvenile Jail, Faisalabad on October 29.

Match was played between the inmates' team and SPARC CRC team. The jail staff was present in the pavilion. Juvenile team had a comfortable win over the opponents. They were awarded a trophy and sports goods. ☞

Internally Displaced Persons

Cont from Page 1

in NWFP, earthquake in Balochistan and flood in Sindh is not new. Children have unique needs that need special attention, strategies and mechanisms. Their issues of schooling, protection, repatriation etc should be taken up by the government. He stressed that when children in emergencies are displaced, their rights should be protected.

Mr S.M.Zafar

Mr S. M. Zafar from Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs said unfortunately the number of IDPs is constantly increasing and it is happening when economic crisis has hit the nation but what is important is the motivation to work for betterment of people. IDPS face numerous problems and start to live an uncertain life losing the comfort of their own space. This is itself a great crisis. He promised to support SPARC and UNICEF and work on the recommendations that were generated from this platform.

Mr Irfan Raza

Mr Irfan Raza of SPARC said that for the last many years SPARC has been taking up new and emerging issues relating to children such as, militancy and children, corporal punishment and now the impact of displacement on children in the various areas of Pakistan due to conflict, and natural catastrophes.

Mr Rafiq Khan

Mr Rafiq Khan SPARC in his presentation on child protection issues for children said "every week at least 500 children are separated from their families and there is no strategy to reunify them with their families. Another major setback is the extremely

limited role of National Disaster Management Authority in alleviating the problems faced by the people and particularly by the children. Children in camps suffer from various health issues such as communicable diseases, malnourishment, lack of education and most importantly lack of security and safety. Almost 69% children in four IDP camps (Kacha Gully, Sheikh Yaseen, Benazir Complex and Palosa) suffer from malnourishment of various types. And this is a story of only four camps".

Mr Iqbal Detho

Underscoring the need for legislation for displaced people with particular reference to children SPARC's Mr Iqbal Detho said "disregard for the minimum rights of IDPs is another dimension of their plight. The responsibility for the protection of IDPs rests first and foremost with local and national authorities. Normative framework for IDPs needs to be designed so that it incorporates humanitarian assistance for the promotion and protection of children and women."

Dr Mohammad Danish

Dr Mohammad Danish from Seher Balochistan said according to the UN estimates 84,000 people were displaced in conflict in 2006 in Dera Bugti and Kohlu. Thousands of people died of starvation because the roads were closed. The people were ignored and there is no authority who has taken responsibility for the welfare of the displaced people.

Mr Anwar-ul-Haq

UN Advisor reflected on the working of OCHA (office of Coordination for Humanitarian

Affairs) Mr Anwar-ul-Haq said that there are 25-30 million IDPs around the world. He said OCHA puts great emphasis on the assessment of the needs of the displaced people and make arrangement for the resources and Pakistan is the only country where humanitarian reforms are not coordinated therefore cluster system was introduced here.

Mr Greg Shulze

Mr Greg Shulze Country Representative Solidarity Center talking about Trade Unions said that they are effective and legitimate. They are the most democratic and representative civil society organization. "I visited the coal mines and I did not find child labor there nor discrimination against women." The NGO and INGOs should understand the importance of trade unions in the country.

Ms Khaleda Mansoor

Member National Assembly Ms Khaleda Mansoor said the biggest problem for IDPS is water and sanitation especially for the women and children. A NA committee was formed that collected money for the IDPs and for earthquake victims in Balochistan. One can see small children who need our help and the committee will now provide money and warm clothes etc to them.

Ms Riffat Sardar

Unicef's Ms Riffat Sardar said almost 300,000 children are effected by humanitarian crisis and disasters. A majority of the displaced are women and children. They suffer sexual abuse and other violence and many are forced to join the militants. Unicef used mules to send life saving medicines and food to these people. 944 separated children were identified in eight camps and through its helpline in Mardan were united with their parents.

Internally Displaced Persons

Contd. From Page 11

Mr Ahsan Sadiq- Punjab Police

Mr Ahsan Sadiq
Assistant Inspector
Punjab Police said

internal displacement has to be seen in the light of poverty as well. We have seen that in poor countries the problems are magnified mainly because of the poor governance, corruption and weak employment opportunities. Dealing with IDPs is not a part of the police syllabi neither any guideline is provided in this context. He called for an open discussion regarding strategy on training police on IDP issues.

Senator Kulsoom Parveen

Senator Kulsoom Parveen said the issue of children is important and it is necessary to work on it.

SPARC has turned a non issue into a issue and it is commendable. There are incidents where the already victimized children especially girls were sold after the October 2005 earthquake. She said that we are facing all these problems because we have moved away from good practices. Moreover there is no legislation on children. She said we are ready to work with SPARC to make the world a better place for children in Pakistan.

Mr Anees Jillani

Mr Anees Jillani,
Board member
SPARC gave the details of the number of IDPs in Pakistan and said

the government has not given any figures of the IDPs. He added the IDPs in Swat are highest in number in Asia and the estimates are almost that of 400,000 to 900,000 people have moved from their homes. He added that it is not easy for NGOs to go to these areas and provide help besides the government has enough resources to help these people without looking outside the country for financial aid for these victims of displacement. ☞

SPARC Demands Promotion of Child Rights in Pakistan

The SPARC CRCs from 46 districts in Pakistan issued the following demands for the promotion and propagation of Child rights in Pakistan on November 12.

We observed that children in Pakistan have been adversely affected by the recent global economic crisis, rising inflation, recent floods, and military operations in North West frontier and Balochistan. Over 300, 000 children are in miserable conditions in Balochistan, as a result of the earthquake. There is a lack of support for street children in urban areas, the involvement of children in armed /tribal conflicts and an insensitivity to the treatment of children by law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, the lack of political commitments to children by, for example, all political parties, demonstrates the insignificant attention given to half the country's population.

