

**Annual Report  
Simorgh Women’s Resource and Publication Centre  
2007**

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## **Year in Review**

Along with ongoing and new activities, this has been a year for planning for the future. The ongoing activities fall into two categories, viz non-funded and to a degree self-sustaining, and those that have funds to sustain them. The Human Rights School Texts Project: Planting the Seeds of Change I, comprising the *Kaleidoscope* Primers (English) and *Phuljhari* (Urdu) and the socio-legal journal, *Bayan* fall in the former category; in the latter there is the Lahore Walled City Project and the Pathways research project.

2007 has also been a year of activism. The summary dismissal of the Chief Justice of Pakistan by General Musharaf triggered of the Lawyers Movement

Continuing with its policy to maintain its focus on awareness-raising, with one critical exception of the Lahore Walled City Project: Planting the Seeds of Change III, the bulk of Simorgh's work in 2006 has also been with the production and dissemination of information. Local and regional networks play an important part in this regard as exemplified by World Court on Wars, Wars of Globalisation and Wars against Women that was held in partnership with the Asian Women's Human Rights Council as well as work and activities related to the Asia Pacific Advisory Forum for Judicial Education on Equality Issues.

**Asia Pacific Advisory Forum for Judicial Education on Equality Issues:  
Protocol and Management Team Meetings, a Results Based Management Workshop  
and the next five year plan.**

**Introduction and Background**

2007 began with the Asia Pacific Advisory Forum for Judicial Education on Equality Issues [Forum] and comprised three activities viz. (i) the Forum Management Team Meeting, (ii) a Results Based Management (RBM) Training Workshop and (iii) a Protocol Meeting.

These activities were held in Karachi instead of Lahore where Simorgh is based because two of the judges deeply involved in judicial education are currently based in Karachi, thus giving the former a distinct edge over the latter at this point in time. These judges are, Justice (R ) Nasir Aslam Zahid who, among other activities, teaches at the Hamdard Law School, and the Chief Justice of Sindh, Justice Sabihuddin.

The Forum is a regional network of five NGOs and senior judges from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka that including senior judges from Canada. Policy decisions regarding the Forum's work are taken by the Management Team with concerned NGOs taking responsibility for policy and programme implementation. Drawing upon CEDAW and other human rights instruments, this regional initiative, which completed the first ten years of its life in 2006, was designed to conscientise members of the senior judiciary to women's issues through education on equality issues.

Simorgh's association with the Forum goes back to 1997.

**Management Team**

The Forum Management Team comprises the following:

- Justice (R ) Claire L'Heureux Dubé (Canada)
- Justice (R ) Nasir Aslam Zahid (Pakistan)
- Justice Douglas Campbell (Canada)
- Justice Karim (Bangladesh)
- Justice Prabha Sridevan (India)
- Justice Dalveer Bhandari (India)
- Justice Shrestha (Nepal)
- Justice Sheerani Tilekawardane (Sri Lanka)
- Justice Nasir-ul-Mulk (Pakistan)
- Justice Tassaduq Jilani (Pakistan)
- Shirley Campbell (Canada)
- Prakash Mani, *Pro Public*, Nepal

- Rokhsana Khondkar, Khan Foundation, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Naina Kapur}
- Smita Bharti} *Sakshi*, New Delhi, India
- Anu Kapoor, *Swayam*, Kolkata, India
- Sumitra Fernandez, *Women in Need* (WIN) Sri Lanka
- Neelam Hussain, *Simorgh*, Pakistan.

Justice Nasir-ul-Mulk is the current Convenor of the Forum and Justice Jilani is the Judge In-Charge Academics, Federal Judicial Academy. Both are Supreme Court judges.

### **The Simorgh Team**

The following team was in charge of logistics, organisation of activities including arranging shopping trips for participants many of whom were accompanied by their spouses:

- Waseem Ghauri
- Laeeque Ahmad
- Shahina Hanif
- Mina Malik

The RBM Training Workshop and the MT Meeting were organised by Pro Public in concert with the Simorgh Team. Travel, accommodation and costs for the workshop and meeting were the responsibility of Pro Public. The Pro Public Team comprised the following:

- Laxman
- Kabita Panday

### **RBM Training Workshop**

The two-day RBM Training Workshop was held on the 10-11 January '07 at the Avari Hotel, Karachi and was conducted by CIDA consultant Helen Thomas.

