

# SPARC

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

## SPARC Receives Award for Volunteerism in Earthquake Areas

SPARC was nominated by the National Volunteer Movement (NVM) affiliated with the Prime Minister's Secretariat for its contribution for the welfare of children in the relief work, in emergency, post emergency and rehabilitation phases following the devastating October 8 Earthquake. The award will be presented on December 5, World Volunteers' Day.

During the first phase of emergency relief measures, SPARC's team in Balakot was

involved in rescue and relief operations. With the help of friends, the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, and Save the Children US, SPARC was able to provide some emergency relief, including tents, food, clothing, bedding and medicines. For children specifically, SPARC provided toys, clothing, books etc. In Islamabad, where a number of injured were brought to, a Buddy Pack Project helped in linking up more fortunate school children with the wounded in the hospitals. Under this

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## 'Students' Die in Pakistan School Raid

Pakistani helicopter gun-ships destroyed an Islamic school allegedly used as an al-Qaeda-linked training camp near the Afghan border, killing up to 80 suspected militants, officials said. Local leaders, however, insisted most of the dead were teenage students, many of whom were "reduced to bits and pieces", media report said on October 31.

The air strike that targeted a madrassah in the troubled Bajaur tribal agency was one of the biggest ever in Pakistan's frontier region.

Witnesses said at least three army helicopters had hovered over the madrassah, then they heard a huge explosion before

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## UN Study on Violence Launched

The independent expert in charge of leading the UN global Study on Violence against Children, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, released his final report, which will be presented at the General Assembly 61st session on October 11.





The report provides a global picture of violence against children and proposes

## The Child's Right to be Heard

Over 30 children and young people from around the world gathered at the UN on September 15 to make their voices heard at a meeting of the UN CRC. It is the first time such a large number of under-18s were able to participate in a Committee meeting.

This year's discussion is on the child's right to be heard which is expressed in Article 12 of the CRC. The discussion day was opened by Jaap Doek, Chair of the CRC who said that "children and young people are the rights owners of the CRC, it is their treaty. All articles are important, but article 12 is of special importance because it should be an integral part of all other articles."

A young girl from Bangladesh said that in Geneva she met children from around the world to discuss the issues they face and realized that children everywhere face similar problems. She asked the Committee to consider the following requests:

-  the need to have child friendly environments so that we are not afraid of adults;
-  adults should treat us as children and also respect us as children and value our opinions equally;
-  we need a complete separate child friendly juvenile system and courts;
-  there should be a child advisory committee working in parallel to ensure the community is made aware of children's issues and monitor the work of the community at regular intervals. ■

### Israeli Air Strike Kills 37 Children http://www.gcrin.org/

An Israeli air strike on a shelter for displaced people killed more than 60 civilians, including at least 37 children, on July 30, fuelling world pressure for a ceasefire in Israel's war in Lebanon against Hezbollah guerillas.

The raid on Qana was the bloodiest single attack during Israel's 19-day-old war on Hezbollah. Rescue workers dug through the rubble with their hands for hours, lifting out the twisted, dust-caked corpses of children. The raid flattened a three-storey building where more than 60 displaced people were in the basement. Many died as they slept. Another Israeli air strike killed five civilians, including two children. ■

## ASPBAE Training Workshop

Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) organized a five-day training workshop on Citizen's Participation in Colombo from September 15 to 21. The Executive Director SPARC Mr Qindeel Shujaat participated in the program.

ASPBAE has developed a Citizen Education Action Learning (CEAL) Guide as a resource for civil society trainers involved in promoting effective citizen action in relation to decision making process at various levels of government.

The objectives of the workshop were:

To introduce CEAL Guide; to compare and share content and approach of the CEAL Guide with what members currently use;

To provide space for trainers among member organizations, to articulate their current approaches, to offer feedback on the CEAL Guide and to consider how aspects of the Guide could be used / customized to be applicable in the work as a community organizers and trainers.

SPARC is a member of the ASPBAE coalition. ■

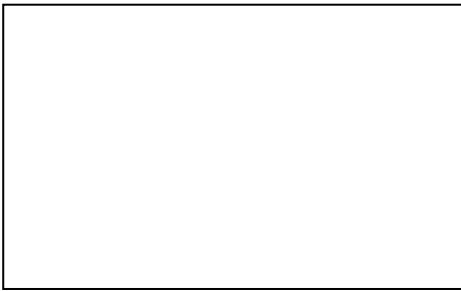
## Breast Ironing: A Brutal Custom

“Breast ironing” - the use of hard or heated objects or other substances to try to stunt breast growth in girls - is a traditional practice in West Africa, experts say. A new survey has revealed it is shockingly widespread in Cameroon, where one in four teenagers is subjected to the traumatic process by relatives, often hoping to lessen their sexual attractiveness. The survey was sponsored by a German development agency GTZ

“If society has been silent about it up till now it is because, like other harmful practices done to women such as female genital mutilation, it was thought to be

good for the girl,” said the GTZ official. “Even the victims themselves thought it was good for them.” However, the practice has many side-affects, including severe pain and abscesses, infections, breast cancer, and even the complete disappearance of one or both breasts.

The survey of more than 5,000 girls and women aged between 10 and 82 from throughout Cameroon, published in June, estimated that 4 million women in the central African country have suffered the process. The practice is now more common in urban areas than in villages, because mothers fear their children could be more exposed to sexual abuse in towns and try to suppress outward signs of sexuality, the survey said. ■



## SPARC, DDC Research on Afghan Refugees

The Disaster and Development Centre (DDC) of University of Northumbria UK and the SPARC signed an agreement for conducting a research on *Psychosocial Issues and Coping Mechanisms of Afghan Refugees* in Peshawar. Ms. Eileen M Brady, Research Associate of DDC visited Pakistan from September 5 - 27, and conducted field research in NWFP with SPARC's assistance.

This research project has been implemented as part of a larger research project that the DDC is conducting in Sudan and Malawi in collaboration with the UNHCR, Geneva, Switzerland. The purpose is to strengthen trauma risk reduction research, education and capacity building activities linked to disaster risk reduction and sustainable development in Pakistan.

SPARC facilitated the research process, by organizing meetings with stakeholders, distribution and collection of questionnaire and write a comprehensive report after collecting the questionnaires.

For this purpose a number of refugees camps were visited in Peshawar and Kohat. ■

## Baby Kidnapper Sent to Prison

The court dismissed the pre arrest bail petition of a nurse charged with kidnapping a newborn boy from the Lady Reading Hospital, on August 21. The court observed that the applicant did not deserve the concession of pre-arrest bail. She was sent to prison.

Counsel of the accused argued that she was entitled to pre-arrest bail under the Law Reform Ordinance. SPARC Legal Aid Coordinator appeared on behalf of the complainant and said that the ordinance applied to women after their arrest and not to the pre-arrest bail petitions. He contended that the woman was charged with a heinous crime and the baby was still missing.

The First Information Report of the case was registered on June 28 by the father of the kidnapped infant. He said he had brought his son to the hospital where he was placed in an incubator in the nursery ward, from where he disappeared. Several people were arrested in the case. Two arrested staffers were released on bail by a judicial magistrate under the ordinance regarding release of women on bail in almost all the offenses except murder, terrorism and financial transactions. ■

## SDC Organizes Conference with Partners

The Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) held a three-day Capitalization Conference on *Human Rights and Development: Learning from Experiences* from September 11 to 13 in Thun, Switzerland. The Conference was attended by over 80 participants from its close partner organizations, SDC Cooperation Offices and Organizational Units.

The main objectives of the Conference were to share, review and document experiences in SDC's (and its close partners') work on integrating human rights into development and to make recommendations that will help SDC implement its new Human Rights Policy.

Ms Zarina Jillani represented SPARC in the Conference and shared the organizations' experience in integrating human rights principles and standards in the area of access to justice. SPARC works with children in conflict with the law and advocates for upholding their basic rights. ■

## Orphans' Future in Quake-Hit Areas Uncertain

Save the Children UK (SCUK) on August 2 expressed concern over the future of orphans in the earthquake hit Kashmir. In a statement, SCUK said that for many children who lost one or both parents in the earthquake, it remained undecided where they were going to spend the rest of their lives, in an institution or within a family.

Extended families often sheltered and cared for children. Nevertheless, a variety of institutions sprung up claiming to care for orphaned children.

Children Protection Director at Save the Children warned, "Children who are being taken in by these institutions are at risk of getting stuck there for their entire childhood. Moreover, there is social stigma and psychological damage which is irreparable." ■

## South Asia Field Exchange Program

Participants attending the *South Asia Field Exchange Program* said that all south Asian countries would be looking towards India as it has recently enforced a ban on employment of children as domestic help.

South Asia Field Exchange Program was organized by ARUNODHAYA Centre for Street and Working Children in Chennai from September 4 to 14 to promote good practices in interventions in child domestic work. SPARC's Provincial Manager Promotion, Nadia Gul participated.

Participants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India interacted with NGOs and took part in field visits. Mr Jerome, Convener, Task Force for Child Domestic Work in Philippines, felt that the moment was ripe for concerted efforts from civil society and government to wipe out child domestic work. There was a need to undo certain myths that domestic work was safer and providing better access to education than other forms of work that children were forced to do. It was among the worst forms of child exploitation that put them at risk of many kinds of deprivation and abuse, he said. Representatives from Nepal said surveys indicated that around 64% child domestic workers had to work between 14 and 16 hours a day. More than half of child workers were not paid.

