



KONPAL* CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION SOCIETY

KONPAL Child Abuse Prevention Society is an NGO working against all form of child abuse. It comprises child rights activists who share the common vision of a society free of child abuse, with zero tolerance against child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation, involvement of children in hazardous occupation, armed conflicts and violence. The members are professionals from different fields who are concerned with therising incidence of abuse against children. The group is fighting for the rights of children and against all forms of abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation of children.

A memorable day with children at SOS Village

RECREATION is the basic right of every child, says the UN Charter of the Rights of Children. Yet a very large number of children are deprived of even the simplest recreation or entertainment.

In recognition of this basic child right, Konpal, Child Abuse Prevention Society, arranged a Mela (carnival) on

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Children have fun at the Konpal Mela. In the inset above, Director SOS Village Karachi Mrs Zahida Hashmi receives a bouquet and a shield in appreciation of her dedicated service to homeless children. Dr Aisha Mehnaz and Dr Ashfaq Mala flank her.

*'Konpal' means a new bud. Small, tender, delicate, yet capable of becoming a flower, a leaf or a branch.

KONPAL CALLING

A memorable day with SOS children

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June 13 at the SOS Village. The carnival was organized exclusively for the deprived and under-privileged children of the SOS Village. The timings of the event matched with the school holidays when every child wished to enjoy the break and have some fun.

The purpose of the Mela was to give the children a sense of belonging, and being a part of society. Care was taken to ensure their participation and to give them the feeling that they are precious to us all. The event inspired other NGOs, apart from Konpal, to come forward and organize more such activities for the betterment of the children of this village.

The Mela continued from 3:00pm to 10:30 pm.

Painting Contests: Painting contests were held to let the children discover their artistic skills. There were two competitions for pot and paper paintings. The winners were awarded prizes. The stalls were managed by Ms Shahnaz Yasin, Ms Abida Tariq and other volunteers.

Mehndi and Face Paintings: By all means the most favourite stall for girls, they crowded it all the time. It was managed by Dr Yasmin Khan and her team of Konpal and SOS volunteers.

Indoor Games and Competition: Indoor game contests such as the dart game, hit the can, pencil game, and ring game were managed by Ahmed and his team of Konpal volunteers.

Outdoor Games: They included Sack Race, Three-Legged Race and Spoon Race. The activities were conducted by Mr Salahuddin, Bilal, Dr Rakesh, Dr Ashfaq and others.

Jumping Castle: A Jumping Castle attracted the children and adults alike.

Magic and Jugglery Show: Everyone loved this amazing entertainment show.

Singing and Dancing Contest: The contest was the most appreciated of all the stage shows. The performers as well as the audience thoroughly enjoyed the Contest and the Stage Show.

Professional singing: The programme concluded with some excellent professional singing.

Apart from these fun activities, some highly useful activities beneficial to children's health were also held.



Dr Krishn Kumar, psychologist Uzma Munawwar, social motivator Abida Tariq and other volunteers making everything ready for the mela at SOS Village, Karachi



Health Camp: A free, detailed medical checkup, including eye checkup and growth & development assessment was conducted by the Konpal specialists. Nutritional and psychological assessment and counselling, blood sugar checkup and eyesight check up were also carried out. Children who were found in need of treatment or further tests were referred to the Civil Hospital, Karachi. About 200 children and their 'House Mothers' underwent the checkup. Konpal medical team comprised Dr Rakesh, Dr Krishn, Dr Nusrat Shah, Dr Yasmin Khan, Dr Farida Qureshi, Dr Shazia Samad, Dr Aisha

Mehnaz, Dr Arshalooz Rehman, her sister who is a qualified ophthalmologist, and many others.

In recognition of service above self, and dedication to the children of SOS Village, a shield was presented to Mrs Zahida Hashmi, Director SOS Village. Certificates of appreciation were given to all House Mothers. Konpal caps were distributed among the kids and the volunteers.

Gifts were distributed among all the children of the SOS Village and House Mothers. At the end, everybody had a sumptuous feast.

Konpal, the main organizer of the mega

event, owes its success to the untiring efforts of its members and volunteers without whose participation and cooperation this memorable event would not have been possible.

For the success of the Mela, Konpal extends special thanks to Dr Ashfaq Mala (General Secretary, Konpal), Ms Shahnaz Yasin (Programme Manager, Konpal), Dr Rakesh, Dr Krishan, Dr Shazia Samad, Dr Nusrat Shah, Dr Arshalooz Rehman, Dr Javeed, Uzma Munnawer, Ms Abida, Waqas, Hamza and his sister and parents, Basit and other volunteers – especially Mr Salahuddin.