This was a useful exercise in helping participants review the work undertaken over the past ten years, but also in planning for future work.

### **The Management Team Meeting**

The MT Meeting was held at the Avari Hotel, Karachi on 12 January '07 to plan its future work based on members' experience along with the project assessment provided by the ten year Evaluation Report by CIDA consultant, Helen Thomas.

Other than MT members, Justice \_\_\_ Nepal also sat in on the proceedings. Rokhsana Khondar had come only for two days and did not attend the MT Meeting.

In accordance with the meeting agenda, discussion centred around funding possibilities, project aims and work strategies at both national and regional levels for the next five years.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Pro Public formally relinquished charge as Forum Secretariat to Simorgh as Forum Secretariat and future Local Executing Agency.

### **Dinner by the Chief Justice of Sindh, Justice Sabihuddin**

The day ended on a different note with dinner on the Sindh High Court lawns. It was a relaxed occasion and provided an opportunity for visiting judges and other Forum members to meet senior judges and their spouses. The guests were also taken for a tour of the Sindh High Court Building by Justice Sabihuddin and other judges.

### **Inaugural Reception**

An Inaugural Reception was arranged for the Protocol Meeting on 13 January '07. The Protocol Meeting as well as the Inaugural ceremony that preceded it, served a an important purpose as it introduced the Forum – its aims, its agenda for the future and especially visiting judges, to the senior judges of the Sindh High Court, the District Court judges, to those still under training and civil society organisations.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan, the Hon'able Mr. Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry was the Chief Guest at the Inaugural Dinner for the Protocol Meeting.

### **Inaugural Speech by he Chief Justice of Pakistan, the Hon'able Mr. Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry**

The Chief Justice made a strong statement in favour of judicial education on equality issues in his speech. He also instructed Justice Jilani, as Academics in Charge of the Federal Judicial Academy, to take definitive steps to promote judicial education on gender and equality issues at the Academy. The Chief Justice acknowledged the importance of 'fairness and non-discrimination' in any legal system, and the conceptual significance of gender equality. He argued that while technically women have access to justice, when women seek legal council, the gender insensitivity of the legal system impedes their access to justice.

The Chief Justice made positive suggestions to the Forum, ranging from the need to include violence against women on national, regional and international agendas, conducting research on gender related issues and incorporating the findings in regional and national policies. He also emphasised the need for women's economic empowerment and awareness of social issues as well as the need to work with government ministries, sectors and departments with appropriate inter-ministerial to implement and monitor policies and regarding violence against women.

## **Keynote Address by Justice (R) Claire L'Heureux Dubé of the Supreme Court of Canada.**

Expressing pleasure on being back in Pakistan, Justice Dubé

## **Presentation by Mr. Justice Dalveer Bhandari of the Supreme Court of India**

While speaking on the importance of gender equality, Justice Bhandari  
**The Judges Protocol Meeting**

Protocol

## **Project in Process**

- April: The Project Concept Paper and background information on Simorgh its work and organisational capacity submitted to Peggy Florida at CIDA Ottawa for review.
- August: A Due Diligence of Simorgh was conducted by CIDA Islamabad, with reference to the Regional Judicial Education Project. This entailed a review of Simorgh's organisational, management and administrative systems.
- September: clearance received from CIDA vis a vis Simorgh's capacity to undertake the Project including the functions of Regional Secretariat.
- October: Decision taken jointly by Simorgh and Justice Douglas Campbell to ask Naina Kapur, Smita Bharti and Helen Thomas to draw up the five-year Forum Project Proposal.
- November-December: Naina Kapur, Smita Bharti and Helen Thomas agreed to take on the task and Agreement documents drawn up by Simorgh for the three consultants.

