



CWISH NEWS

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Children-Women in Social Service and Human Rights Issue 6

Recent activities

World Day against
Child Abuse
- rally and program

Orientations at the
Drop-in-Centers on
child abuse

Letter campaigns at
schools and
communities on
child protection

Comics workshop on
child sexual abuse

PTAN meeting on
child protection

Police report on
sexual abuse
published

Social Audit

Medical workshop

Journalist network
meeting

Recreational
activities for DIC
children at
Sankhapark

Women's groups meeting

Health Camps

When children's rights are violated, there has been a failure by the state to ensure them. Even though the state is the guarantor of human rights, its obligations are limited to its own actions as well as functions in enacting and enforcing laws and policies to prevent the interference of those rights by third persons. It is thus also us people, adults and communities, who allow wrongdoings to take place and fail to prevent them, especially in the area of child sexual abuse that happens in the private sphere. The theme of this 6th issue of CWISH's newsletter is the crucial role of adults

and parents in preventing abuse from happening and taking action when it does. The laws that order punishment for abusers can only be effective if the cases are noticed and brought forward. Thus raising awareness on the issue is necessary. CWISH has conducted an extensive campaign in November to ensure that we as adults learn to carry responsibility in protecting our children. This year the youth and children were mobilised in full force to join the campaign. The message they delivered through their creativeness and talent is clear: it is now time to act.

Protecting children

Children represent a larger population of global society. In the country like Nepal children's population is quite high as half of the population. Still, children's problems are not well responded and often victimized of wrong perception and practices.

Child protection is one of the major concerns on the area of children not only at macro global level but also at micro family level. In Nepal this is a serious concern as we have more than 1.8 million child workers, 45 percent of children are suffering sexual abuse, thousands of children are missing every year, thousands other are trafficked, physical punishment and violence against children is quite common as traditional customs and practices.

People in Nepal have often wrong perception and practices about these issues. Myths at community level hinder people to have protective environment and practices for children. On the other hand children are at the bottom level in social power structure making them to suffer silently. The institutions and state mechanisms are not child friendly and sensitive towards these issues, neither school curricula nor education system have seriously responded this problem. The legal proceedings and provisions also have numbers of loopholes that encourages impunity and hindered justice.

Therefore we need to improve the system and mechanism through strong advocacy initiatives; enable the adults and parents to transfer their responsibility into a right practical action at family, community and school level; and empower children to speak up, to complain and to protest.

CWISH being a human rights organization focused on women, children and youth once again reaffirm it's commitment to work for the children's protection together with parents, adults, children, state mechanism, youth and the civil societies.

Milan Dharel

Executive Director

Thought of the month:

The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names

World Day against Child Sexual Abuse

In November it was time again to mark the World Day against Child Abuse. This year's focus was on the role of adults and parents in protecting children from abuse. CWISH together with a consortium of organizations working on child protection issue organised a variety of activities to raise awareness on the topic. This year the day was set in the context of 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), which Nepal has ratified 18 years ago.



Press program

CWISH organised a press program for journalists to explain about child sexual abuse as well as to inform of the activities to be organised on 19 November. As the media has a main role in making news at the local level, this year too it plays an important role in bringing up the issues in communities. Executive director Milan Drahel thanked for the support of the media in the past and pledged for their cooperation also in the future.



Drop-in-Centers at the centre

Drop-in-Centers do not only provide access to education for domestic child

workers, they also function as a forum for raising awareness and reaching employers. This year orientations on child sexual abuse (CSA) for the domestic workers as well as adults and employers were conducted by the Dynamic Youth Forum members on 15-17 November.

Domestic child workers are at high risk of abuse. In order to prevent abuse and help children who have been subject to abuse, it is important that they understand what it is in order to be able to tell about it. Children were oriented on CSA, how to protect themselves from it as well as how to react to it. After the orientation they were encouraged to use their creativity to draw pictures and write stories of CSA.

Adults play a crucial role in preventing abuse and taking action when it occurs. Yet knowledge of abuse is still lacking and there are wrong perceptions of it. The youth informed the participants on who is a child, what is abuse, where it occurs and who can be the abuser. Some participants were surprised to hear that CSA happens not only in the villages and that anyone, also people of high social status, can be an abuser. Youth also advised the audience on how to talk to children and explained the effects of abuse.



Youth on move

Youth has what it takes to bring about change in the society. This year's 19 November campaign rally was fully under the responsibility of the Dynamic Youth Forum which gathered its members and college students to raise

their voice against CSA. The rally started from Sundhara and ended at Basantapur where the youth oriented the curious audience on child labour and CSA and demonstrated their energy by dance performances.



Children take the lead

The main program of 19 November was organised after the rally in the premises of the Nepal Tourism Board. The program was led by members of the child clubs supported by various Nepalese NGOs including CWISH. Guests included Constituent Assembly (CA) members, the Chair of Constitutional Committee in CA, political party members, police representative and the Central Child Welfare Board Executive Director. The speeches by the children and the guests proved the commitment to fight against child abuse. Children underlined that they are the present, not only the future, and that action needs to be taken now to stop abuse. The children performed songs and drama, which not only kept the audience's attention alive but also delivered important messages on child rights and child protection.



