

The Right to Information and Children
Purkal Youth Development Society and Mountain Children's Foundation, Dehradun
24th February 2011

On the 24th of February the Purkal Youth Development Society (PYDS) requested for a second workshop in the same format as the workshop that took place on the 19th of September 2009. The children had several successes to report and Mr. Swamy requested another workshop with the children of class 6, 7 and 8.

The workshop was attended by 65 students and teachers and was organized in the PYDS School. This year as well the training was conducted in English.

Aditi and Dwarika from the Mountain Children's Foundation (MCF) facilitated the workshop. The interactive workshop started with asking the children what they knew about the Right to Information. This year many more children knew about the Act and what its purpose was. A presentation followed, which explained the RTI Act, the process of filing an RTI application, the fee structure and the process for filing First and Second appeals. The last slide was about what children in other villages had achieved after using the Act effectively.



Following the presentation the children were divided into 5 groups and asked to list the issues that they felt they would like to use the RTI for.



It was interesting to see how the children linked the RTI with issues that were bothering them. The various presentations highlighted four major issues that were echoed in each presentation. The road to the village had not been completed. Ration from the ration shop were of poor quality and the quantity was not standardized. Health facilities were lacking in the village. Street lights were not working.

Each group made its presentation. Young Prachi (Class 6) was the most impressive. Despite the fact that she was the youngest of the presenters she was confident and standing in-front of such a big group of people did not faze her.

Group -1 Mohammad Anish

1. Bent pole on Rajpur Road
2. No ration in the ration shop

3. Waste disposal
4. Street lights not working

Group – 2 Rishab

1. Road construction in Guniyal Goan
2. Street lights not working
3. Voltage fluctuation
4. Irregular distribution of ration
5. Lack of medical facilities in the village
6. No dustbins in the village
7. Lack of transport facilities
8. Unemployment
9. Water flows on the road thus breaking up the road

Group – 3 Abhishek

1. Street Lights not working
2. Taps and handpumps not working
3. Government school condition bad and no computer teachers in the school
4. No hospital facilities for the villagers
5. Lack of electricity in Bitali village
6. People do not get enough ration in spite of having ration cards
7. The quality of material being used for making the road is bad

Group – 4

1. Street lights are not working
2. Shortage of drinking water in Purkal Village
3. Supply of bad quality of ration in the ration shop

Group – 5 Prachi

1. Lack of clean drinking water.
2. No doctors in the village
3. Bad quality of road construction
4. Bad quality of ration in the ration shop



The children were then taught how to write an application and the points that had to be kept in mind while writing an application.

The children went back to their groups to write a finalized application on one of the issues they felt were important. These were read out, corrections made and the applications were further fine-tuned.

Even though the time frame for training the children was very short, the children were eager to learn and quick to understand. By the end of the evening most knew how to write an application and the basic points of the RTI Act.

They were asked for their feedback and some are as follows:

Sonali Mishra Class 10 – “Earlier we had a session as well. But hearing it a second time has reprinted it in our minds more strongly”

Gaurav Class 8- “I learnt many good things in the session. I promise I will spread the message my village”

Priya Joshi Class 10 – “I knew about this act earlier but from this session we got to know how to use this Act in our life.”

Ankita – “I learnt many things from this session –for e.g. if I have any problem in my village I can write an application and ask for information on the subject. I liked the group discussion on every issue.”

Prachi Pundir Class 6 – “I learnt a lot of things from this session - I learnt how to write RTI applications, the fees we have to pay in different cases, etc. Now I can help my family members and members of my villager write RTI applications. I enjoyed learning a lot and will try my best to spread this knowledge all over my village.”

Smiriti Sharma – “I learnt many things about the RTI which was very interesting. The most important being that everyone has the right to ask questions of the government.”



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