

# CHILD PROTECTION BULLETIN

STATE CHILD  
PROTECTION  
SOCIETY, ASSAM

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF ACTIVITIES CONCERNING CHILD PROTECTION IN ASSAM

## EDITORIAL

Street Children are vulnerable to many kinds of abuses. They are even chased and thrown away from their dwellings. Today, they are raising their voices for protection, safe environment, shelter, food, identity and dignity.

This year's International Day for Street Children celebrated on 12th April focused on the theme 'Identity'. Even in the First Street Child Games held at Rio echoed the slogan "I am Somebody". Identity is important for every person. Personal identity describes how one sees him/herself. It is very important to him/her because it affects the way he/she feels about oneself.

We need to give space to the children to express their views. This month's issue carries an article which ensures in protecting the rights of the street children, especially their right to participation by making them part of consultation so that their demands reach the UN.

Dear Readers, let us start with ourselves promoting the rights of children by giving them their identity that they are somebody.

*Editorial Board,  
State Child Protection Society, Assam*

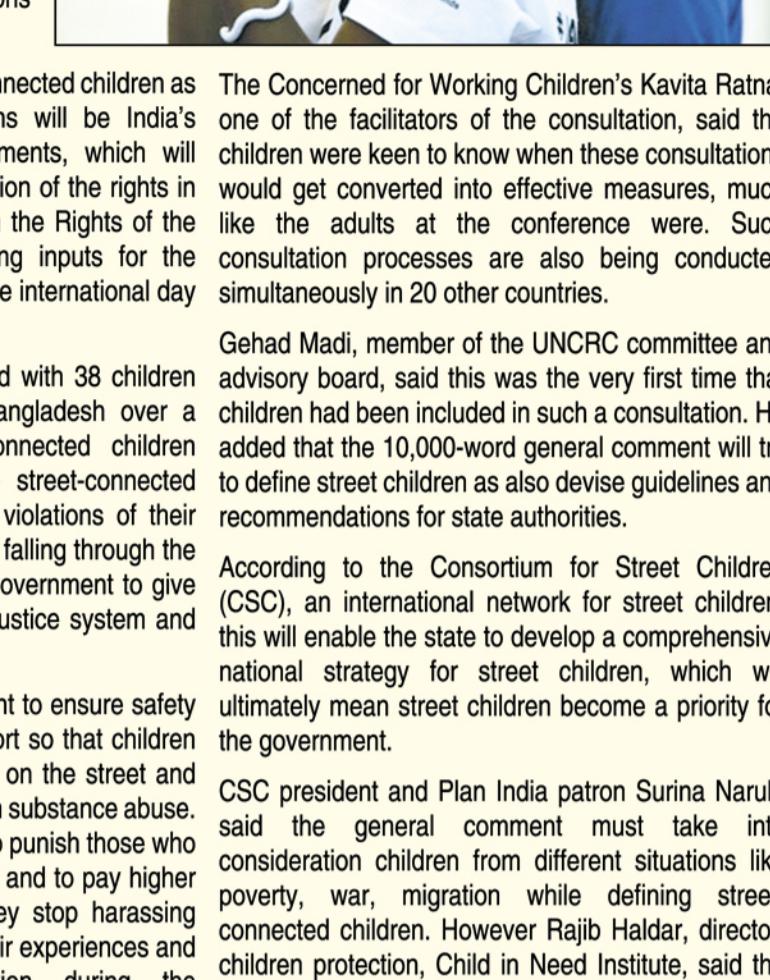
## Street children share demands, concerns with the UN ensuring their Right to Participation

Reports of consultations with street children in India were shared with officials of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child and other civil society organisations at the South Asian Conference: Forthcoming General Comment on Children in Street Situations. These comments from the conference, organised by Plan India and Consortium for Street Children, will be used to formulate the general comment on street-connected children, which is expected to be published in 2017 after consultations with stakeholders across nations.

These consultations with street-connected children as well as civil society organisations will be India's contribution in the general comments, which will provide an authoritative interpretation of the rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The deadline for submitting inputs for the general comments was April 12, the international day for street children.

During the consultation, conducted with 38 children from eight states, Nepal and Bangladesh over a period of three days, street-connected children spelled out their demands. The street-connected children, who experience severe violations of their rights and are generally "invisible", falling through the cracks of the system, asked the government to give them their rights, restructure the justice system and take away dependence on NGOs.

Further, they asked the government to ensure safety for girls, provide agricultural support so that children aren't forced to migrate and work on the street and rehabilitation for parents involved in substance abuse. They also asked the government to punish those who hurt children working on the street and to pay higher salaries to the police so that they stop harassing them. The children also shared their experiences and understanding of their situation during the consultation.