Letter campaigns

As a new practice CWISH initiated letter campaigns to spread awareness on child abuse and protection as well as to mobilise communities and schools to

work on the issue. Thousands of letters including an invitation to an interaction program organised by Child Protection Committees in communities and schools were sent to the adults and parents through school students and door-to-door visits.



Comics workshop

Child club members from four different schools demonstrated their creativeness by making comics on child sexual abuse at a three day workshop organised by CWISH.

During the workshop the participants were oriented on CSA and were encouraged to share their experiences of CSA and its impact upon their life through body mapping. Based on their sharing short stories were made and comic were drawn. The comics were put up on the wall as an exhibition at Chabahil Chowk with support from Chabahil Community Service Centre.

Children prepared altogether fifteen comics telling different stories of incidences of CSA like vulgar text messages and abuse by employer, cousin brother, teachers, stepfather.



Police report

In order to address sexual abuse and take action against it, it is necessary to have information on the problem and the mechanism to deal with it. In December Nepal Police published and shared a Status Report on Sexual Abuse of Women and Children. The report was

made on the basis of data collected from reported sexual abuse cases covering a one year period.

The increase of reported cases in the recent years is not a sign of increase in abuse but a positive trend showing that awareness is spreading and people feel safer to report cases. Much work still remains to be done to encourage people to report. The police has now women and children service centers in all districts to make it easier to bring cases forward. The data also showed that sexual abuse makes up the biggest proportion of all crimes against women and children. Abuse happens anywhere by all kinds of people at anytime. Similarly survivors' back ground varies.

Police responded to the comments and questions of the audience and assured its commitment to work towards achieving better results in the future.



PTAN oriented on child protection

The theme of the PTAN (Parents'-Teachers' Association) meeting in November was child abuse on the occasion of world day against child abuse. The program was organised to make participants realise the relation of child protection with school and the need and benefit for schools to have a child protection system. An expert consultant presented a paper which focused on child rights and child protection.

Following the presentation the participants were divided into seven groups and were requested to provide three things that must be considered in order to ensure child protective environment in schools. Incorporating these points, an appeal letter will be made which and submitted to DEO, DOE and Ministry of Education.

Major points listed from group work were following: the issue of child protection has to be incorporated in curriculum; every school should have code of conduct regarding child protection; representatives from DEO or a special committee must monitor the

situation of child rights and child protection in schools; formation and mobilisation of CPC in every school; provision of child protective infrastructure including provision for children with disability; and provision of psychosocial counseling for children and trainings on the it for teachers.



Social audit

Altogether 82 people participated in the social audit of CWISH programs of 2009. The participants included target groups and stakeholders namely children, women, child club members, youth, SMC and PTA members, head teachers, representatives from community service centers, community police, varying authorities from municipalities, PTAN and media.

The stakeholders and target groups asked questions and provided feedback on the programs. The participants appreciated everything CWISH has done by so far and hoped for regular follow ups and networking with line agencies to make the programs more effective in the future

The questions and queries were clarified by CWISH Executive Director Milan Dharel. The Chairperson Bimala Gyawali expressed that all the feedback and suggestions were most welcome and will provided a guideline for the future.

Women power

CWISH does important work in educating women and encouraging them to start up their own businesses in order to enhance their earning potential. CWISH believes that empowering women also has a positive effect on child labour, if women themselves are educated and able to provide living, they do not need to send their children to work. On 10 November, CWISH organised a workshop for the women groups who are in business or in planning phase. At the workshop experiences on opportunities and challenges of group and group business were shared.

Picture Gallery

- CWISH in action



Story of the Month: Action by Community to stop abuse

A 13 year old girl Uma Chaudhary (Name Changed) was brought to an employer's house in Kathmandu, 2065 Magh to work as a domestic worker with allurements of good food, a place to live and very little work in the family. In the family of three there were a husband, his wife and their son.

Uma's life soon turned into terror. Only one week after she had arrived, the employer's son started abusing her sexually. This severe and threatening abuse happened continuously for 9 months. Uma was not safe even during the day because the husband worked outside of valley and his wife worked in a government office.

When she told about the rape to the wife of the family she ignored it by saying that she was pretty so any man would want to rape her and did not take any protective measures towards her. Uma tried self-protection by starting to sleep on the floor of the wife's room but the terror still continued even during the night. The son came to the room shut Uma's mouth, tied her hands and raped her. She says that the wife even heard her sobbing but would act ignorant and pretended to be asleep.

Even though the employers allowed this abuse to take place straight under their eyes, it was the neighbors and people living in rent in the house who noted Uma's suffering. They responsibly reported the case to CWISH who has now reported and filed the case at the Maharajung Police Station with clear allegations. The offender is currently in police custody.

* Name of the victim has been changed

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