We demand:

- The enactment of the Child Protection Bill, and implementation of the National Child Protection Policy (draft).
- We demand an effective Child Protection Authority and/or a separate Children's Ministry empowered to protect the rights of children in Pakistan.
- The ratification of the two optional protocols to the UN CRC regarding the sale and trafficking of children, and their involvement in armed conflict, and other relevant international treaties.
- Pakistan must prohibit the employment of children under 14 years in all occupations according to the ILO convention 138 dealing with the minimum age of admission to employment. Also, the employment of children in hazardous occupations should be completely prohibited for all children (under 18), in accordance with ILO convention 182 dealing with the worst forms of child labor.

- Special attention to the needs of children in emergencies, such as shelter, food, health, education, resettlement and reintegration.
- The establishment of a parliamentary committee to review existing laws on children .
- The establishment of an expert committee to review procedural flaws in the criminal/juvenile justice system, particularly homicide laws in Pakistan regarding the killings of young girls in the name of honor, which are weak, contradictory and allow space for mediations and other soft options.
- Traditional or cultural practices in the name of Jirga which discriminates against children and particularly girl child.
- Until the relevant amendments in the law are incorporated regarding the abolition of death penalty, a moratorium on the imposition and execution of death penalty for youth offenders should be declared.
- Through Standing Operating procedures (SOP), the organs of the juvenile justice system such as police, prosecution, probation, judiciary and jail staff should be directed to follow the proper procedures at all stages from arrest, detention, and custody, to trial and imprisonment. Further more, they should be trained and sensitized on child rights. ☞

SPARC, US Department of State Sign Agreement

US department of State and SPARC NWFP signed an agreement on September 9 for the establishment of children's parks in Bannu.

The objective of the project is to promote and protect child's right to leisure and play. Two parks will be constructed at Azim Kali and Miryan and children, both girls and boys will benefit from it. ☞

Children's Parliament Takes Oath

Contd. From Page 1

A total of 34 members (children) from Islamabad, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Mithi, Kohlu in Balochistan, Balakot, Karachi, Lahore etc. elected through transparent elections from their respective schools attended the first session of the parliament.

Parliamentarian from Peshawar Mr Saad Bashir said SPARC has provided children with a platform to raise awareness about child

rights and issues relating to children such as child labor, education, child abuse etc. We will raise awareness among the adults of the country through democratic means.

Parliamentarian from Mithi said, "We raise slogans and put money in our pockets but do we have examples of improving the situation of children in the country. We need to work for child rights so that every child is given a chance to enjoy his/her rights. We are not only the future but also the present of the country."

Ms Komal from Punjab defining democracy in Pakistan said "it was a government of the bureaucrats, and mislead masses. Real democracy is when the state is run through mutual consent, of the citizens and the government."

Parliamentarian from Karachi Ms Bakhtawar in her fiery speech said a change can only come when the girl child is saved from harmful traditional practices and children are not made target of abuse and violence and instead education would be provided to them.

The parliamentarian from Balakot in her tearful speech talked about the 2005 earthquake that destroyed everything in her area of Balakot. She thanked SPARC for providing friendly spaces for traumatized children of Balakot and asked for the support of the people for their betterment.

Ms Munazza Batool from FnSt (Für Die Freiheit) who has supported SPARC in the making and organizing of this parliament said "all through life decisions and advises are imposed on children. The parents and teachers never ask children what they want. We need to develop democratic values, and behaviors so that democratic norms are promoted in the country."

Parliamentarian from Balochistan who hails from Kohlu said that thousands of children have lost their lives to continuing conflict, rocket launchers, bomb blasts, starvation and hunger. He said through this parliament I would like to bring a positive change in my area and improve the lives of the children in Balochistan.

Mr Zafarullah Khan from Center for Civic Education welcomed SPARC's initiative of setting up this Children's parliament and

asked the children to raise their voice to bring forth their issues such as clean drinking water, traffic jams etc, and also listen to others and accept their views. In democracy, "due process" takes time, based on deliberations unlike dictatorship.

MNA Haji M. Akram congratulated the Children's Parliament and asked children to refrain from nepotism, self centered approach and provincialism. MNA Aqil Anjum from Islamabad lamented that if education had been given priority situation would have been different. MNA Faisalabad Ms Khalida Mansoor said children's parliament can also hold the country's national assembly accountable to what they are doing for children and congratulated SPARC on bringing young leadership to the forefront.

Mr Anees Jillani Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan administered oath to the newly elected parliamentarians of Pakistan. He also advised the children to take on small issues such as keeping the country clean and community help etc.

Elections for portfolios were also held. On November 13, the inauguration of assembly was held where Ms Marvi of UNDP gave an introduction to Parliament working, rules and procedures and constitution. ⓧ

Punjab: Giving Voice to Children

SPARC Punjab Organized its annual provincial conference at Faisalabad, Tehsil Municipal Authority Complex on October 30 which was attended by 300 child right activists.

Mr Rana Zahid Tausif, City District Nazim addressed the participants on *child rights situation in context of devolution plan*. He said that child rights' monitoring is done at district level by locally elected representatives. According to him, quality of education at union council level has been enhanced due to monitoring by the district government.

Mrs. Anjum Safdar, Member Provincial Assembly elaborated on *harmful traditions and practices* and regretted that people do not pay heed to problems of the children in their surroundings. She said that traditions as marriage with holy book, vani, swara, denying right to education affect girl child adversely.

Mr Malik Amjad Hussain, Advocate stressed on panel of lawyers, separate trial and juvenile courts, in reference to the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000.

Mr. Iftikhar Mubarik from Sahil conversed on *child sexual abuse in Punjab*. He shared some facts and figures of this evil. He shared that children face abuse in vicinity of their homes, at schools and workplaces. He further said that wrong touch and look also falls in sexual abuse.

Doctor Imtiaz Doger, Professor Punjab Medical College Faisalabad discussed *psychological affects of child abuse*. In case of sexual abuse a child faces the worst form of mental trauma. He/she hesitates to disclose the incident to his/her guardians.

