

## QUALITY INSTITUTIONAL CARE FOR CHILDREN AND ALTERNATIVES (QICC&A): MAHARASHTRA (JAN 2002 TO DEC 2002)

### AN OVERVIEW:

The campaign on the QICC&A, initiated by CRY nationally and supported by Saathi, Mumbai at the Maharashtra State level, is an initiative in collaboration with the State Department of Women and Child Development. It aims at ensuring quality care in residential institutions for children and in facilitating family-based and community-based alternatives for social reintegration and de-institutionalisation.

The campaign aims to reach out to nearly one lakh children in 750-odd institutions (govt run / govt aided / private trusts and voluntary organisations) in the State, catering to children from birth to 18 years of age. The campaign endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, and believes that every child has a right to a family or a family-like nurturing environment. It also believes that the State is responsible for the protection of children in the absence of any family or with families in distress and that the civil society is an equal partner in the process. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000, reinforces the role of the State as the guardian of any child in its custody.

The campaign has spread its roots to the entire State of Maharashtra, with the initiation of regional networks on the issue. Mumbai, Pune, Konkan, Thane, Nagpur, Nasik, Amravati and Marathwada, have responded to the initiative with great enthusiasm and have initiated processes with the child care institutions. The initiative was launched at a State-level consultation with 175 representatives of government and non-government organizations from all over the State.

### Vision of QICC&A

*“that all the institutions in the State have to be reached out to, that every child in the institution will have the right to desirable standards of quality care and that every child will have the right to be in his/ her family or have family-like options for his/her growth and development”*

*“that the State will hold the primary responsibility for the same and the civil society will play a supportive role”*

## Broad focus areas

- Ensuring quality care in residential institutions for children
- Facilitating family-based and community-based alternatives for social reintegration and de-institutionalisation
- Prevention of institutionalisation

## Objectives

- Creating public awareness and generating mass opinion on the issue
- Data-base building
- Training of different cadres of staff within institutions
- Direct intervention and demonstration of models of quality care
- Advocacy and influencing public policy
- Ensuring children's participation

The campaign, now a year old, envisages a strong statewide network to implement its objectives and reach out to thousands of faceless children living in the institutions.

## THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA:

The child care residential institutions in the State for children in need of care and protection and for juveniles in conflict with law are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Women and Child Development. The department functions through the following structures: Secretariat at the Mantralaya to look into policy matters and the Commissionerate at Pune to look into the implementation of policies and programs. The Commissionerate is further divided into divisional offices, headed by divisional officers. The State is divided into six revenue divisions: Mumbai (including Konkan and New Bombay), Thane, Pune, Marathwada, Nasik and Nagpur (including Amravati). The divisional offices are further decentralized through district offices headed by district officers. There are 35 districts in the state of Maharashtra, and each district has child care institutions and organizations offering non-institutional services.

The Department governs the functioning of **450-odd residential care institutions catering to about 30,000 children** (the lists for this are available with the department). NGO-run shelters and other residential care programs, running up to other **250-odd institutions** are not enlisted or governed. Non-institutional care programs and services implemented by the department through government and non-government organizations are enlisted under the CARA

guidelines. **Data on the number of children, programs being offered, profile of children and so on is however absent.**

With the drafting of the Juvenile Justice Rules for the State in September 2002, the department is now engaged in the process of implementing the changes as per the rules, however systems for recognition and certification have not yet been set.

Other residential child care facilities run in the State, governed by other departments are as follows:

- Department of Tribal Development: **1100 tribal ashram schools**
- Department of Handicapped Welfare: **500 residential schools**
- Department of Social Welfare: **2500 educational hostels**
- Department of the welfare of SC/ST/NT/ OBC: **677 ashram schools**

(the break-up of number of children is not available for all the services)

**The year that was: 2002**

Some of the major achievements of the year were:

- Collaborative support of the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Maharashtra: Good rapport with the government system: the Department of Women and Child Development and its bureaucracy
- Joining of Raveena Tandon, a film actress, as an icon for the campaign, undertaking a visit to two state-run child care institutions
- State-level consultation of government and non-government organizations, with 175 participants
- Able to reach to a large number of organizations working and interested in the issue and decentralise the process at the State level
  - ❖ Initiation of a state-level network of NGOs and divisional officers of Department of Women and Child Development
  - ❖ Identification of divisional resource organizations to decentralize the initiative from the state to the divisional to the district levels
  - ❖ Initiation of divisional networks across the State, with the help of the Divisional offices and the divisional resource organizations

- Consultation workshops on the Juvenile Justice Act 2000 and the State Rules 2002 and recommendations to the State on the act and the rules
- Initiation and launching of the first issue of a children's wall magazine: Hamari Awaz Suno to reach out to about a lakh children in 750-odd institutions across the State as a mechanism to strengthen children's participation in the process
- State-wide planning meeting to discuss and decide the focus areas for the campaign and plan strategies
- Initiation of data-base building in two divisions: Mumbai and Marathwada

#### Limitations:

- Bottlenecks in permissions for initiating direct intervention programs
- Inability to demonstrate measurable change
- The initiative has not yet broad based it to institutional care providers on a consistent basis

#### Learnings:

- Data-base building as an entry point program was not the right strategy. People should know about QICC&A to participate in the data-collection process. They should know the need for the data-base.
- Personality and career development programs could be a good entry point also to win the confidence of the care providers and demonstrate change
- Consistent relationship with the government and information sharing should be regularly undertaken as this helps to crack the ice with the bureaucrats. Conscious public relations strategy was absent
- This initiative is very much the felt need of the institutions and therefore network building should further be strengthened.