The program was part of a series of sub-regional exchange programs in Africa, Latin America and South East and South Asia. It is supported by Anti-Slavery International, Oak Foundation and Comic Relief. ■

# “Zee TV Told to Remove 'Demeaning' Hoardings”

The Social Jurist on September 12 complaint to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi on the display of hoarding by ZEE TV at ITO, New Delhi containing derogatory and disrespectful message and requested him to take immediate action to remove the hoarding. The Social Jurist received comments against such hoardings from several people. The Social Jurist also requested ZEE TV to remove all such hoardings. Unfortunately, no response has

been received from ZEE TV so far.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police, on September 12 directed ZEE TV to remove promotional hoardings of one of its upcoming soap operas saying that the wordings of the advertisement were demeaning to women.

The hoarding placed by the TV channel advertisement carries a punch line “bete ek fayda, betiyan ek ghata; beta apana

dhan, betiyan paraya dhan; bete chalaye vansh, betiyan chalaye sewing machine,” (sons are advantageous, daughters are a loss, sons are our wealth, daughters are someone else's wealth, sons run ....., daughters run sewing machines). “The advertisement smacks of gender bias and is demeaning to women. The concerned authorities have been asked to remove the hoardings put up at several places in New Delhi and NCR immediately”, a Delhi Police spokesman said. ▣

## Infant Girl Buried Alive, Survives

Indian police were looking for the parents of a two-day-old girl who was buried alive because of her gender but survived the ordeal. The girl was found in a ditch when her shrill cries caught the attention of a farm helper in impoverished Uttar Pradesh state. “She is a small little angel. I was lucky to reach that spot and hear the cries of this baby. Otherwise she would have died within hours,” said Lakshmi Rani, who now wants to adopt the child. Rani calls the baby Mili, which is Hindi for “found”.

Residents of the village, where the child was discovered, said that it was the seventh such incident in the past fortnight. “It is a routine in this village to bury girl infants. Whoever cannot afford a girl child buries it in nearby forests,” said a resident. ▣

## Democracy Vs Child Rights

***In May, a new political party was formed in the Netherlands: the PNVD (Party for Neighborly Love, Freedom and Diversity). The founders of this party are pedophiles, and as such they are well known to the police and the authorities. They are members of an organization for pedophiles, which was recently reported to the police by the National Reporting Point for Child Pornography, for grooming children for sex on internet sites.***

***The PNVD party program includes the following points:***

- ☐ ***Lowering the age of consent for sexual acts between children and adults to 12 years;***
- ☐ ***Making participation in child pornography legal from age 16;***
- ☐ ***Legalization of child pornography with quality control;***
- ☐ ***Allowing children to smoke, drink and gamble from age 12.***

***Whatever else the party program states, the ultimate goal of its founders is to legalize the abuse of children.***

***According to several law experts, the Dutch government could ban and dissolve the PNVD. But minister of justice, stated that democracy is more important than protecting children. Profit for the World's Children who is opposed to this party has urged the international community to sign the petition, react and send their statements to the Dutch government and press. Email: [post@p-w-c.org](mailto:post@p-w-c.org), Website: [www.p-w-c.org](http://www.p-w-c.org)***

## Plight of Palestinian Children

**O**n September 29, a delegation from Defense for Children International - Palestine Section (DCI/PS) met with the UN Committee on Child Rights in Geneva under exceptional circumstances. DCI/PS was invited to address the Committee during its 43rd session to discuss the violation of Palestinian children's rights by Israel outside of Israel's reporting schedule to the CRC. DCI was allowed a special audience with the CRC in light of the urgent situation facing Palestinian children as a result of Israel's on-going military campaign.

DCI/PS focused mainly on the situation of children in Gaza under the current Israeli offensive, "Operation Summer Rain", which began on June 25. The statement highlighted that if the death rate among Palestinian children continues to rise on its current trajectory, 2006 risks being the bloodiest year for Palestinian children since the beginning of the Israeli Occupation in 1967.

Significantly, DCI/PS fieldwork also indicates that in the majority of cases, Palestinian children were killed while not posing a threat in any way to the security of Israeli soldiers or civilians. ☐

## SAF Meeting on Violence Against Children

**S**ocial Welfare and Special Education Minister emphasized the need for taking concrete steps in order to protect the rights of children. Speaking at the inaugural session of the first meeting of the South Asia Forum (SAF) on *Ending Violence against Children*, on July 25 the minister called for empowerment of people with knowledge, skills and awareness about the rights.

The event was organized by the National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD) to review the progress made by the SAF in two areas; early marriage and physical and psychological punishment of children. The seminar was attended by senior officials from the SAF countries.

One of the major outcomes of the regional consultation (RC) was the formation of the 'South Asia Forum for Ending Violence against Children' comprising representatives from governments of eight Asian countries, civil society and a children's group working for violence against children, she added.

She said that SAF was tasked with monitoring the governments' commitments and follow up actions regarding violence against children. She said that Pakistan is signatory to the SAARC Convention on regional agreements for Promoting Child Welfare in South Asia and SAARC Convention on 'Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution'. ☐

## China to Penalize Foetal Abortions

**C**hina will punish health workers who help to abort female foetuses, despite a recent decision not to criminalize the practice, an official said. China's legislature scrapped a bill in June that would have introduced fines and prison terms for aborting girls. But an official said that did not mean there was any relaxation in the policy against selective abortion. The practice stems from a preference for sons, especially in rural areas, and China's one-child policy. As a result, official figures suggest there are 119 boys born for every 100 girls in China. A figure much higher than the global ratio of 103 to 107 boys for 100 girls. However, some population experts are cautious about these figures, suspecting that some female births go unreported. ☐

## Seminary Grabs Land from Children's Library

**T**he Model Children's Library, Islamabad, is a unique facility to attract children's attention towards books and develop their reading habit, but children cannot fully use this facility because an adjacent seminary has grabbed its land.

The library is placed between a mosque and a seminary which has been extending its building on the library's land. The library's administration has been forced to shift the facility to another place because of the seminary's illegal extension.

The library was set up in 1991 with plans to make it a state-of-the-art facility to create children's interest in books. But these plans could not move forward and in turn lost popularity among children. ☐

## Camel Jockey's tale of Woo

**A** young camel jockey has been rendered disabled for life owing to alleged torture by his own cousin during his stay in the UAE. Fifteen-year-old Hameed, of Rahimyar Khan was sent to the UAE (Al Ain) in 1997 when he was only seven.

His father said a woman from Karachi came to his house and told him that she would send his child to the UAE where he would get a pay of 500 dirhams a month. "Living in abject poverty, we readily agreed to the proposal and handed over Hameed to the woman without any investigations. Many other children of our village were sent to the UAE by the same lady."

The boy was working with his cousin on a camel farm. Once when the boy fell ill and asked to be excused from work the cousin threatened him of dire consequences and later banged him with an iron rod, thus causing serious injury to his leg. In February, he was sent back to Pakistan where he was taken to the Child Protection Welfare Bureau and from where his father took him home. Hameed cannot walk properly or ride a bicycle. ■

## 10 Million Children Engaged in Labor

**S**ome ten million children were engaged in various kinds of labor, and the ever-increasing poverty was the main reason for this dismal state of affairs. This was stated at a seminar on *Child Labor-The End of Innocence* organized by the Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid (SHARP) on July 25, in Islamabad.

Speakers challenged government's poverty estimates and criticized it for funding figures. They criticized the government for not following the national and international commitments and taking concrete steps to eliminate poverty, the root cause of forced labor.

ILO official said, there was a pressing need to streamline the educational system according to the market's requirements. Presently, the education system only provided work force for the formal economy, and a yawning gap of informal economy was being filled through untrained child laborers.

A human rights activist said that the number of child laborers was much higher than the government claimed. She said that government and international agencies did not include informal, seasonal and transitional workers into the figures and surveys. She said that the existing laws totally failed to protect the rights of children and prevent child labor.

Asian Development Bank official stated that not only a large number of local children were engaged in child labor but a considerable number of Afghan refugee children were also part of child labor. ■

## Education for Child Workers Urged

**I**nternational agencies, civil society and community organizations should start education programs for working children. This was stated by the speakers at a workshop held in Mithi (Sindh) on September 18 entitled *Child and Bonded Labor* organized by the Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research in collaboration with Thardeep. They said working children have been deprived of education, healthcare and recreational facilities owing to their exploitation at the hands of employers.

SPARC's Iqbal Detho said 45.3% children have no access to health care and education. He said the government planned to increase the literacy rate from 49% in 2003 to 60% in 2006 by making 13 million people literate through the national literacy program. However, such programs have done little to improve the literacy rate. Abid Channa said about 4,000 children of poor families of Thar had been working on carpet looms. ■

## Global March Achieves Results

**G**lobal March Against Child Labor, has traversed a long path in fight against child labor and for ensuring education for all children..