MT members had been warned at the outset that the process of accessing funds for the Forum Project from CIDA would be long drawn out. One year down the line we have reached a point where initial formalities being completed and with Project submission due in the first week of June 2008, we will have completed the first phase of the application process. From information received from CIDA Ottawa, it will take another nine to eleven months before we can optimistically hope that the project is accepted and funds released.

It would be difficult to imagine the past year without the constant support, advice, guidance and encouragement from Forum members, especially Justice Douglas Campbell. Thanks are also due to Justice Dubé, Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid, Naina Kapur, Peggy Florida, Helen Thomas, Shirley Campbell and Prabha at Sakshi, New Delhi for advice, information and moral support.



## **Spreading the Word**

### **Lecture Series by Najma Sadeque: Globalisation and WTO – Livelihoods Under Threat.’**

Planned in October 2005 as part of Simorgh’s overall aim to raise awareness and generate public debate on rights issues and related laws, a series of three lectures on the threat to life and livelihoods posed by globalisation and WTO was held in January 2006.

Addressing different age groups and communities, these lectures were held at: St Anthony’s College, Government College University and ShirkatGah. Over three hundred students and women from walled city attended these lectures. Each presentation was followed by lively discussions sessions.

Like the Shahla Zia Seminar, this proved to be a successful exercise.

Participant response confirms this to be a felt need and highlights the drawbacks of official policy especially with regard to education that has discouraged independent research and its dissemination. It appears that there no lack of public interest in gaining information and building a knowledge base on issues that concern us closely. Seen from this perspective, the general perception that our young people as well as the general public are not interested or indifferent to rights issues is erroneous. The need is there, the interest is there – what is missing is an environment in which people can freely pursue the quest for knowledge and create spaces where the issues that concern them closely can be discussed, understood and addressed.

### **World Court on Women’s Resistance to Wars, Wars of Globalisation and Wars Against Women.**

#### Rationale and Funding

The World Social Forum in Karachi, March 2006, provided the opportunity to hold this event in Lahore, as the Asian Human Rights Council, which was holding this ‘World Court’ in Karachi, would be there. GEP’s decision to close down its programme brought our partnership to an end, but our request for reallocation of funds left over from ABM travel expenses etc to meet expenses for this event was accepted. In themselves these

funds were insufficient; however, ActionAid Pakistan agreed to make up for the deficit. As a result, the World Court was held in Lahore immediately after the WSF, Karachi.

### History

Simorgh has been a member organisation of the AWHRC since 1988, when it was formed in Bangkok to (i) examine and address the lacunae in the UN Charter of Human Rights from a third world perspective and (ii) to work regionally and locally for the rights of women and other disempowered groups. At a Council Meeting in 1993, the AWHRC Core Group of which Simorgh is also a member, decided to hold a series of regional/international 'Tribunals' on different issues in the different countries of South and South East Asia as a way of highlighting issues and creating informed public opinion on them. The first such tribunal was held in Lahore in December-January 1993-4. This not only started a process of tribunals it also gave a name to the project viz 'In the Court of Women.' Coined by LalaRukh of Simorgh, it was adopted by the AWHRC for the entire programme. Subsequently, because of the work by AWHRC and its members in different parts of the world as far flung as Africa, Australia, Latin America etc. and led to the formation of the Arab Women's Court and later, of the World Court.

The first Lahore Court, based on testimonies against different kinds of violence that occurs in different 'locales of power' ranging from the family, the community and the state, had highlighted the fact that patriarchy and its institutions maintain and perpetuate themselves through the multiple use of violence. The World Court high lighted once again the reliance on violence by those in power at different levels. It was in the fitness of things therefore, that after travelling around for over ten years, the 'Court' should return to Lahore where the process first began.

### **The World Court – Lahore**

Date: 29-30 March

Venue: HRCP Auditorium

Planned on the same lines as the Lahore Court, the World Court had witnesses and speakers testify to the violence of war, wars of globalisation and wars against women, and a panel of judges and jurists to analyse and comment on situations. The proceedings were interactive and communication was facilitated by in-tandem translation – task that was ably and with great good humour undertaken by Tahira Abdullah, who had also been one of the translators at the Lahore Court.

