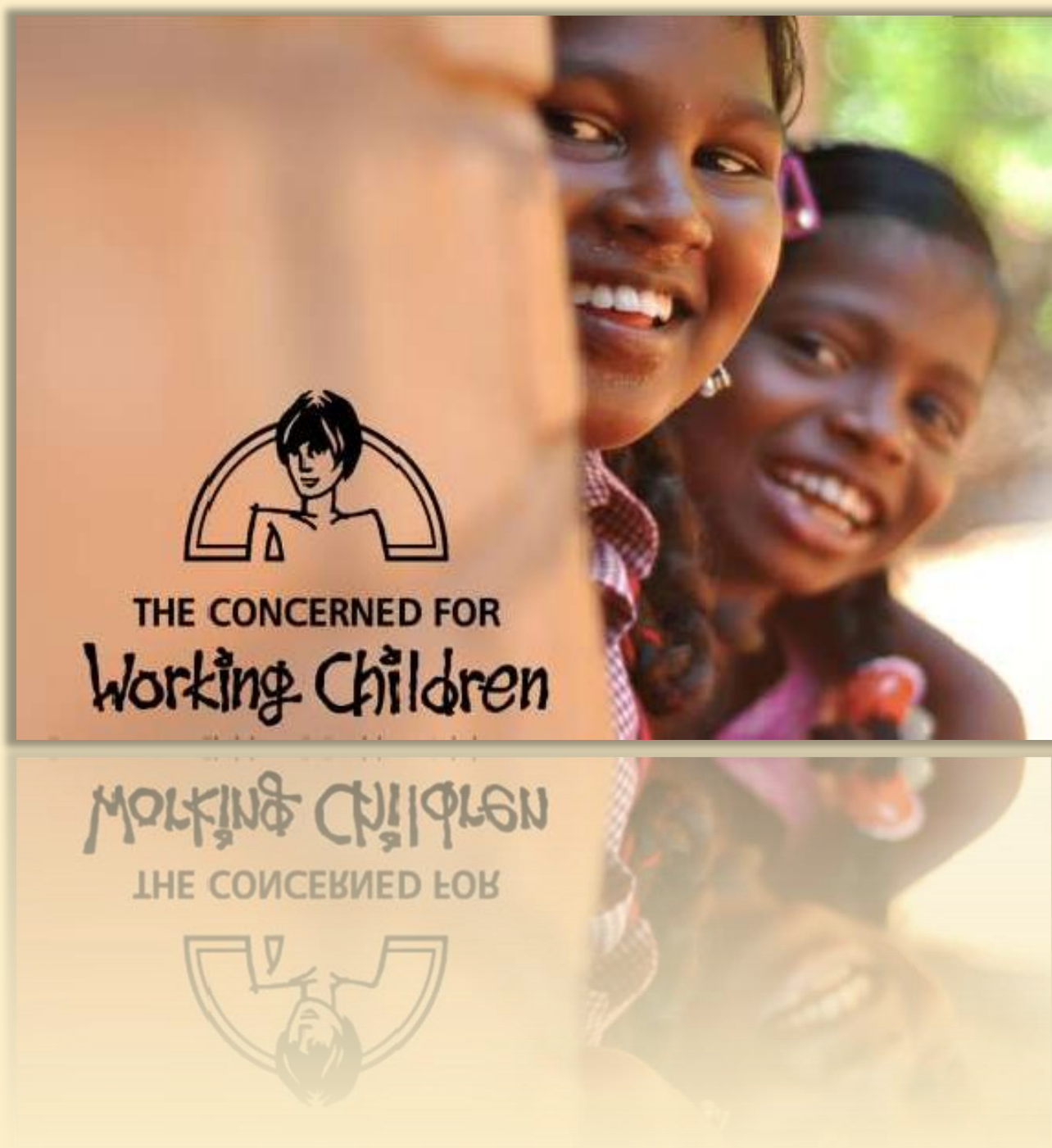




Annual Report 2022

2022 at a Glance

At the Concerned For Working Children (CWC), we have always strived to facilitate members from the key constituencies that we engage with to be adequately equipped to, inform, influence and engage with significant stakeholders in their lives, be it their communities, their local civil and governance systems and authorities, decision makers and influencers at the district, state, national and international levels; the aim being to realise their rights to protection, provision and participation.

In line with its goals, during the period of 2022, the CWC focused on strategic interventions on child rights, children's access to tools and resources to claim their rights and entitlements, children's citizenship and their participation in governance. Thus, it enabled their active and representative participation in local, state and national level advocacy initiatives to influence the shaping of laws and policies that have a direct bearing on their lives.

COVID – 19 and the resultant long drawn impact on the various socio-economic and geographical factors have further wreaked havoc – direct and indirect- in the lives of the Bhima Sangha, Makkala Sangha and the members of the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat Hakkottaaya Andolana (GPHA), with entire communities suffering from loss of livelihoods, access to proper healthcare facilities, lack of food security, displacement under duress and mental health concerns to name a few.

CWC has focused towards addressing these, through both local level interventions and state advocacy. Thus we have exerted pressure on the Government of Karnataka to address these issues by: creating opportunities for members of the constituencies to engaged directly with decision makers; escalating issues concerning inadequate state response to decision makers such as Commissioners and Principal Secretaries who head various concerned departments; providing inputs into policy documents including government orders, circulars and guidelines that uphold the interest of the constituencies; to dispel misunderstanding about and unjust implementation of nationwide programmes (such as MGNREGA); active involvement in the development of a state level MIS system on COVID imoacted children; being part of a rapid-action state response team with state level officials and active CSOs, providing most vulnerable communities to directly speak to decision makers and public to influence state response; liaisoning with mainstream media and social media to enable boundary partners and CWC to bring to public knowledge the provisions and programmes made available by the governments, CSOs and philanthropists; amplifying the views of children and community members at the international level such as the UN agencies at the regional and global forums.

2022 has also witnessed the State Resources Centre (SRC), continuing its journey offering both professional and academic education tailored to the needs and interests of young people. The SRC has provided employment opportunities for adolescents and have been focusing on supporting adolescent girls by linking them to learning and earning opportunities through our marketing cooperative, Nammangadi. Most of our trainees have been employed, and many girls have been boosting their incomes through this cooperative.

The SRC has also supported vulnerable children, including those from marginalized communities and orphans, ensuring they continue their education and gain life skills. Children living on campus have been receiving empowerment education and have been developing a strong sense of identity and agency.

Priority has been given to the overall health and wellbeing of children, offering additional care to those with mental and emotional challenges and focusing on their psycho-social development. Children have had access to nutritious food, have been participating in growing and preparing it, and have been learning respect for food and agriculture. On-site clinic, collaborations with the Manipal Academy of Higher Education to offer psychological counseling are other wellness and health resources that have been curated. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we set up a quarantine center with the necessary medical equipment. We have been conducting vocational courses in fields like electrical wiring, garment production, wood technology, and beautician training, based on feedback from potential employers.

Children at SRC have continued to uphold the strong participatory structure of electing representatives to form a Children's Panchayat. This entire process is a learning journey on democratic values and collective leadership. The Panchayat has been helping children participate in decisions affecting them, such as suggesting menu items for review by SRC administrators.

Throughout the project period, CWC's facilitators have been visiting Panchayats in Udupi and Vijayanagara Districts, engaging with community members and stakeholders to promote SRC's programs and explore collaborations.

Empowering children, communities and local governments

Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha

1. Advocacy by members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha with local and district administration towards accessing emergency healthcare and relevant benefits of government schemes

Priyanka receives a prosthetic hand: Priyanka, a member of Bhima Sangha from Kalvi Panchayat, Huvinahadagali taluk, Vijayanagar district, lost her right hand in a school bus accident three years ago. When CWC began work in Kalvi panchayat in August 2021, the issue was raised by the members of Bhima Sangha. Subsequently their representatives have also raised this concern at the taluk child rights task force meetings in Huvinahadagali taluk in March 2022 and demanded support to meet the expenses for a gravely needed medical treatment. Members of Bhima Sangha in collaboration with CWC also raised this matter at a meeting of the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) held in Bellary district. When no response was forthcoming, members of Bhima Sangha raised the matter with the Chief Executive Officer, Vijayanagar district administration. He issued directions to provide movable artificial hand under a special grant to the Kalvi Gram Panchayat. The artificial hand was assembled under the supervision of the doctors at the district hospital. As a result of constant follow-up, and provision of necessary information to Priyanka's family, she has now received a prosthetic hand.

Hanumanti, a member of Bhima Sangha, accessed pension for the disabled: CWC began its intervention in Kithnur panchayat, Hagaribommanahalli taluk in February 2022. Hanumanti has not been able to speak for past 16 years. Hanumanti's grandmother is her only guardian and the child had not received any of the benefits under relevant social security schemes. Representatives of Bhima Sangha raised this issue at the taluk child rights task force meeting held in March 2022 and at the district level consultation with the members of Bhima Sangha and the Vijayanagar district administration in April 2022. The Tahsildar who was leading the meeting immediately asked the village accountants for the monthly allowance available to specially-abled children and issued orders for its immediate disbursement to Hanumanti. However this was delayed due to bureaucratic hurdles in the health department. This lapse was again brought to the notice of the Tahsildar and he immediately undertook required action to process her monthly allowance.

2. Facilitating the convening of children's gram sabhas and area sabhas in partnership with members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha from Udupi and Vijayanagar districts

Due to COVID 19, children have been deprived of many activities and opportunities to engage in games and play-lessons, socialisation with classmates, participation at the children's gram sabha, taking part in cultural activities, talent competitions etc. Due to COVID 19, children's gram sabhas meetings were not held for 2 years. In order to encourage children's participation, in addition to children's gram sabhas, the government issued a circular that children's ward sabhas need to be conducted prior to the children's gram sabhas.

Children have been constantly raising the need to participate in children ward sabhas prior to gram sabhas. CWC has consistently advocated for holding these meeting at a time and place that is convenient for children. These meeting must also be conducted in a child rights friendly manner with the full participation of the respective gram panchayat and ward sabhas. At these meetings members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha have raised several concerns with regard to infrastructure development, effective implementation of child rights monitoring systems to ensure their protection at the local level, MGNREGA programme and concerns regarding lack of coordination among relevant departments to address their concerns. They carry out social monitoring with red ribbons indicating issues that are yet to be addressed and white ribbons to signify those addressed.

3. Advocating for the realisation of the right to protection of the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha

Assistance in POCSO cases through legal guidance and counseling: CWC assisted the family of a 15 year girl, who is a member of the Makkala Sangha from Yadamoge panchayat, Kundapur taluk, Udupi

district, to file a POCSO case against the perpetrator, as she reported being sexually abused during one of our regular field visits. After learning about the case, representatives of CWC provided legal guidance, necessary assistance and counseling to the child and her family and also inquired about the status of her health and wellbeing. CWC has assisted her father to file the complaint and supported legal proceedings. As a result, a case has been registered and the accused has been detained. Her mother, who has been mentally ill and under medication for her condition, suffered a major setback in her mental health after learning about this incident, further aggravating her health condition. The father is taking care of the girl, taking her to regular health checks at scheduled times. CWC has also advocated for assistance from the local Anganwadi Centre to provide her nutritious food. She wishes to continue education and therefore is unable to take the responsibility of taking care of her child after delivery. CWC also assisted her in accessing the necessary healthcare facilities to have a normal delivery at the local government hospital. The Krishna Anugraha organisation has agreed to legally adopt the child. The girl is now staying at home and pursuing her Class 10 at the nearby Hosangadi High School.

In yet another case, A minor (13 years 9 months) girl of Mudenur, Nandihalli panchayat, Huvinahadagali taluk, Vijayanagar district was sexually assaulted by a local resident and a case was filed under POCSO Act. The foetus was medically terminated on account of deformities. CWC intervened by providing necessary moral support and counseling to the affected girl and her family.