The Concerned for Working Children's Kavita Ratna, one of the facilitators of the consultation, said the children were keen to know when these consultations would get converted into effective measures, much like the adults at the conference were. Such consultation processes are also being conducted simultaneously in 20 other countries.

Gehad Madi, member of the UNCRC committee and advisory board, said this was the very first time that children had been included in such a consultation. He added that the 10,000-word general comment will try to define street children as also devise guidelines and recommendations for state authorities.

According to the Consortium for Street Children (CSC), an international network for street children, this will enable the state to develop a comprehensive national strategy for street children, which will ultimately mean street children become a priority for the government.

CSC president and Plan India patron Surina Narula said the general comment must take into consideration children from different situations like poverty, war, migration while defining street-connected children. However Rajib Haldar, director, children protection, Child in Need Institute, said the definition being given for street children is far too

wide. "It should include children surviving on, working on the street and children on the brink of coming onto the street and they should be looked at from the legal perspective, not just emotionally." He added that the issues of children must be taken up on the mission mode. There were also discussions on what can be done to make governments accountable, street-connected children from the perspective of child labour, as also agency of such children during the conference. While Bharti Sharma, ex-chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee, said the measures must be aimed at the family and not just the child, child rights activist Khushboo Jain pointed out that the voice of the family was completely missing from the general comments. Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights Stuti Kacker, the chief guest at the conference, said efforts have to be made to prevent from coming in conflict with the law. "But personally, I feel street children urgently need a nutritional safety net."

*Courtesy: SHATAKSHI GAWADE: Asian Age, 10th April, 2016*

## THE FIRST STREET CHILD GAMES

With only 100 days until the world turns its eyes towards the Maracanã for the opening ceremony of the 2016 Olympic Games, serious doubts remain about Brazil's capacity to deliver the event. But Rio de Janeiro has already hosted an alternative Olympics this year. The inaugural Street Child Games gave former homeless children the chance to become medal winners last month, offering an inspiring example of how grassroots sport can elevate the most marginalised groups and give them the opportunity to show their potential. Take the cases of 14-year-old Hepsiba and 20-year-old Innocent, who were both among the medal winners. Hepsiba, who lives with her mother in a night shelter in Chennai on the Bay of Bengal, picked up gold, silver and bronze medals for India in the 100m, 400m and 100m hurdles, giving her the confidence to continue training and pursue her dream of becoming a professional athlete.

"It was very difficult at home in India," she says. "I live in a night shelter and many other children are struggling like me. On the streets we could not have a bath or eat properly. I wanted to win gold in the 100m and my determination overtook my fear which made me achieve my goal. It took me a while to realise that I was not only representing street children from India but the country itself – which gave me an extra push. Now, I have won, I know I too can achieve." Innocent, who coaches children at a centre for the homeless in Bujumbura after being helped off the streets where he fled during war and genocide in Burundi, collected two golds in the 100m hurdles and long jump. "I am very excited that I won" he says. "I want to tell everyone that sport is important and they should not give up."

The sight of former street children pushing themselves to the limit and then climbing on to the podium to collect their medals was truly inspirational for volunteers at the Street Child Games like me. But in an era when the problems facing international sport are so evident, from doping and excessive spending to corruption, it also provided a chance to look again at sport's potential to create a level playing field for marginalised groups – not just on the track but by educating a wider audience about the challenges facing certain groups.

The run-up to the Olympics has been far from smooth, with the collapse of the cycle path fuelling fears that Brazil is not ready for another "mega-event" so soon after the World Cup. But it's much harder to dwell on the problems when you see sport's transformative power in action. Teams of teenagers from Argentina, Brazil, Great Britain, Burundi, Egypt, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and the Philippines took part in the Games, which included seven days of sports and a UN-style congress to discuss children's rights.