Mr. Aamir Hameed Mughal, Regional Manager SPARC Punjab verbalized on *civil society perspective regarding child rights*. He emphasized that it is the responsibility of both the government and civil society to secure the rights of their next generation. He said that

SPARC is present in the remotest areas of the country and playing its role actively through its campaigns, lobbying and advocacy.

Chaudhary Abdul Ghafoor, Minister for Prisons Punjab informed the participants that government has enhanced the daily food allowance of the prisoners from Rs 17 to Rs 40. He committed to stand for child rights in the assembly. He agreed that a separate Ministry for Children should be established and promised to take it up with Chief Minister. Keeping in view the efforts of SPARC concerning the juveniles in jails, he granted permission to Regional Manager SPARC as *non official visitor* to all Punjab jails.

Mr. Tahir Iqbal, CRC coordinator Faisalabad in his concluding remarks called upon the government, civil society and media, to actively pursue child rights. ☞

Juvenile Prisoners towards Betterment

SPARC has established a computer center in Haripur jail, NWFP for juvenile prisoners to keep them in-sync with modern technology. It is hoped that upon release, they may benefit from it.

A batch of 26 students was trained in basic and medium level courses of computer sciences.

Eight of them have completed training in coral draw, 11 in internet operation, one each in Microsoft Word and

Microsoft Excel, four in windows and one in Adobe Photoshop. ☞

SPARC Staffer Awarded

SPARC's Salam Dharejo was among the five Pakistani journalists selected from 13 developing countries in Asia for the 2008 *Developing Asia Journalism Awards (DAJA) and Workshop* organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Institute, in Tokyo in November.

The event recognizes excellence in journalistic reporting by those covering development trends and issues in the region. Prizes for 2008 will be awarded for reporting in four strategic areas of development - environment, governance, infrastructure and regional integration. Salam Dharejo was selected for his articles on infrastructure. ☞

Bill to Amend 'Primitive' Jail Laws Soon

The NWFP Minister for Prisons said on November 19 in Peshawar that with the consultation of concerned departments, a draft of amendment bill would be presented in the provincial assembly soon to make necessary amendments in the 'primitive' jail laws in order to ensure implementation of the proposed jail reforms program. The provincial minister stressed the authorities of home, health and police departments to fully cooperate with the prisons department to provide necessary treatment facilities to the sick prisoners.

The meeting was told that the proposed jail reforms program was a two pronged: reforms in prisoners related issued and reforms in staff related issues. Under the plan, Borstal institutions would be established in different jails at a cost of Rs22 million. Besides, computer literacy centers and technical vocational centers would be set up in jails to give education and teach professional skills to the prisoners. With the involvement of industrialists, prison industries would be modernized and jail rules would be amended with the consultation of the concerned departments. ❧

Fund Shortage Blocks Jail Plan for Women, Children

Unavailability of funds has emerged as a stumbling block to the realization of the Senate Standing Committee for Interior's proposal, floated in August, to establish a separate jail for female and juvenile prisoners in Rawalpindi, according to a media report on November 24.

Adiala Jail is the only prison in the city but it's overcrowded. The jail can accommodate 80 women and 50 juvenile prisoners but over 150 women along with their kids and 100 adolescents are kept there. One inmate said that the unhygienic conditions in jail expose us to various diseases. She said no female

doctor was available to women prisoners on jail premises. She claimed children as small as five years old are kept in the barracks exposing them to unfavorable environment. She said these children could never become responsible citizens after release.

The woman demanded that the Punjab chief minister order early construction of separate jail for women and juvenile prisoners. He said under the plan, the separate jail would be a model prison having a vocational training centre, schools, mosques, a playground and other necessary facilities. ❧

Pakistani Children in Afghan Jails

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on November 6 issued notices to the Federation and the Foreign Affairs and Interior ministries on a petition seeking repatriation of 150 Pakistani children allegedly detained in Afghan jails.

Petitioner said a British journalist, Yvonne Ridely, had revealed that more than 150 orphans, including Dr Aafia's son and daughter, were still detained in covert jails in Afghanistan.

Many children were shifted to foreign jails when the incumbent Interior Secretary was serving as the Sindh inspector general police, the petitioner alleged. ❧

UN Urged to End Executions of Juvenile Offenders

As UN Member States began debate on the rights of the child, more than 300 NGOs from 82 countries called on the UN General Assembly to take urgent action to end executions for crimes committed by children, Human Rights Watch said on October 14 in New York

The vast majority of States enforce the absolute prohibition on the death penalty for individuals who committed crimes as children, in compliance with international law. But the overall number of such executions has been rising. Five countries – Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Pakistan and Yemen – have carried out 32 of these executions since January 2005, and have well over 100 other juvenile offenders on death row.

"Groups from all over the world are saying that these executions are an outrage," said researcher on children's rights for the Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch. "The General Assembly should demand that countries stop these killings immediately and pass reforms so that no one is ever again executed for a crime committed as a child." ❧

Child Offenders Still Facing Execution in Iran

Iran will not hang minors convicted of drug trafficking but those found guilty of murder could still face the gallows, a senior judicial official said on October 20 in Tehran. The comments by assistant attorney general throw in doubt assurances he gave earlier that juveniles offenders under the age of 18 faced a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and not execution. Many activists initially welcomed Iran's change of policy, which followed a campaign co-sponsored by CRIN in which hundreds of NGOs and child rights organizations signed up to a petition calling for an end to executions in five target countries. ❧

Boy Killed in Clash with Classmates

A student of class-VIII was murdered outside government Iqra high school during a scuffle with his classmates and an outsider in Hyderabad on November 3.

A brawl took place between the deceased who was the class monitor, and other class-mates in the school. His classmates were angry over him for reporting their names for punishment for indiscipline. After school timing, they again clashed.

Farhan, who worked in a hair saloon brought scissors and attacked Moeen on left side of his chest, causing a wound in his heart. The boy died on his way to hospital. The assailant escaped.