A few of the Initiatives are as follows:

The initiative undertaken by Global March to harmonize work on the cross-cutting issues of education, poverty and child labor have resulted in the formation of a Task Force. This body will mobilize political will and momentum towards mainstreaming the issue of child labor and education in national and international development through advocacy, coordination and support.

Global March picked the campaign around World Cup 2006 in Germany, to remind FIFA, the sporting goods industry and others on their commitments towards children, elimination of child labor from sporting goods industry and ethical trading norms.

Global March has been able to convince UNESCO to highlight the child labor prevalence as preventing the attainment of education for all goals and provide an in-depth analysis, especially successful practices, strategies and actions that have the potential for replication, in the future Global Monitoring Reports on Education. ■

## NCSW Seeks Law for Domestic Help

The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Pakistan has finalized recommendations for legislation to protect the rights of domestic servants, a commission member said on August 7. The legislation aims at protecting house-servants from financial exploitation and harassment by employers besides seeking industrial-worker status for them, he said.

“A survey was conducted in all provinces of the country in targeted and random cases. “Presently, domestic servants are not recognized as workers under the law and they are very vulnerable to financial, physical, mental, psychological and above all sexual exploitation. That is why there is dire need for legislation to protect them and their rights as human beings and workers,” he said.

The commission has called for the establishment of a regulatory body, which will register domestic-workers and have the right to initiate prosecution against an offending employer on the complaint from a domestic employee, he said. The commission has also recommended a minimum age for domestic workers to avert child labor, he added. ■

## 20% Children Working in Nepal

Experts, child rights activists and trade union leaders have stressed on the need of formulating strategies and effective implementation of these strategies and national policies by the government, NGOs and private sector to eradicate child labor in Nepal's transportation sector.

At an interaction program organized by Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN) in Kathmandu, Deputy Superintendent of Police informed that 15 children, who were working in this sector, have died of in road accidents in the last fiscal year. He said the transport entrepreneurs employ children because they find children as cheap labor who can work not only as assistants in vehicles but also as domestic helpers.

CWIN President Gauri Pradhan said that 20% of the total work force in Nepal is children. He estimated that there are around 8-10,000 children working in transportation sector at present. However, in the last few years, child labor has gradually shifted from formal sectors like transportation to informal sectors like brick kilns and domestic helpers, he added. ■ [Http://www.nepalnews.com](http://www.nepalnews.com)

## Tanneries Violate Labor Laws

Laborers working in tanneries in Kasur should be paid in accordance with the new labor policy revised by the government. This was stated in a circular issued by the local tanneries association here on September 3.

PML-N's labor wing district President demanded that minimum wages of workers should be fixed at Rs 4,000. In several leather tanneries, he claimed that only 12 workers were doing work of 20 workers. Besides they were not even provided with safety gear to protect them. ■

## Awareness Campaign Against Child Labor

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, ILO and the Norwegian Government signed a deal on July 19 on the second phase of a three-year program to combat child labor in Pakistan. The program is designed to increase public awareness on the issue of child labor, and to create a national environment against child labor.

Federal Secretary of Information expressed his commitment to the implementation of the project by providing free airtime to various media projects, with technical support from the ILO. ■

## ILO Launches Child Labor Web Movie

The International Labor Office (ILO) launched in July a new Web movie (in 12 languages) featuring the plight of more than 200 million child laborers worldwide, but also signs of hope showing that the end of child labor is within our reach. The ILO is committed to helping countries lift all children out of the worst forms of child labor by 2016.

According to a recent ILO report, there are now 28 million fewer child laborers than four years ago but millions more still need help to live as children again. The number of child laborers worldwide fell by 11% between 2000 and 2004, from 246 million to 218 million. What's more, the number of children aged 5-17 trapped in hazardous work decreased by 26%, to reach 126 million in 2004 as opposed to 171 million in 2000. [www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/wdacl/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/wdacl/index.htm)

## Ulema Declare Polio Vaccine Safe

An edict issued after a meeting of Ulema (clerics) and experts declared that “the polio drops are safe and no anti-fertility agent, including oestrogen and progesterone, are added to it at any stage of its manufacturing process nor any such agent is present in the final product,” following a meeting of Ulema and experts held at the Peshawar Medical College on September 2. The Principal of the University told the meeting, which was jointly organized by the WHO, Unicef and the health department, that polio affected 350,000 children annually, mostly in countries inhabited by Muslims.

Due to vaccination, the number of polio-affected countries had now been brought down to only six, including Pakistan. During the last 18 years since the launching of the global campaign, five million children have been saved from getting paralyzed. He said the rumors had caused immense damage in Nigeria and India, and that they were aimed to portray that Muslims were a great hurdle in the campaign against polio. He said that Pakistan had recorded 25,000 cases of polio in 1994, 558 in 1999, 28 in 2005, and 12 this year so far.

The WHO country chief said that during the last 17 years more than 10 billion doses of polio vaccines had been provided to more than one billion children globally, adding: “No side effects have been reported during this period.” ■

### People Ready to Immunize Children

The WHO representatives were briefed on polio vaccination campaign in Swabi District on September 7. They were told that the people and Jirga in Gadoon Amazai had given up their protest against the campaign and were now ready to administer anti-polio vaccine to their children. ■

### Polio Cases Detected in FATA, NWFP Province

A fresh case of Polio was reported in Bannu bringing the total number of cases in the NWFP to six this year.

“The National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad has confirmed that a 11-month-old baby girl has had poliomyelitis,” WHO Bannu-based campaign officer of the Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI) said on August 28. He said the child currently residing in Bannu, hailed from Afghanistan. She had been administered six oral polio vaccines (OPV), but at the time of receiving the drops she was probably malnourished.

A PEI official for NWFP and Fata said that a 14-month-old boy, Raees Khan, was diagnosed with polio despite having administered polio vaccines.

**Rajanpur:** The district health department's claim that it has controlled polio a great deal has proved wrong. The EDO (Health) said at a meeting in Islamabad that only 50% polio cases had been controlled in the district. Two fresh cases have been reported in two areas near the district. ■

### Unclean Water Major Threat to Children's Health

Children in Pakistan face four major threats such as contaminated water, road accidents, poverty and internal and external environmental pollution, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) official.

Contaminated water is the cause of five per cent of children diseases and most child diseases break out because of polluted water, said WHO country director in Pakistan, while speaking at a seminar on *Child Environmental Health* at the Child Services Academy on September 21, in Islamabad.

He said that road accidents left numerous children dead or maimed and 50% of these incidents could be reduced by following traffic laws. Poverty and internal and external environment also affect children's health. “Smoking, cooking inside rooms and burning woods for heating rooms are big threats to the lives of children,” he said.

He said that although the law in Pakistan banned the sale of cigarette and smoking at public places by youth under 18 years of age, the threat of *sheesha* smoking remains and could cause negative impacts on the health of children. Services Academy director, highlighted the aims and objectives of a \$23,000 project initiated by the academy in collaboration with the WHO, regarding children's health. ■

### Pakistan Polio Free in 2006?

International experts have suggested that Pakistan has the best chance to eliminate polio virus during 2006 as the number of affected people has decreased from 30,000 in 1994 to 13 till July this year because of the Polio Eradication Program, UNICEF said on August 22.

Unicef said in a statement that the number of cases of polio was estimated at 25,000-30,000 per year before initiation of the National Immunization Days program in 1997. With the introduction of the program the number decreased to 1,147 in 1997. ■

# SPARC CRC ACTIVITIES

## SINDH

### **Information on Juvenile Inmates**

**September 20:** SPARC's Regional Manager Sindh met Probation Officer in his office in City Court Karachi and collected information about juvenile offenders who are on probation. He provided a list of 12 juvenile prisoners.

### **Meeting Probation Officer**

**September 21:** SPARC's Regional Manager met Assistant Director, Reclamation and Probation in Karachi. He informed that 35 juvenile prisoners were on probation under his supervision. Though he did not have computerized data, he assured that he will provide the same in future. Problems of Probation Officers were also discussed and SPARC role in that regard was highlighted.

### **Only Two Probation Officers**

**September 22:** SPARC's Regional Manager held a meeting with the Director Probation Sindh, and discussed the problems of probation officers. He said that there were only two probation officers working with him and they are not enough for the whole of Sindh. SPARC suggested that he should take up the issue of increasing the number of probation officers with the Ombudsman on behalf of SPARC. He said he would bring up the issue in the Sindh Assembly as it was already approved by ex-Chief Minister Sindh.

### **Consultation in Mirpurkhas**

**September 17:** A consultative meeting on state of child rights in Sindh was held at Mirpurkhas. The participants included jail officials, police, educationists, journalists, CRC coordinator Mirpurkhas attended the meeting which was facilitated by SPARC regional head.

The issues that came under discussions included advocacy, awareness, tolerance, networking, coordination, behavioral change, and the phenomenon of ghost schools. The meeting underlined the importance of taking holistic approach to address the problems of children in Sindh.

### **Umerkot Vigilance Committee**

CRC Umerkot called introductory meeting of District Vigilance Committee,

which was attended by Nazims, social activists, journalists, lawyers and representatives of NGOs, CBOs. The CRC also arranged a two-day polio camp with the cooperation of health department. Around 300 children were administered polio drops.