The Court was opened by Ferida Sher and followed by Guru Nanak's kalam by Sara Zaman and a choreographic presentation of a poem by Najm Hossain by Huma Safdar and Samiya Mumtaz.



Speakers included members of AWHRC as well as from Pakistan. These were: Corinne Kumar, International Coordinator, AWHRC, Shakun Mohini and Madhu Bhushan, India, Ita F. Nadia, Indonesia, Rana Mustafa, occupied Iraq, Wahu Kara, Kenya, Najma Sadeque, Marium Palejo, Tabassum Bhatti and Nighat Said Khan, Pakistan.

The World Court Jury comprised the following: Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid, Farida Shaheed, Khawar Mumtaz, Wahu Kara, Ita F. Nadia and Najma Sadeque.

The day ended with a candle-lit vigil in memory of those killed and violated by the violence of war, wars of globalisation and violence against women.

### Conclusion

Despite visa hassles, shifting of venue, uncertain arrival times of participants including those who did not arrive at all, the World Court was a successful event in terms audience participation and interest – the HRCP hall was full to overflowing – and participant feedback was positive.

Special thanks for this success are due to Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid, Tahira Abdullah and Hussain Naqi sahib of HRCP and Najm Sethi, who in different yet significant ways supported this activity.

### **Comments**

This was the last GEP funded event by Simorgh. Simorgh fulfilled project requirements and a relationship that had been built on mutual cooperation came to an end six months before it was due, with DFID's decision to close down the GEP Programme.

However, Simorgh's commitment to *Bayan* continues as it would be a pity to lose the work and effort of the past years simply because one donor has left and despite problems created by an earlier than expected end of the grant cycle. We have trained a competent editorial and research team that is committed to the concept and aims of *Bayan*. We cannot afford to lose them. The search for funding has started and we are optimistic about our success.

Other than the *Bayan* Editorial Team, Simorgh owes the success of this project to friends who have given so willingly of their time to this venture. As one phase of this project draws to a close, we would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid and Dr Parvez Hassan who have always been there for us.

Financial Support: ActionAid Pakistan.

Timeline: July 2005- December 2007

## **Introduction**

Started in 2005, the Lahore Walled City Project as an awareness raising-cum-action research project entered the next phase of its development in 2006. Where the first months had been spent predominantly in ‘discovering’ the area and in activities designed to build trust between the community and the Simorgh Team, from January onwards the team began to consolidate the work done in 2005 through workshops, group activities etc.

## **Workshops, Lectures and Discussion Sessions**

### **ε March 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> 2006 – Vocational Training Institute**

Two discussion sessions were held with the staff and students of the VTI in March, with participants including thirty-one students and eight teachers.

Discussion with faculty members revealed that a major problem is low attendance due to (i) lack of student interest in courses offered at the VTI, (ii) poverty and ill health.

Discussions with students corroborated teacher’s perceptions with one small difference – the students were not interested in the courses offered, but this did not mean they were indifferent to the idea of changing their lives for the better.

The active participation of students in our discussions corroborated this point and the principal indicated that regular sessions such as those held by Simorgh would have a positive outcome in terms of student attitudes etc.

## **Project Area Visits and Activities**

Increasing project acceptability gave rise to Project Area Visits that involved activities ranging from planning meetings for future activity, discussion sessions and lectures. The first of these visits took place on:

- 5<sup>th</sup> May.**      Site:      F.J. College, Chuna Mandi  
Activities: Lecture followed by discussion with Women’s Studies students.  
Meeting with final year students.  
Purpose: Discuss plans for July Workshop and the possibility of inviting VTI students, community members to it.
- 6<sup>th</sup> June.**      Site:      VTI, Delhi Gate  
Purpose      Discuss workshop feasibility with the principal and staff of the VTI

**8<sup>th</sup> June**      Sites:      FJ College, Chuna Mandi and VTI, Delhi Gate.  
Purpose      Planning for July workshop with Principal FJ College and  
to confirm participation of students and staff of VTI

## **Cluster Groups**

2006 saw the emergence of 'clusters' of women and girls in the area comprising:

- Cluster 1: F.J. College, Chuna Mandi: different activities are carried out with this group. Sometimes the college is also used for community activities.
- Cluster 2: Delhi and Yakki Gate Area: contact is maintained with women from the community and students through the VTI.
- Cluster 3: Bhaati Gate Area: contacts established and since then maintained in this area through the base-line survey.