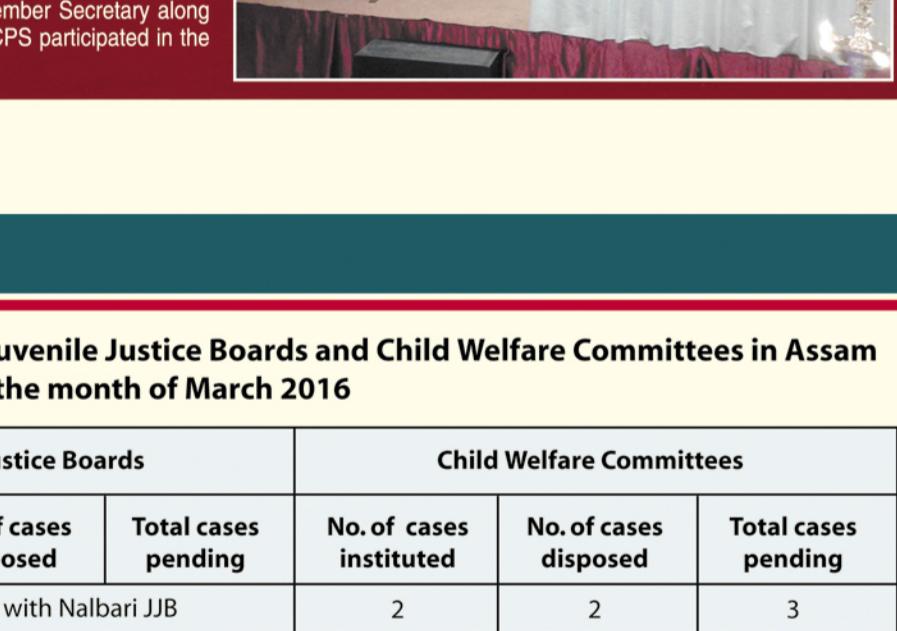
All the teams were organised by NGOs, many of which use sport as a tool in their work with young people. Meninos da Mocambique

in Maputo, for example, uses sport to help girls break free of restrictive gender roles, such as domestic servants. Team member Racquelina, who won silver in the long jump and bronze in the 400m, said: "For me, sports means companionship. Sport is something I use to take my mind off things. Sometimes when I am at home I feel so lonely, I prefer to go out and play."

Street Child United, the organisation behind the Games and its flagship event, the Street Child World Cup, supports a sports project in a tough favela in Rio, encouraging children to play football as an alternative to the violent drugs trade and bringing together in one team those from areas run by rival factions. Coach Jessica, who escaped the drugs trade by joining a football programme, described sport as "the basis of my whole life".

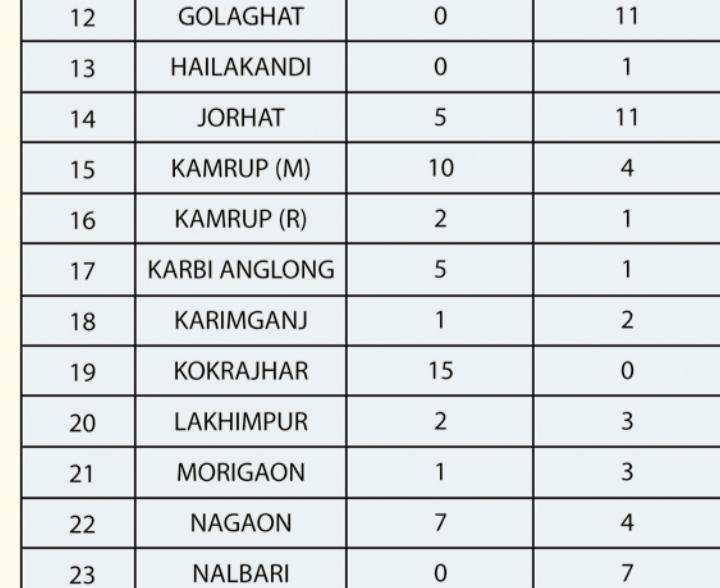
The youths who took part in the Games are the ultimate underdogs, in sport and in life; many are born into wars, violence or abuse and often risk their lives by fleeing their homes or working in dangerous jobs. Giving them the chance to shine at sports changes perspectives and provides a chance for a continued platform back home.

Manoel Torquato, from the project behind Team Brazil at the 2014 Street Child World Cup, said: "After the Street Child World Cup there was a big change in the government's perspective because they saw that the whole world was looking at Brazil. We were invited to join a working group to discuss solutions for children who work on the streets."



Mehar, from Pakistan, who won gold in the long jump, silver in the 100m and 400m, and bronze in the hurdles, told the congress how he had seen many other children die during his years working as a child on fishing boats. "There were dangers for us as we used to go too far out to sea," he said. "It's a terrible position to be in and other kids died. I had never been to school as my family had no money to send us. My family used to tell me not to play but to go to work, but one day a coach saw me play football and said I was really good. But I don't want to just play sports. I want to help other children so they don't have to go through what I have."