### **CRC Mithi**

CRC Mithi handed over two ceiling fans and one color TV to the jail staff of Sub-Jail Mithi for juvenile prisoners. District Police Officer (DPO) Mithi appreciated SPARC's work and took note of the problems of the prisoners. CRC Mithi also gave one fan and a water cooler for the judicial lock-up.

### **Legal Aid Cases**

CRC Sindh provided legal aid to 13 juvenile prisoners between July to September.

<b>#</b>	<b>CRC Name</b>	<b>Legal aid case/Rs 2000</b>
1	Larkana	3
2	Sukkur	1
3	Mirpurkhas	2
4	Dadu	2
5	Kamber	3
6	Jacobabad	2
<b>Total cases</b>		<b>13</b>

## LAHORE

### **Talk Show on Child Protection**

July 12: A local Punjabi language TV channel invited SPARC Regional Manager Punjab Rafiq Khan to participate in a discussion program on child protection issues in Punjab. The program discussed the issues relating to two kind of children; destitute and neglected children and juvenile prisoners. ■

### **BIJJ given TV, Stationary**

**August 28:** SPARC Lahore and CRC Faisalabad organized a function at the Borstal Institute Juvenile Jail, Faisalabad. Chairperson of the Chief Minister's Task Force on Women and Juvenile Prisoners presided. SPARC donated 12 color televisions, outdoor sports items and stationary for the juvenile inmates. While speaking on the occasion, the chairperson assured that she would work for the formation of

separate juvenile courts in the Punjab.

### **Meeting with DIG Prisons**

**August 31:** DIG Prisons Faisalabad asked SPARC's Rafiq Khan to come up with a complete rehabilitation plan for the Borstal Jail Faisalabad. He appreciated the services undertaken by SPARC to improve the condition of juvenile offenders. He assured his support for SPARC's activities in Faisalabad region. He also accepted SPARC's proposal of imparting training to the BIJJ staff on how juvenile offenders should be treated.

### **SDC Team Visit**

A SDC team comprising Ms. Mary Murphy and Mr. Aazar Ayaz visited Lahore on September 17 and 18 on a back stopping mission. The team was briefed about the activities of SPARC Lahore with special reference to the advocacy and lobbying efforts at the Punjab level for the implementation of the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000. On September 17, the team visited Central Jail Staff training Institute and the Directorate of Reclamation and Probation.

Ms. Mary Murphy went to Faisalabad with Rafiq Khan. In Faisalabad, she held a meeting with the DIG Prison, who told her about SPARC's role in improving the conditions of juvenile inmates in the Borstal Jail. Later, they visited the Borstal Institute. In the afternoon, Ms. Mary Murphy and Rafiq Khan attended a CRC Faisalabad meeting at the Chenab Club. The CRC briefed Ms. Mary Murphy about their activities in the past six months and later there was a question and answer session.

While returning to Lahore the team visited the Police Station Baikhi in District Sheikhpura. The Station House Officer took them around the police station.

### **Advocacy through Letters**

As part of SPARC's lobbying for bringing improvement in the life of children in prisons, SPARC office sent a letter to the Chief Justice of Pakistan on September 8, demanding setting up of exclusive juvenile courts as promised in the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000. These courts can play an important role in

alleviating the miseries of juvenile offenders, who have to languish in the prisons for months and years for petty crimes.

**Letters to the Judiciary**

On August 1, letters were sent to all the District and Sessions Judges of the Punjab asking them for the formation of panel of lawyers for providing free legal aid to the juvenile offenders. So far, District and Sessions Judge Sialkot has notified the formation of the panel of lawyers to provide legal aid to children in Sialkot prison.

**Meeting with Registrar LHC**

**July 26:** SPARC Lahore sent a letter to the Chief justice Lahore High Court. Mr. Rashad Aziz, Law Manager and Rafiq Khan had a meeting with the Registrar Lahore High Court and Deputy Registrar Establishment. The Registrar assured SPARC that they would work for setting up of Panel of Lawyers in Punjab for juvenile offenders. ■

**Meeting in Rajanpur**

**September 14:** A team comprising CRC Rajanpur and SPARC members met district and sessions Judge Rajanpur and requested him to notify the panel of lawyers for providing legal aid to children in Rajanpur. The Judge assured his full support in assisting SPARC in helping Juvenile prisoners. He also said that he would notify the panel of lawyers as soon as possible.

**Camp Jail Visit**

A meeting was called by the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau Chairperson in the office of the Superintendent of the Camp Jail, Lahore on September 28 for the opening ceremony of Bureau office at the Camp Jail.

The objective of the meeting was to find

ways for different organizations to work together in the Camp Jail for improving the conditions of juvenile offenders. The representatives agreed that they would inform each other about the services they are providing to the juvenile offenders in the Camp Jail.

It was also agreed that the educational and rehabilitation program at the Camp Jail needed to be revamped. SPARC offered its services for improving the education program and said that it would provide two school-teachers, stationary and sports items for the juvenile inmates.

**Consultation with Lawyers, Journalists**

SPARC Lahore organized a half day consultation on *Protecting Our Children* with lawyers and journalists of District Okara on September 7. The objective of the meeting was to raise awareness level and share information with key stakeholders about child related laws and legislation and implementation in Pakistan.

All participants shared their views about the plight of children with particular reference to children of District Okara. SPARC's Fahmina Naz gave a brief introduction of SPARC and child rights. Chief Editor Daily Jinnah shared his experiences related to camel jockeys. President District Bar Okara informed that panel of lawyers are being formed in Okara to protect the rights of children.. Participants appreciated SPARC's effort in sensitizing the masses about child rights.

**Legal Aid for Juvenile Prisoners**

SPARC's Rashad Aziz provided free legal aid to 18 juvenile prisoners and bailed them out .While volunteers from CRC provided free legal aid to 30 juvenile offenders. A total of 48 juvenile offenders were given free legal aid from July to September 2006.

Break down of the legal aid provided by CRCs is as follows:

<u>Name of CRCs</u>	<u>Cases</u>
Muzaffargarh	1
Bahawalpur	4
Rajanpur	4
Multan	15
Okara	3
Total	30

N W F P

**Malaria Campaign in Bajaur**

**July 30:** CRC Bajaur held an awareness program on malaria in Bajaur Agency. People from all walks of life participated including CRC members, malaria supervisor Khar Hospital and Health Net members. The speaker gave a comprehensive lecture on the causes of malaria and measures for protection. CRC coordinator said that laboratory tests and proper medication from a qualified doctor was a must in this regard.

**CRC Malakand Donates Blood**

**July 31:** Father of a 12- year-old disabled Neelam contacted CRC Malakand and requested for blood donation for his daughter. CRC Coordinator and other members helped the father and provided blood and other free medical aid. CRC Coordinator assured full cooperation to the father of the patient.

**A Visit to the Primary School**

**July 31:** CRC coordinator Sher Zaman, Nazim Dargai and CRC members paid a visit to the Primary School No 2 Dargai. They met with the children and teachers and distributed 80 sets of books, pencils and note books among the poor and needy children. Nazim and the school principal appreciated CRC Dargai's role in

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promoting child rights.

CRC also convinced the local clerics that education was important for all children and their role in influencing the influential in this regard. Later, the clerics announced on the loud speakers that each and every five-year-old child should be sent to school.

**CRC Mardan Aborts Trafficking Case**

A resident of Mardan sold his 9-year-old daughter to a group of pimps who then sold the girl to an old man in Punjab for Rs 60,000. When the man came to take the little girl, her grandfather informed the police about the crime. CRC Mardan spoke to the District Police Officer (DPO) and District Nazim Mardan and appealed to take strict action against those involved. Due to timely action of the DPO and the Nazim, the girl was saved.

**District Vigilance Committee Meeting**

District Coordinating Officer (DCO) Mardan chaired the first meeting of the District Vigilance Committee on bonded labor. CRC Coordinator Mardan attended the meeting. The committee passed a resolution prohibiting bonded labor and warned the workshop and factories owners to stop bonded labor or else face strict penalties. The committee also appreciated SPARC's role in this regard.

**CRC Charsadda**

CRC Charsadda Coordinator and members visited the flood affected areas of Umerzai and Turangzai and met with the families affected by floods including children and women. CRC members distributed biscuits and chips among children. They found that children were facing problems of food shortage, scabies and other diseases.

**12-year- old boy Freed**

ASI of Chitral police station informed CRC Coordinator that police had arrested a 12-year-old boy at 1 am. CRC Coordinator went to the police station and got the information about the boy who was found unconscious on the roadside after taking a high dose of hashish. The child said that he was a student of class three. CRC coordinator got the boy released on bail and provided him with food and clothes and sent him home.

**Panel of Lawyers in Nowshera**

**June 28:** CRC Nowshera met with the district and sessions judge Nowshera and briefed him about the CRC and notification of the panel of lawyers. The judge assured support and cooperation in this regard. On July 18, he issued the panel of lawyer's notification under JJSO comprising of three lawyers.

**Swabi Jail visit**

**July 14:** SPARC Regional Head visited judicial lock up Swabi. All the 12 juvenile offenders in the jail were under trial and one of them was mentally disturbed. The children demanded medicine and a computer. Juvenile inmates were happy with the SPARC appointed teacher, but the school was closed because there were not enough children. It will reopen when there are at least 20-25 children.

