

About the Concerned for Working Children (CWC): (www.concernedforworkingchildren.org)

The Concerned for Working Children (CWC) is a not-for-profit, secular, democratic development agency, working for over three decades as a pioneering organisation in the field of children's rights and civil society participation in Asia. CWC has been thrice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, 2013 and 2014 for its pioneering work in the field of children's participation globally. CWC works in partnership with children and their communities; local governments; and national and international agencies to implement viable, comprehensive and appropriate solutions to address the various problems that children and their communities face. We are committed to empowering children and ensuring their democratic participation in all matters that affect them. Our field programmes in Karnataka cover rural and urban areas in Bangalore Urban, Udipi, Bellary and Vijayanagar districts, Karnataka, India. Through our advocacy and research programmes, we have contributed extensively to policy debates around child labour and children's rights at national and international level.

If you are a resident of the United States of America, please use the following link to support us:

In principle, CWC always works towards ensuring that State fulfils its responsibilities. Due to Covid our children and communities need immediate responses as they do not have any reserves or security nets to tide them over the delays. CWC requests you to contribute and to share our appeal with your family and friend's circles. Contributions will be set aside for COVID -19 responses exclusively if that is stipulated. Our donations will have tax deduction provisions under 80G. The CAF link can be found here:

[https://cafa.iphiview.com/cafa/Organizations/OrganizationView/tabid/437/dispatch/byorganization_id\\$197358_hash\\$5576af26ddf05c4ddb9fdade79e2f17649bbc58b/Default.asp](https://cafa.iphiview.com/cafa/Organizations/OrganizationView/tabid/437/dispatch/byorganization_id197358_hash5576af26ddf05c4ddb9fdade79e2f17649bbc58b/Default.asp)

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Impact of COVID – 19 on our children and communities:

The COVID-19 pandemic led to severe, unprecedented crisis situations and triggered severe challenges for the children and communities in terms of lack of basic amenities, facilities and support mechanisms. It has disrupted livelihoods, education, physical and mental health and uprooted communities. The COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdowns resulted in lack of access to adequate healthcare services – including geriatric care, care of chronic ailments, emergency response, maternal health care and infant care.

CWC has worked closely with the following children and communities in relation to COVID-19:

- Children below the poverty line not enrolled in Anganwadi Centres or Government schools
- Children of migrant communities in transit
- Children enrolled in Anganwadi Centres
- Children enrolled in government schools
- Working children and working adolescents
- Children in Child Care Institutions
- Migrant workers (children, women and men) in their place of work & Urban poor
- Migrant workers in transit (children, women and men) to their places of origin

- Workers enrolled under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)
- Rural Communities, with a special focus on the most vulnerable such as Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, persons with disabilities, women-headed households, persons with ailments and elderly above the age of 60
- Gram Panchayats across the state of Karnataka

CWC's response to COVID-19 crisis:

As emergency response we have mobilised and provided affected communities with groceries, medical aid, transportation support, counselling and health care. Our emphasis has been on preventive care, awareness-raising; production and distribution of masks, the creation of quarantine facilities, and the ensuring hygienic practices in all project areas.

A COVID-19 response protocol has been implemented in CWC State Resource residential facility and applied in all our field interaction. The organisation, in collaboration with the District Administration has set up a well equipped COVID – 19 care centre at CWC's State Resource Center to provide care and protection of children whose parents are infected and NNVP for home quarantine center to care for children whose parents are in quarantine.

CWC has helped children and communities to access and use relevant information related to COVID - 19 care, schemes to support affected communities, economic care packages etc. It has helped to them create and access safety systems, physical and emotional care systems. We have consistently mobilised community support, activated local governments, negotiated with state-level officials, and collaborated with civil society organisations to be responsive to children, elderly and all community members.

We have also addressed failure of public food distribution systems, mid-day meal programmes of the education department of the state, lack of responsiveness of the food and civil supplies dept, lack of food security for migrant workers. These have been done with sustained state advocacy, helping children and community members to directly communicate with State Level and District Level officials and also using media as a platform for advocacy.

CWC has advocated for and secured long due salaries of MGNREGA Workers and that of Community Health Workers. Both these have State Wide implications. We have also been part of a State COVID response team set up Chief Ministers' office and led by the Principal Secretary of Decentralisation. We have also helped State design and implement an MIC system to locate and support children affected by COVID in all of Karnataka.