30,000 Children Rendered Homeless by Earthquake

Over 70,000 people, including 30,000 children were left homeless in quake-hit Balochistan, Unicef said on October 31 in Wam, as health workers warned that deadly diseases were spreading. Unicef said the government assessed the situation in the worst-hit districts of the province and were “concerned about the urgent needs of children and women”. “With winter closing in, the most urgent needs of the survivors are shelter, safe drinking water, food, warm clothing and emergency medical assistance,” Unicef said.

Clean water was a “priority” and Unicef teams had started providing water and sanitation services, and food supplements for pregnant women and young children, it said. “Children are especially vulnerable to diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera. Ziarat district health officer said “due to the cold hundreds of children are being treated for pneumonia, abdominal diseases, diarrhoea and chest problems.”

“We fear the death toll will rise. Such diseases, if not treated in time, are life-threatening,” he said. Tents, blankets, clothes, medicine and antibiotics were still in short supply.

“Our children are dying, help us,” cried one man, in Khanozai high in the mountains.

‘Murders’ of Unwanted Babies

The silence in Mowach Goth graveyard, mainly reserved for bodies of abandoned persons, is peculiar. There are many small graves, without any headstones. The graves are of those unwanted newborns whose right to life was snatched by their own parents, a media report in Karachi said on Nov. 2.

These unfortunate souls are rejected not only by their parents, but the state, too. There is no official record of their birth and death, while the police do not register an FIR to conduct post-mortem for determining the actual cause of mortality.

This violation of the law notwithstanding, theirs is the case of cold-blooded murder.

“We appeal to the people not to kill their babies and give them to us. We will provide them with food and shelter,” said Bilquis Edhi of Edhi Center. Sadly the number of such cases have increased in the city over the years, she said.

“We recover about 20 to 25 bodies of mature and immature infants every month, most of them girls. In April this year, Edhi recovered 37 bodies. They are recovered from all over Karachi, followed by

Islamabad and Lahore, from where on average 10 to 15 bodies are discovered per month.”

The bodies, often disfigured and mauled by stray animals, birds and insects and at times burnt, are recovered usually in plastic bags from garbage dumps, sewers, drains and filthy narrow lanes.

“At times, babies are rescued from the spot, but die later, some, mothers leave their children in cradles set up at Edhi centers who are later handed over to families interested in adoption only if they fulfill a certain criteria,” she further added.

Children Drawn into Afghan Conflict: Unicef

A fghan children are being recruited as suicide bombers and drawn into the military, a senior Unicef official said on November 23 in Kabul. "It is clear that there are stories and allegations of recruitment on the different sides, but we don't have enough documentation to say how bad it is," Johnson said.

A Unicef task force was set up this year to document the problem and Johnson said it was pushing the Afghan government to better verify the ages of the men it was taking into the armed forces. There have been reports that men under the internationally accepted age of 18 are being recruited.

More than 7,400 under-age soldiers were demobilized in a government program in 2003, two years after the fall of the Taliban. There were also cases of children being used as suicide bombers by insurgents but the numbers had not been established, Johnson said. ☞

UK Warns against Forced Marriage

B ritain is taking a tougher stand against forced marriage with new powers to clamp down on the practice, Foreign Secretary said on November 24 in London on the eve of his visit to Pakistan.

He said government action could only go so far though, and it was time that communities spoke out against forced marriages. Britain's Forced Marriages Unit (FMU), set up in 2005, says 65 percent of its known cases involve Pakistan. Forced marriages have led to suicides and 'honor killing' murders in Britain, shocking a nation that has absorbed immigrant cultures.

On November 26 Miliband visited Kalar Syedan, notorious for 'forced' marriages between elderly British men of Pakistani origin and young Pakistani women and high divorce ratio among such couples. He met a select group of British nationals of Pakistani origin to discuss the problem relating to 'forced marriages.'

Referring to the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act, he said it would enable courts to prevent such marriages and punish people forcing anyone into marriage. It also provided a way out for people forced into such marriages, he said.

A local resident said a large number of girls lured into marrying aged men were divorced usually from three to six months after the marriage. ☞

Conference Proposed on Juvenile Justice

To assess and improvise the condition of jails and prisoners, a meeting of Provincial Jail Welfare Committee was held in the committee room of Home Department on October 14, chaired by the provincial minister prisons. The minister prisons asked the organizations to adopt focused coordinating efforts for better results. He also suggested organizing a donor conference in this regard.

SPARC's Jahanzeb Khan suggested the minister to organize local conference instead of a donor conference owing to prevailing law and order situation as well as cost effectiveness. He further suggested that local industrialists and philanthropists can be invited to the Central Jail Peshawar. All the members of committee including the minister agreed to arrange a local conference in the jail. ☞

Government Fails to Block Pornography

The government has lost its battle against Internet pornography, as obscene website are accessible in Internet cafés of the twin cities a media reports on October 30 in Islamabad.

Obscene websites are viewed on almost every computer and almost every computer had the record for surfing of pornographic websites in Internet Cafes'.

A computer engineer, said, "Unhealthy use of Internet has promoted cybersex addiction." Obscene websites are blocked not only in many Muslim countries but also in secular countries such as China, Thailand, Singapore and Canada, for the exposure of children to pornographic material is harmful for them. There is a dire need to protect children from its harmful affects.

A senior citizen, said that parents could stop their children from exposure to pornographic website by keeping computer in family rooms rather than bedrooms of children. ☞

Briton Gets 20 Years for Child Abuse: On November 19 a court in Albania (Tirana) found a 57-year-old Scottish man guilty of abusing children in orphanages and jailed him for 20 years. The verdict described Brown as "a threat to society" and said he would be deported from Albania after completing his sentence. ☞

Nobel Laureates Call for Education in Conflict Zones

Nobel Peace Prize winners called on governments to act to ensure that millions of children in war zones can go to school. In an open letter sent on November 20 to world leaders and combatants in war zones, 31 Nobel laureates said that more than 70 million children around the world did not have the chance of an education and more than half of these lived in conflict areas.