Rescue of 4 working children in hazardous work conditions: 4 working children, who were found working in the cow shed, picking dung and feeding the cattle, have been rescued by the representatives of CWC. Although interested to attend school, they were not enrolled. Their father, he said that he would marry the daughters at the earliest. In order to provide safety to the children and make the necessary further arrangements for them, the details of these cases were brought to the attention of the officials of the concerned departments and having surveyed the workplace, they spoke to the children and the employers, children's guardians and the manager of the cowshed. CWC intervened and provided awareness sessions to the children and their families regarding the negative impact of the laws governing child marriage on their lives. The children were told not to get married unless they were of marriageable age. Two children have been enrolled in the nearby school and the other two are studying in Kundapur. The owner has agreed to provide for the education of all 4 girls.

Intervening in ensuring protection in an incident of assault on a girl, by her neighbour: As a result of a family dispute, 14 year old Adishree, a member of Makkala Sangha, was beaten up by her neighbour at Kappehonda, Hengavalli gram panchayat, Kundapur taluk, Udupi district. CWC immediately intervened upon learning the incident and her family was supported to file a formal complaint with the child helpline. As follow up local police visited the child's house investigated the details and registered a case against the person who committed the assault. The accused has assured that he will not cause any trouble to the child or her family in the future.

Protection from child marriage: CWC has been in the forefront in preventing the child marriages of several girls from Hirehadagali, Nagati Basapura, Hagaranoor, Nandihalli and Harappanahalli panchayats of Huvinaadagali taluk in partnership with the leadership of the members of Bhima Sanghas of these respective areas. CWC also received positive response and the complete involvement of concerned officials in putting a stop to these child marriages from taking place. As a follow up these actions, CWC has also created about the negative impact on the young girls due to the provisions laid down in the laws governing child marriage and also facilitated in procuring annulment letters for all of the marriages.

4. Reviving the focus on child labour and conversations around safe, dignified and rights upholding work for adolescents: Facilitating the representation of Bhima Sangha in the light of the 5th Global Conference on Child Labour organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)



the events.

The National Child Labour Day was an opportune occasion for the members of Bhima Sangha facilitated by CWC to bring back the focus on children and adolescent work. This was marked by consultation of members of Bhima Sangha with the Udupi and Vijayanagar district administration and thus seeking the accountability and binding to address the issues raised by them at the district level. We facilitated the communication with the elected representatives and administrative officials, media outreach, social media campaign to highlight the outcomes of

Consultation in Vijayanagar district: The National Child Labour Day was celebrated on 30th April 2022, at Vijayanagar district. The EO of Huvinahadagali taluk panchayat along with the Vijayanagar district administration and The Concerned for The Working Children worked towards the event 'We are the Ambassadors of Change – Let's Join Hands Together'. The interactive session was held for the members of Bhima Sangha from Huvinahadagalli and Hagaribommanahalli Taluk panchayats. The objective was to create a platform where first and foremost working children could directly assert their agency, and those in office would register the concerns and recommendations for change by working children and make concrete commitments to address them.

Members of Bhima Sangha, while acknowledging the gram panchayat's role in addressing issues raised by members of Bhima Sangha on various platforms, also highlighted that the gram and taluk panchayats cannot address all the concerns raised by working children in terms of policy change. They demanded the intervention of the district administration on the larger policy concerns. The interactive program was conducted under the chairmanship of Sri Chandrasekharayya, the Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Harapanahalli Division. Prior to the commencement of the programme, the members of Bhima Sangha undertook a peaceful procession, raising slogans on the rights of working children culminating in the hoisting of the Bhima Sangha flag and singing the Bhima Sangha anthem.



Bhima Sangha also presented its achievements through the display of the 'Lifeline of Bhima Sangha' and poster exhibition. Uma Maheshwari of 'We Mana Foundation' conducted an awareness session on balanced use of locally available food items for nutrition. A health check-up of children who participated in the program was also organised. A total of 170 members of Bhima Sangha from 18 panchayats in Vijayanagar district were present at the event. Makkala Mitras, members of gram panchayats of Huvinahadagali and Hagaribommanahalli taluk panchayats, Anganwadi workers and various taluk and district level officials took part in the event.

The representatives of the working children who attended the meeting shared their real-time situation, problems and necessities and asked for feedback from the concerned departments. Officers present at the meeting, who proactively responded to the concerns raised by children for implementation of specific plans and programmes towards addressing their needs.

Working children who wish to continue education and/or combine work and education presented their demands to the district administration for programmes and schemes to offer safe work and earn and learn opportunities. They also raised demands for appropriate and adequate vocational training and exposure to entrepreneurship and necessary business skills; they requested to be connected with potential recruiters. Adolescent girls demanded for the implementation of a comprehensive programme to provide nutritious food, healthcare, access to sanitary products and counseling and awareness on puberty and social issues like child marriage. The District Director of Planning, Vijayanagar said that the Department of Women and Child Development and the Vijayanagar District administration would send a proposal to the Government to re-enforce the programme for adolescent girls.

Consultation in Udupi district: 50 members of Bhima Sangha from gram panchayats in Kundapur and Byndoor taluks and children from migrant labourers communities participated in the consultation with



the Udupi district administration, in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mr. Kurma Rao and other officials. The objective, as in Vijayanagar, was to facilitate first and foremost working children to directly assert their agency, and for those in office to register the concerns and recommendations for change by working children and make concrete commitments to address them; including looking into implementation of schemes and programmes for their welfare.

Along with the DC, a senior civil court judge, the Deputy Director, DWCD, Labour Inspector, representatives of various departments, employers and Makkala Mitras were a part of this consultation. Working children had an opportunity to come face to face with the officials during the group discussions. The officials acknowledged that this helped them develop empathy towards the realities of working children and their families, facilitating them to view

the problems of working children from children's perspective itself. They further acknowledged that approaches that aim to eradicate or invisibilise them will not work.

Working children have been consistently advocating for safe and age-appropriate work that offers dignified wages to support livelihoods of working adolescents and their families with access to basic facilities such as food, drinking water, and toilets. They have also consistently raised the need for tailor made opportunities to combine work and education. They have placed their recommendation for entrepreneurial and business skills, along with access to region and sector specific vocational trainings also to be made available to them. They have also thrown light on the challenging situation in their families and stressed upon their need to work to support their families in such crisis situations, which have been aggravated by the pandemic.

The Deputy Commissioner of Udupi district Mr. Kurma Rao responded proactively to the issues raised by working children and stressed upon the need to develop tailor made plans to address the issues faced by them. He further gave assurances towards taking the necessary initiatives to make Udupi district a model district in its approach to address the issue of child labour that keeps the consultations with working children at its central focus. We are following up with the office of the DC to develop specific plans and programmes to address the issues raised by working children during the consultation.

These events have also been documented and detailed submissions of the outcomes and action points of these meetings have been sent to the respective district administrations in the form of official submissions. The submissions covered key issues raised by working children for immediate, short term and long term responses along with responses of the district and taluk level administrative officials covering action points for implementation. The Bhima Patrike (wall magazine for children) was released at the events and both the events have received adequate press coverage at the state level: <https://news24karnataka.com/we-are-the-beginners-of-change-join-us/>

5. Convening of the taluk level child rights task force in Huvinahadagali and Hagaribommanahalli taluk panchayats

With the objective of holding the taluk administration accountable to ensuring rights of vulnerable children and adolescents, the taluk level child rights task force meetings were held at the taluk panchayat premises of Huvinahadagali and Hagaribommanahalli taluk, Vijayanagar district. Members of Bhima Sangha held the taluk panchayats accountable to address the issues that they had raised during the meeting held the previous year and also acknowledged and thanked the panchayat for addressing several issues that were raised. They include: Issues regarding schools not being available in the vicinity, lack of access to good quality drinking water, lack of cleanliness and sanitation, repair of roads, provision of street lights, providing proper treatment for a member of BhimaSangha struggling with hearing disability and provide houses for those who have not been provided houses from the gram panchayats.

Provision of nutritious food kit, sanitary napkin and IFA supplements to adolescent girls, conducting regular health camps and ensuring proper nutrition levels of children and adolescents, providing locally accessible options for vocational training and employment for adolescents between the ages of 16-18 under the MGNREGA scheme were reiterated. Nearly 150 members of Bhima Sangha from Huvinahadagali and Hagaribommanahalli taluks participated at the meeting where officials from DWCD, Revenue, Police and Taluk panchayat officials were present at the meeting to respond to the issues raised by Bhima Sangha. Several of these concerns have already been addressed by the respective taluk panchayats and the issues that come under the purview of the district administration have already been highlighted to them through detailed submissions as a part of the consultations on the National Child Labour Day, 2022.

6. Implementation of Oorundu Shaale program (village as a school)

The COVID-19 Pandemic resulted in restricting access of children to formal and informal education and learning spaces. Children became confined to their homes and did not have the opportunity to mingle with other children for learning and playing. Recognising learning can take place in multiple avenues such as vocational education, perceiving that spaces for learning can be created within the community, providing community based platforms for children to exhibit fine arts, performing arts and other creative talents within them, CWC aimed at providing open spaces in the community by identifying resource persons to facilitate holistic learning and creative expression of children.

This will also enable children to have conducive and child friendly spaces where they can break away from isolation, and psychological stress that they face being confined to their homes. This is a space they can use as an outlet to openly share and report instances of physical and psychological abuse

that they are facing and seek help from the community. CWC, in response to the limitations posed by the pandemic, launched the Oorundu Shaale programme. It is a simple concept to share interesting and exciting skills, knowledge and information through resource persons, experts in the community who are proficient with information and skills from various fields of creativity and knowledge. Children will now have the opportunity to access the community space and resource persons to learn from one another.

Every town, village, and city has its own special influence on everyone who lives there. It is the integral relationship with their daily life that influences all their processes and leads to their growth and personality development. Its contribution is prevalent in learning growth and development, play, wellbeing, relationships and co-existence. If the entire town is seen as a space that aids learning and development, the formal schooling system would become one of the many factors that influence lives of people especially children and adolescents. A number of external opportunities, possibilities, and dynamic factors always enrich life. Drawing from these fundamental concepts, CWC continues to work with the constituencies. Oorundu Shaale Program was successfully implemented in 26 panchayats in Kundapur and Byndoor taluks of Udupi district.

7. Facilitating the setting up of children's libraries as a part of the gram panchayats' commitment to enable shared learning spaces

Due to COVID – 19 pandemic, members of the Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha were unable to meet in large groups owing to the restrictions in place. So they arrived at the recommendation to conduct area-wise meetings before they convene at the Grama/ward level. The Govt. of Karnataka also introduced the 'OduvaBelaku' (Light of education) programme that aims at creating children's libraries to inculcate the habit of reading in children. Children have consistently advocated for the children's library to be created as a space to express their creative and artistic talents, as a knowledge hub center and a safe space for children to access and connect with other children of the panchayat to learn and grow as a community. It is also envisioned as an information center for children to access general knowledge and information that is useful and important to them. Every gram panchayat has to mandatorily set up the children's libraries in their respective panchayats.

CWC, in collaboration with the Bhima Sanghas and the Makkala Sanghas of the Kundapur taluk has facilitated the Gram panchayats to set up children's libraries to provide a vibrant learning space for children. They have used the opportunity to transform the children's library into their own space to exhibit and explore their talents, creativity and express their views and perceptions. Children visited children's library, registered their membership, have exhibited their craft and artwork in Library premises, collected books from there, planned to read and explain it to other members of the Sangha.



At the children's libraries enabling child rights friendly spaces for the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha, they have been engaged in creative expression of their abilities. As a result of our consistent facilitation, we have observed that children express themselves and involve in different activities without hesitation and fear of judgment. Traditional games, environmental awareness activities, song, dance, origami, writing, storytelling and curating stories, poem reading, participating in quizzes, are some of the cognitive, developmental and creative activities that are being administered at the children's libraries by CWC. CWC has also provided books to children of different age groups.



