

Journalists Alert ...1

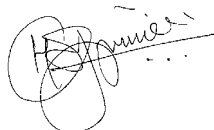
Child Issues in Focus

✎ key story ideas for media coverage and discourse

Dear Reader,

Issues of child rights have been taking remarkable shape in the society, but receiving inadequate space in different forms of media. Highlighting the children's issues in media is today extremely essential because it has direct bearing on the policy environment at international, national, regional and local levels. JOURNALISTS ALERT is an attempt to remind you to pen down on different issues and aspects of the children in our society so that their future can no longer remain bleak; ultimately they are the future citizens of our country and the world. Supported by Plan International, this Alert consists of some positive stories of children-based interventions that actually show way to all of us. Other set of stories drives us towards realizing the gravity of the problem and to act upon the burning issue. Hope you will subscribe some of the story ideas and act appropriately.

Sincerely,



Hasrat Arjumend

✎ **Child participation should not just be rhetoric but should become a meaningful reality**

In the remote area of Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu (India) where the devastating Tsunami of 26 December 2004 played havoc with more than 9,000 lives. A small group of children are using photography as a tool to monitor relief and rehabilitation measures initiated by international development agencies. Equipped with a child friendly eye and simple parameters to assess relief, they have posted their findings including photographs on the website www.picturesforlife.org. There is a lot to learn from these children as the website amply reveals.....



Make universal birth registration a reality

Did you know that millions of children in India go unregistered? Yes, when a child is born his birth certificate becomes his first identity — it is passport to existence and many other things he may receive as benefit including school admissions, passport, ration card, etc. Now with the support of film star Anil Kapoor, Plan has been taking this issue to the masses. And along with UNICEF and the Office of the Registrar General of Births and Deaths, this issue has received a tremendous boost. But what is the ground reality, and how can it be changed? For more information on the issue, visit the website www.writemedown.org.

Vigilance committees to prevent trafficking and HIV/AIDS

At a time when the incidence of trafficking and HIV/AIDS is increasing among the youth in states like Andhra Pradesh, vigilance committees formed in the villages falling under the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh are keeping a tab on the movements of suspicious traffickers to ensure that no one is trafficked. This has been the result of a five-year project being implemented by a network of more than 20 NGOs in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh supported by Plan. For more details and if you want to visit the area to do a story, please contact K. Kannan, Communications Coordinator, Plan at k.kannan@plan-international.org




Bhopal Express to roll out again

The Bhopal Express is rolling out again; but this time it is sensitive to the needs of children in railway platforms. Yes, a Plan India supported project is ensuring that children in railway platforms from Delhi to Bhopal are never in distress again. The project, being implemented by the Delhi-based NGO CHETNA is envisaging the creation of child friendly platforms across eight locations: Hazrat Nizamuddin, Mathura, Agra, Gwalior, Jhansi, Bina, Bhopal and Habibganj. Railway officials are being sensitized as part of the project and their cooperation is being solicited. Meanwhile, a study on children in railway platforms by CHETNA has revealed that these children are involved in more than 70 odd jobs on railway platforms. For more information, please contact: Grassroots Media Initiative, New Delhi at grassrootsmediainitiative@gmail.com

Children draw up a vision for their schools

Innovations in education can happen with children's involvement, as this group of children in Andhra Pradesh's Suryapet area reveal that they write the vision for their schools, identify the resources they have and the resources they need. With the support of the State Resource Group, this project has gone a long way in involving children in improving the quality of education. The school improvement programme is now being replicated across several states. For more information, please contact: Grassroots Media Initiative, New Delhi at grassrootsmediainitiative@gmail.com

 **These are also amazing.....**

The Amazing Kids awards show on POGO channel features the children who have excelled in extra-ordinary feats. But who defines what is extra-ordinary? Children cleaning up village tanks, organizing immunization camps, taking cudgels on behalf of children who do not go to school, teaching adults in night schools aren't the extra-ordinary achievements for ordinary rural kids? And should these feats go unrecognized? Check out what Seema in Gairsain (Uttanchal) did recently by logging in www.plan-international.org. We have a plethora of such stories of ordinary children doing what their parents and community members thought was extra-ordinary. It is time, we ran a column in newspapers recognizing the social consciousness of rural kids.....