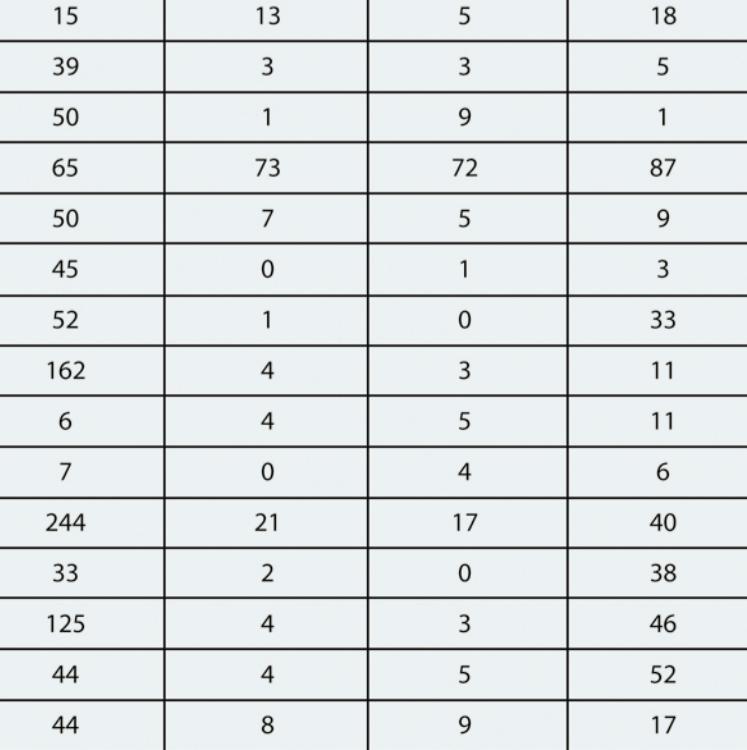
A key reason why sport can help such marginalised youths is that it is universal, in this case transcending language as young people from nine countries made friendships despite their cultural differences. It is this global language that explains why sport can offer unique opportunities to the most socially excluded everywhere. As Hepsiba put it: "Even street dwellers have talents."



A One Day State Level Orientation Programme for Protection Officers Institutional Care and Non-Institutional Care of all Districts was held on 19th April, 2016 at Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, Guwahati. Sri Kumud Chandra Kalita, IAS, Director, Social Welfare, Assam cum Member Secretary, State Child Protection Society, Assam inaugurated the Orientation Programme.

**Corrigendum**  
Dear Readers in the last month's issue – March, 2016, though the name of Sonitpur CWC is mentioned in the news article "CWC hands back 2 girls to traffickers", the case has nothing to do with CWC, Sonitpur as the two girls do not belong to Sonitpur.

A Regional Conference of North Eastern States was held on Child Adoption organized by CARA (Ministry of Women and Child Development) in collaboration with Social Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya in Shillong on 18th April, 2016. Representatives from DCPUs, CWCs, SAAs, CCLs, and Member Secretary along with officials from SCPS participated in the programme.



**Status Report on the functioning of the Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees in Assam for the month of March 2016**

Sl. No.	Districts	Juvenile Justice Boards			Child Welfare Committees		
		No. of cases instituted	No. of cases disposed	Total cases pending	No. of cases instituted	No. of cases disposed	Total cases pending
1	BAKSA	Cases are jointly dealt with Nalbari JJB			2	2	3
2	BONGAIGAON	4	4	17	3	4	8
3	BARPETA	7	8	107	11	7	27
4	CACHAR	2	5	63	0	4	3
5	CHIRANG	0	7	32	2	5	4
6	DARRANG	7	3	91	3	2	12
7	DHEMAJI	0	11	39	5	5	1
8	DHUBRI	3	0	97	2	3	14
9	DIBRUGARH	6	10	63	6	6	0
10	DIMA HASAO	1	0	21	0	0	0
11	GOALPARA	3	1	104	6	6	19
12	GOLAGHAT	0	11	15	13	5	18
13	HAILAKANDI	0	1	39	3	3	5
14	JORHAT	5	11	50	1	9	1
15	KAMRUP (M)	10	4	65	73	72	87
16	KAMRUP (R)	2	1	50	7	5	9
17	KARBI ANGLONG	5	1	45	0	1	3
18	KARIMGANJ	1	2	52	1	0	33
19	KOKRAJHAR	15	0	162	4	3	11
20	LAKHIMPUR	2	3	6	4	5	11
21	MORIGAON	1	3	7	0	4	6
22	NAGAON	7	4	244	21	17	40
23	NALBARI	0	7	33	2	0	38
24	SONITPUR	2	1	125	4	3	46
25	SIBSAGAR	0	6	44	4	5	52
26	TINSUKIA	0	1	44	8	9	17
27	UDALGURI	1	2	17	4	4	26
<b>Total</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>1632</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>494</b>

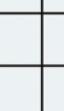
Source: MIS Cell, SCPS, Assam

For any feedback, write to :

Chairperson, Editorial Board,

State Child Protection Society, Assam

46, Survey Bus Stop, Beltola, Guwahati-781028, Phone:0361-2229275, Email:scpsassam@gmail.com, Website:assam-scps.com/termsofuse.php



DSW, Government of Assam