CWC has held consultations with them to understand the challenges faced while undertaking online classes through digital devices and the challenges and advantages of having access to internet. In addition to the hectic physical classroom lessons, there were children who were forced to carry both written notes and also additionally send them through digital means. Children expressed to have faced challenges in coping up with absorbing the new curriculum due to the learning challenges imposed by the implementation of online education. Therefore several activities were conducted by CWC to encourage formal learning along with enabling cross learning among different Bhima Sanghas to learn about success stories and challenges in different context.

The children's libraries established at the Gram Panchayats was not just limited to encouraging reading

and rote learning but functions more as a resource centre. They have enabled a functional, creative place for every child in every panchayat, which facilitates learning and development through creative activities and mutual learning. The setting up of these children's libraries was undertaken in partnership with Udupi District administration, which has also consistently provided opportunities for knowledge acquisition everywhere in the community.

CWC also conducted training workshops for the library supervisors of the Gram Panchayats. The establishment of these children libraries has been a direct contribution by CWC. CWC technically supported the drafting of the Udupi district level order to develop creative, safe, child-friendly spaces for its children; thereby inputting towards formulating comprehensive child rights friendly programmes at the district level.

Local governments (Panchayats, includes – GPHA members (Elected Members), Officials), Taluk (Block) and District administration

1. Assisting the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha from distressed families to access to uninterrupted education

CWC has facilitated members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha of 122 families of Udupi district and 64 families of Vijayanagar district who lost the primary earning members of the family during COVID 19 pandemic to access the benefits of social security schemes such as pension, monthly allowance, emergency allowance, scholarship for children to continue education in collaboration with the gram panchayats of Udupi and Vijayanagar district. Along with these benefits, CWC has also advocated for the provision of school fees, transportation fare, and provision of allowance for school uniforms, to ensure that children access education in an uninterrupted manner.

CWC has consistently advocated with the respective gram panchayats, officials of the concerned departments, and district administration of Udupi and Vijayanagar to ensure that the children in need access the various benefits, grants and incentives to continue their education. Members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha were also impacted significantly due to the COVID 19 as they stopped going to schools and stopped their studies halfway during the pandemic. Few of them who were attending schools in difficult circumstances and were also interested in continuing their education through external examinations and assessments were identified under various panchayats of Vijayanagar district. CWC has submitted a formal proposal to the Vijayanagar district administration in response to the recommendations placed by members of Bhima Sangha to pursue higher education, combining earn and learn options and the need for specific vocational training.

The members of the Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha from vulnerable and marginal families, who have expressed their interest to continue their education in Udupi district, have been facilitated to access assistance from the gram panchayats, several private individuals and institutions to receive support. The support extended is in the form of school/college fees, school bag, text-books, travel expenses to and from school/college etc.

2. Ensuring access to food and nutrition through advocacy by the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha in collaboration with the gram panchayats of Udupi and Vijayanagar districts

During the COVID 19 pandemic several families of the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha faced severe financial hardships due to loss of livelihoods. This created severe economic instability. The regular field interventions of CWC revealed that due to closure of schools, children did not have access to mid-day meals and the dry rations distributed to school going children through the government schools did not reach all the children enrolled in government schools. This led to several children facing alarming health concerns such as malnutrition, under-nutrition and anaemia. However we have also observed that the economy is slowly reviving as there has been increased availability of jobs post the COVID 19 pandemic. Children who are enrolled in government schools and Anganwadi centres are now getting access to mid-day meals and dry ration. With the revival of the PDS, members of the vulnerable and marginalised communities have been able to access their share of ration.

CWC continued its efforts to work with the local government, Anganwadi Centres and government schools to ensure that Children going to school, those who dropped out of school, children who are

combining work and education had access to the dry ration supply that they are entitled to under respective programmes. CWC conducted a survey in Kundapur taluk to understand the status of access to food for the vulnerable and facilitated the provision of food grains allocated to individual families through the gram panchayat and private donors.

Several issues were explored such as what constitutes nutritious food, what food cause ill health, use of food grains for specific nutritional needs and sharing sessions on impact of nutrition on overall health. A total of 238 members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha from Udupi and Vijayanagar district participated in these discussions to provide their inputs for further follow up at a local and statelevel.

3. Advocating with the government of Karnataka towards the implementation of Arogya Nandana (Garden of health), a comprehensive programme to ensure access to quality healthcare to the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha

In order to overcome the nutritional deficiency in children, their health check-up was ordered by the government under the AarogyaNandana programme to ascertain the levels of nutrition and overall health indicators. As a direct result of the advocacy of CWC from the local to the state level, children up to the age of 18 have been integrated to administer health check-ups under this programme.

Through our field work in our constituency areas, we have seen that children who have been identified under the programme as undernourished are not getting the prescribed nutrition food kits and adequate medication due to the lack of convergence between the Departments of Women and Child Development, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Health and Family Welfare and Education. The health check-ups done under the programme consist of measuring only height and weight of children and do not include detailed workup of blood to determine anaemia and other underlying health concerns. CWC has submitted a requisition to the Director, Department of Women and Child Development to address these glaring gaps in the implementation of the Arogya Nandana programme.

Adolescent girls from Vijayanagar districts have been raising the following issues: lack of availability of sanitary napkins under the Shuchi (Cleanliness) programme, lack of provision of nutritional foodkits and IFA tablets to those that are struggling with low haemoglobin and BMI levels, the need for counselling and awareness regarding navigating the physical and mental changes that take place during puberty and how to follow appropriate sanitary practices.

CWC in order to ensure the effective implementation of this program aimed at the overall development of children, has undertaken advocacy initiatives from the local to the state level. It has also advocated for the availability of sanitary napkins and nutrition food kits to adolescents girls who are suffering from under nutrition and malnutrition. In order to ensure implementation of this program CWC has made a submission to the Principal Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development, Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, additional chief secretary, director Department of Women and Child and to the secretary Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Karnataka.

4. Ensuring access to healthcare to the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha in collaboration with the gram panchayats of Udupi and Vijayanagar districts

CWC in response to the recommendations of the vulnerable children and their communities recommended that detailed tests be included under the programme to ascertain health concerns in children and adolescents so as to provide appropriate medical attention to them. Health check-ups of members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha have been conducted through the health camps, conducted in several panchayats in Udupi and Vijayanagar districts. As a follow up to the check-ups done children suffering from malnutrition and other health concerns have been prescribed with necessary supplementary medication. CWC has also conducted awareness sessions to the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha of Udupi and Vijayanagar districts about undertaking precautionary measures to defend themselves from the third wave of COVID 19 and vaccinations available for adolescents in the age group of 15-18 years.



In order to ensure access to regular healthcare CWC in conjunction with private donors facilitated the distribution of ECG machines. As a result of our regular field intervention in CWC areas in Vijayanagar

district, CWC highlighted the lack of presence of necessary medical equipment such as ECG machines at the primary health centres. In these taluks Without ECG machines in primary healthcentres and sub-centres within Gram Panchayats, one had to go to taluk or district hospitals for diagnosis of cardiac diseases.

CWC in collaboration with gram panchayat, taluk and district administration and in partnership with CAD Foundation has facilitated the dissemination of ECG machines to primary health centres and sub centres based on several criteria such as population, distance to health centres, villages covered, in 24 gram panchayat of Vijayanagar district. CWC has also facilitated training workshops for Community Health Officer, Taluk Health Officer and ASHA workers of these gram panchayats to operate these ECG machines and take corresponding readings for further follow up. CWC has also been advocating for wide spread access of ECG machines that are available to these gram panchayats to be accessible to more number of people. It has been consistently working with the gram panchayats, taluk and district administrations to regularly conduct general health check-ups to gauge basic health indicators such as blood sugar level, blood pressure and especially to be made available to the MGNREGA workers. They have been prescribed treatments, given medication, and further follow up has been intimated. Many of them have also received their COVID 19 booster dose vaccines.

5. Ensuring access to viable livelihood options to the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha in collaboration with the gram panchayats of Udupi and Vijayanagar districts

The National Rural Livelihood Mission programme is aimed at generating livelihood opportunities fr women from vulnerable and marginalised communities. CWC undertook targeted advocacy initiatives with the district administration of Vijayanagar district about the possibilities of offering trainings to them and holding a one-day workshop at the district level where Chief Executive Officers and the concerned officials will have direct discussions and share information with women who are interested in receiving such training. As a result of our intervention, a one-day workshop on self-employment andan interaction program was conducted with Chief Executive Officers and concerned district level officials on follow-up on the subsidy scheme. About 40 women participated in this. Plans are underway to access additional information about the training they are interested in.

Ensuring access to job opportunities to members of Bhima Sangha: Sita, a member of Bhima Sangha from Kalvi hamlet, Kalvi panchayat, Huvinadahagali taluk, Vijayanagar district expressed her interest driving the waste collection vehicle. She also expressed her aspiration at the children's gram sabhas and also at the taluk level child rights task force meetings held in March 2022. The Kalvi gram panchayat has agreed to provide free driving training to Sita and has issued to her a letter of recommendation for free training. Sita is now 18 years of age and she is now eligible to acquire driving license and subsequently undertake training to be able to drive the vehicle. After having completed her additional training in tailoring, she will pursue the driving classes.

6. Ensuring the realisation of the right to livelihood of the vulnerable and marginalised MGNREGA workers

CWC has been consistently working with MGNREGA workers in Udupi, Vijayanagar, Belagavi and Bagalkot districts to create awareness among them regarding the provisions of the Act, facilitating them to raise their issues, advocate with concerned officials from local up to the state level to claim their rights. The NREGA Act, providing employment guarantee by workers of the socio-economically marginalized sections of CWC 's areas, focuses on facilitating advocacy of their rights at the local as well as at the state level. CWC , in collaboration with the workers have recognized that the Act provides not more than 100 days of employment to the workers, whereas the Act states that the workers should be provided minimum of 100 days of employment and that there should not be a cap stipulating only 100 days of employment to the workers.

CWC has taken serious cognisance of this misinterpretation of the Act and its impact on thelivelihoods of these workers. It has taken up these concerns with the MGNREGA Commissionerate atthe state level and plans to pursue this concern as a major national level advocacy initiative as there are systemic restrictions in place that do not allow workers to work more than 100 days. CWC has

been able to consistently respond to the timely issues faced by workers employed under the MGNREGA scheme in Belagavi, Bagalkot, Gulbarga, Raichur and Vijayanagar districts. CWC in collaboration with the MGNREGA workers sought clarification on the fact that members of the Gram panchayat can also work as Metis (Supervisor of a group of workers). It has sought clarification from the Commissioner, MGNREGA and this has resulted in passing of an order addressing this misinformation. CWC has been working with the MGNREGA workers who have not been able to secure job opportunities under the scheme even after one month of submission of an application, requesting for jobs. The law states that after 15 days of submission of application for job and failure to secure a job opportunity, they are entitled to receive unemployment allowance. The key issues raised by the MGNREGA workers include:

- Lack of availability of further work after completion of 100 days of work per family
- Lack of availability of health insurance facility for the MGNREGA workers
- Lack of availability of workers card from the Department of Labour, that is presently only available to construction workers
- Non response with regard to increase of wages under the MGNREGA programme despite the changing socio economic realities of families reeling under the after effects of COVID – 19 pandemic
- Extended delays in providing work at panchayat level, situation where more days of work is not provided even though the family has completed 100 days
- Delay in the release of budget to procure materials for jobs allocated even though it should be done within a month. This release has been pending for years
- Lack of information about the possibility of many jobs that can be done under the employment guarantee and the adequate implementation of the act
- Non-payment of additional wages that should be paid to the workers even though they have been appointed as Gram Kayak Mitra for a year, they are taking work from them and not paying them
- Delay in allocating work even after 15 days of submitting applications for jobs under the programme and not getting a copy of the job application as acknowledgement of receipt
- Not being given an acknowledgment letter by the gram panchayat for applying for unemployment allowance
- Lack of information about various works that can be undertaken under the employment guarantee scheme
- Specially abled citizens being denied access to job cards because of the concerns with the linkages to the Aadhaar card
- Lack of availability of 100 days under separate job card for more specially-abled citizens

The MGNREGA workers and Gram Kayaka Bandhus (Metis) from Belagavi, Bagalkote, Raichur, Gulbarga, Vijayanagar often seek assistance from CWC for information about such problems over the phone who have been consistently supported with access to information and timely counseling. They also reach out to us to help interpret the implications of government orders related to employment guarantee scheme, information on important schemes that are being shared with them at regular intervals.