The Nobel laureates included former US President Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama, South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, detained Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and organizations such as Amnesty International.

“War and conflict are perpetrated by adults. But every adult was once a child and grew up with experiences and guidance that shaped their lives. At the heart of this lies education,” they said in the letter, backing a campaign by British charity Save the Children.

The Nobel laureates called on governments and other parties to armed conflicts to respect schools as places of peace and safety, where children could learn free from violence or fear of recruitment into the armed forces. ☞

Drive to Protect Child Rights Launched

The Social Welfare Department, in co-operation with the Unicef, launched a drive to protect child rights in commemoration of the Universal Children’s Day according to reports on November 21.

Social Welfare Secretary said that the campaign, *Children our Responsibility*, was aimed at transforming children into productive citizens by protecting their rights and providing them education.

Secretary said that this campaign would help evolve a system that would ensure child security and provide them with a conducive environment to grow and progress in life through education.

He said the government had allotted top priority to protecting child rights, adding that NGOs had played an effective role by supplementing government endeavor.

He said that under the Children Rehabilitation Program, besides preventing sexual abuse, special attention was being focused on those children who are involved in begging and the homeless. ☞

Draft Child Protection Policy Ready for Cabinet

The Special Education and Social Welfare Ministry has drafted a child protection policy, which will be submitted to the cabinet for approval shortly, said Federal Minister for Social Welfare on November 20 in Islamabad.

She said the Child Protection Bill was also ready and it will be tabled in the parliament soon after approval of the policy. She said in the area of legislation, provisions of 78 laws relating to children had been reviewed and compiled.

“The government is fully aware of the fact that child protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect is the least researched area in Pakistan. In this regard, the government in collaboration with UNICEF has established National Child Protection Information and Management System for Child Welfare and Development to strengthen monitoring of child rights” she said.

Unicef’s Mogwanja said child abuse was a global phenomenon and equally prevalent in developed and developing countries. ☞

Call for Making Primary Education Free, Compulsory

Academics and research scholars called for implementing a national program for free and compulsory primary education to bring about universal literacy and strengthen school education.

Speaking at the two-day National Conference on Education on November 26 in Hyderabad they expressed grave concern over deterioration of quality of primary education in the country, particularly in Sindh.

Speakers said serious drawback of the educational system was the neglect of school education and that the provinces had not been encouraged and financed adequately to improve school education or bring all the children to schools.

They said girl’s education suffered from cultural constraints, gender discrimination, economic priorities, religious interpretations, political exploitations, vested interests etc.

Another academic emphasized the importance of a “balanced” education system for promoting values of democracy, social justice, integrity, humility, tolerance and good citizenship. The education policies were based on a weak conceptual framework and guided by bureaucratic, political and donor-driven agendas, the scholar said and added that the policies failed to make a major difference on the quality of education, giving rise to all kinds of social ills in the society. ☞

Move to Ban Corporal Punishment in Africa

A wide range of child rights organizations from across Africa supported by Save the Children Sweden have presented a submission to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Addis Ababa requesting the Committee to issue a written statement urging States in Africa to prohibit corporal and other forms of humiliating punishment of children in all settings and to promote measures to implement and promote this prohibition.

Filker

NGOs Pare Down in Face of Financial Crisis

Members of some of the biggest development and humanitarian NGOs are laying off staff or revising programs for 2009 as their income streams flatten because of the global financial crisis.

Fundraising experts of some of the world's top NGOs - Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK and World Vision USA - said program growth will slow in 2009 as a result of the squeeze. "The growth we had assumed when putting plans together a year ago is not materializing," director of finance and information systems at Oxfam GB, said. "The overall picture is essentially flat." Oxfam had envisaged five to six percent growth over 2009-10, but has now revised this to zero. Aid groups are doing all they can to prevent the cuts from affecting beneficiaries. "We are trying to cut back on support, rather than program costs," Oxfam's said.

NGOs are trying to innovate their way out of the financial squeeze. Some agencies, such as Oxfam, aim to increase funding from institutional donors which they see as being steadier in the long term. Save the Children is trying to carve out more funds from wealthy individuals. "It will be a competitive market but I cannot believe we won't grow in the next four to six years," said Steele. ☞

One Million Hands Against Child Soldiers

Schoolchildren, children affected by armed conflict, youth, and community and civil society groups around the world are mobilizing to send one million "red hands" to the UN by early 2009 to observe the Red Hand Day Campaign 2009.

On Feb. 12, 2009, the anniversary of the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict, children from all continents hope to present a portion of these "red hands" to Mr Moon to stress the need to end the use of child soldiers.

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers adopted the "red hand" symbol in 1998 as part of its worldwide campaign against the use of child soldiers. After the entry into force of the Optional Protocol on February 12, 2002, Coalition partners have used this day as "Red Hand" day, with many organizing local events utilizing the red hand to raise awareness about the child soldier issue.

The campaign encourages participants, particularly schoolchildren, to make hand prints with red ink on A4 paper, together with a personal message about their desire to end the use of child soldiers. ☞

Food Worth \$840,000 Lost in Afghan Attacks

Some \$840,000 worth of food for needy Afghans has been lost so far this year in attacks, the UN's World Food Program (WFP) said in Kabul on November 17.

The WFP did not say who was behind the violence, but attacks are most often blamed on bandits and militants, including Taliban. Rising food prices, drought and poverty mean about nine million people in Afghanistan need food assistance, but volatile security has made it difficult to deliver food to them. ☞

L E T T E R S

Help promote Child Rights

Shade is a NGO working in one of the tribal areas of Balochistan province. Our focus area is district Jaffarabad. It is one of the backward areas of the province where the status of women is very low, school going children work in the fields, corporal punishment on children at schools and at homes is routine and accepted.

We have started an activity on our own against corporal punishment. We take sessions at schools and at homes at different villages to sensitize our community against corporal punishment. At school levels we are trying to lobby with the district government to introduce a child rights chapter in the syllabus.