**Radio Buraq Program**

**August 24:** In a live program aired by Radio Buraq on child rights, SPARC's Jahanzeb was invited as a guest speaker. During the hour long program, questions related to child rights and child protection, and the role of the government and the NGOs came under discussion.

**PCCWD First Meeting**

The first meeting of Provincial commission for Child Welfare & Development (PCCWD) NWFP was held

on August 28. It was decided in the meeting that rules and regulations would be streamlined for smooth running of the PCCWD and sub committee was formed to review the Borstal Act in the next PCCWD meeting by SPARC.

**Central Jail Bannu visit**

**August 30:** SPARC's Jahanzeb Khan and CRC Coordinator Mir Hayat Khan visited Central jail Bannu and met with male juvenile and female prisoners and inquired about their problems. There were 77 inmates in the male juvenile section and 21 women and seven babies accompanying mothers. SPARC donated one color TV, and board games to the male juvenile section as well as to the female section. Jahanzeb asked the coordinator to repair water pipes and provide note books to the juvenile section.

**Role of Elected Members**

Swabi's CRC organized a consultation with elected members of District Swabi and Tehsil Chota Lahor on August 29. Nazims, Naib Nazims, councilors, lady councilors, media persons and CRC members participated.

SPARC's Jahanzeb Khan said that elected members were already working on child rights, such as birth registration, education, health, and sanitation etc. It is the responsibility of the elected members to monitor teachers, doctors' activities and check their efficiency and progress he added. Ensure water and bathrooms in every school and setting up of Basic Health Units (BHU) Jahanzeb Khan said.

Nazim Tehsil Chota Lahor, District Swabi said children were working in tobacco processing and suggested that the Tobacco Board should cancel the agreement with farmers who are employing children.

### Government Urged to Improve Education Standard

SPARC and CRC Charsadda organized a joint press conference on September 8 in Charsadda Press Club to celebrate the International Literacy Day.

SPARC's Jahanzeb Khan said that the primary purpose of celebrating this day was to create awareness among the public on the importance of education and to remind the government about its international and national commitments on Education For All. He also demanded increase in education budget and free primary quality and compulsory education for all.

ADO Ghulam Rehmani appreciated SPARC's role in promoting child rights.

### Legal Aid to Juvenile Inmates in NWFP

CRCs took up 20 cases of juvenile prisoners in NWFP, during July to September, out of which four cases were decided, one bail was dismissed and fifteen were granted bail.

Break down of legal aid provided by CRCs is as follows:

Name	Cases	Bail	Released
		Granted	
Swabi	9	6	2
D.I. Khan	3	3	-
Mardan	3	3	-
Bunner	2	1	1
Mansehra	2	1	1
Karak	1	1	-
Total	20	15	4

## BALAKOT

### Vocational Training for Women

**September 1:** SPARC started a vocational training center for the women of Shaul community. Here at least 25 to 30 women are taught stitching. Besides two women are being trained as beauticians to make them self reliant and independent.

### Pre-school for Children Set Up

**September 1:** SPARC is running nine Fun Centers in Balakot and it is catering to around 800 children living in the surrounding areas. SPARC has also started a Pre-school where children between the ages of 3 and 5 are being educated. The school is being run on Beaconhouse School style and the staff was also trained by the same school. Besides, SPARC is also running three Basic Education centers for adults both males and females.

### SPARC Iftari

**October 8:** SPARC team invited people from nine communities in Balakot for Iftari and also discussed the problems and issues being faced by them. All the people said that they were not happy shifting from Balakot to any other place because they had their memories attached to this place, besides their lands and homes were here.

### Open Forum

**October 8:** SPARC took part in the Open Forum organized by Omar Asghar Development Foundation in village Tarna of Balakot. A senior Provincial Minister was also present, who discussed various issues and problems being faced by the survivors of October earthquake. The Program was also aired by Aaj TV Channel.

### Workshop on Child Protection in Mardan

SPARC and CRC Mardan held a day-long workshop at Mardan for teachers on *Child Rights and Child protection* on September 20. The workshop was organized with the financial support from Unicef.

Regional Manager, SPARC Jahanzeb Khan spoke on the role of teachers in protecting rights of children by providing good and quality education. He explained the CRC and its articles and stressed on the teachers to be very clear on "who is a child". He reinforced that a person less than 18 years of age is considered a child. It was also discussed that both girls and boys are equal and should be treated as such.

Deputy Director Ministry of Law and Human Rights talked about the vulnerability of a child and the dangers faced by both girls and boys in the society. He defined article 19 of the Convention regarding protection from abuse and neglect.

He also stressed on the negative impact of corporal punishment on children. At the end of the workshop each teacher shared his/her views and suggestions to improve the educational environment and encourage children to attend school.

**Walk for Peace :** School children will hold country wide walk for peace under the aegis of the National Council for Interfaith Dialogue (NCID) to promote peace and tolerance between religions, NCID official said on July 26.

He said NCID had selected hundreds of schoolchildren of various faiths to participate in the interfaith walks starting from Karachi to Khyber. "These children will walk through the famous roads of Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Quetta, Peshawar and Multan. They will sing songs and hold placards, banners and candles symbolizing peace," he said. Walk campaign will start in the first week of November.

## Juvenile Law of Little Good for the Offenders

Despite the protection of child prisoners' rights guaranteed in the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2002 (JJSO), a large number of children languish in different jails of the country with adult prisoners and jail staff violating their legal rights. According to a SPARC report, over 4,000 juvenile inmates are presently kept in adult barracks in harsh and exploitative environments.

The JJSO provides many legal rights to the prisoners below 18 years of age. A child under 18-years involved in bail-able crimes cannot be kept behind the bars under any circumstances. However, every jail in the country has a number of children who are facing trial while in detention and being devoid of their legal right.

Under the JJSO no child can be handcuffed, put in fetters or given any corporal punishment at any time while in custody. Yet, a majority of these inmates face direct harassment, physical and sexual exploitation and many victims lose their right to appeal, as they do not have a family that may arrange their bail. ❏

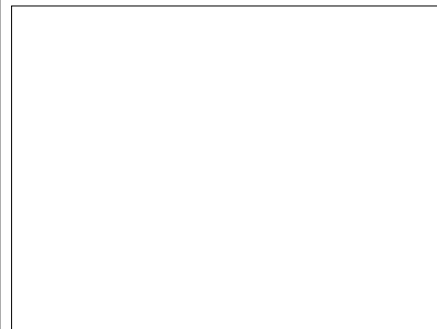
## Fact Sheet of Children in Justice System

Children in the criminal justice system around the world:

- ✎ There are one million children in detention today.
- ✎ 90% of children in conflict with the law are petty offenders.
- ✎ Four out of five children who commit an offense only once in their life time.
- ✎ A majority of children who end up in the criminal justice system are from deprived communities and discriminated against minorities.
- ✎ In UK, 50% of children in detention have either been in care or involved with the social services. A significant proportion has also suffered violence or sexual abuse at home.
- ✎ In Uganda, 70% of children taking part in a study on children in conflict with the law said that their main reason for stealing was to get food and meet basic needs.
- ✎ In Kenya, research found that 80

85% of children in police custody or correctional facilities were children in need of care and protection and had committed no offense.

✎ 33 countries and territories still permit corporal punishment as a court sentence for children. Six countries still permit the death sentence for crimes committed by children and 15. *Save the Children UK*. ❏



## Handicapped Boys Bailed Out

On August 30, Special Anti-Corruption Judge granted bail to two physically handicapped boys who had been illegally taken to Iran for begging. The FIA passport circle produced the two boys Ashaque and Major, before the court under Section 17(1) of Immigration Ordinance 1979.

The Iranian authorities had arrested the boys and after their trial, jailed them for entering their country through illegal means. On completion of their term, they were handed over to the FIA authorities in Quetta and later to the FIA Sukkur as they were residents of Ratodero and Shikarpur. The court granted bail for Rs25, 000 each on the ground of their age and disability.

The boys said that a man had taken them to Iran on the pretext of pilgrimage to sacred places. "We were forced into begging through his agent. He used to give us meal but finally we were caught by police there and sent to jail," claimed Ashaque. ❏

### First Glimpse of the Ocean

Close to 40 children of women prisoners at the Karachi jail were treated to a special lunch by social worker Jimmy Engineer on July 14. The children, all of whom live with their mothers inside the women's section of the Central Prison, were exhilarated to catch (for some of them) their first glimpse of the sea.

The children were playing in the sand and around the restaurant where they were taken for lunch. Many of the children were extremely well versed with the details of the presidential ordinance and said that their mothers had told them all about it. Some of the children, who were born in jail and are now toddlers, could not believe they were looking at the ocean. This was the first time that Mr Engineer had acquired permission to take these children out of the jail and bring them to the beach.

## 'I Would Like to See the Outside World'

Nearly 10 years old, Ayesha, a student of KG-2 jail school is living in the jail with her mother and brother. The mother was arrested in a narcotics case.

