

**Zonal Workshops with Children & Young People on Collating their Voices for the
Upcoming State Assembly Election 2023**

Bal Adhikar Sarkshan Sajha Abhiyan Alliance (DASHAM)

Divisional Workshop of UDAIPUR



August to September 2023

Introduction

The state is preparing for the upcoming state assembly election at the year's end. The political parties are responsible for fulfilling the promises declared in the manifesto during the election campaigning. Considering the significance, Bal Adhikar Sarkshan Sajha Abhiyan Alliance (DASHAM) in association with UNICEF, UNFPA, and partner organizations is in the process of including the grassroots voices of children and young people in their manifestos.

In this process, the network has organized a series of meetings at state level meetings, block and district level discussions by partner NGOs. This was followed by the seven zonal/divisional workshops across the state with the active participation of beneficiaries from August to September 2023. Further, a state level consultation will be organized to collate the voices and issues of adolescents and young people and will be handed over the demand charter to all the political parties.

The zonal/divisional workshop began with Jaipur in August, followed by the last at Udaipur in September 2023. A similar participatory method of rest workshops was utilized to make it joyful, interesting, informative, and effective.

Divisional Workshop of Udaipur

A two-day second zonal workshop was organized at Udaipur, having representation from Banswara, Chittorgarh, Dungarpur, Rajsamand, Udaipur, and Pratapgarh on 11th & 12th September 2023 at Aastha Training Centre, Bedla, Udaipur. A total of 198 people including 147 adolescents & young people, 51 NGOs, and stakeholders actively participated. The adolescents and young people represented schools, differently abled, rural, and urban areas of the division.

Proceedings

1. Welcome & Introduction

In the Udaipur workshop, the state team of UNICEF participated namely; Dr. Isabelle Bardem-Rajasthan chief, Mr. Ankur Singh- Communication Specialist, and Mr. Sanjay Nirala- Child Protection Specialist.

Also invited the representatives from NGOs of Udaipur to make the deliberation effective and fruitful. Dr.Narendra Gupta-Jan Swathya Abhiyan, Mr. Kailash Briwasi-Jatan Sansthan and Ms. Sindhu-UNICEF Udaipur participated.



The participants and guests were welcomed by Mr. Vijay Goyal, Resource Institute for Human Rights, and Mr. Shiv Nayal, Antakshri Foundation, and thanked the partner NGOs for an overwhelming representation of adolescents & young people from different districts.

All were briefed about the responsibility taken by the DASHAM network on collating the voices of ten thousand children and young people across Rajasthan for the influence impact in the manifesto of the political parties and thereby bringing about changes at the policy level in the state.

The NGOs introduced their organization, its work, and the adolescents & young people accompanying them in the workshop. All the young participants filled out the Google form containing a questionnaire related to the issues and concerns as well as suggestions for effective policies for overall growth and development.

2. Encouraging Joyful Learning through Actions

Mr. Shiv Nayal & Ms. Reena Sharma- Antakshri Foundation and Ms. Vinita Soni- Freelancer facilitated the activity in which all the adolescents & young people were taken out in the garden area to provide a conducive environment and enriching joyful learning.

Garden game:

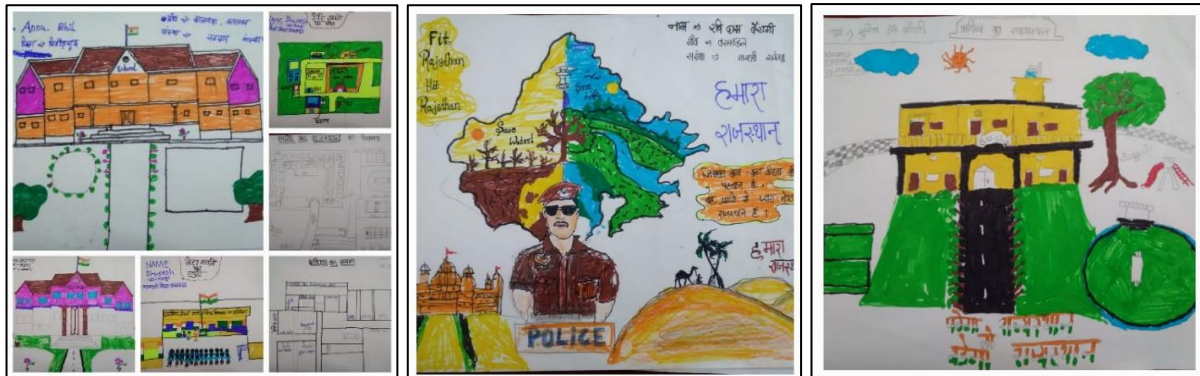
In the garden, all young participants were encouraged to walk slowly, silently and observe nature, feel the atmosphere, hear the surrounding sounds, feel the different fragrances of plants/flowers, and if required touch the plants/leaves in the first round. In the second round, they were instructed to walk in the garden again with their closed eyes holding each other, follow the same path as the previous round, feel the surroundings and nature and, in case of obstacles cross them smoothly. After a while, the participants were instructed to stop, open their eyes, observe where they reached, and look back to the point from where they started this round.

The participants enjoyed the game which was also helpful in reducing the inhibition and becoming friendly to each other.



Illustrating the school of dreams:

To engage the children in creative activity, they were encouraged to draw their dream school on the provided drawing sheet. The participants sketched beautiful school campuses, comprised of buildings, greenery, fencing, playgrounds, etc. The activity was helpful to make them think deeply about their future life, and heading to achieve their dreams.



3. Youth and Adults Group Activity for Collating the Voices of Young People

3.1 Group Activity by Children and Youth Participants

To enable healthy and open discussion, the young participants and NGO coordinators were encouraged to divide into different groups according to the given topic.