Free medical camps at the seaside villages

TO help the monsoon affected residents of the coastal areas of Karachi, Konpal organized a medical camp, in collaboration with CDRS, at three villages along the western coastline on August 16, with an 18-member team of doctors and volunteers. Free medical camps at seaside villages

The first medical camp was set at the Somar Village at Hawkesbay. More than 250 children, women and men from the village and some adjacent villages were seen. Three separate medical centers were held in each medical camp where specialist and doctors examined, advised and gave free medicines, provided by CDRS, to the affected peoples. Those found in need of further investigations and admission were referred to Civil Hospital Karachi, where CHK doctors and Konpal members would provide further treatment and care.

Konpal offered this service to all the individuals requesting admission and further management. After the camp the Konpal doctors celebrated Independence Day with the children of the village.

The second camp was held at the village at the French Beach and the third near Mubarak Village (Allah Bano Village) a place close to the Hub Chowki.

At each camp the Konpal doctors and volunteers held free medical service for women, children and elders of the village and dispensed free medicine total of more than 400 patient were seen in these village. These camps were held from morning till 5:30pm in the evening.

After the camp the Konpal team relaxed at the Sunehri beach before returning to Civil Hospital Karachi.

The Konpal team was assisted and helped throughout the day by Mr Taimur Mohmand and his volunteers. The following doctors and volunteers participated:

Prof Aisha Mehnaz, Dr Ashfaq Mala, Dr Krishan Rai, Ms Uzma Munawar, Ms Abida Tariq, Dr Rakesh Raj, Dr Najam, Dr Masood, Dr Sonia, Dr Rabia, Dr Prakash, Dr Seema, Ms Fatima, Ms Moona, Mr Abdul Basit, Mr Imran, Mr Usman and Ms Shahnaz.

Pictures of the medical camp are seen here.



Glimpses of Konpal medical camp



Instances of child abuse and neglect on the increase

THE magnitude of child abuse and neglect (CAN) is increasing globally as well as locally, causing devastating psychological and social problems to young victims and their families, stated Dr Ashfaq Mala at a consultative meeting of the Hospital Child Protection Committee (HCPC) at Civil Hospital Karachi (picture below).

He added since the HCPC at CHK started working in 2005 the number of reported cases are increasing day by day. The cases of abuses involve nutritional and medical neglect, physical and sexual abuse and corporal punishment. He presented documented cases of sexual abuse recorded by the medicolegal officer of CHK and supported by the reports of the chemical examiner.

The meeting, chaired by Mr Ghulam Rasool Ahpan, Secretary Social Welfare Department, Government of Sindh, was held on Aug 27 at the Paediatrics Unit III, Civil Hospital, Karachi.

At the meeting, Professor Aisha Mehnaz explained that the main objectives of the meeting were to introduce and review the HCPCs in Karachi and the interior Sindh; review case management; share experiences; and discuss problems and constraints faced by the HCPCs. The meeting also aimed at improving networking with the concerned government departments and other NGOs. She also gave a brief presentation regarding HCPC formation and functioning.

A brief introduction of Konpal was

presented by Dr Fehmina Arif, highlighting its vision, aims, objectives and activities, touching on the future plans.

Dr Krishn Rai presented the case study of a street child who was later managed by multidisciplinary team of HCPC, CHK, and briefed upon the process of management and rehabilitation. He also gave the cost incurred.

After a session in which various HCPCs coordinators shared their experiences, Dr Nusrat Shah discussed the constraints and problems being faced by HCPC CHK. She pointed out that no legal support was extended by the CHK, and at present networking with other NGO is being solicited for legal support.

It was mentioned that social support was still lacking; no home visiting programme was being carried out; no medico-legal officer had been appointed; there was lack of cooperation by other concerned departments; financial constraint hampered management of CAN victims; ownership/support was denied by the government; logistic constraints; and non-existence of a scientific rehabilitation centre. The need for protection and security of care providers and HCPC members was also mentioned as a major problem.

Dr Azra Rafiq, coordinator of HCPC at Sindh Government Qatar Hospital, mentioned increase in workload as only a small number of staff was available. She said that many cases came to the hospital but since the number of the staff

is not sufficient, proper attention cannot be paid to these cases. Dr Khalid Zuberi, coordinator of Sindh Government Children Hospital, North Karachi, said that they do have child friendly space but needed a better organizational setup of the HCPC.

Dr Mushtaq Shaikh, coordinator of Sindh Government Lyari General Hospital, said that because of a lack of security, a majority of the cases went unreported. He complained of a total lack support from the hospital administration.