## **Activities**

### **The Najma Sadeque Lectures**

**27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> January**

Keeping in mind that women's issues do not exist in isolation, Simorgh organised a series of workshops with students and women from the walled city on 'The Impact of Globalisation and the WTO on Our Future,' by Ms Najma Sadeque from ShirkatGah, Karachi. The lectures were delivered in English and very ably translated into the Urdu by Samina Rahman.

These lectures were held at Government College University, Lahore and the ShirkatGah office respectively. Students from GCU, Kinnaird College, Lahore College and 22 students from F.J College and women from the Walled City attended these lectures. As the lectures were translated into Urdu and participants were encouraged to join the discussions in whichever language they felt comfortable, the discussion sessions were lively, especially in the session at ShirkatGah where there was an all female audience and the atmosphere informal.

### **World Court on War, Wars of Globalisation and Wars Against Women**

**30<sup>th</sup> March**

Thirty-five women of varying ages and 22 students from F.J. College, Chuna Mandi, attended the World Court. It was a good introduction to for students and the community to global events and the impact of war and violence on third world countries.

### **Celebrating 25 years of Women's Action Forum**

**4<sup>th</sup> November**

Women's Action Forum (WAF) celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> year of its struggle for Women's Rights and Democracy on the premises of National College of Arts – and institution with which the women's movement has a long-standing relationship. The Simorgh Collective as well as other members were deeply involved as organisers and participants.

Almost 500-600 women including 55 women from FJ College, Chuna Mandi, VTI, Delhi Gate and women from the walled city, took part in these celebrations. The participation of the latter was facilitated by Simorgh.

It was a good way to introduce the women's movement as well as women's issues in a historical context to the community.

## **Workshops**

### **F.J. College, Chuna Mandi 13<sup>th</sup> March-14<sup>th</sup> March**

#### Background

Originally scheduled for January, this workshop had been postponed due to a clash with college schedules. Essentially an exercise in awareness-raising, this was the first issue-based workshop with college students after the two courses in First Aid. Issues taken up at this workshop were based on student's concerns articulated during the base-line survey.

#### Workshop Methodology

Participatory with 'Question Boxes' to encourage those to shy to take part in discussions to express their views etc.

#### Resource Persons

Feryal Gauhar, Neelam Hussain, Firdous Arshad, Mahvish Ansar and Imrana Akhtar.

Participants: 29 post-graduate students, six community leaders and five faculty members. Attendance rose dramatically the next day as news of workshop sessions spread among the student community. Simorgh requested college authorities to allow all those interested and not involved in classes to attend.

#### Format and schedule

Starting with an introduction to Simorgh, its aims and objectives as well as team members, time was made for the participants to introduce themselves briefly thus actively bringing them into the 'talking loop.'

Topics for the two-days were as follows:

- |      |  |                                 |
|------|--|---------------------------------|
| i.   | Aims and Objectives of the Walled City Project                   | Firdous Arshad                  |
| ii.  | History of the Women's Movement:<br>its in England and Pakistan. | Neelam Hussain                  |
| iii. | Poverty and its Effects on Women                                 | Feryal Gauhar                   |
| iv.  | Muslim Family Laws – An Overview                                 | Mahvish Ansar,<br>Imrana Akhter |

Each session was followed by discussions. The workshop also provided students with the opportunity to discuss community matters with the councillors.

### **F.J. College, Chuna Mandi 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> April**

Similar to Workshop I in March, the April Workshop with F.J. College students was designed on the basis of issues identified through the baseline survey and subsequent discussions. Unlike the March workshop, participation was lower due to exam schedules etc. As with the earlier workshop, the approach was participatory and the workshop began with introductions of the Simorgh team and students.

