

SPARC ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child)



SPARC: House 98, Street 5, MPCHS, E-11/1, Islamabad. (Telephone: 051-2163011-12-13) | Website: www.sparcpk.org

Vision

A world in which children are valued and empowered and their rights promoted and protected.

Mission

To promote and protect the rights of children and to empower them using international standards as a yardstick through advocacy supported by research, awareness raising, service delivery and human and institutional development.

History

SPARC was registered in December 1992 as a non-profit organization under the Societies Registration Act in Islamabad.

Being instrumental in introducing the concept of Child Rights and in raising issues that were previously not part of the national debate, it has been creating awareness about the UNCRC and lobbying for implementation of its provisions.

It has been working on issues such as education and violence against children, especially corporal punishment, child labor and juvenile justice.

It also draws attention to the needs of and issues affecting the Girl Child, such as early/forced marriage, harmful traditions, access to education, and discrimination.

Outreach and Geographical Coverage

SPARC is certified by Pakistan Center for Philanthropy (PCP) and under the USAID Institutional Management Certification Program (IMCP). It is in consultative status with ECOSOC and the UN Department of Public Information

In 2003, it received the United Nations Recognition Award in acknowledgment of its work in highlighting the plight and promoting the rights of children in Pakistan.

It has been working since its formation to promote Child Rights in Pakistan and has gradually extended its outreach in the country by establishing its offices in Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi and Hyderabad; presently, the offices in Karachi and Lahore are not functional due to lack of funds. Additionally, it currently has project offices in Multan and Haripur. The registered office is based in Islamabad.

Methodology

SPARC believes that the problem of millions of children cannot be resolved through a piecemeal, project-based approach. Action is required at the macro (government) level if widespread change is to be brought about. In this regard, the primary responsibility lies with all tiers of government, but civil society organizations and the general public also play important roles in improving the state of children's rights.

Advocacy

SPARC aims to introduce policies and/or legislation where it is needed or where none exists. This involves reforming ineffective or harmful practices and/or laws and ensuring that existing ones are effectively implemented and enforced.

Awareness- Raising

An improvement in the condition of the children and the status of their rights will not come solely through policy and legislation. Changes in social attitudes and practices are also required. SPARC believes that by raising awareness, it is also building the capacity of various stake holders. Apprised of the importance of Child Rights and their roles and responsibilities in ensuring them, the general public, civil society organizations, government officials and concerned individuals are better equipped to improve the condition of the children of Pakistan.

SPARC spreads awareness about Child Rights through its many publications, consultations, meetings, campaigns and has effectively utilized both print and electronic media for this purpose.

Education

SPARC calls for free, compulsory, uniform and quality education for all children up to grade ten, regardless of their area or social origin.

In its annual publication *The State of Pakistan's Children*, SPARC documents developments in the education sector, including government policies, resource allocations, access to and quality of education, enrolment, dropout and completion rates. Through its publications, and consultations and radio messages, SPARC raises awareness about children's right to education and the important link between illiteracy, poverty and child labor.

The insertion of Article 25-A in Pakistan's Constitution has given a boost to SPARC's education related activities.

SPARC with the support of AAWAZ-Response funding carried out a research study to identify the barriers to girls' education from the ages of 5 to 16 years. The research was undertaken in three targeted districts of South Punjab: Multan, Muzaffargarh and Bahawalpur. SPARC engaged stakeholders including the parents, children, school principals, teachers and officials from the targeted districts and provincial departments.

From December 2013 to March 2015, a Project titled 'Communities Taking Charge: Bringing Quality Back into Primary Schools' supported by DAI Europe targeted 64 private and public sector schools. Its key tasks included conducting a research to identify gaps in public sector schools, dissemination of results and lobbying with key stakeholders, including government and School Management Committees (PTCs).

It undertook the Project titled '*Promoting Child Friendly Classroom Environment*' in the 2009-2012 period. It trained 5,239 teachers on alternatives to corporal punishment in schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Furthermore, the Director of the KP Education Sector Reforms Unit (ESRU) issued a notification of setting up a Grievance Redress Mechanism in the Education Directorate and EDO offices of the province. A major breakthrough was reached when the Regional Institute of Teachers Training (RITE) incorporated contents related to classroom management, positive discipline and harmful impacts of corporal punishment in its syllabus.

With the support of KNH, a project was undertaken to improve School Enrolment and Retention Rates in the Flood Affected Areas of KP. The project duration was October 2011 to July 2013. SPARC renovated 42 schools in Nowshera and Charsadda providing play facilities and infrastructure support; training 50 teachers and 28 Parents Teachers Councils; undertook community sensitization and produced informational material. Increased enrolment was recorded with 310 new enrolments in Nowshera schools while in Charsadda, 444 new admissions were recorded.

With the support of Terre des hommes Germany, a Project to Rebuild Schools in Flood Affected Areas of District Badin was undertaken from January 2014 to December 2014. SPARC provided infrastructural support to ten damaged schools in Badin and undertook disaster preparedness trainings to more than 300 students and 11 teachers and carried out community awareness campaigns on importance of education.

