

HUMARA bachpan TIMES

JUL - AUG 2015



EDITORIAL

Humara Bachpan Times, in this issue discusses how child leaders from different cities advocated with various stakeholders for better living conditions in their neighborhoods. This July, child leaders from Bhubaneswar were invited to Bank Information Centre, Washington DC to share some of their recommendations on the World Bank's proposed safeguards policies.

We take pleasure in sharing with you this edition of Humara Bachpan Times.

Happy Reading!!



We know what is best for us

Children form an important stakeholder in any development project.

The World Bank in view of this took initiated a series of consultations in Washington DC, wherein a delegation of nine children from Uganda, India and Albania had participated to share their recommendations on the World Bank Safeguard Policies.

Child leaders Rupak Gouda and Jasmin Nissa, child leaders from Bhubaneswar, represented India and spoke on 'Consulting Communities' and 'Information disclosure' at this Consultation. They had the opportunity to meet, several officers from World Bank, especially Mr Subash Garg, Executive Director, India.

The week long consultation, captured children's perspectives on safeguards the bank should ensure before investing in a developing country. Children participation should be a 'non- negotiable principle, impact assessments that look at the unique risks of bank's projects on children should be conducted. Communities, should be re-settled as a last resort, and to a place where access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and housing to be ensured.

Children as community developers

The child leaders from Singravelan Nagar and MGR Nagar from in Chennai raised the issue of irregular water supply and non-functional water pipes with their ward councilor Mr. Karthikeyan.

"There are very few proper functioning taps in our community, as a result, we wait in long queues for water, subsequently getting late for school. We want a metro water supply in our community." - said Shubhas, a child leader from MGR Nagar

Mr Karthikeyan immediately forwarded the matter to Tamil Nadu Water Board, following which the non-functional water taps were repaired and continuous water supply was also ensured. The councilor also shared his number with the children to get in base with him in case of any other issue.

A group of 36 child leaders and 25 parents from Jaibhim Nagar, Mumbai, began the old tradition of writing letters to their MLA, Mr Ramesh Latke to convey their concern of a river which flowed adjacent to their neighbourhood. It remains unsafe due to low raise walls around the river causing the children to fall into the water and injure themselves. Within a month the officials began the construction of high raise walls.

"There were many times when we had tried to raise this issue but have failed even after multiple attempts. Seeing this happen, our hopes have rekindled. If all goes well, Jaibhim Nagar would be a safer place for children." - Sachin, a child leader exclaimed hopefully.



1) "As it is we don't have spaces to play, now due to fear of vehicles passing by we can't even play on our streets"- said Krishna, a child leader from Saatwadi, Surat.

Child leaders along with the help of community members from Saatwadi, a low income neighbourhood in Surat wrote a letter to the Zonal Head on the 10 of August 2015 to build a speed breaker on the road that passes by their community.

The speed breaker would prevent speeding vehicles to slow down and the children to cross the road and play safely.

15 of August the children witnessed a couple of officials discussing on building a speed breaker as per the letter sent by them.

This success has conjured up the hope and confidence of the child leaders in saatwadi.

2) Child leaders from Narela, New Delhi collected strong visuals to prepare their Charter of demands. (COD) They mentioned the issue of open manholes and drainage in their community.

"Open drains serve as the breeding place for flies and mosquitoes. They also emit stench, as result of which the children fall prey to many diseases."- said Artie, a HBC fellow.



The COD was then submitted to their MLA, Mr Sharad Chouhan. He immediately enabled the construction of a proper and covered manhole and drainage system.

3) Child leaders from the city of Bhopal had a meeting with four ward councilors from Gulabi Nagar and Saraswati Nagar. They raised the issue of sanitation safety and cleanliness in their community.

"I feel very unsafe while returning back from my tuitions in the dark, a street light would lighten the roads and make me and other girls feel safe." Said Priyanka Raghuwansi, child leader from Gulabi Nagar.

"I am really happy to see children advocating for the betterment of their living conditions. I would like to be in regular touch with the children."- said Ms Sushma Babisa, the ward councilor.

The ward councilors approved of their issues and within few days began the installation of two street lights and allocated two dustbins.

4) Child leader from Sidhnath Nagar and Ravidas Nagar, Jabalpur submitted a COD to Mayor Ms Swati Godbole and discussed the issue of water in their neighborhood. The COD asked for the installation of new pipelines in the area and regular checks on the quality of water.

"The fluoride content in the water is very high, as a result the teeth quality of the children is deteriorating"-said Shiv Kumar Choudhry, a HBC fellow.

"I will have a word with the ward councilors and get this issue resolved as soon as possible"- assured the city Mayor, Ms Swati Godbole.

As a result of the advocacy, new pipelines are now being constructed in the Ravidas Nagar and a supervision is being kept on the quality of water.

Independence Day Celebration

69 long years since India freed herself from the hold of the British and still we remember with pride the Tricolored flag and all those that sacrificed their lives. Though India is a free nation, not all of its citizens live freely. Oppression exists, both in covert and overt forms.

One of the major oppressed groups are the communities that live in poverty. Held captive by money (or the lack there of), the subpar standard, living conditions, these people are enslaved into thinking that they have no way out.