Topics for the day were as follows:

- |      |  |                                |
|------|--|--------------------------------|
| i.   | History of the Women's Movement<br>(on request from the college) | Neelam Hussain                 |
| ii.  | Human Rights and CEDAW   | Firdous Arshad                 |
| iii. | Muslim Family Laws –<br>An overview                              | Mahvish Ansar<br>Imrana Akhtar |
| iv.  | Tolerance and Society  | Shazia Shaheen                 |

Each session was followed by discussions.

### **With the Community**

#### ***Aaye nayay raastay nai manzilaiin talaash karain***

**27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> June**

It took 10 months of almost weekly visits and activities before we gained enough acceptability to organise a workshop for the women's community in the walled city. Held at the F.J. College, this was our first three-day workshop of this kind. Participants comprised 36 women from the Delhi and Yakki gate areas, 50% of whom were known to the team and the other 50% selected through known contacts. The majority were between the 30-50 age group though there were some who belonged to younger or older age groups.

The main aim of this workshop was to build trust, to select women for initial mobilisation and to motivate them for formal learning by providing them with a space where they could comfortably discuss different matters and share experiences thereby creating a sense of togetherness.

The success of this workshop can be summed up in the words of one participant: 'I am a mother of four daughters, but was excluded from a share in my husband's property due to my failure to produce a son. I worked hard to ensure my daughters' safety and education. My eldest daughter is a doctor and she has helped me to bring up her younger sisters and arrange their marriages. It has not been easy, and I used to long for some one to listen to me – someone whom I could trust and who could guide me, like you all are doing today.'

### **With VTI Students**

*Aaye nayay raastay nai manzilain talaash karain*

**11-13 July**

The following themes/issues were discussed during the three days allocated for this workshop: i) goals, aspirations and ground realities, (ii) women and development and (iii) strategies for and routes to positive change.

Relevant information and material was provided by the resource people, five of whom came from Simorgh and one from the Health Department.

The methodology, as always, was participatory. A large number of students and ex-students were keen to take part in the workshop, however, due to spatial constraints; only 36 girls could be accommodated.

ε

**F.J. College, Chuna Mandi**

**1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> December**

A two-day workshop with students of the FJ College took place in December. Organised with the aim of developing life-skills as well as using theatre as a learning technique, the workshop focused on theatre techniques and script writing. Issues under discussion and which provided themes for scripts included health, life skills, gender relations and culture. Fifty five students and four teachers took part in this workshop with Huma Safdar as the resource person.

### **Sessions: VTI**

Regular sessions were held with the students of the VTI, Delhi Gate, during this period, with participants comprising approximately 35-40 students and 8-9 teachers in each session.

These sessions took place on: and 26<sup>th</sup> May and 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

ε **7<sup>th</sup> April, Session 1:** focused on assessing and developing student's reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills, in order to gain some idea of their realities and aspirations.

ε **21<sup>st</sup> April, Session 2:** titled, 'Where we are and where we would like to go': this session was designed with the aim of assisting participants to (i) recognise the importance of personal development and (ii) to set realisable goals in life.

ε **5<sup>th</sup> May, Session 3:** titled 'Legal Literacy and Muslim Family Laws,' this session was taken by Imrana Akhter of Simorgh. The participants showed a keen interest in laws pertaining to marriage, divorce etc and the lecture was followed by a lively discussion.

ε **26<sup>th</sup> May, Session 4:** the focus of this session on life in the walled city. Role play and skits on different themes were presented to highlight problems etc.

ε **2<sup>nd</sup> June, Session 5:** On participants demand, the focus was on legal literacy with Mavish Ansar of Simorgh as the legal resource person. Discussions centred on issues of marriage, the difficulty of finding good matches etc.

Regular VTI Sessions drew an end with the start of the summer vacation; however, as the Institute remained open for short courses, Simorgh maintained periodic contact with the staff and students taking the short courses.

ε **December, Sessions 6 and 7:** VTI Sessions were resumed in December when two sessions were held for fifty five students and nine teachers in each session. Topics included, (i) the role of NGOs in community development, (ii)

### **Reaching out to non-Muslim communities**

Simorgh hoped to include minority groups living in the walled city in its activities. With this in mind, three Sikh families, members of the Hindu community as well as Christian families have been contacted. Two meetings have been held and further work is planned.