## The year that is: 2003 (Future Plans)

### Focus for the year:

- Increasing the strength of QI CC&A through orientation meetings and memberships
- Visibilising the issue and the initiative and building public opinion
- Support in the implementation of the JJ Act 2000 and the State Rules 2002
- Data-base building (making a state-level directory)
- Public relations, political lobbying and conscious advocacy efforts at state and national levels
- Documenting different models of quality institutional care and adopting institutions for demonstration of models
- Structure of the network to be worked out and sustained
- Action researches
- Initiation and strengthening of processes of children's participation

### Programs:

#### Visibility:

- Zonal, district-wise, divisional and state-level meetings on the QI CC&A (local meetings on a monthly basis, state-level on a quarterly basis)
- Annual membership of institutions and organizations working on issues related to children in residential care institutions (to be installed along with the meetings)
- Conscious media campaign through the press on building public opinion on the issue (through a core group working with the media)
- QI CC&A quarterly newsletter for sharing of information with members and other stakeholders (for internal circulation)

#### Models:

- Meeting with all the funding organizations and donors to discuss the issue and plan programs with their involvement (needs of children in institutions and support to be given by the donor organizations, support for after care programs)
- Looking at after care and rehabilitation of institutionalized children as a model program to be demonstrated in the coming one year
- Documenting ongoing experiments and individual experiences across the state on institutional care and alternatives and disseminating the information to the masses, care providers and the media

#### Implementation of JJ Act and Rules:

- Creation of simplified material on the JJ Act and Rules and disseminating the information to interested people
- Training programs on child rights and JJ Act at the divisional levels (6 training programs and one state-level workshop) (two in a month)
- Work with the department on the setting up of CWCs and JJBs and implementation of the rules, providing them support and setting deadlines to the implementation
- Workshops and seminars on critical appraisal of the Act and the Rules

#### Data-base building:

- Mumbai city directory on institutions within three months, Marathwada within six months and the state-level directory within a year

#### Capacity building:

- Skill training programs of different cadres in care providing
- Training of Trainers at the State-level on issues related to child rights and care providing

#### Children's participation:

- Wall magazine to continue, with more processes for children's participation and making the wall magazine a sustained media activity (four more issues)
- A state-level consultation of children as a start for processes on participation of children in the initiative (in May)
- State-level process with girls living in institutions (as celebration of the girl child week in September)

#### Be part of the system:

- Attend monthly divisional meetings of the department and bring up the QI CC&A on agenda of the department
- Work towards replicating the model of child care institutions cell in Karnataka government (exposure visit, documentation and presentation)
- Set up a grievance cell within QI CC&A for children and staff rendering institutional care (invite key people on the cell)

#### Research:

- Action research on number of children in conflict with law under the new JJ Act and implications for services (secondary data within three months and actual assessment within six months- by TISS for QI CC&A)
- Need-based and issue-based research to feed into the campaign

Other networks:

- Participate in International conference on children and residential care in Sweden in May
- Represent QICC&A in issue-based networks on child sexual abuse, on trafficking, gender issues, issues of livelihood, etc

**Our Partners in the process:**

CRY, MUMBAI

SAATHI, MUMBAI

BAL ANAND, MUMBAI

FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE, MUMBAI

IAPA, MUMBAI

BALPRAFULTA, MUMBAI

CCVC, MUMBAI

YUVA, MUMBAI

CWC, MUMBAI

NAVCHETNA, THANE

SOFOSH, PUNE

BHARATIYA SAMAJ SEVA KENDRA, PUNE

SAKAR, AURANGABAD

LOK VIKAS SAMAJIK SANSTHA, NASIK

VI DARBHA NGO FORUM, NAGPUR

BAL HAQ ABHIYAN, MAHARASHTRA

ACADEMY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, AMRAVATI

ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS LIKE TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, NIRMALA NIKETAN, KARVE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND OTHER SOCIAL WORK COLLEGES IN THE STATE

FUNDING PARTNERS LIKE CRY, TDH, IAPA AND OTHERS

**AND DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND ALL INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS OF THE PROCESS**

Financial Support for divisional level processes

- Personnel: 6 regional co-ordinators (Salary, travel)
- Documentation and information dissemination: reports, case studies, process reports of initiatives
- Training: Division-level training on child rights, JJ act 2000, skills in working with children in residential care institutions and so on

Budget for Jan to Dec 2003

Item	Number of units	Per unit cost	Total amount
Seed money to the co-ordinating organizations for implementing the above	6 co-ordinating organisations	Staff: Rs. 60,000/- Documentation: Rs. 12,000/- Training: Rs. 20,000/-  i.e. Rs. 92,000/- per organization	Rs. 5,42,000/-
<b>Total</b>			<b>Rs. 5,42,000/-</b>