 **Girl child education in feudal Rajasthan**

Sending girls to school is not easy in rural Rajasthan where millions of them do not go to school or do not study beyond class-V. In such a situation, the Balika Shivirs — an intense eight month long coaching camp for children — is ensuring that girls go back to school. Visit Lunkaransar of Bajju in Rajasthan to know more, or contact K. Kannan, Communications Coordinator, Plan at k.kannan@plan-international.org




 **Child labour is both a cause and consequence of poverty**


An oft-repeated statement... But the children in Delhi's Sangam Vihar question the ban on child labour enforced by the Supreme Court recently without an alternate rehabilitation plan for them? Why is such a plan necessary? Ask Ajay or Hemlata who studied children working in dhabas on the Mehrauli-Badarpur road and you can know more. Members of a children's group called the Bal Panchayat question everything around them including child labour but the realities even in their own area are different..... For more information, please contact: Grassroots Media Initiative, New Delhi at grassrootsmediainitiative@gmail.com

 **Stop Child Labour: School is the best place to work**

Child labour is a worldwide problem which, according to ILO's latest Global Report on the issue, still affects the lives of 218 million children. India has the largest number of working children in the world: 13 million children according to official Indian statistics, but unofficial estimates claim between 60 and more than 100 million. The Indian Child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act prohibits child labour in a limited number of occupations and processes that are considered hazardous. Domestic labour and work in hotels, restaurants, bars etc. have now been added to that list. In other occupations, e.g. agriculture, child labour is limited to 6 hours a day (although not enforced). There is no legal limit to the work a child can do at home, even if this home-work is part of an industrial subcontracting chain. For more information on this issue, log in www.schoolisthebestplacetowork.org or Contact: Gerard Oonk at g.oonk@indianet.nl.


 **Only formal schooling can ensure education of children in Orissa**

There are more than 40 lakhs of child labour in Orissa out of which around 23 lakhs are girl child labourers. After several schemes are launched to proliferate education for children and bring more children into mainstream education, the situation has not improved. The need for quality education for the children is still a dream. The idea to popularize the non-formal education to bring more children into the mainstream school has also faced with implementation problem. Different schemes like EGS, DPEP, SSA, NCLP, etc. have failed to provide quality education and all these schemes should effectively work as bridge courses or preparatory courses and all the children must get quality and equitable education through mainstream formal school system. For more information, please contact: Grassroots Media Initiative, New Delhi at grassrootsmediainitiative@gmail.com

 **Government of India not serious for children's future**

In 2002, the 86th constitutional amendment included education as a fundamental right by incorporating Article 21(A) of the constitution. It generated some hope that every child in India will have access to education. However, a central act is still awaited to promote free and compulsory education in a proper spirit. 86th amendment should set legal standards, which would pave the way for millions of children to get free, compulsory and quality education. Nevertheless, despite several consultations and meetings the central government could not reach a consensus to enact the Right to Education Bill in the parliament. In 1994, following a judgment by the Supreme Court, the centre asked the states to make education compulsory for children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The state governments washed their hands off saying it would add to their financial burden. Government of India is deliberately delaying the Bill to pass in parliament in order to escape the responsibilities. The facts need to be investigated and unearthed. For more information, visit: www.caclindia.org; or contact: Ranjan Mohanty, Campaign Against Child Labour, Bhubaneswar at caclcs@yahoo.com, caclcs@sancharnet.in



 **Ever tried to find out children's views on issues affecting their lives?**

Probably yes or perhaps no... But children are honest, do not beat around the bush and are genuinely concerned on issues of education, health and many other areas affecting their lives. Why not talk to a child the next time you do a story on issues affecting children's lives. Or perhaps carry their story alongside the stories you choose to write. We will only be too glad to help....

For further information, please contact:

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