SPARC, with the financial support of KNH and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), implemented a four year educational project (2014-2017) in selected 60 government schools of Districts Abbottabad and Haripur in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The project, *Promoting child friendly classroom environment in selected schools of KP*, largely aimed at improving quality of education and learning outcomes in target districts through provision of basic educational facilities and infrastructural support to 60 selected schools, training of 120 master trainers and over 360 school teachers and strengthening of child protection systems in the province through lobbying and awareness raising. Child Rights Committees and member lawyers in two districts provided legal aid to more than 35 beneficiaries and 29 fact findings were reported from both districts.

As a founding member of the Global Campaign for Education, SPARC has organized activities during the annual Action Week since 2000 to draw attention to different concerns about education and to encourage governments to work towards their Education for all goals.

Every year, GCE week is celebrated from April 21-27 with the cooperation of the project offices. Press conferences and consultations with the stakeholders are undertaken to create awareness about the importance of education and the role it can play in reducing poverty.

Child/Bonded Labor

SPARC has continued to ask successive governments to improve their laws in order to set a legal age limit for employment in Pakistan. In addition to this, a number of widely disseminated researches focus on the core issue of exploitation of child laborers. Every year, SPARC marks the 'World Day against Child Labor' and is a member of Coalition against Child Labor (CACL).

Time and again, the issue of widely rampant debt bondage in Sindh and Punjab has been addressed by SPARC. Extreme poverty, lack of access to formal credit and alternative means of livelihood, makes working in a kiln the only viable option for many where wives and children are included in the bargain. SPARC has reached out to these marginalized communities through CNIC, vote and birth registrations; education of children in bondage, registration of brick kilns and formation of trade unions.

Juvenile Justice

SPARC is working to create awareness about the plight and needs of children in conflict with the law, about Pakistan's juvenile justice system and about the international guidelines and agreements concerning juvenile justice. It has trained over 5,000 police officials, judiciary and members of bar associations about their responsibilities under the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000.

Violence against Children

SPARC has been addressing grave child rights violations as trafficking, early child marriage and its repercussions, child sexual abuse, corporal punishment, abduction, suicide and killings and involvement of children in armed conflict/ child militancy since long. Together with like-minded NGOs, efforts are made for the ratification of optional protocol on sale of children, child prostitution and pornography.

Girl Child

SPARC works for empowerment of young girls and women including the ones married off at early ages through open and distance learning, non formal education, skill and vocational trainings and entrepreneurship with market linkages and job placements as well.

During the March 2016 to February 2017 period, SPARC reached out to improve sustainable livelihoods for 6,000 disadvantaged girls in different cities of three provinces- Multan, Rawalpindi, Hyderabad, Peshawar and slum areas of Islamabad. Increased skills among girls with acquisition of knowledge about their rights were the key objectives of the project. Technical and Vocational Training Institutes, run under the auspices of government, were a part and parcel of this process.

Currently, SPARC is training 5,000 girls and young women in Multan through increased technical and vocational skills and awareness and aspirations for employment opportunities. It caters to girls and women victimized by child early and forced marriage through skill provision and technology based learning.

It has trained 200 women and girls on e-commerce in Multan, Rawalpindi, Hyderabad, Haripur and Peshawar. Women were trained on basics as well as potential benefits of e-commerce. The resource material including a manual is also available on our website for easy access.

Street Children Centers

SPARC is also operating five centers for street children in Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Multan, Islamabad and Hyderabad for a number of years now where apart from other facilities and vocational training, street children are also provided non-formal formal education and they are mainstreamed into regular schools.

SPARC Training Institute

Training unit of SPARC lays claim to significant achievements in building the capacities of stake holders, government and non government institutions, community members, civil society organizations, law enforcement agencies and academic institutions through research, training and advocacy.

Key Publications

The State of Pakistan's Children

This publication is being published since 1997 and tracks the development in child rights via statistical data and changes in governmental policies across Pakistan. The report also presents recommendations to the Federal and Provincial Governments which, if adopted or considered, can uplift the state of child rights. The report, supported by Kindernothilfe remains a key source of information on child rights in Pakistan and widely disseminated to stakeholders across the country.

SPARC OFFICE ADDRESSES

MAIN OFFICES

SPARC ISLAMABAD (HEAD OFFICE)

House # 98, Street # 05,
MPCHS, E-11/1, Islamabad

Tel # 051-2163011, 2163012

Fax # 051-2163013

SPARC KARACHI

No 304, Third Floor,
Kashif Center, Shahra-e-Faisal,
Karachi

Ph: 021 35661732

SPARC HARIPUR

House # 2, St # 2,
Aslam Khan Colony,
GT Road, Near Daewoo Bus Terminal,
Haripur.

Ph: 099-5611527

SPARC CSC ADDRESSES

CSC PESHAWAR

UC-27, Hazar Khwani,
Gujarabad, Khyber Colony,
Peshawar
Ph: 091-2624073

CSC HYDERABAD

B-73, HDA Extension,
Phase II, Qasimabad,
Hyderabad

Ph: 022 2116147

CSC RAWALPINDI

House # 5043, Street # 29,
Muhallah Chaudrian, Fauji Colony,
Pirwadai, Rawalpindi
Ph: 051-5492444

CSC MULTAN

House # 1, Street # 1
Near Al-Huda Hotel,
Larri Adda,
Multan
Ph: 061-6560095
