

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Page 1:
Editorial

Page 2:
Block Level Forum

Page 3:
Advanced Training of
Trainers

Page 4:
YASH Group - Summer
Camp

Children take initiative

Exposure Visit

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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EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), through Article 12, states that children have the Right to be Heard and the Right to Participate. In keeping with this, and the fact that the Maharashtra State Elections are up this year, the children of NINEISMINE drew up a 'Children's Manifesto', a document which states issues what they would like the next government to address along with recommendations. Children can use this Manifesto to advocate with different political parties and parliamentarians to have them incorporate it within the Manifesto of their respective political parties. Going one step further, the children can interact with the electorate, through the #VOTEFORME campaign, encouraging them to read the Manifestos of political parties and vote for the one that includes children's issues in the same.

Children should be given the platform that they can claim to raise the concerns of their childhood today which were definitely not the same for us adults when we were kids. Vote for Me Campaign should give children the space to share their opinions and exercise the right to speak and to be heard.

A document explaining the concept has been shared with the participating organizations at the recently concluded Advanced Training for Trainers in Mumbai. Those who do not have can send us an email on balsansad@csamumbai.in requesting the same.

- The Editorial Team

UN Convention
on the
Rights of the Child

“You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.”

Block Level Forum



Child friendly panchayat is a pilot initiative implemented in Chandrapur and Nandurbar. The programme is focused on building capacities of children and promoting child participation in governance through Bal Sabhas and Bal Panchayats. This programme has led the Gram Panchayats to be more responsive where all members understood, implemented, promoted child friendly activities, developed action plans based on real evidence and involved children in decision-making processes.



With the objective to bring the children of various Bal Panchayats representing different Gram Panchayats together to meet, know, share and learn from each other and also to teach children about the importance of knowing their rights and to take up leadership roles to initiate actions responsibly, the first Block Level Forum for Chandrapur district was held in Pombhurna and Bhatala blocks on 28 and 29 May 2019 respectively. CSA team along with UNICEF consultant Ms. Rajani and 3 master trainers were present to make both these events a success.



The schedule for both the days was:

- Introduction and getting to know each other through ice-breaker activities
- Children sharing their experiences, success stories
- Input sessions: (brief introduction about UNCRC, motivational stories of children around the world, training on leadership skills/qualities)
- Group games and activities emphasizing on child rights, team building and leadership were played.

It was indeed a pleasant surprise to have Mr. Dhananjay Salve, BDO (Block Development Officer) along with his staff grace the occasion at the block forums.



His presence at both the block forums made a great impact on the children. He interacted with the children, asked them about their learnings through the day. Mr. Salve, not only appreciated the children for being the change makers in their village, but also encouraged them and assured his co-operation and support in all their endeavors. To motivate the children, he also recited his poems



which were indeed inspiring. Ms. Ashwini, Bal Sarpanch of Bhatala Bal Panchayat, very confidently expressed the learnings and various activities they were engaged in throughout the day.

“You have a right to be protected from kidnapping.”

“You have the right to give your opinion, and for the adults to listen and take it seriously.”

Advanced Training of Trainers

In order to build the capacities of the staff of the organizations who had participated in the Basic ToT last year and enable them to move towards forming Sabhas / Bal panchayats in their respective village / Gram Sabhas an advanced ToT was organized from 21st May 2109 to 24th May 2019 at Sarvodaya, Goregaon (East), Mumbai. A day wise summary of training is mentioned below;



Day 1: A recap on the last years program was done which was followed by the sharing of the work done and challenges faced in implementing the project by the organizations including PRATYeK and CSA. There was a session where the participants were explained the concept and structure of Bal Sabhas, Bal Panchayats and the levels of federation. The participants were guided on how to link the children with administrative officials as well as the local elected representatives with a view to create Child-Friendly Panchayats.



Day 2: The first session was on Children's parliaments and participation which was followed by a sociocracy election process. This process was enacted by the group to give them an understanding on how to elect office bearers with 100% votes from the children. In the seconf half, Ms. Rajani, a consultant with Unicef, presented the Chandrapur model of Child Friendly Panchayats which was followed by an input on the upcoming Unicef campaigns, namely, CRC@30 and #VOTEFORME.



Day 3: This day was dedicated for understanding advocacy, the nine steps of advocacy and using different mediums like cartooning, flash mob, puppet show, action song, clay modelling etc for advocacy. The participants were asked to share their views about advocacy and then, selecting a topic, they were asked to create an advocacy plan for their organization and present it.



Day 4: The day started with a participatory discussion on the monitoring and evaluation and M&E templates were shared. This was followed by a presentation on media resources and documentation, where the importance of documentation and sending stories for the MMMS2 Newsletter was stated. The participants were asked to share their learnings from the three days of training and their plan for implementation. A vote of thanks was given by Fr. Mario Mendes, Director, Centre for Social Action and distributed of the certificates for participants who attended all the days of the training.



YASH Group - Summer Camp

The YASH group has been a dynamic group where different aged children have come together to make a change in the society. The group was taken for a summer camp from 11th to 15th May to Vasai. Foremost the children went through the process of understanding the importance of the children's parliament, and the roles and responsibilities of the four major ministers, and then they went through the election process, which made them aware about the how a children's parliament functions and of how the meetings are conducted and agendas are set.

The children learnt different ways of doing advocacy in their community. They also learnt different mediums to express themselves by learning sign language and practising it. As the YASH is a group with children with disability so to interact with them, they learnt to use basic sign language for interaction.

The children also learnt a medium of circus art, where through this art form they expressed their creativity and expression. They also had practice sessions for flash mob and street play as a part of the advocacy to be conducted in their community.

Through this summer camp the children have realised the significance of team work and of how advocacy can be done without violence, they learnt how inclusion is important in a group like there's and most importantly how they can bring a change in the lives of the children and people in the community.



Children take initiative to get their area cleaned

My name is Michelle Sambrea and I belong to the Little Star Bal Sansad group of Motagaon, Uttan. Our Bal Sansad group met on 9th of May for a meeting. At that meeting the facilitator gave us information and explained to us our main four rights and asked us if we have experienced getting these rights. We answered that they have not, for example, we have a right to survival and for that we need clean air, water, cleanliness in our area, etc.

We then raised the point of garbage disposal issue in our area. And with the help of our facilitator, we wrote a letter on 21st of May and visited the official of Mira-Bhayander Municipal Corporation, health and hygiene department. He accepted our letter and immediately called the health and hygiene worker of our area and asked him to take necessary action without any delay.

The very next day the workers came and cleaned the area thoroughly. It was so good to see our area clean. All this because our facilitators guided us well and we took the initiative to see that our rights were exercised. There is now a sense of fulfilment and pride amongst all the children of our Bal Sansad group.



Exposure Visit

On one of their school's weekly holiday, the Jawaharlal Nehru Bal Sansad group of Tulashi village, district Gadchiroli, under our network partner Arogya Prabodhini, decided to visit and understand the working of the Gram Panchayat Office.

Under the guidance of their teacher Mr. Vishnu Dunedar the children met with the Gram Sevak, Mr. Divakar Nindekar and had a discussion with him. They came to know how the Gram Panchayat functions, the work it does, its economic sources and the election process to the Gram Panchayat. They also got information on the village child rights committee and the Gram Sabha.