All of these points are elaborated below.

ISSUES	SPECIFICS	RESPONSE	FUTURE NEEDS (Gearing up to face the third wave of the pandemic, we anticipate the following needs in the community)
Health	Physical Health	CWC has organised health checkup for the children in Udupi and Ballari districts. Members of Bhima Sangha also participated in this camp. COVID-19 tests were conducted and assesment of nutritional levels were done – both facilitated by CWC. For children who were found malnourished, CWC has provided nutritional and medical support.	Facilitate health camps to children across all our children and communities areas to reach out in children in need of medical attention. Facilitate advocacy of adolescent girls across our children and communities areas to provide schemes to

		<p>CWC also advocated for similar health assessments to be carried out in the entire state. Glad to report that has been accomplished and the Aarogya Nandana Programme has now been launched.</p> <p>CWC worked with the elected members of the panchayats in Udupi and Bellary districts to locate families of children in distress situations to provide emergency assistance, counseling support and awareness regarding home based care, preventive care and rehabilitation.</p>	<p>cater to menstrual and reproductive health such as sanitary napkins, nutritional food kits every month, iron and folic acid tablets, health check up to gauge their BMI and overall menstrual health.</p> <p>Follow up with the Department of Health and Family Welfare and the local government to conduct periodic health checks and provide toll free health line contact details have to be provided for them to reach in times of medical emergencies</p> <p>Ensure continued supply of sanitary products such as face masks, hand sanitisers to children and families impacted by COVID - 19. Organise capacity building workshops to provide awareness regarding COVID – 19 and conduct outreach programmes in the communities who are unable to come to Namma Bhoomi.</p>
	Mental Health	<p>CWC has worked with community facilitators, parents and children in distress situations to identify children who require mental health care.</p> <p>Assistance has been provided in terms of psycho-social support and dissemination of useful information to children in distress, children of single parents to provide adequate support on a case-to-case basis.</p>	<p>Facilitate advocacy of adolescent girls across our children and communities areas with the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) to provide regular counseling. Organise regular in-house awareness and capacity building workshops and creation of safe spaces for adolescent girls to seek support and guidance during adolescent stages.</p>
Nutrition	Lack of access to food supply, thereby adversely impact the nutritional needs of the children and communities groups	<p>CWCstepped in to bridge the gap in the delivery of these Government relief packages to affected communities by providing short term ration kits to children and families in distress.</p> <p>Though as a principle, CWCdoes not engage in service delivery, in these unprecedented crisis situations, we perceived that it would be prudent to provide short term ration kits to support families in crisis situations in our children and communities areas.CWChas been able to support 1700 families of children in distress situations, whose livelihoods had been affected due to</p>	<p>Follow up with the Department of Integrated Child Protection Services scheme (ICDS) to provide immediately with dry rations, drinking water and milk in pre-packed supply either delivered to their homes or collected by them from the Anganwadi Centre or Gram panchayat.</p> <p>Pursue with the Department to ensure that availability of food and health support to the workers communities has to be made the responsibility of the local elected governments and cooking LPG to be</p>

		job loss or death due to COVID – 19	<p>provided to all, irrespective of their enrolment in the Ujwala scheme or not.</p> <p>Provide ration kits to the marginalised children and their families that have been severely impacted by COVID – 19 in terms of loss of employment or death due to COVID - 19.</p>
Protection	Child labour	<p>CWCfacilitated the drafting of a national petition by working children and adolescents representing unions of working children from 8 states of the countryto discuss their rights; voice their demands and flag their aspirations.</p> <p>The members of the unions spoke about their present situation, especially in the context of COVID – 19 and beyond. Making matters worse, COVID – 19 has further aggravated many of the long-standing systemic issues, gravely affecting them and their communities. Read more here: https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2021/04/petition-by-working-adolescents-demanding-attention-and-child-rights-friendly-response-from-the-state-on-the-29th-april-2021-the-eve-of-national-child-labour-day-india/</p>	<p>Facilitate the advocacy of the working children’s unions to exert pressure on the state and national governments. Follow up for the implementation of the recommendations of working adolescents with different departments.</p> <p>Provide decentralised, specific skill and need based vocational training to young people at the local level to the working and unemployed adolescents in collaboration with the local panchayat and also collaborate with taluk and district level organisations to provide placement for the trainees who have successfully completed the requirements of the course.</p> <p>Facilitate the adolescent working children to advocate with the Department of Labour to avail the Construction Worker Welfare Fund and all provisions provided under its ambit.</p> <p>Facilitate the adolescent working children to advocate with the Department of Labour and Social Welfare to provide access to vocational training to enable skill building and other inputs locally to build the capacities of these youngsters to be able to seek viable employment.</p>
	Child Protection from Abuse and Bullying: Children have raised	CWCfacilitated a webinar on the issue of 'Cybercrime - Concept, types and scenario of Cyber crimes against children in India' at the virtual program online sensitization program on 'Cyber crimes and its effects on children for	Follow up with the Department of WCD to ensure the inclusion of the MakkalaToofan series of programmes about Adolescence, Gender and Sexuality to be