We want SPARC to work with us in our focused area by supporting us through trainings; moreover, participation in your activities would build our capacity. There is wide scope for working on issues relating to children in the area. We would like you to link us with an organization that can support us to sensitize our community about child rights in the area.

Sajad Ahmed

SHADE office TMA Building

Jinnah Road Usta Muhammad

District Jaffarabad, Balochistan

E/mail. shadeorganization@yahoo.com

Building Skills

Our organization Mehran Welfare Trust Larkana is working for the welfare and development of the children and adolescents since 2004. In this regard, we are running a drop in centre for street children and Helpline centre for adolescents, youth & women and we provide Behavioral Specific Life Skill (BSLS) education program for vulnerable children and adolescents like as Most at Risk Adolescents (MARA) & Especially Vulnerable Adolescents (EVA) with the collaboration of Unicef.

We request you to please keep us on your mailing list and share IEC material regarding Child rights and prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Panjal Khan Sangi

Mehran Welfare Trust Larkana

*House # 117 Sachal Sarmast Township
Larkana*

Activism among Villagers

Child Development Organization (CDO) is working for the rights and development of children in Taluka Johi. This year we planned to celebrate Universal Children's day in Village Khan Mohammad Gadhi Taluka Johi.

The reason being that so far such events are arranged in bigger towns and popular places, we want to change the trend and hold this event in little and undermined village.

The core objectives of this program are to highlight awareness on the Child Rights and raise voice against child abuse in the community.

We have selected that village because it is backward and has no electricity yet. The lone primary school is being run without electricity and children have to suffer the hot sun without any fans.

We aim to provide the children here a platform from where they can participate in various activities and display their talent.

Along with this the community would be sensitized and made aware on issues relating to rights of the children with emphasis on education, health, safety etc. We request SPARC's support in this endeavor.

Nazeer Ahmed Soomro

General Secretary, (CDO)

Ward# 04, Opp. Govt: Main

Primary School,

Taluka Johi, Distt. Dadu,

Sindh [Pakistan]

Email: cdosindh@hotmail.com

cdosindh@gmail.com

Children First

Save the children UK is pleased to inform you of the formation of a new organization, *Children First*.

In the wake of a massive earthquake on Oct 8, 2005 that it hit most part of the northern Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Save the Children UK embarked on a sizable and highly significant humanitarian response in AJK with the support of other international donors from across the world. Transitioning through the phases of rescue, relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, SC (UK) interventions in Kashmir to date have been worth over 13 million pounds.

Through our extensive program in AJK, SC (UK) Pakistan program has been able to directly benefit over 30,000 children and over 12,000 families through services in child protection, education, health and livelihoods. Additionally the ministries of education, health and planning and development have been supported in their operational reinstatement and capacity building.

After having worked in AJK for three years and as a part of the original exit strategy, SC UK is now phasing out of the post earthquake program in AJK. In order to address issues of sustainability and long term impact SC UK program in AJK has been transformed and institutionalized into a local NGO, *Children First*. It has been legally registered under 42 of the company's ordinance 1984 with effect from October 22.

With effect from November 1, 2008 *Children First* now an entity independent of SC (UK) will not only ensure the continuity of the initiatives already undertaken but also pursue sustainable models of working with and for children and communities in AJK in the development sector, as a local partner NGO of SC (UK), and more importantly an indigenous local organization with the skills, capacity and experience to work as a local partner with a variety of donors, government department and other agencies.

Please join with us in welcoming *Children First* and I hope you will find opportunities to work with and support this new organization to bring lasting change in to lives of children.

Madeline Wright

No. 97, Main Double Road,

F-10/1, Islamabad Pakistan

www.savethechildren.org.uk

Child Related News

If you are interested in receiving news from Sri Lanka pertaining to child rights, abuse or related areas I can forward same to you as and when brought to light.

*B. A. Wijesena
wijebyp@slt.net.lk*

SPARC Publications

Thank you for the regular mailing of SPARC publications. These all are valuable source of knowledge sharing and information with exclusive focus on children and their development in a secure and right based environment. Article -13 has improved and it is good to see children's participation in highlighting their issues and problems.

However, for some reason I have not received your annual report *The State of Pakistan's Children* for the past three years. Please send me these three remaining publications and other publications if any on child rights.

*Dileep Kothari
Raabel Resource Centre-RRC
P.O Mithi-69230
District Tharparkar, Sindh*

Awaiting Child Rights

We request SPARC to form a Child Rights Committee at Thatta, Sindh as there is emerging need of awareness on child rights in our district.

We request you to conduct workshops and awareness raising seminars on child related issues in association with your Karachi office.

*Jokhia Haji Khan
Jokhia Village Development
Organization
P.O. Jungshahi Distt Thatta*

Appreciating Newsletter

My NGO in Bahawalnager is working on human rights, AIDS, women and children. I have gone through your organization's newsletter and found it very informative.

I would like to subscribe to it so that we may be aware of child rights across the country. We also wish to be members of SPARC and seek guidelines for it.

*Ayub Alam,
Bahawalnager*

Request for Trainings

We, the members of SRAC request SPARC to help and support us in bringing about a positive change in the society by creating awareness on human rights. We are trying to minimize the level of terrorism and violence and in this regard have held meetings with Swat Peace Jirga.

It is our endeavor to create an environment in Swat that would stop this senseless violence in the Valley and promote peace and progress for all. We wish to educate people on the evil of child labor and work for its eradication, to check violence against girls and work for the welfare of women.

*Farmanullah
marvee78@yahoo.com*

Communication Channel

We have received SPARC's Discourse, and Newsletters. These are good publications and one of the best ways to share information and knowledge besides a communication channel between NGOs and CBOs.

We would like you to inform us about the activities of SPARC and Coalition Against Child Labor, Sindh so that we can also be a part of it. At Sindh, a lot is yet to be done on improving children's plight.