"I go to school at 9:00 a.m. We get a *paratha* (bread) and tea or toast for breakfast. I finish school at 1pm. I take a nap and then I make tea for my mother," she said. "I don't have any friends here because all the children are younger than me and the older ones are much older." Ayesha makes no mention of playtime. She said that the days when her father visits are happy ones. "I've forgotten what the outside world is like but I really want to go and discover it all over again," she said. ❏

# Influential Involved in Raping Mother, Daughter

A mother and daughter of a lower caste were allegedly kidnapped and raped by the police and government henchmen in Kabirwala on August 25. The two women were kept in confinement for 12 days. According to the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) the daughter was the main target, who being from a lower caste had just returned home after completing her Masters from Bahauddin Zakariya University.

This was not taken well by the State Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights as well as by the Kabirwala police of Punjab province. To

teach them a lesson the minister with the connivance of the police sent armed men to kidnap the girl and her mother.

It has now been revealed that the daughter and mother had been also allegedly gang raped. The victims were afraid to discuss the rape after their release since the police Khanewal- Punjab allegedly threatened to kill them. It is also believed that the nature of threats have been orchestrated by the Minister himself. This atrocity only became known after the mother went to a female doctor to stop the bleeding that she was suffering as a result of the rape. The mother then disclosed that both

she and her daughter had been raped by no less than 10 attackers.

The police allegedly threatened that if they disclosed their story to anyone; they (the police) will not only parade them naked throughout the area but will also arrange for a fake police encounter to kill her father and brothers.

According to the NGOs and activists, calls were made allegedly by the Minister instructing the police that the two victims should not be allowed to tell their story. The police refused to file a case against the accused. ❏

## India, Pakistan Top Traffickers

Pakistan has been listed as one of the key source of trafficking of women in a UN report. India has emerged as a key destination and transit point for global trafficking of women and girls. Besides India, other sources of human trafficking are: Pakistan, Thailand, China and Cambodia.

According to the UN Population Fund report *State of World Population*, in the South Asia, illegal trading of children is "an extension of a serious child labor problem, which includes exploitation of girls for domestic work", the report says. Southeast Asia and South Asia are home to the largest number of trafficked people, an estimated 2.5 million and 1.5 million respectively. ❏

## Father Kills Son

Mumtaz Mai will forever repent seeking her husband's help in persuading their son to go to school on October 9.

Asim, 8, wanted a day off from school in Vehari, She told the police. "Despite my persuasion, Asim was not willing to go to school. Then I asked my husband to prevail upon the boy to go to school."

Mumtaz said her husband got mad when Asim remained adamant. "He picked him up and threw him on a bed (*charpoy*) like a basketball," Mumtaz said, adding the boy fell unconscious as his head hit the wooden part. She rushed him to a nearby hospital but he died on the way. ❏

## Peacekeepers Accused of Sex Abuse

The UN is investigating a suspected child prostitution ring involving its peacekeepers and government soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN mission said. Among accusations being investigated is that pimps are using the presence of UN peacekeepers to lure vulnerable girls to go and work as prostitutes said a UN statement.

The UN's 17,000-strong mission MONUC has been hit by a series of sex scandals and last year banned sex with locals. "Although the majority of their patrons are Congolese soldiers and civilians, some of the girls involved mentioned that elements of MONUC contingents based in the region were also among their clients," the statement said. ❏

## Another Meerwala in Muzaffargarh

A twelve-year-old girl was stripped and made to stand in public in a village near Shehr Sultan, Muzaffargarh, by her neighbors to teach her a lesson for the sin she never committed. As in the Meerwala case - the suspicion was same of girl's brother having illicit relations with a woman of the rival group.

Though the area people, union council Nazim and Muzaffargarh district Nazim confirmed that such an incident had taken place on September 22, police said the stripping issue had been concocted by the girl's family in a bid to neutralize the First Information Report registered against them. ❏

Saeeda Syed

## Minors Saved from Marrying Elderly Men

Two minor girls who had been given in marriage to men in their fifties by a recent Jirga to settle a Karo Kari dispute heaved a sigh of relief on July 6 when a court sent them to Darul Aman. The police enforced the court's orders by arresting five of the 14 suspects booked for seeking to implement the Jirga's decision by kidnapping nine-year-old Shakila and 10-year-old Bashiran. The feudal lord who took the Jirga decision is at large. The girls' parents refused to accept the Jirga verdict and sought the help of police and the court. ❏

## Girls Abducted from Earthquake Area

Two minor girls, abducted from Balakot soon after the October 8 earthquake, reached Edhi Centre Lahore and were shifted to Edhi Home Islamabad on August 13. Mehlak Bibi, 14 and Aqsa Bibi, 8, were living in a tent village in Balakot with their younger brother and an aunt, who had lost both her legs. Girls' parents have reportedly died in the earthquake.

Both the girls told Edhi staff that some unknown people came to their tent and promised to look after them. They gave them some drinks after which they fell unconscious. They were then taken away and kept somewhere in Lahore and three days ago they got an opportunity and fled. They reached Edhi Centre in Lahore with the help of some local people. The girls, he said, were frightened and were unable to tell where they had been confined. They said their younger brother was still with the abductors. ■

Saeeda Syed

## Over 25,000 Street Children in Karachi

Karachi Naib Nazim said that it was the responsibility of both government and the society to provide protection to street children. She was speaking at a seminar on *Protection of Street Children* organized by the city government in coordination with Malir town administration and social work department of the University of Karachi on August 24.

She said that the number of street children was increasing and in Karachi alone their number had crossed the figure of 25,000 and this was high time to address this serious issue. She appreciated the establishment of "drop-in centers" for street children by various NGOs with Unicef's assistance. Unicef officer said that the Unicef had established a drop-in center in Jamshed Town in collaboration with Azad Foundation, where 600 street children were registered and were provided with necessary facilities and imparted non-formal education. ■

## Dubai Governor, Arab Sheiks Sued for Enslaving Children

A lawsuit was filed on September 15 in US district court alleging that the governor of Dubai and his brother enslaved some 30,000 children over the past three decades for use as camel jockeys, the US attorneys announced here. The 56-page suit, bases its case on international laws banning slavery and the use of child labor. Governor of Dubai and his brother are charged with "the alleged abduction and human trafficking of thousands of young boys" from places like Bangladesh, Sudan, Pakistan and southern Asia, according to a release by the South Carolina-based law firm

"Once abducted, the children were allegedly sold into slavery to serve as camel jockeys for the entertainment of the Arabian elite," the statement read. According to the complaint "boys as young as two years old have been stolen from their families, trafficked across borders, and kept in brutal camel-racing camps throughout the UAE, forced to train camels and perform as jockeys." The suit also claims some of the boys were sexually abused, injected with hormones to prevent them from growing, and starved to be kept light. ■

## Imam Slits boy's Throat on Resisting Rape

In Mianwali, a prayer leader of a mosque slit the throat of one of his students, aged 16 when he refused to fulfill the carnal desire of his teacher on August 22.

The prayer leader took the boy to a far-flung and deserted mosque. Upon resistance, he knifed the boy and fled. The injured boy dragged himself to the road where a man spotted him. He has been hospitalized in critical condition. The police examined the crime area and found walls and floor of the mosque to be blood stained. ■

## Conflict keeps 43 million Children out of School:

Forty-three million children living in countries around the world wracked by war and armed conflict are being left without the chance to go to school according to new research published on September 12 by Save the Children.

The study reveals the devastating consequences of armed conflict on education in 30 countries. Schools are destroyed or commandeered by armed forces, teachers are killed or flee to escape the violence, children can be recruited and forced to fight, and are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The report finds that children living in these countries receive the least amount of aid for education because donors think it is too difficult to deliver aid to them. Over 40 countries across the world launched *Rewrite the Future*, Save the Children's biggest global campaign in its 85-year history. [Http://www.crin.org/resource](http://www.crin.org/resource) ■

# LETTERS

## SPARC Training Really Works

I really admit that my daughter worked one month in SPARC office and learned a lot about child rights and specially girl's rights. Whenever she talks to others she refers to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and recounts that according to CRC No. ... It is our right. Last year she contested the election as Head Girl in City School Islamabad and lost but again contested this year and won it.

SPARC is doing really something good for children and making them think about their rights and also demand their rights in a peaceful and democratic way.

Muhammad Anwar  
Friedrich Naumann Foundation  
Islamabad

## A Note of Thanks

First, we would like to thank you for sending us your publications, which are quiet useful in our work on child rights. We are also sending you our new mailing address, so that we keep receiving your publications.

Kalyananda Thiranagama.  
Lawyers for Human Rights and  
Development  
233/1, Cotta Road, Colombo 08,  
Sri Lanka.

## Work in Balochistan

Anjuman Ittehad Nojowanan (AIT) is working in an underdeveloped area of Barkhan (Balochistan). The organization is working on children and women based projects.

We request SPARC to extend its sphere of operation and initiate projects in this area also. We are receiving your newsletters and other publications and would like to become SPARC members.

Mohammad Zafar Khetran  
Near Primary School  
Mohalla Madina Masjid  
Barkhan (Balochistan)

## Trainings and Seminars

MAVRA is working at district level with Coalition Against Child Labor. Our main focus is on child labor. We receive your literature regularly and request you to invite us in your trainings and seminars.

Tanzila Yousuf  
Rana Colony, G.T. Road  
Gujranwala

## Donations

Shafqat Service Centre works for handicapped and people suffering from infectious diseases. We also work on raising awareness on AIDS, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis. At the same time we are also working with women and children in jails by providing free legal assistance.

