

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Page 1:
Editorial

Page 2:
Our Right to Play

Page 3:
Bal Sansad Elections

Vote For Me Campaign

Page 4:
Nargis Shaikh shows
the way

Awareness through Vote
For me campaign

Page 5:
Creativity Corner



Kid's Corner

Maaza Maharashtra Maaza Sahabhag

A monthly newsletter highlighting activities of the Children's Parliaments in Maharashtra

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PRATYEK

Presence and Ruthlessness for Advocacy and Training of the Young for Earth-rights and Kids' rights



unicef



Maaza Maharashtra Maaza Sahabhag

EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

Since schools have begun and the children have started a new academic year, so also your children's parliament meetings would have begun and you would have already started training and planning activities with the children. We want to hear from you on how the start has been.

We already have a few of our partners update the online form that has been shared with all, and we are happy to see the work that is being done. For this month we have #VOTEFORME campaign that was carried out by two of our partners, a story of a child from one of our network partner who got all the help to keep the behaviour of a school teacher under check, elections for ministerial roles carried out and a success story shared on how the children from village Soit in Chandrapur got their playground back.

The work has just started and we have a very long way to go. We are confident that you, our partners will see to it that the children are adequately trained and armed with the knowledge of their rights. In the months to come we hope to see many such stories of children standing up for their rights and addressing issues of concern in their locality.

This year also marks the 70th year of UNICEF's work for children and we urge you to visit this site <https://static.unicef.org/tinystories/> where writers from around the world have shared a short story on the theme 'What I Want for Every Child', and I leave you with this thought, "What do you want for every child?" Share with us your thoughts on balsansad@csamumbai.in.

- The Editorial Team

“ You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.”

<https://www.crcasia.org/>

UN Convention
on the
Rights of the Child



OUR RIGHT TO PLAY



Image Reference: <https://www.nation.co.ke/>

The children of the village Soit in Chandrapur were brought together and the concept and objectives of a Child Friendly Panchayat were explained to them. The children were given sessions on child rights. During these sessions the children came to know that one of their rights is to play and to play they needed a ground.

The ground in that village was used by the villagers to attend to nature's call. The children got together and discussed this issue in the Bal Sabha on how to get the playground back. They wrote an application regarding this issue and presented it to the Gram Sabha. The Sarpanch told the children that they would look into the matter. But nothing happened. The children started to follow up continuously with the Gram Panchayat and put a fresh application. The children's parents and other elders were angry

with the children for taking up this issue, but this did not hamper their determination and did not stop trying.

The children themselves contributed and brought light bulbs to light up the area which the villagers used to attend nature's call. Even this did not yield any results. The children then tried something new. Some of the children went on the ground making noise by beating the vessels for a few days. This did not go well with their parents and were advised not to use the playground but use either their courtyard or the school ground to play. The parents of a few children even barred their children from attending the Gram Sabha

meeting but the children did not lose hope and submitted another application to the Gram Panchayat.

Now, the parents of a few children agreed with the points put forth by the children and started to support them in their mission. The application submitted by the children was finally taken up to be discussed in the Gram Sabha. The members of the Gram Sabha discussed this matter and found merit in the points raised by the children. It

was announced by the Gram Panchayat that the villagers will not use the playground to attend to nature's calls and anyone found to be doing that would have to pay a fine. As a result of this rule the children were successful in their fight and got their playground back.

Article 31

“You have the right to play and rest.”

“You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.”

“You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.”

BAL SANSAD ELECTIONS



confidential manner. The counting of the votes after the election resulted in 3 girls and 6 boys being declared as winners. Rushikesh Khating was declared as child prime minister of group and other portfolios were allotted to the remaining 8 children. These children who were chosen as ministers were assigned the responsibility of working towards the rights of each and every child.



Dnyan Bal Sansad under our partner Asmita Seva Pratishthan, Parbhani, held elections for the ministerial roles at a Zilla Parishad School in Itlapur. The children took active part in the election process. The Director of the organization had a session on child rights for the children. During the meeting it was decided that all the children of the village and in schools should be made aware of their rights.

The election process was conducted in a very

#VOTEFORME CAMPAIGN



wanted to highlight the issue of child rights being neglected by the elected representatives and because the children below the age of 18 have no right to vote they wanted the adults to take responsibility of protecting the rights of children.