CWC has made targeted efforts to address these concerns by sharing them with village, taluk, district and state level officials for immediate action and follow up. We have also held consultations with the MGNREGA workers Sogi, Hampasagara, Itagi, Gaddikeri panchayats of Vijayanagar district on the important issues under the MGREGA Act in their areas, in which a total of 264 workers (168 men, 96 women) have also participated in awareness sessions where information has been shared on the importance of Gram Sabhas in effective implementation and getting immediate response by filing complaints through MGNREGA helplines.

Proactive responses to the issued that have been raised by the MGNREGA workers:

- As a result of our persistent intervention and advocacy, the gram panchayats in all the above mentioned districts have responded positively to the issues raised by the MGNREGA workers through allocating work on time, ensuring timely payment of wages for the works undertaken by MGNREGA workers and conducting health camps for health check-ups of the workers
- These concerns have been raised with the Chief Executive Officer of Vijayanagar district administration, especially regarding providing health insurance facility for MGNREGA workers. The CEO suggested in a meeting of Panchayat Development Officers that they should be

provided free of charge assistance at the Village One centres to participate in Ayushman Bharat Yojana. This update has been shared with the MGNREGA workers

- The grama kayakabandhus (Metis) of Bagalkote district had not received their honorarium for about 11 months. They had raised this matter several times and had been insisting by issuing claim letters. It was brought to the attention of CWC and we raised this matter at the state level and urged the MGNREGA Commissionerate to address it immediately. In June 2022, this matter was brought to the attention of the NREGA Commissioner. As a result of our intervention, during the first week of July, the monthly allocation of Rs. 11,000/- for 9 months honorarium has been released. By the end of June 2022, the gram kayaka bandhus have completed 1 year since joining the job. This is the first time that they have received their salaries as the Central Government had not released funds for the same for a long time
- CWC has also urged the Government of Karnataka to withdraw the order to cancel the provision of Rs. 10 to workers to sharpen their tools that they would be using for the various works that they undertake under the MGNREGA programme. This matter was shared with the workers and they expressed that instead of withdrawing the Rs 10/- order, they have decided to claim the right through a letter to the Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers and have proceeded with it. This matter has also been raised with the officials at the state level

Local organisations and institutions

1. Facilitating additional classes for members of Makkala Sangha to take their examinations for Class 10 with the support of volunteers

Several members of the Bhima Sangha and the Makkala Sangha expressed the requirement for assistance towards preparation to take their class 10th examinations. CWC facilitated conducting of community classes since 2021, taught by volunteers from (Moodlekatte Technical Institute) after school hours. These community classes have been implemented in Basrur, Hosadu, Hangalur, Kandavar, Khambadakone and Gangolli, Kolkere, Hosadupanchayats in Udupi district on a regular basis. CWC has been in conversation with the institution to continue this community classes with the help of volunteers based on the recommendation from the children of these areas. Thematic learning program and various short term and long-term trainings have been conducted in collaboration with gram panchayat for the members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha under the OorunduShaale Program based on the interest expressed by them.

Empowering Children From The Migrant Labourers' Communities

Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha

1. Reviving the focus on child labour and re-igniting conversations around safe and dignified jobs with decent pay for adolescents by representatives of Bhima Sangha in the light of the 5th Global Conference on Child Labour, organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The National Child Labour Day was an opportunity for the members of Bhima Sangha, facilitated by CWC to bring back the focus on working adolescents and children. The events included a consultation of members of Bhima Sangha with the District Administrations of Udupi and Vijayanagar, reaffirming the accountability of the decision makers and demanding response. CWC facilitated the communication with the elected representatives and administrative officials, media outreach, social media campaign to highlight the outcomes of the events.

Consultation in Udupi district: 50 members of Bhima Sangha from migrant labourers communities and gram panchayats in Kundapur and Byndoor taluks participated in the consultation, in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mr. Kurma Rao and other officials. The objective, as was in Vijayanagar, was to facilitate first and foremost working children to directly assert their agency, and for those in office to register the concerns and recommendations for change by working children and make concrete commitments to address them; including looking into implementation of schemes and programmes for their welfare.

Along with the DC, a senior civil court judge, the Deputy Director, DWCD, Labour Inspector, representatives of various departments, employers and MakkalaMitras were a part of this consultation. Working children had an opportunity to come face to face with the officials during the group discussions. The officials acknowledged that this helped them develop empathy towards the realities of working children and their families, facilitating them to view the problems of working children from children's perspective itself. They further acknowledged that approaches that aim to eradicate or invisibilise them will not work.

Working children have been consistently advocating for safe and age/ability appropriate work that offers dignified wages to support livelihoods of working adolescents and their families with access to basic facilities such as food, drinking water, and toilets. They have also consistently raised the need for tailor made opportunities to combine work and education. They have placed their recommendation for entrepreneurial and business skills, along with access to region and sector specific vocational trainings also to be made available to them. They have also thrown light on the challenging situation in their families and stressed upon their need to work to support their families in such crisis situations, which have been aggravated by the pandemic.

The Deputy Commissioner of Udupi district Mr. Kurma Rao responded proactively to the issues raised by working children and stressed upon the need to develop tailor made plans to address the issues

faced by them. He further gave assurances towards taking the necessary initiatives to make Udupi district a model district in its approach to address the issue of child labour that keeps the consultations with working children at its central focus. CWC, from the field to the state level, is following up with the office of the DC to develop specific plans and programmes to address the issues raised by working children during the consultation.

These events have also been documented and detailed submissions of the outcomes and action points of these meetings have been sent to the respective district administrations in the form of official submissions. The submissions covered key issues raised by working children for immediate, short term and long term responses along with responses by the district and taluk level administrative officials covering action points for implementation. The Bhima Patrike (wall magazine for children) was released at the events and both the events have received adequate press coverage at the state level: <https://news24karnataka.com/we-are-the-beginners-of-change-join-us/>

Elected Representatives and Govt. Officials

1. Facilitating a survey in partnership with members of Bhima Sangha and Udupi district administration to map working children, understand their realities towards further advocacy

CWC collaborated with the Udupi district administration to come up with a framework to conduct a survey to understand realities of working children from migrant laborers communities. The information that emerges out of this survey would be used by the Udupi district administration to proactively formulate schemes and programmes meant for holistic development of working children and also look at addressing the individual concerns by working children and their families on a case to case basis.

The children that we spoke to shared that they choose to work to support the livelihood because of the family's challenging socio-economic conditions. They expressed their interest to combine both education and work in their preferred sector in order to gain knowledge and skills from their own experiences. They feel that work is relevant as they get to learn important skills needed at work to help better equip themselves for their professional career in the future. Children take pride in their work and share that it inculcates self-esteem and enhances learning, enables access to information, skills and knowledge from their own experiences. The findings of the survey revealed that some of the adolescents were involved in safe and age/ability appropriate work. Some of these were non-hazardous sectors – and these enabled them to meet some of their expenditures; continue their education and/or, contributed to improve the family's financial status. Some of the children did not see any benefits in continuing their education in the formal learning systems and choose to pursue vocational education to gain skills and knowledge more likely to provide future employability. Some of the children opted to work to extend support to their families for financial support only after they felt disengaged from education. Some of the other children expressed their difficulty to follow education taught in schools and had opted to work, where they felt they were learning skills and knowledge.

908 hazardous zones and 148 Non-Hazardous Zones were considered for the scope of this survey. 91 working children were identified out of whom 70 children were found working in non-hazardous zones and 21 children were found working in hazardous zones. 29 (24 boys and 5 girls) were found to be combining work and education; 49 out of school children (28 boys and 21 girls) presently working. 10 children (7 boys and 3 girls) work with their parents, during festival days and work as street vendors; 6 children responded that they were 18 at the time of the survey, but those who surveyed said they were under the age of 18

Some of the recommendations shared by working children during the survey were

- Presently, working children are given lunch breaks. Children can also be provided leisure time when there are no customers or when there is lesser workload. There need not be fixed time allocated for this. The employers must provide leisure and relaxation time for children in accordance to the age and ability of working children

- Children working in juice parlour, garage, hotels and other establishments must be provided personal safety gear appropriate to the work location and type of work (Eg: gloves, face masks, appropriate tools)
- The employers must ensure the provision of adequate safety measures in place and restrooms for working children
- Working children must have access to adequate transportation facilities and must be provided with clean drinking water and food
- Children must be provided wages appropriate and commensurate to the work that they engage in and discrimination based on age and gender must not be practiced while paying wages to working children. The wages thus provided to working children must not be less than what is already stipulated as per the Minimum Wages Act.
- The duration of work for children must be fixed based on the age and physical abilities of the working children
- Working children must be entitled to paid leave of a day every week
- Adolescents must be paid overtime wages if they would be working beyond their fixed timings and what is expected of them
- Adolescents eligible for safe work must be provided with adequate emergency healthcare, health insurance and other perks that are provided to adult workers

During the period covered in report, this survey is still underway.

2. Presentation of concerns of children from the migrant and urban poor communities with regard to accessing education post the COVID - 19 pandemic

At the meeting organised by the Directorate of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Department of Education, Govt. of Karnataka to discuss the implementation of the policy on the education of children from migrant communities, CWC raised the following issues, based on field experience and with as policy engagement in Bangalore, Belagavi, Bagalkot, Ballari and Udupi districts during and post COVID – 19 pandemic

- Migrant children and their families have travelled back to their hometowns during the pandemic. Their situation in their source locations have to be ascertained. Many families have lost their livelihoods and have been struggling to survive post the pandemic. Many families have been further pushed into economic deprivation because of the pandemic, which means that the older children have had to drop out of school and start working to support the families and to pull them out of poverty and debts
- The state has to undertake a detailed stock taking of the socio-economic marginalisation of children from the migrant communities from 6 – 14 years post the impact of the pandemic and understand their concerns in accessing formal education without interruption. The policy must also take into account the children who have dropped out of school for various reasons, both in rural and urban areas and link them with appropriate tent schools, residential schools and local government schools in their respective locations
- Children in the rural areas in Ballari and Vijayanagara districts have identified migration as a concern that disrupts the education of children when parents migrate in the midst of the academic year. Children have been requesting for the availability of hostels and have demanded that they be made safe and secure for stay in the absence of their parents. Children have also been demanding transportation services to access schools in the neighbouring towns and villages and these provisions must be made available locally. Parents, while searching for jobs in coffee plantations in Hassan, Mandya and Madikeri districts, fear leaving behind girl children considering their safety which deprives them of opportunities to pursue education
- Children from Belagavi and Bagalkot districts have struggled with accessing education since their districts have been gravely affected by floods in 2019 and 2020. Some of their schools had been submerged during the flooding and many children have lost their study materials and textbooks because of which they have not been able to prepare for and attend examinations. Some of the schools are in extremely dilapidated conditions and a stock taking has to be done in these and other flood affected districts to assess the infrastructural and educational needs of the children and integrate the recommendations of the children from these regions in the framing of the policy
- Online education has been largely inaccessible to children in the rural areas, because of which many children have had to drop out of school. Children have struggled with lack of access to

technology and connectivity while accessing online education. Children have also shared that they have been unable to follow the lessons through online means as they are unable to clarify their doubts and ask questions if what is being taught is unclear. Children have also constantly demanded that the state provides access to technology and internet connectivity to those that cannot afford to access them

- The policy must have the migrant child at the heart of its objective and all the concerned departments must come together to ensure that migrant children who already come from vulnerable and marginalised sections of the society do not trickle down from the safety nets that we ought to create for the larger wellbeing of such children – Therefore consultations should be consulted at the district level
- The right to participation of children as enshrined in the UNCRC and ratified by India must be upheld and ensured by the state with the effective implementation of the Makkala Gram Sabhas and Ward Sabhas in the rural areas and Makkala Area Sabhas in the urban areas. These platforms must bring together children from the utmost marginalised communities to bring forward their concerns regarding education, vocational training, safety, protection, child labour, child marriage and other concerns and the relevant departments must respond to the issues raised by them at in an appropriate manner at the local level

Public and Private Agencies

1. Facilitating the discussion with the representatives of owners of establishments and industries in Udupi district

A discussion was held with the owners of establishments or factories identified in the survey and other working children about their participation in creating a child-friendly working environment and addressing the needs related to labor in an interaction program conducted by working children on the Working Children's Day. Some of the employers who participated in the working children and adolescent dialogue programme expressed their willingness to provide secure jobs to children with the skill-set and abilities which may be required by their sector.