*Akram Ali Khaskheli
HWA Nawabshah*

Interest in Publications

HANDS is a registered non profit organization working in public and private social sectors to promote health, education and reduce poverty in deprived communities. HANDS is benefiting more than Eight million people of nearly 7000 villages in 15 districts of Sindh.

We will like to receive newsletter at new address. Furthermore we need "The State of Pakistan Children 2007", please write us as to how we can get this report.

*Lal Jaan
140 C- Block II,
PECHS, Karachi
info@hands.org.pk*

Call for Revision of Child, Family Laws

Save the Children on November 19 called for revision of the child and family laws. *20 to 20: Protect Us, Provide Us, Involve Us* – coincided with the World Children's Day marking. The campaign will be rolled out across Pakistan in coordination with organizations including SPARC.

"There exist 78 child and family laws in Pakistan but most of them need revision so that they could be harmonized with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Children (UNCRC) said its Director. It also aims to press the government for early enforcement of Child Protection Bill (CPB), 2006. He said Pakistani children/youth totaled over 80 million but there existed no proper code to safeguard their rights and protect them against violence.

On the occasion of *Day against Violence on Children*, October 20, child rights organizations liaison conducted countrywide awareness raising activities.

SPARC joined hands with Save the Children (Sweden), Plan Pakistan, Rozan and Sahil and carried out media consultations with support of its child rights committees in Punjab, Sindh and NWFP.

Moreover, petition cards to implement Child Protection Bill were signed by people from different walks of life. In this regard, electronic media on-aired interviews of child rights experts on a wide range of issues.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Human Rights Education: Human rights can only be realized if people are informed about their rights and know how to use them. Education about human rights is therefore central to the effective implementation of the agreed standards. While this was emphasized 60 years ago when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, we are still far from ensuring that people know their rights and understand how to claim them. The current challenge remains that of making human rights education more than a simple repetition of the various legal conventions with little explanation as to their relevance to ordinary people in their daily lives. A European resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship (the European Wergeland Centre) will carry out and support research, provide in-service training for teachers and disseminate information and serve as platform and meeting place for relevant actors. Countries can indeed learn from one another. www.coe.int/children

WHO Report: World Health Report 2008 launched in October critically assesses the way that health care is organized, financed, and delivered in rich and poor countries around the world. The WHO report documents a number of failures and shortcomings that have left the health status of different populations, both within and between countries, dangerously out of balance. "The World Health Report sets out a way to tackle inequities and inefficiencies in health care, and its recommendations need to be heeded," said WHO Director-General at the launch of the report in Almaty, Kazakhstan. "A world that is greatly out of balance in matters of health is neither stable nor secure." www.who.int

Corporal Punishment: Save the Children has published its Report of the first global workshop on *prohibiting all corporal punishment and other humiliating punishment of children: Achieving legal reform*, held in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2008. This report – "Towards the universal prohibition of all violent punishment of children" – documents the information exchanged during the workshop and provides an important resource for all those working to achieve law reform. The report also includes answers to frequently asked questions about prohibition, an analysis of the legality of corporal punishment in all settings, in all countries, a regional analysis of ratification of international and regional complaints/communications mechanisms, and information on useful resources. www.savethechildren.se

Teachers Talk: Teachers in New York City public schools say that punitive approaches toward children, such as aggressive policing, suspensions and other reactive strategies, undermine the human right to education by failing to address the causes of conflict and criminalizing the school environment, according to a report by Teachers Unite and the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI). In the report, *Teachers Talk: School Culture, Safety and Human Rights*, launched on October 27 teachers call for preventive and constructive approaches to discipline that create positive school cultures, teach behavior skills and use conflict resolution. Among the largest threats to safety in schools, teachers cited overcrowding, lack of quality training for teachers, inadequate numbers of guidance counselors and social workers, and the lack of opportunities for teachers, students and parents to influence discipline policies. www.nesri.org

Under Attack: Defense for Children International–Palestine Section (DCI/PS) released a report in November that documents the troubling extent of settler attacks perpetrated against Palestinian children in the Occupied Territory. While settler violence has steadily increased since the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000, the start of 2008 has marked a notable increase in settler attacks against Palestinian civilians, including children. DCI/PS' report is based on evidence gathered during the period January 2007 – June 2008 and is limited to settler attacks on Palestinian children in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The report highlights nine separate incidents of settler attacks including shootings, beatings and stone-throwing incidents, resulting in injuries to 12 Palestinian children. www.dci-pal.org

Undocumented Children: In November *A Child Alone and Without Papers*, released by the Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP), reveals what happens to more than 43,000 undocumented, unaccompanied children removed annually from the United States and repatriated to their home countries. Policy analysis and interviews with adults and children in the system revealed the U.S. often compromises children's rights, safety, and well-being, contrary to international law and U.S. child welfare standards. "The U.S. treats undocumented, unaccompanied children with a shocking lack of concern. Policymakers should act swiftly and forcefully to priorities the welfare of all children in U.S. custody," report author said. Inadequate policies lead to maltreatment of children in official custody. Insufficient systems miss opportunities to identify children caught in trafficking. In the United States, no uniform process deals with undocumented, unaccompanied children in custody, including whether they can access an attorney, the length of detainment, and treatment while in custody. www.cppp.org

Call for Information: Involvement in the criminal justice system can be daunting. This is especially so for child victims and witnesses. As such professionals working in the criminal justice system must understand the rights of child victims and witnesses and be well-versed in strategies for providing support. For these reasons the UN adopted the Guidelines on Justice for Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime. In support of the guidelines the UN Office on Drugs and Crime is supporting the development of an online training tool that will be widely available to professionals. The writer of this training is requesting your assistance. He is seeking examples of promising practices that provide support for child victims and witnesses, especially those which address the Rights as identified in the Guidelines . *Link : Guidelines on Justice for Child Victims and witnesses of Crime* ↗

SPARC Helps Boy's Release

Contd. From Page 1

Instead of going to school on that day, he took a bus to Peshawar and from there, another bus for the five-hour journey to Lahore.