Please help us continue with our mission with your kind donations.

Ch. Shafqat Abbass  
Room 25, first floor  
Taj Mahal Plaza  
Rawalpindi

## Help save the Innocents

This summer Save The Innocents went to see the progress of the "Project 2005" and we are very happy and satisfied to see the progress. Those children who had never seen a school before now know English words. It surprised me that they are very smart in Math. They also know their numbers from one to hundred, addition, subtraction and table of 2.

I was so happy and proud when one of the boy who is paralyzed from waist down asked my son Danial "what is your name", (He asked in English) that was the moment I felt that all our hard work is worth it.

Save The innocents Also distributed uniforms, text books, school bags and supplies to all the students for the new school year. Now currently we have three classes and two grades. Each grade has 40 students, there are more children who want to join the school but unfortunately,

we have limited space. This year our goal is to build a school building for the students.

One of the landlords is donating land for the school building; we need more funds for the construction. Please help us brighten these innocents' futures and protect them from being lost in poverty and ignorance again. Help them to see their dreams come true.

You can make donations by check (please make the check payable to Save The Innocents.Inc) or make on line donation. Please visit [www.savetheinnocents.com](http://www.savetheinnocents.com) and click "How to help" or click on "Project 2005" to see the video of our work. We need your help, Be a member of Save The Innocents for \$ 10.00 (.33 cents a day) a month or Sponsor a child for education for as little as \$ 15.00 a month.

Mrs Nilofar Ahmed,  
Save The Innocents Inc.  
11389 East Bails Pl,  
Aurora, Co 80012.

## Fading Light

I read a review of *Fading Light: A Study on Child Trafficking* in a leading newspaper. I found it interesting and impressive. It appears a big study and effort has been made to write down this book on a very important issue in Pakistan.

Prof. Ms. Nasreen Pasha  
205-B, Upper Mall Scheme,  
Lahore.

## Requesting Feedback

Pakistan Labor Development Organization (PLDO) feels it may not be possible on the part of the government institutions to fight for the interest of laborers single-handedly. Therefore, PLDO Bahawalpur Division has printed a brochure, highlighting rights given to workers by different government institutions for their guidance. We call for maximum participation from public in this regard.

Ch. Mushtaq Ahmed Mushtaq  
St# 6, Jinnah Town Mian Channu

.....

### Clean Water

I wish to make use of SPARC's platform to bring a serious health issue to the notice of the authorities at Hajipur. Water is saline here, so people here have to store canal water. People dump waste matter into it, giving rise to all kinds of diseases, Jaundice and stomach related diseases have caused several deaths.

I request the high authorities to take immediate action on this impending health concern and supply us with clean canal water for hundreds of lives are at stake.

Ahsan Abbass  
Hajipur  
District Rajanpur

.....

### Request for literature

My association is working for child labor in feudal dominated Tehsil Jampur. We have never conducted any seminar on child rights. We would like for SPARC to extend its services to this far-flung and remote area as your team is already working in Rajanpur area. Moreover, provide us with literature that can be useful for us.

Malik Asif  
Al Habib Development Organization  
Tehsil Jampur  
District Rajanpur

.....

### Seeking membership

Human Development Association has been receiving SPARC Newsletters and I have also received training in a CRC workshop.

I am determined to become a CRC member and want to be part of SPARC's programs.

Mazhar Sultan  
Human Development Association  
Faisalabad

.....

### Seeking membership

I have started receiving literature from SPARC. Now I also share it with friends to give guidance on child rights.

I also wish to become a permanent member of Sindh CRC to carry the mission forward.

Qaiser Ali Tanwiri  
Khairpur Mirs

## New Convention for the Disabled

After five years of negotiations, countries have agreed on a new convention to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

"This is the first convention of this magnitude for this century," UN General Assembly President said after the agreement was reached. He said the negotiators were "sending an absolutely wonderful message to the world. You are sending the message that we want to have a life with dignity for all and that all human beings are all equal".

Proponents of the convention maintained that the treaty was necessary because persons with disabilities represented one of the most marginalized groups and that their rights had been routinely ignored or denied throughout much of the world.

While the convention does not create new rights, it specifically prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in all areas of life, including civil rights, access to justice and the right to education, health services and access to transportation.

It is estimated that 10% of the world's population, or about 650 million people, suffer from disabilities. ■

## Pakistani Clerics Fight AIDS Through Islam

A group of Muslim clerics had been hired by Pakistani authorities to launch a new AIDS awareness campaign. There are about 3,297 reported cases of HIV/AIDS in Pakistan.

But the program coordinator, believes that "the reported ones are just the tip of the iceberg."

"We have enlisted the help of religious leaders and clerics and printed specific material of Quranic teachings in order to reach the majority of Pakistan's 160 million people," Islam said.

Many of them are deported (from the Middle East) after tested HIV positive. It is very important to make them aware of the risk they pose to their families and to change their lifestyle," Dr Adnan Khan, a consultant with the program said.

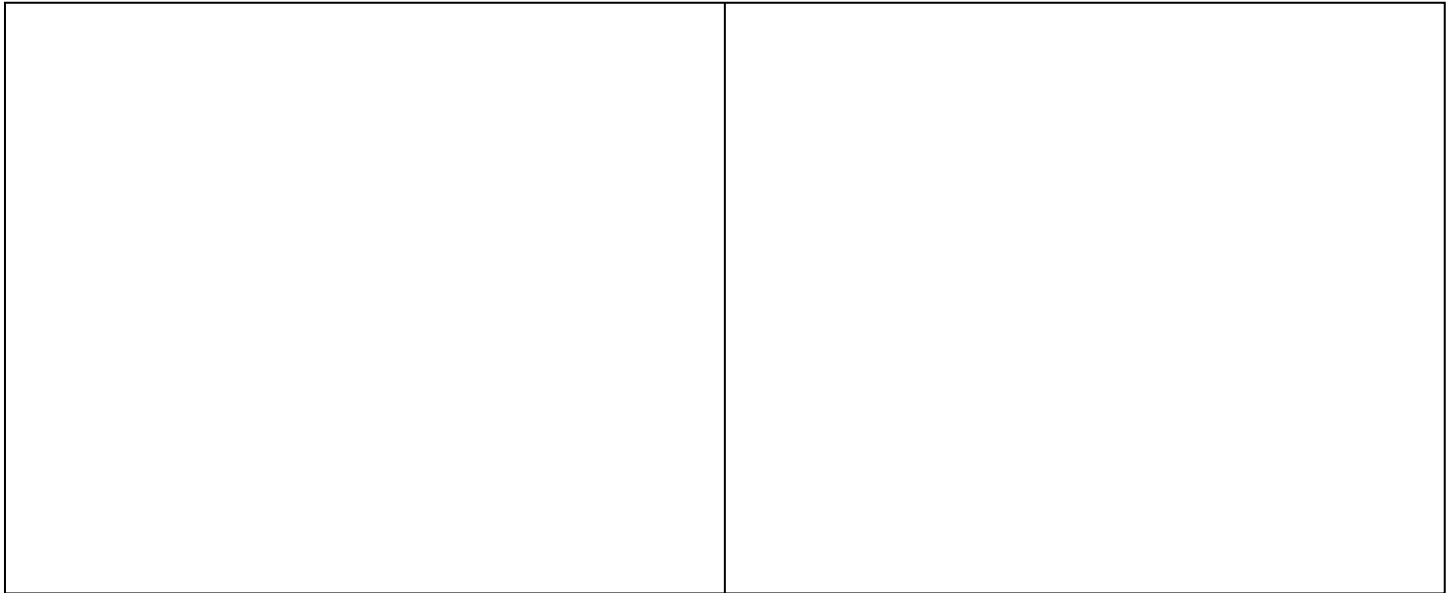
The material prepared by Pakistani clerics will be used in other Islamic countries, including Indonesia and Egypt who have already translated the books and posters to use them as part of their own national programs. ■

## HRC Asked to Prioritize Child Rights

In a joint statement sent to the second session of the Human Rights Council on September 26 a large number of organizations working on child rights have called for working alongside the Council to strengthen human rights and child rights standards worldwide.

The statement said that while conscious of the need to mainstream children's rights into the entire human rights system, we feel that children have specific needs and concerns that necessitate the adoption of an explicit children's rights focus by the Council. The World Conference on Human Rights, in its 1993 Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, reiterated the principle of "first call for children" and stated that "the rights of the child should be a priority in the UN system-wide action on human rights". Thus the CRC should be highlighted in the work of the Council.

This statement is our call for action by the Council on four specific child rights issues. The areas of grave concern include 1) violence against children, 2) sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 3) children affected by armed conflict and displacement and 4) children in conflict with the law. ■



## SPARC for Separate Juvenile Courts

**S**PARC has demanded of the Supreme Court to set up separate juvenile courts in Punjab to try juvenile offenders according to the rules of the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance (JJSO) 2000. SPARC Regional Manager Rafiq Khan speaking to a local newspaper said on September 9 that SPARC had written to the Chief Justice of the SC, asking him to order the establishment of juvenile courts under Section 4 of JJSO. He said the letter was written in view of the exceptionally low conviction rate for children (around 13%) coupled with delays in their adjudication and the severely limited recreational and educational opportunities in Punjab prisons that forced most of the children to spend months or even years in needless and damaging confinement.