Employers also shared their opinions during the survey on child and adolescent workers and their conditions. Employers consider the physical capabilities and age restrictions while providing work to children. Children and adolescents understand the importance of time management and the value of making the best use of time when they work during the holidays and after school / college hours. Children come to work because of the challenging financial situation of their families and many are not interested in pursuing formal education. Due to the family's economic situation adolescents wish to work but they are not given job opportunities even though they are legally allowed to work. The employers hesitate to give them work due to pressure from the Labour Department in the name of child protection. Adolescents above 15 years of age are allowed by law to work in safe and appropriate jobs with dignified pay.

One of the important outcomes of such interactions with employers is the opportunity to discuss adolescent labour vis a vis child labour Act along with children's rights provisions. This has made it clear that we are not dealing with polarized positions that are counter-productive – but instead with nuanced and meaningful understanding of work and education as they play out in the lives of young people.

These conversations have opened up certain opportunities for potential safe and dignified work options for adolescents. Some of the employers have also indicated interest in providing skill education and training prior to absorbing some of the trainees into their work sector.

Education For Democracy: CWC's State Resource Centre, Namma Bhoomi

The team at SRC and children explore a variety of learning and teaching experiences. The background and histories of the young residents and students at SRC do provide many challenges and complexities. Yet it is a venue for exploration and a space to nurture and realise aspirations. Some of the achievements of this periods are:

1. **Education and Employment:** At the State Resources Centre (SRC), professional and academic education is offered based on young people's needs. The center supports adolescents with job placements and provides special attention to adolescent girls, linking them to earning opportunities and marketing outlets through Nammangadi, a cooperative.
2. **Success and Support:** Most trainees are employed, with adolescent girls benefiting from Namma Angadi. Vulnerable children, including those from marginalized communities and orphans, continue their education. All children gain life skills, empowerment education, and a sense of self-identity and community recognition.
3. **Health and Wellbeing:** SRC focuses on the overall health of children, including those with mental and emotional disabilities. Children receive nutritional food and participate in growing and cooking their own food, fostering respect for food and labor. The center has a full-time caretaker, an on-site clinic, and provides medical treatment and psychological counseling in collaboration with Manipal Academy of Higher Education. During Covid, a quarantine center was set up.
4. **Children's Panchayat:** SRC has a Children's Panchayat elected by the children, teaching them democratic values and collective leadership. The Panchayat helps in decision-making on various matters, such as menu suggestions.
5. **Community Engagement:** CWC facilitators visited 69 Panchayats in Udupi and Vijayanagara Districts, interacting with over 3300 community members and stakeholders to raise awareness about SRC's programs.
6. **Vocational Training:** Vocational courses offered include electrical wiring, garment production, wood technology, and beautician courses. Feedback from users and employers guided the courses. 39 trainees completed training, 40 are ongoing, with 31 graduates in apprenticeships and 4 as entrepreneurs. 42 children are enrolled in academic education, with 9 preparing for SSLC exams.
7. **Life Skills and Values:** Children learn about nutrition, teamwork, and respect for all tasks. They develop an appreciation for food, work, and the importance of not wasting resources
8. **Agriculture Knowledge and Skills:** SRC residents engage in planting, nurturing, and harvesting vegetables, greens, and fruits on campus. They receive guidance from agricultural specialists on growing conditions, care, irrigation, and fertilizers. They experiment with water harvesting, vermicomposting, and rainwater conservation. This interaction with nature, including flowers and birds, provides a joyful learning experience and a unique co-existence with nature.
9. **Dairy:** All SRC children learn about dairy, including different breeds, nutrition, medication, health insurance, pregnancy, and cleanliness. They practice milking and milk management, track milk production by breed, and use most of the milk for SRC, selling the surplus to local dairies. They receive input from a veterinary doctor and SRC experts on vermicomposting and Gobar Gas Management, which are also showcased to visitors interested in low-cost technologies.



10. **Art and Crafts:** Children at SRC are exposed to various dance forms, including Bharatanatyam and Yakshagana, with both girls and boys participating in diverse roles. They use Yakshagana to address modern themes and social awareness. The fine art cultural group, Bhima Kalaranga, organizes weekly cultural programs. This environment supports traditional and modern cultural expression alongside professional and academic education.

11. **Life Skills and Career Support:** Along with core competencies, children gain life skills, cultural exposure, community services experience, and democratic functioning through Makkal Panchayat. They receive career guidance, financial management, banking, savings, and entrepreneurship support. Apprenticeship programs and campus interviews aid in job placements.



12. Exposure Visits:

1. Electrical and Plumbing: Karnatak Power Corporation (Hosangadi), MESCOM Office (Tallur), Sunrise Pipe Industry (Koteshwara), Rajaram Polymers (Koteshwara)
2. Garment Production & Beautician: Prakruti Beauty Parlor (Uppunda), Padma Fashion (Kota), Bloom Beauty Parlor (Udupi)
3. Carpentry: Chaithra Wood Workshop (Hemmady), Jyoti Glass & Plywood Shop (Kundapur), Harsha Furniture Shop (Kundapur), Prabhakaran Tiles (Gulvady), Vishvakarma Karakushala Shilpa Kala Kendra (Kumbhashi)
4. All Trainees: Agriculture University (Brahmavara)

13. **Capacity Building Outreach Programmes:** Seven short-term outreach programs have been conducted for women from vulnerable and marginalized communities, members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha in Udupi and Vijayanagara districts.

In this manner along with their core competence children learn from life skills, cultural exposure, community exposure, community services and their democratic functioning with Makkal Panchayat. They are also provided support with carrier guidance inputs on, financial management, banking and savings and entrepreneurship. The apprenticeship programmes for the long duration courses and campus interviews are very useful for their job placements.

State and National Advocacy and Policy Impact

Bhima Sangha, Makkala Sangha and Gram Panchayat Hakkottaaya Andolana

1. Reviving the focus on child labour and re-igniting conversations around safe, dignified and rights upholding work for adolescents: Facilitating the representation of Bhima Sangha in the light of the 5th Global Conference on Child Labour organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The National Child Labour Day was an opportune occasion for the members of Bhima Sangha, facilitated by CWC to bring back the focus on children and adolescent work. This was marked by consultation of members of Bhima Sangha with the Udupi and Vijayanagar district administration and thus seeking the accountability and binding to address the issues raised by them at the district level. CWC facilitated the communication with the elected representatives and administrative officials, media outreach, social media campaign to highlight the outcomes of the events.

Consultation in Vijayanagar district: The National Child Labour Day was celebrated on 30th April 2022, at Vijayanagar district. The EO of Huvinahadagali taluk panchayat along with the Vijayanagar district administration and The Concerned for The Working Children worked towards the event 'We are the Ambassadors of Change – Let's Join Hands Together'. The interactive session was held for the members of Bhima Sangha from Huvinahadagalli and Hagaribommanahalli Taluk panchayats. The objective was to create a platform where first and foremost working children could directly assert their agency, and those in office would register the concerns and recommendations for change by working children and make concrete commitments to address them.

Members of Bhima Sangha, while acknowledging the gram panchayats role in addressing issues raised by members of Bhima Sangha on various platforms, also highlighted that the gram and taluk panchayats cannot address all the concerns raised by working children in terms of policy change. They demanded the intervention of the district administration on the larger policy concerns. The interactive program was conducted under the chairmanship of Sri Chandrasekharayya, the Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Harapanahalli Division. Prior to the commencement of the programme, the members of Bhima Sangha undertook a peaceful procession, raising slogans on the rights of working children culminating in the hoisting of the Bhima Sangha flag and singing the Bhima Sangha anthem.

Bhima Sangha also presented its achievements through the display of the 'Lifeline of Bhima Sangha' and poster exhibition. Uma Maheshwari of 'We Mana Foundation' conducted an awareness session on balanced use of locally available food items for nutrition. A health check-up of children who participated in the program was also organised. A total of 170 members of Bhima Sangha from 18 panchayats in Vijayanagar district were present at the event. Makkala Mitras, members of gram panchayats of Huvinahadagali and Hagaribommanahalli taluk panchayats, Anganwadi workers and various taluk and district level officials took part in the event.

The representatives of the working children who attended the meeting shared their real-time situation, their problems and necessities and asked for feedback from the concerned departments. Officers present at the meeting, responded to questions raised by children.

Working children who wish to continue education and balance both work and education presented their demands to the district administration for programmes and schemes to offer safe work and for earn and learn opportunities. They also raised demands for appropriate and adequate vocational training and exposure to entrepreneurship and necessary business skills; they raised requests to be connected with potential recruiters. Adolescent girls demanded for the implementation of a comprehensive programme to provide nutritious food, healthcare, access to sanitary products and counseling and awareness on puberty and social issues like child marriage. The District Director of Planning for Vijayanagar said that the Department of Women and Child Development and the

Vijayanagar District administration would send a proposal to the Government to re-enforce the programme for adolescent girls.

Consultation in Udupi district: 50 members of Bhima Sangha from gram panchayats in Kundapur and Byndoor taluks and migrant labourers communities participated in the consultation with the Udupi district administration, in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mr. Kurma Rao and other officials. The objective, as in Vijayanagar, was to facilitate first and foremost working children to directly assert their agency, and for those in office to register the concerns and recommendations for change by working children and make concrete commitments to address them; including looking into implementation of schemes and programmes for their welfare.

Along with the DC, a senior civil court judge, the Deputy Director, DWCD, Labour Inspector, representatives of various departments, employers and Makkala Mitras were a part of this consultation. Working children had an opportunity to come face to face with the officials during the group discussions. The officials acknowledged that this helped them develop empathy towards the realities of working children and their families, facilitating them to view the problems of working children from children's perspective itself. They further acknowledged that approaches that aim to eradicate or invisibilise them will not work.

Working children have been consistently advocating for safe and age appropriate work that offers dignified wages to support livelihoods of working adolescents and their families with access to basic facilities such as food, drinking water, and toilets. They have also consistently raised the need for tailor made opportunities to combine work and education. They have placed their recommendation for entrepreneurial and business skills, along with access to region and sector specific vocational trainings also to be made available to them. They have also thrown light on the challenging situation in their families and stressed upon their need to work to support their families in such crisis situations, which have been aggravated by the pandemic.

The Deputy Commissioner of Udupi district Mr. Kurma Rao responded proactively to the issues raised by working children and stressed upon the need to develop tailor made plans to address the issues faced by them. He further gave assurances towards taking the necessary initiatives to make Udupi district a model district in its approach to address the issue of child labour that keeps the consultations with working children at its central focus. CWC is following up with the office of the DC to develop specific plans and programmes to address the issues raised by working children during the consultation.