The children and young participants were divided into five groups on the basis of different coloured cards to ensure everyone's participation, sharing views, understanding of each other, and enabling teamwork, the topics included:

- Education
- Protection
- Health & hygiene
- Development
- Participation

All the groups were sitting in separate locations and were tasked with identifying existing problems related to their assigned topic and proposing actionable solutions. The groups engaged in collective brainstorming sessions, guided by their program facilitators, which aimed to ensure taking their perspectives into account in shaping solutions.

Further, each group collectively presented their recommendations and experience with the larger group. (Annexure-I)



3.2 Group Activity by NGO representatives

The representatives from the NGOs working on the issues of children, young people, disabled also divided into four groups for collectively discussing and presenting the demands, the topics included:

- Education
- Participation
- Health & Nutrition
- Protection of children



4. Team UNICEF Interaction with Participants

The state team of UNICEF interacted with the participants, all were encouraged to share their names, name of villages, name of the school, and their concerns. The details were noted by the team for the immediate and long-term actions with the local and state government to provide a healthy, safe, and learning environment to each child at their schools.

Further, participants were motivated to express their views and share valuable experiences. Those included:

- Low teachers and student ratio that hampers the growth and development of students.
- Abuse, misconduct, and discrimination faced by the teachers.
- Uncleanliness in the school building and campus.
- Shortage of books in the school library, that remain non-updated for a long time. Children need to buy or pay rent to avail the latest books from the school libraries.
- Lack of basic amenities in the schools such as proper classrooms, separate functional toilets, sanitary napkins, wash basins, drinking water areas, proper playground, sports materials, library, etc.

- The chapter on the reproductive system is taught in an insensitive way that results in skipping the class by students specifically by the girl students.
- Caste discrimination is followed in a few schools while serving mid-day meal food by the cooks at government schools.
- Unavailability of doctors in the village government hospitals.
- Shortage of supplementary nutrition in the Anganwadi centres that leads to irregular distribution among beneficiaries.



5. Presentation of Demand Charter by Young People

The group representatives presented the demand charter on the basis of group discussions. Professor Gaurav Vallabh-National Congress Spoke Person, Mr. Mangilal Garasia-Ex Congress State Minister, Mr. Raghuveer Meena-Ex MP Congress, Mr. Chandra Gupta Chauhan-District President BJP and Mr. Prakash Bharti-State Joint Secretary AAP.

Education:

- Proper management of the availability of good quality sanitary napkins, for proper distribution a date can be fixed and placed at a fixed place where girls can access during school hours, and also deploy a disposal machine for the same.
- Ensuring the deployment of a person for the cleanliness of the school campus.
- Provision of a school till senior secondary school in every 2-3 villages, having all subject teachers, playground with sports material, PTI teacher, fully equipped library & laboratory, computer lab, proper school campus, functional separate toilets, RO drinking water facility and bus facility for all students.
- Deploying trained and skilled teachers for especially able children.
- Deploying counselors at schools, Angwadi centres, panchayats, and colleges.
- Ensuring the timely release of scholarships for economically poor children to continue their school education.
- Improving the education services on the basis of new education policy.
- Maintain the student and teacher ratio as per the policy.
- Special provision for the children with special needs.

- Organizing debate competitions and other big events at schools for healthy discussions.
- Do not engage teachers in election, census, vaccination etc work.
- Once a week imparting life skill education, session on child rights, etc.
- Promoting girls' formal education in the villages.
- Even Angwawadi centre, panchayat bhawan, and colleges should have playgrounds for sports activities for tribal children.
- Every day about 15 minutes of discussion between students and teachers on different topics for promoting healthy talks and communication skills.
- Follow no bag day as actual no bag day and formulate innovative activities of those days.

Health:

- Promoting mental health and focusing prevention of mental diseases through awareness, posters, wall paintings, etc.
- Special provision of sports, and nutrition facilities for the tribal children.
- The Anganwadi centres should have toys and educational materials for mental abilities.
- Health checkups at schools and Angwadi centres.
- Availability of lady doctors at the sub centres.
- Opening open gym in the public parks of the villages.

Nutrition:

- Quality food distribution in Angawdi centres and mid day meal services and extending MDM services even for the students till 12th standards.
- Eradicating widespread malnutrition among children of 6 months to 2 years of age by providing proper nutrition.
- Providing quality supplementary food services.
- To reduce malnutrition in the rural area, launch swarajya poshan Abhiyan at every Anganwadi centre.

Safety:

- Installing CCTV in the classrooms and school campus.
- Installing street lights on all the roads of villages for the safety of girls and children.
- Publicising child helpline numbers through wall paintings, radio, and television in rural areas.
- Teaching good and bad touches as the part of curriculum.
- Develop an online complaint portal, on which any concern related to the children can be raised through calls, and videos. The portal should be assessed by responsible government officials including the district collector, education officer, police officer, and health officer.

Participation:

- To ensure the participation of children, activate bal panchayat and bal sansad and its functions.
- Ensure children’s participation in the parent-teacher meetings.

The group of caregivers shared the demands related to the orphan children, which included:

- The most important documents including aadhar card, Janadhar card, passport, driving licence, etc become challenging to process which are essential for their identity, higher education, and employment. These children need to pay the fees to avail these documents which are free for the rest of the population.

Towards the end, the guests addressed the workshop, they admired the overwhelming participation and presentation by the adolescents and young people representing different areas of the Udaipur zone. They emphasized education as the only option for growth in everyone’s life. They ensured to study the concerns and demands shared by the participants and think of a plan to put them into actions.



Media Coverage

The workshop was well covered in the electronic media.



