



Children's Voices – A Comics Wallpaper Exhibition By Children Affected by HIV/AIDS

In collaboration with UNICEF, the Positive Women's Network (PWN) began work with children affected by HIV/AIDS in 2006. A national consultation which brought together 53 children from 10 states was conducted in 2006 to enable children to present their issues to the Government and to ensure that policies incorporated their needs. Following this successful initiative PWN began its journey towards developing children's advocacy forums at the state-level. This required building the capacities of members on working with children and leveraging support from external resource agencies for technical inputs.

One such agency which was kind enough to support these processes is World Comics India (WCI) -- a collective of cartoonists, media persons and grassroots activists. WCI promotes comics as a communication tool and as a mode of self-expression in remote and difficult areas in South Asia and other countries. WCI trained the children in developing Comics Wallpapers narrating stories about their lives and issues. This has been found to be an excellent medium for communicating difficult topics and also generating interest in the audience, which was obvious in a Comics Campaign by children in Madurai district conducted as part of this project.

Around 40 children are now part of children's advocacy forums in Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. PWN conducted comics workshops during the months of January and February, 2010 with these children. The children raised various issues around their lives which focused on their school environment, hospitals they visit, family environment, incidents on the streets or related stigma faced by them in the community. These comics were developed in the form of wallpapers for exhibition and advocacy with key stakeholders from Government and non-government sectors.

The "Children's Voices – Comics Wallpaper Exhibition By Children Affected by HIV/AIDS" led by PWN in collaboration with the Center for Human Progress was held at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on 19-20 March, 2010. The exhibition was an opportunity for children to express themselves to the public and share their views and creativity. The comics are self-explanatory and reveal the thought process and ideas of each child participant.

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