Within minutes, he said, he was caught by the Indian guards. "They just did not believe that I had crawled through the fence. They thought I had swam through the canal.

Finally, a senior officer came and they all took me to the exact place, and I had to show them the gap through which I had come in," he said. N is perhaps the first in the India-Pakistan prisoner saga to have been freed so quickly. He was allowed to go back four months after he was caught.

Boy's father said he was grateful to SPARC and media both in Pakistan and India for campaigning for his son's release from Indian jail which otherwise would have been a Herculean task. ☞

Court Releases 765 Brick Kiln Workers

Third additional District and Session Judge Hyderabad released 756 brick kiln workers including children and women's from the private captive of different Bricks companies near Hoosri and Tado Jam District Hyderabad. SPARC Hyderabad had received 13 applications from brick kiln workers and others brick kiln owners are involved in bonded labor.

SPARC filed 13 different petitions against owners of the brick kilns through advocate Shahzado Saleem for release of

laborers in bondage. The honorable court after hearing of petitions ordered the station house officers (Hoosri and Tando Jam police stations) to produce detainees before the court. 756 of them were produced and were set free by the court. However, no criminal case has been ordered against the offenders. Thousands of workers and farmers are bonded in the private jails of brick kiln owners and landlords but police and district governments are not taking any action against them because of political affiliation and vested interest. Had the District Vigilance Committees been active, situation would have been much different. ☞

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(Including Postage & Handling)

	Local Rs	Asia US\$	Europe/ N. America US \$
SPARC Newsletter	200	10	15
SPARC Newsletter with Discourse Quarterly Magazine	300 (per annum)	15 (per annum)	20 (per annum)
The State of Pakistan's Children	300	20	25
Books:	(per copy)	(per copy)	(per copy)
◆ Cries Unheard: Juvenile Justice in Pakistan	850	40	45
◆ Lengthening Shadows: Poverty -Affected Children	150	10	20

Please send your payments to SPARC or transfer in the following accounts:

SCF, Pak Rupees Account No. 7775-1, Habib Bank Limited, Jinnah Avenue Branch, Blue Area, Islamabad, Pakistan.

SPARC, US\$ Account No FCCD 8004, First Women Bank Limited, Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, Islamabad, Pakistan. Routing No: 706431 Swift No: AMXAEI BUS 33A, American Express Bank, New York.

SPARC Loses a Friend

Mr Hafeez-ur-Rahman, former SPARC board member and a seasoned journalist breathed his last on November 14 following a fatal heart attack.

Mr Rahman was a friend not only of SPARC but of children as well. He contributed for the promotion and propagation of child rights and championed for a world fit for children through his articles in leading newspapers such as Dawn where he wrote a weekly column. He also translated the SPARC English Newsletter into Urdu, and shared his concern and interest for children as member of the board.

He appreciated SPARC's initiatives in creating awareness on the rights of the child and for creating a better world for children.

SPARC will miss Mr Rehman and offer its heartfelt condolences to the family. ☞

Acid Thrown on School Going Girls in Afghanistan

Five Afghan schoolgirls were attacked with battery acid by suspected Taliban in Kandahar on November 12.

The attack occurred when two men on motorbikes confronted the students outside the School. Two girls were seriously injured by what was discovered to be battery acid. "We were on the way to school when two men on motorbikes stopped next to us. One of them threw acid on my sister's face. I tried to help her and then they threw acid on me too," said Latefa, (16). "We were shouting and people came to see what was going on,

then the two men escaped," she said. Latefa, was hurt and Shamsia, her sister, is in a serious condition with acid burns across her face. Girls were banned from attending schools under the Taliban government, from 1996 to 2001.

"But Latefa, her sister, said that she is determined to continue her education, and she will not let this attack stop her from learning. The school was empty, as students were afraid to attend classes. "By such actions, they cannot prevent six million children from going to school," the government said in a statement. ✂

13-Year-Old Girl Stoned to Death in Somalia

A 13 year girl was stoned to death in Somalia on October 27, Amnesty International said. She was killed by a group of 50 men who stoned her to death in a stadium in the southern port of Kismayu, in front of around 1,000 spectators.

She was accused of adultery in breach of Islamic law but, her father and other sources said that she had in fact been raped by three men, and had attempted to report this rape to the militia who control Kismayo, and it was this act that resulted in her being accused of adultery and detained. None of men she accused of rape were arrested.

"This was not justice, nor was it an execution. This child suffered a horrendous death at the behest of the armed opposition groups who currently control Kismayo," said Amnesty International's Somalia Campaigner.

A truckload of stones was brought into the stadium to be used in the stoning. At one point during the stoning, eyewitnesses said that nurses were instructed to check the girl was still alive when buried in the ground. Inside the stadium, militia members opened fire when some of the witnesses to the killing attempted to save her life, and shot dead a boy who was a bystander. ✂

Barbaric Killing of a Teenager

Parents of 18-year-old Tasleem Solangi, who was killed in an extremely inhuman manner allegedly by some elders of her tribe, have appealed for protection as "killers are still at large and have not been arrested because of their connections with police" on October 27 in Karachi.

Tasleem's mother said that her daughter was first thrown before hungry dogs and then riddled with bullets. The act was staged before the girl's father who had been under detention for about a year.

The tragedy took place in March, but came to light when Tasleem's mother succeeded in getting a news item published about her missing husband.

The mother, alleged that Tasleem was killed by her uncles to grab their six acres of land and a small animal farm. The mother said that four years ago she was also declared a kari and her elder daughter was victimized in a similar manner. She said the killers were roaming freely and had also threatened to eliminate her and other family members. ✂



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SPARC is an independent NGO founded in 1992, working for systematic & concerted action to promote & protect the rights of the child. This newsletter is part of SPARC's endeavors to give voice to the plea of millions of children dwelling in a state of abject poverty and neglect. SPARC is in consultative status with ECOSOC & UNDP, & is a partner of Child Workers in Asia, Global March, Anti-Slavery, DCI, GCE & IBFAN.

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