	<p>several concerns regarding online abuse and bullying. They have expressed the lack of knowledge in navigating the digital space and face several alarming dangers</p>	<p>functionaries of Child Care Institutions'. The webinar was aimed at reaching out to children in the most marginalized situations across the state, especially children in CCIs by providing guidance to the adults who are responsible for the functioning of the CCIs on how to support children to use technology in a way that they don't harm themselves or other children in the process.</p> <p>The Jaala-Jagrate (Digital Safety) series of programme was designed by CWC to create awareness around digital safety for children as rights holders across the state of Karnataka in collaboration with a panel of experts of child rights, selected by the Department of ICPS, Government of Karnataka by designing the outline of the sessions to complement one another. The sessions were aimed to impact various stakeholders such as children themselves, teachers, parents and institutional and non-institutional care givers. The programme telecasted by Doordarshan Chandana (State owned broadcasting channel for the state of Karnataka).</p>	<p>telecasted to children of all Govt. and private schools across the state.</p> <p>Follow up with the Department of WCD to screen Digital Safety related programmes to reach a wide range of children.</p> <p>Facilitate with the Department of Women and Child Development to implement child rights friendly social monitoring systems such as Makkala Mitra, Makkala Anche Pettige and platforms that enable their right to participation to influence on decisions that impact their lives such as Makkala gram sabhas and ward sabhas.</p>
	<p>Child marriage:</p>	<p>CWC served as the national anchor to facilitate 2500 young people who have been supported by 96 organisations across 15 states of the country to voice their concerns and state their recommendations for addressing root cases of child marriage. We also facilitated their dialogue with the Task Force appointed by the Central Govt to submit its recommendations to the Govt. Of India through the submission of the 'Young Voices – National Report' regarding the proposed amendment to increase the age of marriage of young girls to 21 years.</p>	<p>Identify children and adolescent girls who are vulnerable to child marriage through regular field visits and provide counselling to them and their families regarding the adverse impact of child marriage.</p> <p>Link the adolescent girls with appropriate govt. schemes and also organise rights based capacity building programmes to empower them to advocate for themselves to postpone their marriage to after they become 18 years of age.</p> <p>Organise skill building training to the adolescent girls who express interest in seeking employment through training and link them up for placements with taluk and district level organisations.</p>
	<p>Childcare during COVID-19: Lack of awareness regarding</p>	<p>CWC has set up a COVID – 19 care centre at CWC's State Resource Center to provide care and protection of children whose parents are infected and NNVP for home quarantine center for those to whom isolate themselves at</p>	<p>Facilitate the Bhima Sanghas and Makkala Sanghas to advocate with the Department of WCD and the local government to set up COVID-19 Care Centres for</p>