This Independence Day saw immense advocacy with the urban local officers by the child leaders from various cities. Here is a glimpse of all the major advocacy initiatives in different parts of the county.

1) 42 Children from a low income neighbourhood in Goregaon, Mumbai took the charge to free their neighborhood of its filth. They cleaned their streets, simultaneously sensitizing people to take care of their neighborhood and not dirty it.

“We are not free unless people take charge of their own community and try keeping it clean.

They should realize the diseases caused due to unsanitary living condition”- asserted Pallavi Nikam, a child leader from the same neighborhood.

2) Child leaders from various communities of Delhi came together to celebrate the day of Independence in Narela and Badarpur, low income neighborhoods in the suburbs of Delhi. The event also witnessed participation from various local Government leaders.

“Nothing much has changed since independence. We still live in cramped houses, defecate openly. It’s time we take a strong stand and better our conditions”. - said Varsha, a child leaders from Badarpur.

“It’s been 67 years since Independence, and still majority of its population lives without access to basic facilities. We now demand our basic rights and entitlements from our local leaders to get them fulfilled”- asserted Tarun Sharma, a fellow from HBC

“We as local leaders will try our best to ensure that the community gets access to basic facilities”. Said Mr Narayan Das Sharma, MLA from Badarpur. He also assured the children that they could feel free to approach him with their issues anytime.



3) An overwhelming participation was seen in Ruppunpur, Varanasi on the 15 of August 2015. 50 Child leaders participated and various dignitaries also graced the occasion.

“Open defecation has serious consequences,

The community in Rupnapur should advocate to build toilets to get rid of this harrowing issue, said Professor Ms Sarita Tiwari, Banaras Hindu University.

“It is delightful to see children participating and advocating for themselves and their neighborhood. My good wishes to these children and HBC.”- exclaimed BL Prajapati, a school teacher.

The child leaders from Phul Kohna and Ruppunpur used the celebration as a platform to share their issues and concerns prevailing in their community. The ward councilor took a note of the issues and promised the construction of toilets, pipelines and roads in the community. “We will always be open to the needs and problems of the community. We would extend our support in every manner possible”- assured Mr Sujit Mourya, the ward councilor

4) 70 children from four child clubs of Kesimedu, Chennai hosted the Independence Day celebration in their neighborhood. The head police inspector Mr Majima, was the chief guest of the event.

He hoisted the flag and gave a speech on the relevance of Independence Day. He talked of great leaders of our nation and motivated the children to grow up to become good leaders.

As children remain the most vulnerable section during any kind of trouble or distress an appeal was also made to the police to take special care in ensuring child safety and security.

Advocacy Initiatives

1) Giryapaa road, Tenyampet, 5 child leaders from Chennai took up the issue of not having a community space in their neighborhood. They submitted a COD to their ward councilor, asking for the construction of the above.

“We don’t have a community space for holding our child club meetings or for conducting social events and festivals, I think it is important for a community to have such a space”- said Varsha, a child leader from MGR Nagar.

After a follow up meeting by the Humara Bachpan Fellows, the ward councilor promised that he would ensure the allocation of 25 lacs along with the 1 crore that was sanctioned by the State Government.

“The inauguration ceremony for the construction of the community hall would be held in March 2016”, promised the ward councilor Mr Chinnayyan.

2) Seven child leaders from the **of Jabalpur** submitted a COD to their MLA Mr Tarun Bhanot stating the unsafe condition of their school and the lack of toilets in it.

“I don’t feel safe going and urinating in the open and, as we don’t have a school boundary wall, outsiders walk and we do not feel safe in their presence, said Kavita Chaudhary a child leader from Sanjay Nagar.

Mr Tarun allocated 2 lacs and 14 thousand towards building toilets and boundary walls in the school premises.



School Outreach Programmes and volunteer mobilization

1) A School outreach programme was held in St. Hilraj School in Pune. Over 300 students from class 5 to 7 participated.



The students were given a brief introduction about the campaign and were then divided into groups for an activity. They were asked to identify and give a presentation on the things they were grateful for towards their parents, teachers and friends.

This activity aimed at honing the skills of, identification and participation. Any problem solving or analysis entails the first step i.e. identification of it. The students were very happy and also expressed their willingness to meet and interact with the child leaders every month.

A similar programme was held in Mother’ Public School, Bhuabneswar. 300 students from class 8 to 10 and the school teachers participated in the programme.

The school has decided to take up the project of designing 3D models on the topic ‘My City, My Dreams’, and put it on display on the 14 of November which also happens to be their school annual exhibition day.

2) Volunteers from Orissa Engineering College, Trident Academy and KIIT University made regular visits in the month of August to engage with the child leaders.

“I always wanted to be around lesser privileged children and help them realize their potential. HBC has given me the platform to do so. Now I am holding the hands of many such talented children and contributing to their development. Surprisingly I feel as if I am the one learning more and more each day”. – Deepesh Nayak, Volunteer from Orissa Engineering College.

They gained knowledge of the campaign’ activities and also engaged with the children in the forms of games and activities to make them more sensitized about their living conditions and also development of their communication skills and logical thinking ability.





HUMARA BACHPAN CAMPAIGN

National Campaign on Living Conditions of
Young Children in Urban Poverty

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