These events have also been documented and detailed submissions of the outcomes and action points of these meetings have been sent to the respective district administrations in the form of official submissions. The submissions covered key issues raised by working children for immediate, short and long term responses and the responses by the district and taluk level administrative officials covering action points for implementation. The Bhima Patrike (wall magazine for children) was released at the events and both the events have received adequate press coverage at the state level: <https://news24karnataka.com/we-are-the-beginners-of-change-join-us/>

2. International Press conference to mark Child Labour Day with the release of the joint statement of working adolescents from Asia, Africa and Latin America, April 2022

To mark the National Child Labour Day on April 30th and on the eve of Labour Day, May 1st focusing on the 5th Global Conference on Child Labour organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), CWC, as convener of Children: Ambassadors of Change (CAOC) facilitated the reconvening of the International Movement of Working Children.

With the objective of highlighting and rekindling global conversations on the realities and demands of working children and adolescents globally, working children and adolescents' movements of Latin America, Africa and Asia, came together to issue a joint statement asserting their rights and expressing their demand to be consulted in all matters that affect them.

Thus CAOC helmed an International Virtual Press Conference on April 30th, where working children from the 3 continents came together to continue making their issues, concerns and recommendations heard, by releasing their Joint Declaration.

Six young working children from Asia, Africa and Latin America shared their experiences and thoughts and drew attention to the existence of children and adolescents in the workforce; how they have been made invisible; their contributions; their demands for safe work opportunities and other alternatives, their wishes for their communities, their country and other working children globally, and their demand that ILO, international bodies and the governments the world over acknowledge them as citizens of today who 'are part of the solution, not the problem'! Here is the link to the joint statement:

<https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2022/05/joint-declaration-of-the-movements-of-children-and-adolescent-workers-in-light-of-the-ilos-5th-global-conference-on-child-labour/>

The joint statement was further adapted and adopted as the Movement of International Working Children and Adolescents' Global Joint Statement in light of ILO's 5th Global Conference on Child Labour. The joint statement was one of the documents used as a basis of his presentation by the African Working Youth, Kabwe, who was one of the Children's delegates in the conference. Open Democracy also covered the international declaration of the Movements, in Open Democracy:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/a-message-to-the-ilo-from-the-worlds-working-children/>

As an extension to its participation in the South Asia consultations for ILO's 5th Global Conference on Child Labour (where CWC as part of CAOC and Bhima Sangha participated), CWC was also invited as a Civil Society Organisation to participate in the conference, which we extended to the CAOC. Thus, three partners from CAOC participated as audience in several sessions of the 5th Global Conference on Child Labour; and wherever possible, highlighted the lived realities and agency of Working Children and Adolescents. However, the participation of both children and CSOs in ILO's 5th Global Conference was approached by the organisers from a tokenistic framework, with little space for true agency and different opinions and points of view. The international movement is shaping up its future course of joint action to highlight the agency of working children and adolescents.

3. Sessions on successful models enabling children's participation and holistic development through AIWGRC

With the clear mission to uphold meaningful participation and agency of young people through creation of platforms where their voices and recommendations are central to the way forward, the All India Working Group on the Rights of Children (AIWGRC) networks, children's sharing and Monthly meeting in February 2022 was a thought provoking one. The members of Azad Jugnu Club and children from the de-notified communities of Madhya Pradesh, facilitated by Muskaan, Bhopal shared their experiences, concerns and their agency to address some of their problems. This demonstrated the learning space for discussion and dialogue between children from different organisations, locations and contexts.

Subsequently, in March 2022, members of Bhima Sangha from 2 different Sanghas in Vijayanagara shared how they have addressed issues such as caste discrimination, accessing their rights to accident redressal and other entitlements. Their sharing was greatly appreciated by all present. Their successful strategic, multi-pronged and sustained struggle against deep rooted caste discrimination was highlighted for detailed documentation. These platforms at the state, national and international level enable members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha to present their concerns and place their recommendations on various issues that impact their lives.

4. Convening of the taluk level child rights task force in Huvinahadagali and Hagaribommanahalli taluk panchayats

With the objective of holding the taluk administration accountable to ensuring rights of vulnerable children and adolescents, the taluk level child rights task force meetings were held at the taluk panchayat premises of Huvinahadagali and Hagaribommanahalli taluk, Vijayanagar district. Members of Bhima Sangha held the taluk panchayats accountable to address the issues that they had raised during the meeting held the previous year and also acknowledged and thanked the panchayat for

addressing several issues that were raised. They include: Issues regarding schools not being available in the vicinity, lack of access to good quality drinking water, lack of cleanliness and sanitation, repair of roads, provision of street lights, providing proper treatment for a member of BhimaSangha struggling with hearing disability and provide houses for those who have not been provided houses from the gram panchayats.

Provision of nutritious food kit, sanitary napkin and IFA supplements to adolescent girls, conducting regular health camps and ensuring proper nutrition levels of children and adolescents, providing locally accessible options for vocational training and employment for adolescents between the ages of 16-18 under the NREGA scheme were reiterated. Nearly 150 members of Bhima Sangha from Huvinahadagali and Hagaribommanahalli taluks participated at the meeting where officials from DWCD, Revenue, Police and Taluk panchayat officials were present at the meeting to respond to the issues raised by Bhima Sangha. Several of these concerns have already been addressed by the respective taluk panchayats and the issues that come under the purview of the district administration have already been highlighted to them through detailed submissions as a part of the consultations on the National Child Labour Day, 2022.

Elected representatives at the state and national level, representatives of state and national ministries and departments, especially on children and livelihoods

1. Advocacy with the Parliamentary Committee to review the amendment to increase the age of marriage of young girls from 18 to 21 years

The Young Voices National Movement acknowledged that the Government of India, in the winter Parliament session, took cognisance of the objections to amending the minimum age of marriage of girls from 18 to 21 years. We valued this opportunity of a Parliamentary Committee review of the proposed amendment. The YVNM opposed the move to amend the legal minimum age of marriage for women in India from 18 to 21 as this would be severely detrimental to girls' rights to autonomy and choice. We worked tirelessly through the hardships of the first wave of COVID 19 in India to present a comprehensive representation of our objections to the Task Force.

We strongly stated that we would remain united in our vision to end child, early and forced marriage and remain committed to upholding the rights and best interests of every child of India and appealed to the chairperson and members of the parliamentary committee for the opportunity to make a formal presentation.

CWC has also made a detailed presentation on how the Young Voices National Movement, through the submission of the Young Voices National Report was able to emphasise the importance of creating conscious and rights sensitive platforms for children and adolescents to express their concerns and put forth their recommendations on laws and policies that have a direct bearing on their lives. This presentation was made in early 2022 at the Karnataka State Trainers Collective consultation organised by Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore. In this state level event, master trainers from all districts of Karnataka took part and their main take-away was the importance of young people's agency and how that provided unique and crucial perspectives on the issue, including matters related to consent, sexuality and gender.

In the first quarter of 2022, based on the findings of the Young Voices National Report, the YVNM also made a formal submission to the study titled 'Comparative Study on Best Practices for Effectively Legislating and Enforcing the Minimum Age of Marriage to Accelerate Efforts to End Child Marriage' being undertaken by UN Women.

Here is a list of submissions by the YVNM and subsequent press coverage at the state , national and international level:

- Young Voices National Report (Hindi and English) tabled to the Task Force in July 2020: Contains demands from young people from 15 states on what needs to really change to delay their age of marriage:

<https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2020/07/young-voices-national-report-15->

[states-nearly-2500-young-people-submission-to-the-task-force-examining-age-of-marriage-and-other-concerns-july-2020/](#)

- A letter from young people to Parliamentarians (Hindi and English) sent in December 2021: <https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2021/12/open-letter-from-girl-citizens-to-parliamentarians-opposing-the-bill-to-increase-the-age-of-marriage-of-young-girls-from-18-21-years/>
- A brief outlining experts' views as well as key demands from young people (English): <https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2021/12/raising-the-age-of-marriage-will-only-criminalise-and-not-prevent-early-marriages/>

Media and press coverage (2020 and 2021)

- The Hindu (2021): <https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2021/12/raising-the-age-of-marriage-will-only-criminalise-and-not-prevent-early-marriages/>
 - BBC Hindi (2021): <https://www.bbc.com/hindi/india-59791117>
 - The New Indian Express (2021): <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2021/dec/20/pandemic-effect-minor-girls-now-part-of-marriage-market-2397528.html>
 - Prajavani: <https://www.prajavani.net/op-ed/discussion/kavitha-ratna-article-on-the-increase-in-marriage-age-of-women-in-india-896048>
 - Down to Earth (2020): <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/health/should-minimum-age-for-marriage-of-girls-be-raised-to-21-72485>
 - The New Indian Express (2020): <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/women-health-index-india-marriage-age-6531515/?fbclid=IwAR1zbf7uBB4nKlnzS3bvPXliY6Mka-raGpKJujBaxxRaYCUtiasxVRsfrKc>
 - BBC Hindi (2020): <https://www.bbc.com/hindi/india-53774209>
2. Presentation of concerns of children from the migrant and urban poor communities with regard to accessing education post the COVID - 19 pandemic

CWC has been constantly advocating for the concerns of members of Bhima Sangha and Makkala Sangha on various issues, including accessing education post the COVID - 19 pandemic. At the meeting organised by the Directorate of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Department of Education, Govt. of Karnataka in April 2022, to discuss the implementation of the policy on the education of children from migrant communities, CWC raised the following issues, based on field experience and policy engagements in Bangalore, Belagavi, Bagalkot, Ballari and Udupi districts during and post COVID – 19 pandemic. The specific details of the same have been represented in the IND-14 project report. CWC is currently following up with the SSA to hold a follow up meeting to discuss revisiting the policy based on the concerns shared at the meeting.

3. Campaigning against the closure of hostels by the Govt. of Karnataka during COVID – 19



In January 2022, in the light of the third wave of COVID-19 hitting India, several Child Care Institutions (CCIs) of State (State recognized privately run and State run hostels) were closed down and the children were being sent back to their communities. It was observed that a circular was issued to this effect by the Director of ICPS, GOK. CWC viewed this as a very detrimental move, as children who are already in such institutions or residential programmes are there because they are in dire need of care and support, which their families and communities could not provide. Thus, relegating

them back at a time of extreme vulnerability during to the pandemic would be very detrimental to their safety and well-being.

In order to halt this trend, a strong petition was made to the Chief Minister, State Opposition Leaders, State Ministries of Education, Health and Social Justice, as well as to the Director-ICPS and the DCs of Udupi and Vijayanagara districts, demanding the revocation of this move and ensuring protection of all children of CCIs. A petition was also floated on Change.org, which got more than 90 endorsements from across the country. Here is the petition on Change.org: <https://chnng.it/tgCF9tjVTw>

As a result of our advocacy at the state level, the Director of ICPS withdrew the circular, effecting CCIs across the state for vulnerable and marginalised children to remain open, and to ensuring that they were safe spaces that observe the COVID – 19 safety guidelines issued by the Govt. of Karnataka. The Deputy Commissioner of Udupi district also withdrew the order to close down the hostels under the Directorate of ICPS, benefitting children in vulnerable situations across the district.

4. Public Hearing on the impact of COVID - 19 on the education of children in Karnataka

Action Aid Association and Slum Mahila Sanghatane organised a public hearing on the impact of Covid-19 on Children's Education on the 22nd of March at SCM House Bangalore. The objective of the public hearing was to hear children's, parents', and community leaders' perspectives on the COVID-19 induced unique educational catastrophe affecting children from lower income and marginalised groups and to accordingly make recommendations to effect redressal of the educational crisis and rehabilitation for these and other children across the state.