Sub-section 2 of Section 6 of JJSO says, 'A juvenile court shall not ordinarily take up any other case on a day when the case of a child accused is fixed for evidence on such day.' During proceedings of 65 cases in Lahore and several interviews conducted inside various jails in Punjab not even a single magistrate took into consideration Sub-sections 2 and 3 of Section 6 or Section 7 or Section 10 of JJSO. If we have exclusive juvenile courts, judges will have time to properly hear the cases of juvenile offenders.

He said the number of under trial juvenile offenders could drop dramatically, if juvenile courts were set up and cases were taken up on regular basis. It could also minimize the cases of custodial abuse and prolonged detention, hence giving the offenders an opportunity to return to normal life. ■

## Waiting to be Hanged

**M**ore than 7,400 men and 36 women are waiting in 81 Pakistani jails to be hanged, confirmed Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).

Pakistan retains capital punishment by hanging for a range of offenses, including murder, drug smuggling, rape, attempted murder, kidnapping and acts of terrorism. But the number of death sentences handed out annually far exceeds the number of hangings, meaning prisoners could remain in the terrible conditions on death row for up to 10 years, according to cases documented by the HRCP.

Jawed Khan, a juvenile offender, who was 14-years-old when he was found guilty of murder in 2003 - is being held in Faisalabad Central Jail awaiting his death sentence. The Juvenile Justice Systems Ordinance (JJSO) bans death for persons under 18. However, as Amnesty International (AI) said in its appeal over Khan's case, the law is frequently ignored. In the absence of documentation age is often hard to prove.

This year 253 people, including three women, have been sentenced to death, with 42 hanged. Last year 477 people were sentenced and 52 hanged, while in 2004, 394 were sentenced and 15 hanged. ■

## Talk show on Juvenile Justice

**A** national TV channel aired a live program on children in prisons. The program was moderated by Mr. Anees Jilani. SPARC Regional Manager Punjab participated in the dialogue along with Mr. Arshad Mahmood, National Consultant. The discussion focused on different aspects of juvenile justice.

The panel made the following recommendations;

- (a) Children in prisons should be provided free legal aid,
- (b) Cases of juvenile offenders should be tried in separate and exclusive juvenile courts,
- (c) Department of probation should be activated to facilitate the release of children who come in conflict with the law. ■

## UN Study on Violence Launched

### Contd from Page 1

recommendations to prevent and respond to this issue. It provides information on the incidence of various types of violence against children within the family, schools, alternative care institutions and detention facilities, places where children work and communities. The report will be accompanied by a book providing a more detailed account of the Study.

The Study was prepared through a participatory process which included regional, sub-regional and national consultations, expert thematic meetings and field visits. Many Governments also provided comprehensive responses to a questionnaire transmitted to them by the independent expert in 2004. Significant contributions were also made by regional bodies and intergovernmental bodies, as well as from United Nations entities, civil society organizations and children.

SPARC also contributed to this Study by organizing a national conference on Violence Against Children in Islamabad and prepared a report on the above subject giving a detailed analysis of the various types of violence being committed against children in Pakistan. The report was submitted to the concerned authorities working on the study.

Website: <http://www.violencestudy.org> ❏

## BELA Takes Charge of NFBE

The government has decided to hand over the Non Formal Basic Education (NFBE) project worth Rs 26.75 billion to a proposed new autonomous body called the Basic Education Literacy Authority (BELA), after the Education Ministry's failure to properly execute the project.

The main objective of BELA will be to supplement government policies with regard to basic education by extending non-formal education facilities to children between the ages of five and 14 years. The project was initiated under the Prime Minister's Literacy Commission in 1995 with the aim to establish 82,000 home-based schools. These schools were to be set up in areas that did not have primary schools for girls.

The deadline for the project was 2002-03, but by 2006 only 10,185 non-formal schools were established, and even these have not been functioning properly. The Planning Commission in May 2005 declared the NFBE project "dead, sick and slow moving" and recommended its premature closure by next year. The Education Ministry resisted the move saying that the NFBE project was critical to Pakistan achieving its goal of 100 percent literacy rate in the country by 2015. ❏

## SPARC Receives Award

### Contd from Page 1

project, children in hospitals, and their specific needs and wishes were identified, lists were prepared, and local school children were asked to adopt a 'buddy' and prepare a gift duffel bag according to the list for the wounded children.

Meanwhile, follow up visits to Balakot and Muzaffarabad, helped in identifying the needs of children as well as local contacts that could be of assistance to SPARC. Some of the basic needs of children needed to be addressed adequately and immediately; the surviving children needed not only shelter and healthy recreational and learning activities, but also help in coping with injuries and the trauma of losing friends and family members.

The idea of a Fun Center was proposed by SPARC and the community responded. One affected family offered the use of its land for setting up the Center, which became operational on November 18. This Fun Center was a major success and in the following months SPARC with the support of Kinder Not Hilfe, a German organization set up nine Fun Centers, which became the hub of children's activity. The new Fun Centers have become operational in Shah Ismailabad, Balyani, Garlaat, Madni Mohalla, Bhampora, Shual, Julara, Turana and Hassa.

Among the SPARC staff working in Balakot area are Coordinator Debbi, Mahnaz, Qaim Ali Shah and Rashid Khan Jadoon. ❏

## 'Students' Die in Pakistan School Raid

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the choppers flew off. Most of the occupants were asleep while some had awoken for pre-dawn prayers, they said. Twenty bodies wrapped in sheets were laid out for funeral prayers and people pulled dozens more from the rubble and put them in sacks.

The deputy chief minister of North West Frontier Province, which borders the area, said after attending the funeral that he was resigning "to express solidarity with those innocent 80 students who died". "This attack has been launched by America and its allies, which includes Pakistan," he said. "Only 45 bodies were in shape. The rest have been reduced to bits and pieces." ❏

# World's Most Illiterates are in Pakistan

Pakistan is at serious risk of not attaining the goal of adult literacy by 2015, warns Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006. The theme of this year's report is *Literacy for Life*. Pakistan having over five million illiterates is one of the countries where global illiteracy is concentrated.

According to the report the Gender Parity Index (GPI) of Pakistan is one of the world's lowest GPIs (0.73); India and Nepal have made much progress since 1998 and nearly reached gender parity in 2002 (India's GPI increased from 0.84 to 0.96 and Nepal's from 0.78 to 0.92); Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Maldives and Sri Lanka had already reached parity by 1998.

The UNESCO data shows that the number of illiterates is increasing in Pakistan. According to the census reports 18.64 million people were illiterate in 1951. In 1961, the number increased to 22.08 million, in 1972 it was 33.59 million, in 1981 it was 42.69 and in 1998 it increased to 50.38 million.

Likewise, the percentage of GDP spending on education continued to decline. It was 2.62% in 1996-97, 2.34 percent in 1997-98, 2.40 percent in 1998-99, 1.7 percent in 1999-00, 1.6 percent in 2000-01, 1.9 percent in 2001-02, 1.7 percent in 2002-03, 2.1 percent in 2003-04, 2.2 percent in 2004-05 and 2.1 percent in 2005-06; the UNESCO figures said quoting the census of Pakistan. ■

## '23 Orphan Children Need AIDS Test'

Twenty-three orphaned children in Hangu district and Parachinar Agency are unable to undergo HIV tests because they cannot pay the fee. "They have lost one or both parents to AIDS. We need to ascertain if these children have been affected by the disease," said an officer of Roshan Development Society, who had so far registered 53 patients in Hangu and 102 in Orakzai and Kurram Agencies.

He said they had recorded 11 children in Hangu and 12 in Parachinar, Kurram Agency. Now these children need to be tested for AIDS. Most of these children

are destined to suffer from HIV/AIDS, but tests are urgently required, he said

"We have conducted their AIDS tests in the antiretroviral (ARV) therapy centre in Peshawar. All were negative. But they require HIV test, which is not available in Peshawar," he added. In addition to the children, there are 31 HIV positive women, who need treatment. The HIV test costs about Rs 4,000-5,000.

All the children are below four and have no knowledge about the disease. At the same time the government and donor agencies are also reluctant to extend help to them. "There may be more such children because most of the people deported from Middle Eastern countries after being tested positive for HIV/AIDS belong to this area," he said. ■

## SPARC Condemns Ban on Teacher's Association in Sindh

SPARC expressed concern and condemned the Sindh Government's decision to place a ban on teacher's association as this amounts to the violation of their basic right to Freedom of Association.

The ban on teachers' associations in Sindh is in violation of the Constitution of Pakistan, International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions to which Pakistan is a signatory and civil law and statutes. Pakistan has ratified all ILO conventions and ILO permits no flexibility in the acceptance of the basic human rights standards, that is, freedom of association.

This ban could mean a continuation of curtailment of teacher's rights, loss of jobs and demoralization of teachers which will seriously impact on the education of children in the country.. ■

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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. The 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 & UNDPI, & is a partner of Child Workers in Asia, Global March, Anti-Slavery, DCI, GCE & IFAN.

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