	COVID – 19	<p>home.</p> <p>CWChas been able to bring out the Bhima Patrike (Wall Magazine) which is being used as a tool by working children’s unions to access key information and gain awareness about the concerns and achievements of the Bhima Sanghas in different areas and their advocacy at the local, state and national levels to holds governments accountable to addressing them. Members of the children’s groups have find the magazine useful to disseminate key information regarding COVID – 19 vaccines, about how to talk about eve teasing and such other concerns and to access helplines.</p>	<p>children and Information centers in central locations and important announcements need to be made through mobile centers – reaching out to all areas to ensure no one is left out.</p> <p>These vans can also maintain a regular route and stop in some specific locations so that people can also have an avenue to share their concerns and requirements.</p>
Education	COVID-19 drastically restricted children’s access to both formal and informal education. They have been confined to their homes, isolated and lacking learning inputs.	<p>CWC launched the ‘OorunduShaale’(The community is a school) programme, a simple concept to share interesting and exciting skills, knowledge and information through resource persons, experts in the community.</p> <p>These learning spaces are child rights friendly and help children overcome their psychological stress of being in confinement. Children have also used them to talk about physical and psychological abuse they have experienced and found help from us to deal with them.</p>	<p>Facilitate the advocacy of working adolescents and adolescents to access scholarships from the Dept. Of Social Welfare to take up vocational training under NIOS and other recognised training institutions across the state of Karnataka.</p> <p>Provide scholarships for working and other vulnerable adolescents who come from extremely socio-economically marginalised families in the meantime.</p> <p>Set up safe learning spaces in the community for children. Conduct regular awareness and interaction sessions with them to encourage them to use it to seek support, guidance, counselling and necessary emergency support when required.</p>
	Young people unable to secure scholarships to pursue vocational and academic courses offered by the NIOS.	<p>CWC helped children who reached us via the Juvenile Justice System to access educational scholarships to get vocational education in the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).</p> <p>Our advocacy has ensured that that now this provision is extended to all children referred to by the Child Welfare Committee in the entire State of Karnataka.</p>	

Livelihood	<p>MGNREGA workers affected by loss of livelihoods and poverty during the pandemic, thereby adversely impacting the rural economy</p>	<p>CWC has advocated for the MGNREGA workers to access employment opportunities under the scheme to secure their livelihoods. In response to the issues raised regarding lack of availability of jobs after submitting applications and therefore the right to obtain unemployment pension, we have been working with the MGNREGA workers who have not been able to secure job opportunities under the scheme.</p>	<p>Follow up with the Department of RDPR and NREGA Commissionerate in partnership with the adult NREGA workers to provide employment exceeding the minimum of 100 days per worker.</p> <p>Follow up regarding providing employment opportunities to engage in safe and appropriate work and safe work environment for adolescents in the age group of 16 – 18 years.</p> <p>Provide regular capacity building workshops for NREGA workers to access govt. schemes, assistance with information management to advocate with the local panchayat to access the benefits of the scheme.</p>
	<p>Unemployment and under-employment was widespread during the pandemic</p>	<p>CWC created self-employment opportunities to marginalised communities such as women’s groups in Udupi district, thereby responding to the market needs by enabling skill development in a localised manner in collaboration with the local government and civil society organisations and private institutions. It has been able to organise a 20-days tailoring training programme in collaboration with the local government for women’s groups and adolescent girls. As a result of this training, the entire batch of the trainees from the women’s groups were successful in producing a fully completed order of 5000 PPE kits, there catering to locally identified market needs.</p>	<p>Follow up with the Department of Labour, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) and the gram panchayat to provide skills building workshops to women’s groups and adolescent working children in the children and communities areas and collaborate with local private agencies to provide employment to the trainees who have graduated from the workshops to boost employment. Organise workshops for women’s groups, working adolescents and other marginalised groups.</p>
State and National Policy	<p>The ASHA (Community health Workers) had not received their salary for three months during the pandemic.</p>	<p>The Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) frontline workers addressing COVID – 19 crisis situations at the panchayat level have raised that they not received their salaries for up to 3 months and also not provided PPE kits and other protective gear during home visits and community visits during the lockdown. CWC took up the matter with the Principal Secretary, Department of RDPR and sought immediate disbursement of pending salaries and necessary PPE kits to them.</p>	<p>Pursue advocacy with the Department of WCD and RDPR to implement the MIS system to provide holistic perspective of children in need of care and protection for the panchayat to facilitate linking of the children and their families to appropriate govt schemes and services that they are entitled to.</p>

	Lack of information and statistics on children who have been adversely affected during the COVID – 19 pandemic	CWCis a core team member of a state level advocacy group working in collaboration with the Department of RDPR to develop an information management system to put together a database of the needs of children across the state of Karnataka. This template will be used to conduct mapping exercises and gather important statistics related to the children across the State.	
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Here are the links to our response to COVID-19 in Karnataka:

<http://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2020/04/the-concerned-for-working-childrens-multi-pronged-response-to-covid-19-pandemic-crisis-situations/>

<http://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2020/04/petition-for-corona-pandemic-response-required-from-the-government-of-karnataka-the-way-ahead/>

You can find us online here:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/workingchildren>