All the speakers emphasized the need for having medico-social officers in all the committees.

At the end of meeting, chief guest Mr Ghulam Rasool Ahpan, in his concluding remarks, assured that he would contribute to the cause in all possible ways. He added that the issues of appointing medico social officers, notification from the Health Department and space for rehabilitation centres would soon be solved.

Mr Ghulam Rasool Ahpan presented the Konpal souvenirs to coordinators of HCPCs and Prof Aisha Mehnaz gave them to the chief guest.

Other participants were: Dr Iqbal Ahmed Shaikh, Dr Yasmeen Qazi, Ms Sabiha Shah, Dr Rakesh, Dr Tariq Kamal Ayubi, Dr Javed Haleem, Mr Malik Tahir Iqbal, Dr Nabeela Soomro, Ms Uzma Munawar, Ms Abida, Dr Sikandar Sohani, Ms Mariam Sheikh, Mr Faiz Alam, Dr Umbreen Gul, Dr Uzma Ahpan, Ms Shabana Mairaj, Dr Nasreen Anwar, Dr Raza Rahman and Dr Saba.

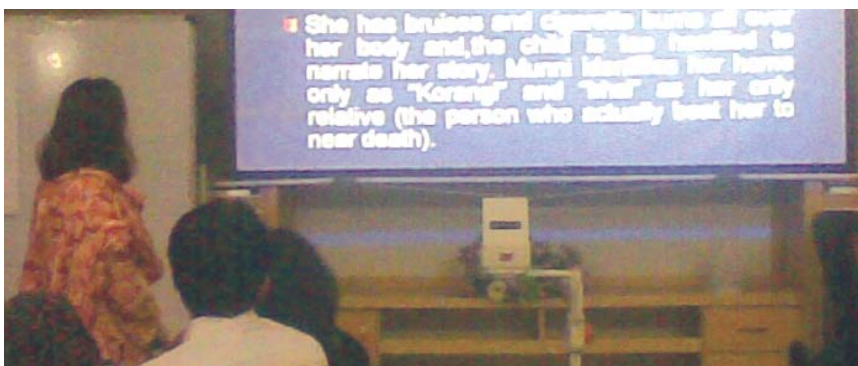


NEWS BRIEFS

A TWO-DAY TRAINING WORKSHOP on child protection, early case detection and management of child abuse was held at the Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) and Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK) on March 3-4, 2009. As many as 25 health care providers working at CHK, Lyari General Hospital and private practitioners were trained in this workshop. It was organized in collaboration with DUHS Professional Development Centre.

HOSPITAL CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE OF CHK:

Frequent meetings, at least one per month, are being held at the Konpal office and CHK where all the cases seen in the previous month are reviewed and appropriate actions taken. There has been a steady rise in the cases reported. In the last meeting, the committee discussed the financial burden incurred in the complete rehabilitation of an abused child. The committee has decided to appeal for donations for the rehabilitation of the child through “sponsor a child” scheme.



Views of the training workshop on child protection, early detection and management of child abuse held at DUHS



A case of child neglect

THE CASE of five-year-old Anam was brought in a critical stage by a social worker of a trust.

The child weighed only 5 kg, as much as a 3-4 month old child. She was cachexic, severely debilitated and suffered from multiple infection and sepsis. She was thrown on a garbage dump by her own biological father. Anam was a case of severe medical, nutritional, physical and emotional neglect and abuse.

There was a strong possibility that she was being used for beggary and was purposely starved as the parents who were traced later appeared well nourished but they blamed their poverty for their abominable neglect of the poor child. Unfortunately, Anam succumbed to her illness within 48 hour of admission.

Who is to be blamed for poor Anam's utter neglect and subsequent death?

Independence Day activity

ON Pakistan's Independence Day, Konpal organized and participated in a number of activities involving children.

On August 13, Konpal organized children's painting and singing competition at the Department of Paediatrics Unit III of the Dow University of Health Sciences.

Doctors, paramedics, mothers of child patients and children admitted in the ward actively participated and greatly enjoyed the events.

Gifts and prizes were given to all the participating children.

A cake cutting ceremony was held at the end.

On August 14, members of Konpal visited the SOS Village in Karachi and joined the children of SOS in Independence Day celebrations.

On August 16, Konpal, in collaboration with CDRS, organized a medical camp at western coastal areas of Karachi. These medical camps were held at Sandspit and Mubarak village.

The Konpal team, including doctors and volunteers, visited and managed patients and celebrated Independence Day with the villagers.



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