DECCANHERALD.COM
Away from school for 2 years, many kids losing interest in learning: Report
After two years of staying away from schools, many children have now lost interest in schoolin...

The cases were heard by an empowered jury panel consisting of Ms. Kavita Ratna – Director, Advocacy – The Concerned for Working Children Bangalore; Mr. Gurusurthy Kasinathan – National Coalition on the Education Emergency and Adv. Vinay. K Srinivasa – Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore. 14 children and their families shared their stories of them not being able to access education during and post COVID - 19 at the public hearing. These children were part of a larger pool of 64 case studies from 6 districts namely: Belagavi, Bagalkot, Mysore, Madikeri, Chamarajanagar and Bangalore. The cases covered following issues:

- Denial of learning opportunities to vulnerable and marginalised children
- Children forced to drop out of school due to a lack of funds to pay for private school fees
- Children are out of school because they have not received a Transfer Certificate (TC) from a private school
- The hardships of the marginalized children who are unable to afford online education
- Once again, children are the inevitable forces of child labour.

Parents and representatives from the supporting organisations also elaborated on the issues above and laid bare the severe hardships and sorrow that the children and their families had to go through. On the basis of this hearing, the jury came out with a detailed report of recommendations to restore the right to education of children from disadvantaged populations.

Here is the link to the report:

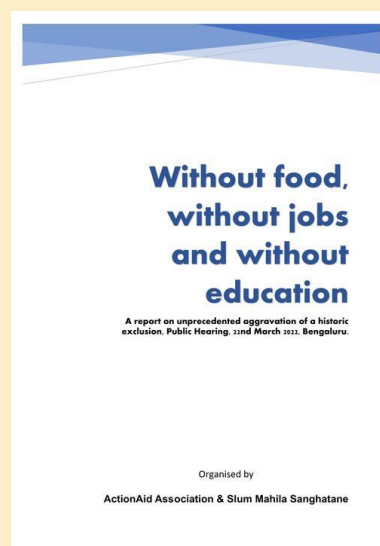
<https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2022/04/public-hearing-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-education-of-children-from-vulnerable-communities/>.

Both the public hearing and the jury report have thrown very strong light on the failure of various State and other mechanisms to ensure that children have unconditional to their basic right to education and development. The report has been used as a point of reference and reckoner in several other processes, such as submission of recommendations to the Draft National Youth Policy etc.

Here is the press coverage of the release of the report titled 'Without food, without jobs and without education':

<https://www.deccanherald.com/state/top-karnataka-stories/away-from-school-for-2-years-many-kids-losing-interest-in-learning-report-1102208.htm> |

<https://m.dailyhunt.in/news/india/english/the+news+minute-epaper-newsmint/as+incomes+dry+up+families+in+bengaluru+slums+forced+to+pull+kids+out+of+school-newsid-n370685068?s=a&uu=0xd677c65ae26c74f5&ss=pd&fbclid=IwAR16ws6gl->



[I0MqrC5O8gXfgS25Q-a5g4FE4MclqLrVgLa9gT4FbytKu69ks.](#)

5. State level advocacy to highlight important concerns and recommendations regarding the implementation of the MGNREGA programme

CWC continues to focus on the state level advocacy towards ensuring that the rural communities access their right to livelihood through optimum implementation of the MGNREGA Act and effective utilisation of the provisions of the Act.

In keeping with this, and in continuance with the dialogues and engagement with the Commissionerate MGNREGA through 2021, a detailed submission was made to the Commissionerate RDPR (MGNREGA) in March 2022. The submission - which was drafted in partnership with the GPHA, on the basis of points of concern and action that MGNREGA and GPHA members have continuously raised - highlights the key concerns and demands of MGNREGA workers in Karnataka, with special focus on ensuring minimum 100 days of work is assured, delay in payments and unemployment compensations are addressed, more panchayat relevant jobs as – identified and recommended by the gram sabhas - are brought into the job folio for MGNREGA, and COVID must be recognised as a natural disaster under MGNREGA (which would extend entitlements to the MGNREGA workers in terms of minimum 150 days etc.) This is part of ongoing advocacy on MGNREGA.

On July 18th, representatives of CWC were part of a very productive consultation with the Commissioner MGNREGA, Government of Karnataka, organised by Azim Premji University (APU), wherein, there was a dissemination of the study to evaluate the status of implementation of MGNREGA, conducted by researchers from APU. This was followed by detailed discussions with the Commissioner on issues faced by /recommendations from the MGNREGA worker communities & CSOs working with them, as well as sharing on the various initiatives undertaken by the Commissionerate RDPR (MGNREGA). One of the concrete outcomes was that the Commissioner committed to calling a state level consultation on MGNREGA and requested for us to compile a list of the MGNREGA worker CBOs and CSOs, whom they could invite for the same.

Keeping in line with this consultation, CWC hosted a state level consultative call with MGNREGA workers and CSOs working on MGNREGA, on July 26, 2022. It was a very productive platform with 39 MGNREGA Workers' Collectives /CSOs from approximately 15 districts in Karnataka sharing their ideas, issues and suggestions towards effective implementation of the programme in Karnataka. As an outcome of this, CWC has compiled a Karnataka State Level Organisational Resource List, a comprehensive list of MGNREGA Worker Collectives and CSOs that can potentially be part of the state level physical consultation on issues concerning the implementation of the MGNREGA programme in Karnataka, that will be organised by the Commissionerate of MGNREGA, proposed to be held in August 2022.

CWC also compiled a comprehensive joint submission of issues and recommendations to be shared with the State Government and in particular with the Commissioner RDPR (MGNREGA), with the objective of dialoguing and ensuring actionables and advocating towards accountable commitments from the Commissionerate MGNREGA in the State Level Consultations.

While CWC continues to strategically engage with the state mechanisms to support the community of MGNREGA workers to claim their rights and entitlements, we are simultaneously facilitating a platform for MGNREGA workers' communities and CSOs to jointly advocate for their rights.

6. Feedback to the Draft National Youth Policy 2021 by Young Voices National Movement

The YVNM welcomed the Draft National Youth Policy 2021 as an important tool to ensure young people's leadership and participation in making key decisions that impact their lives and contribute to India's progress towards the SDG goals. It also acknowledged the open invitation by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYAS) to young people and civil society organisations to give feedback on the same.

The Young Voices National Movement' (YVNM), while ensuring it's primary mandate of continually demanding the revocation of the bill proposing increased age of marriage for girls in India, continues to be a forum that uphold young people's agency, their right to be heard and the right to participate in decisions by their families and by their government on issues that directly impacting them.

In keeping with this, the YVNM came together once again to disseminate the Draft National Youth Policy (NYP) 2021 among young people and share their appreciation, their concerns and most importantly their recommendations to the Ministry Of Youth Affairs and Sports, which was helming this policy. The submission titled 'Draft National Youth Policy 2021: Recommendations from The Young Voices National Movement (YVNM)' encompasses feedback from more than 200 young people, and more than 30 CSOs across 14 States, with more than 100 CSOs/networks/individuals endorsing the same.

The submission consists of 4 parts:

- Part A: Detailed feedback on specific sections of the draft NYP 2021 by a collaborative of Young People and CSOs
- Part B: A Note outlining how Policy commitments can uphold participation of young people (explicitly and/or implicitly) including: Rights based Youth Participation Principles; A Participatory Framework and; Examples and links to some outstanding models of adolescent and youth participation in India
- Part C: State Reports from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Gujarat
- Part D: List of Participations in the draft NYP Consultations and Endorsers to the Submission

Here is the link to the submission:

<http://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2022/07/feedback-to-the-draft-national-youth-policy-2021-by-young-voices-national-movement/>

7. Advocacy by AIWGRC on the challenging the move towards integrating ChildLine under MHA

CWC organised a consultation at the national level to facilitate a collaborative decision making platform for various stakeholders to hear their concerns and recommendations regarding the transfer of Childline to the Ministry of Home Affairs Emergency Response Services Scheme (MHA ERSS) under the Mission Vatsalya scheme, in April 2022. More than 40 representatives from organisations in Karnataka and elsewhere in the country took part in the discussions and gave their recommendations for further advocacy to counter the issue at the national level, considering the alarming concerns with the linkage of the ChildLine under the ERSS of MHA. They highlighted how generalizing it as a general helpline will dilute the significant role that 1098 has played for vulnerable children across the country, not only as an emergency helpline to access emergency services, but also as a helpline to access first level emotional, mental and psychological care and support. Further, child rights and child development experts highlighted handing over the reins to the police (who would be handling the helpline going forward), would tend to put every incoming call into the lens of a law and order issue, which is not the case for majority of the calls coming into 1098, as studies have shown in the past.

Child rights experts and policy think tanks highlighted the role of various stakeholders such as the ChildLine India Foundation themselves and Police Officials in higher positions across the country and suggested consulting them to get an overview of the larger concerns should the proposal come into force. However, despite sincere attempts to advocate against the integration of ChildLine services under the ERSS of MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs), CWC has failed to exert pressure challenging the MHA proposal, and CHILDLINE 1098 has now been integrated under the Mission Vatsalya.

CWC has been quoted in the article elaborating on the position of the AIWGRC regarding the proposed move to bring ChildLine under MHA. Please read the article here: <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/child-right-defenders-concerned-over-mha-taking-over-childline-1098-162957>. While the above process could not achieve its outcome, it has highlighted the need for continual monitoring of ChildLine's integration under MHA and its impact on children across the country, a process which needs to be strategically planned.

Civil Society Organisations, CBOs, NGOs, NGO networks/alliances

1. Launch of the publication "Claiming Citizenship" in collaboration with UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia and the development of MOOC on Adolescent Participation in Governance

CWC launched the report 'Claiming Citizenship: Case Studies of Adolescents Participating in Governance in South Asia', a joint publication of UNICEF and the Concerned for Working Children (CWC) in June, 2022. It is a unique study on adolescent participation in institutional settings aimed at enhancing transformative strategies for adolescents' participation in governance.

The objective of the publication was to ensure the documentation of good practices and incorporate praxis based inputs to mainstream adolescents' participation in governance, develop capacities of young people and adults to integrate adolescent engagement and participation in different sectors. The publication captures 4 case studies of successful models of adolescent participation in governance supported by UNICEF ROSA across local and national initiatives in India, Nepal and Bhutan. They are:

- Safe City Initiative, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India
- Child Friendly Local Governance and Planning, Maharashtra, India
- Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG), Nepal
- Adolescent and Youth participatory review of the National Youth Policy, Bhutan

It also highlights UNICEF's decades of collaboration with rights-based civil society organisations to realise children's right to participation. The initiatives have strengthened policies, mechanisms, capacities and relationships to facilitate adolescent agency and their participation in decision-making. They have furthered the realisation of adolescents' right to participation and enhanced the delivery of responsive and relevant services.

The methodology included analysis of policy and legal framework related to adolescent participation in governance: international, national & state levels, review of historic reports and process documentation and online consultations with adolescents/adolescent led groups discussions & interactive tools; online consultations with relevant Ministries/Departments/UNICEF sectors, partners and CSOs including frontline workers, conversations with 43 adolescents, 32 government officials, 20 civil society representatives and 10 UNICEF staff: focus group and individual engagement; micro and macro review; analysis and recommendations.

The outcome of the exercise was to review the nature and structures of decision-making platforms, where adolescents are encouraged to take part in decision-making process, exploration of capacities which enable adolescents to have optimum impact in informing and influencing policy level decision-making processes over and beyond 'being heard' and identification of potential platforms and way forward.