Through this campaign villagers were also made aware that the children have a right to education and that adults should not indulge in any form of child labour. Stating article 12 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child they said that children have a right to voice their opinion and adults should listen and take it seriously and this VOTEFORME campaign was a platform for them to do just that.

The officials of the gram panchayat and other members were present for this event and they along with the other villagers acknowledged their support to the children by putting their votes for children's rights.

Our network partner, Arogya Prabodhini, Gadchiroli, has a Bal Sansad in Shivaji school, village Tulshi, Taluka Desaijanj. This Bal Sansad has been active for the past one year. To spread awareness of child rights in the village the children of this Bal Sansad organized a VOTEFORME campaign for the villagers.

The children explained the objective of the VOTEFORME campaign to the villagers and encouraged them to read the children's charter of demands. Through this activity the children

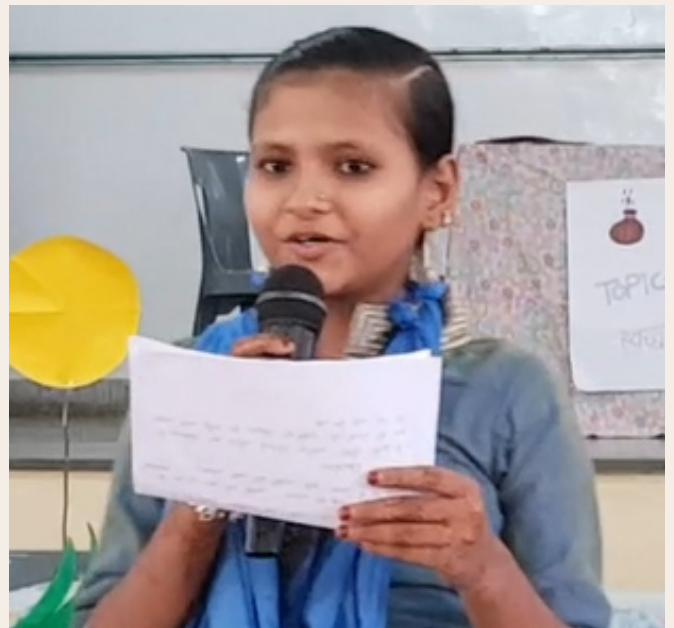
NARGIS SHAIKH SHOWS THE WAY

The standard VI students of the school at Rafi Nagar were not treated well by their teacher. The teacher was not showing concern to their needs and was over strict and rude. During school hours, instead of teaching them, the teacher would instruct the students to copy the content written on the board and get busy with personal work and did not tolerate any disturbances from the students. This had a very negative impact on the children.

This issue was raised in their Bal Sansad meeting, and the children discussed and decided to write a letter to the teacher. Nargis Shaikh took the initiative to draft this letter. The letter described the grievances that they faced due to the behaviour of the teacher and how they were emotionally affected due to this rude behaviour. The letter also requested the teacher (indirectly) to change her behaviour as her cooperation and guidance was necessary to bridge the unhealthy gap between them, thereby achieving the main goal of education. She also took help from two other children from the Bal Sansad to take signatures on the drafted letter and the letter was

presented to the teacher.

After two weeks when this issue was again discussed in the Bal Sansad meeting, the children explained that a huge change had been observed in the behaviour of the teacher. She stopped repeating her earlier behaviour, but started a new thing about passing sarcastic remarks. But over a period of time these remarks have also stopped and the children today are very happy with the change that has taken place in the teacher.



AWARENESS THROUGH #VOTEFORME CAMPAIGN



The YASH children group had a community engagement for the Vote for Me Campaign, the children prepared the ballot boxes for putting in the slips and they divided themselves into groups of three and went to three different locations in the community, the children communicated to the people about they

being the present of the country even if they can't vote till they are 18 years old. The children asked the people to read the manifesto of various parties to ensure that they endorse a party that supports child rights.

The motivation for children was that they were recognised with the work they do in the community; each child got the chance to talk to people and tell them the importance of child rights. The sweet and bitter experiences during the interaction made the children realise that it takes effort to make people realise that children's needs must be addressed and discussed and that children can be also self-reliant



▼ A poem by Prachi Sonawane, Mentoring Team - Centre for Social Action, Mumbai

What I want...

I want the child to be free,
Study and get a degree.
I want the child to raise a voice,
No matter how much the noise.
I want the child to be strong,
In midst of what went wrong.
I want the child to fight,
And stand up for what is right.
I want the child's smile to spread,
And have a bright future ahead.