A release of the publication was organised on June 14, 2022. The welcome remarks were delivered by Noala Skinner, Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF ROSA, opening remarks were delivered by Yasamusa Kimura, representative at the UNICEF country office, Safe City initiative Madhya Pradesh India by: Nargis, 20Safe City initiative participant, Bhopal; Shivani Taneja Muskan UNICEF civil society partner Madhya Pradesh; Advaita Marathe, Child Protection officer, Madhya Pradesh State Office, Bhopal; Anuradha Shankar, Additional Director General of Police Madhya Pradesh Police, Government of Madhya Pradesh; main findings of the report was presented by Kavita Ratna – The Concerned For Working Children; Child Friendly Local Governance initiative Maharashtra India by: Anuradha Nair social policy specialist UNICEF Maharashtra State Office; Sanket Rahul Gaurkar, 20, representative, child friendly Bal Panchayat Chandrapur District Maharashtra, SumedhGurjar, Director, Centre for Research and Documentation, Yashada, Maharashtra; Sharing from Nepal child friendly local governance initiative by Ashok Kumar Jha, Program Officer, UNICEF Janakpur provincial office Nepal, Bhutan's participatory youth policy process by Chencho Lhamu, CEO, Centre for Media and Democracy, UNICEF CSO partner and closing remarks were delivered by Dharshini Senevirathne, ADAP UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia. The launch event was attended by 130 attendees from across the world, including children and adolescents. Here is the link to the recording of the event: <https://youtu.be/WZ3FVV0B-s8>

The other links below are:

- Overview of the report:
<https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2022/06/claimingcitizenshipcasestudiesofadol-escentparticipationingovernanceinsouthasia/>
- Executive Summary:
<https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2022/06/claimingcitizenshipcasestudiesofadol-escentparticipationingovernanceinsouthasia/>
- Presentation - Bird's eye view of the report:
https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL_Claiming_Citizenship_Kavita_June_14.pdf
- Report: <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/reports/claiming-citizenship>

CWC in collaboration with the Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) section at the UNICEF Regional Office in South Asia is also developing a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Adolescent Participation in Governance. CWC is providing technical inputs for its content development as a subject expert. This collaboration with ADAP is supported by the formal Organisational Partnership between CWC and UNICEF, ROSA.

The objective of the MOOC is to create awareness around the importance of adolescent participation in governance and to equip adults with the knowledge and skills needed to engage with adolescents in various contexts. This MOOC is predominantly a video-based solution for the development of an interactive, quality-assured learning programme to strengthen capacities of public functionaries in South Asia to engage meaningfully with adolescents in governance and in decisions that affect their lives. Two dimensions of participation are considered: The meaningful engagement of adolescents as a) persons with entitlements and b) persons with agency who can influence and advocate.

This programme is intended for professionals in governments, civil society organisations and independent human rights institutions. It can extend to any adults working with adolescents such as teachers, lawyers, judges, police, social workers, community workers, medical professionals, civil servants, public officials, traditional leaders, and parents. Upon completion of this programme, learners are expected to understand, implement and assess the principles, policies and practices relating to adolescent participation in governance and institutional settings. Presently it is a work in progress.

2. Social media campaign leading up to the National Child Labour Day, India in April 2022

CWC launched a campaign to mark April 30th by a social media campaign highlighting the testimonies of challenges faced by working children through posters and videos. CWC also shared many sets of posters highlighting the representations of members of Bhima Sangha and other working children from Sakthi-Vidiyal, Tamil Nadu and Prajaak, West Bengal. All these organisations collaborated with CWC to develop and disseminate video testimonials and illustrations handmade by working children and adolescents. This social media campaign showcased the concerns and recommendations by the children and young people themselves. It highlighted the impact of the pandemic on their lives, how it has aggravated their living conditions and why the importance for the need to work has re-emerged.

3. Participation at the Round Table on Child Labour organised by CLARISSA

CLARISSA is a consortium of organisations committed to building a strong evidence base and generating innovative solutions to the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh and Nepal. It's funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), with core international organisations such as The Institute of Development Studies, Terre des Hommes Foundation, Child Hope and the Consortium for Street Children, working in tandem with Country partners in Bangladesh and Nepal. The CLARISSA programme sits within the Asia Regional Child Labour programme which includes components run by UNICEF, UNICEF Innocenti and the ILO.

CWC was invited to a close group high level roundtable hosted by CLARISSA, to provide a confidential space to explore some of the complexities and difficulties in addressing child labour. These include the more challenging and provocative issues, focusing on areas where working children face the most danger and harm. Through a three-hour virtual conversation, 15 participants, including Kavita Ratna from a variety of backgrounds (including civil society, government, UN, academic, donor and business) were invited to:

- explore issues relevant to international debates
- exchange views on promising practices
- start to identify actions to progress together.

Post the round table, CWC was able to directly reconnect and resume the conversation on Children's Participation and Agency with Mikiko Otani, the present Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Representatives of CWC, along with Ms. Otani had also been co-panellists on the UN Early Forced and Child Marriage Panel. Thus CWC shared with her all the actions and highlights of CWC with regards to upholding the agency of Working Children and Adolescents, which has opened channels this is a ripe platform to continue the conversation on Children and Adolescents' Participation and Agency with CWC.

4. Critical response to the abysmal allocation of funds for the welfare of children under the Union Budget 2022- 23

CWC also drafted and disseminated a detailed press release to be published, with the aim of highlighting the increasingly depleting allocation of budget for schemes and programmes aimed at child welfare as a part of the Union Budget 2022 – 23; and the adverse impact it will have on children and adolescents across the nation. Here is the link to the detailed press note:

<https://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/news/2022/02/union-budget-vulnerable-children-left-high-and-dry/>

5. CWC 's opinion on the raid and rescue operations for children in need of care and protection, in the article published in the News Trail

A State Level Media Online News Journal News Trail published an article on the operation 'Nanhe Farishte', which means 'Little Angels', initiated by South Western Railways (SWR) in 2017; The objective of which is to rescue and prevent trafficking of children and to lend a helping hand for the lost and runaway children. Kavita Ratna, representing CWC, inputted the urgent need for preventive response over reactionary response of rescue, which should be strategically incorporated in the larger framework of operation 'Nanhe Farishte' itself.

Here is the link to the article: <https://newstrailindia.com/inner.php?id=7150>

6. Capacity building workshop on concerns regarding prevention of child marriage, organised by NIPCCD, Bangalore

CWC facilitated a session on 31st May on the roles and responsibilities, challenges and opportunities in the prevention of child marriage at the two day Sensitisation Programme on issues of Child Labour for various stakeholders organised by NIPCCD, Bangalore. The objective of the same was to build a rights perspective in the actions and processes of systemic players in addressing child marriage and related concerns. The participants were more than 50 Senior and mid level CDPOs/child protection functionaries from Kerala, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh; including CDPOs, Protection Officers (institutional care), DCPOs, legal cum probation officers, Labour Inspectors, District Labour officers, Asst. Labour officers, Police inspectors and Rescue officers.

7. Presentation at the 8th World Forum and 27th ECAD's Mayors' Conference, Sweden and at the Child Rights Training Workshop organised by the World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD) in April and May 2022

Kavita Ratna, as the representative of CWC, was invited to be one of the speakers at the 8th World Forum and 27th ECAD's Mayors' Conference being held in Gothenburg, Sweden. CWC presented the topic - Capacity Building of Children's Rights With A Focus On The Participation Of Young People.

The World Forum was a meeting place for WFAD members, as well as professionals, scholars, local, regional, and national authorities, and other decision-makers from around the world working to prevent drug abuse, increase treatment, along with promoting recovery and reintegration services. Experts from the field shared research, best practices, and tools on: Prevention Treatment and Recovery Advocacy – this special track includes advocacy for funding, prevention, children's rights, and against legalisation. The programme included an extensive list of speakers from international organisations, research institutes, and grassroot organisations who joined in person and virtually. The conference covered a diverse programme in prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery with research, best-practices, and personal stories. An exhibition at the venue showcased the work of our members to visitors.

CWC presented about 'Adult Child Engagement in Prevention as a part of the children's rights framework as a part of the children's rights training workshop, organised by WFAD. We also focused on looking at the UNCRC from the point of view of children, thereby emphasising the importance of the realization of the right to self determination. It stressed on the fact that children around the world have consistently been demanding their right to participation, especially by children from the most vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds. The presentation also explored children led research for their own advocacy and explored several examples of it. It also stressed on the fact that easy access to alcohol in the local areas despite constant opposition by affected groups to limit access to alcohol and adamant state policies bent upon generating major share of the state revenue from liquor sales intensifies the problems arising due to the consumption of alcohol and its impact on children, adolescents and their communities.

Working children have consistently raised the problem of illegal sale of alcohol and have successfully advocated against closure of illegal outlets in their villages. CWC highlighted that a blanket ban approach is not the solution to the problem but increased awareness and collective localised efforts to close down such illegal outlets led by affected women and children will lead the way to a comprehensive approach to address the problem effectively in a decentralised manner. It also highlighted that children have inspired adults, especially women to participate and have been role models for adults to exercise their citizenship with more responsibility and vigour.

Story of Change

The Impact of the State Resource Centre and community outreach

The situation described highlights a transformative initiative led by Bhima Sangha in Kithnur, Vijayanagara Taluk, addressing the needs of working adolescents for professional education and better economic opportunities.

Here's a summary of the key points:

1. **Context and Challenge**: Sixteen working adolescents from Bhima Sangha faced severe economic hardship and long working hours, which severely impacted their ability to access education. Their work involved physically demanding tasks, long commutes, and meager pay. Due to their lack of professional skills, they were often relegated to low-paying coolie work.
2. **Demand for Professional Education**: The adolescents repeatedly requested access to professional education to improve their livelihoods. Despite the challenges, Bhima Sangha and the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) worked to address this need.
3. **Training Program**: The Grama Panchayat was convinced to support a five-month garment production training program. Bhima Sangha played a crucial role in mobilizing community resources and implementing the program. The training took place at a community center, with participants attending around their work schedules.
4. **Impact of Training**:
 - **Skill Utilization**: After graduating from the program, some trainees began using their tailoring skills alongside their daily work. Others applied for government support to obtain their own tailoring machines.
 - **Economic and Social Benefits**: The new skills provided better job opportunities and increased recognition for the young girls. The training also had a positive impact on their prospects in the marriage market.
 - **Advocacy and Awareness**: During the training, the participants were involved in a play to raise awareness about child marriage, titled "Say No To Child Marriage." This play was well-received by the Karnataka state government officials, who showed interest in documenting it for broader dissemination.
5. **Continued Engagement**: The trainees, representing Bhima Sangha, became role models within their community, promoting the value of vocational education and advocating against child marriage.

Overall, this initiative demonstrates the significant impact of vocational training on empowering adolescents, improving their economic conditions, and enhancing their social standing. The success of the program and the play reflects the effectiveness of community-led interventions in addressing both educational and social issues.

Our Journey Ahead... Opportunities and Challenges

During this period, the realization of children's rights, grassroots democracy, and decentralization faced significant obstacles, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions. The pandemic severely impacted our constituencies, resulting in loss of lives, livelihoods, employment, and access to essential services such as food security and quality healthcare.

Despite these challenges, the CWC (Child Welfare Committee) demonstrated resilience and adaptability. We proactively addressed immediate concerns by facilitating communication and action at local, district, and state levels, primarily through online and telephonic channels due to the pandemic's restrictions. At the panchayat and district levels, the CWC spearheaded various initiatives to create a child rights-friendly response system for marginalized children.

Our approach emphasizes developing effective practices on the ground while influencing systemic changes through policy adjustments. We have successfully scaled up our projects geographically and in policy, with notable examples including the Child Rights Task Forces, Children's Grama Sabhas, the Village Library Programme, and the District Child Protection Protocol. These models have made their way into state policy, enhancing their sustainability and impact.

However, the current external environment remains challenging for rights-based work, with a tendency to deprioritize the needs of the vulnerable. Nevertheless, the CWC remains committed to evolving and sustaining our efforts. We will continue to work in partnership with children, young people, and their communities to uphold and advance our mission despite the ongoing obstacles.