### **Simorgh Women's Centre, Delhi Gate**

In response to a felt need, the Simorgh Women's Centre was set up in Delhi Gate in December 2006. With the assurance of an independent space that is safe and within reach of most participants, contact with the community has increased. Even in this short span of time, informal meetings including focus group discussions on violence against women have taken place.

### ***The walled city monthly diary*** ***january***

***5<sup>th</sup>***

ε *visited the Nawaz Sharif hospital as part of a fact-finding cum p.r exercise.*

*we held a series of small meetings in the Yakki and Delhi Gate area. Contact with community participants had been made during the 2005 Baseline Survey. Our aim now was to develop contacts and get women's views for community activities.*

*a core group of about fifteen women had emerged on the basis of contacts made in 2005. Given that we are offering neither services nor financial assistance, this is no mean achievement.*

- ε *we visited Local Government Representatives with the aim of building links with them so that fears regarding our work would be allayed and our work especially women's meetings could be facilitated.*

### **16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>**

- ε *held two cluster group meetings with at Yasmin's tuition centre and Shamim's house respectively.*

### **20<sup>th</sup>**

- ε *building on contacts made in 2005, we arranged a cluster group meeting at the Vocational Training Institute (VTI) to introduce the women from Yakki and Delhi gate areas, VTI students and staff of to each other and to the Project Advisor Ferida Sher.*

*the objective of this meeting was: (i) brainstorm with women on local issues as a preliminary to organising women's groups in the area, (ii) to involve them in ongoing discussions in regular sessions at the VTI.*

## **February**

### **3<sup>rd</sup>**

- ε *we visited the VTI to strengthen earlier contacts. This was essential as experience of community work shows that community interest flags unless systematic contact is maintained. The team also visited the Girl's High School Delhi Gate to discuss the possibility of holding regular sessions as those planned with the VTI with older students.*

### **10<sup>th</sup>**

- ε *met M. Muhammad Naeem Akhter, Deputy Director Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority to discuss the possibility of interaction between students and the Institute and Simorgh plus use of Institute space for our activities. We presented him with a monthly activity plan. Mr Akhter's response was positive.*



**17<sup>th</sup>**

- ε *hoping to expand our outreach in other areas as well, we arranged a meeting a group of women in Bhaati Gate. This group was interested in income generation activities such as loan schemes etc. Although this does not come within the ambit of our work, we are continuing to maintain contact with this group.*

**22<sup>nd</sup>**

- ε *our team met the Nazim of Bhaati Gate as well as two women Councilors. The latter are well-liked in the community and their offers of support added to our credibility in the community.*
- ε *on the same day, held at the VTI to plan for the coming discussion session. Student attendance was low due to the Namoos i Rasalat riots in the city, thus the staff had time on their hands and were willing to chat. This proved lucky for us as we learnt a lot about students' interests, behavioural norms, likes and dislikes as well as the social and economic concerns of the community.*

## **March**

**15<sup>th</sup>**

- ε *met with Laeeque Ahmad, Nazim Bhaati Gate for permission to work with senior students of government girl's schools in his area. Mr Ahmad's response was positive and he agreed that we work with schools under his jurisdiction.*
- ε *called on Councilor Ishrat Bano at her home as we wanted to plan the next project activity with her. Ishrat Bano has been consistently helpful and willing to assist with ideas etc.*

**24<sup>th</sup>**

- ε *went to the VTI to invite the staff and students to the 'World Court on War, Wars of Globalisation, Wars Against Women.' This activity has been organised jointly by Simorgh and the Asian Women's Human Rights Council is to take place on 30<sup>th</sup> March.*

## **May**

*as part of our research study, we built relationships with senior citizens in the walled city for interviews.*

**11<sup>th</sup>**

ε *today we interviewed Sardar Begum, who is eighty years old and Zareena Begum who is fifty. Both live in the Delhi Gate area. The interviews took almost two hours each.*

**17<sup>th</sup>**

ε *we had met Mr Muhammad Sharif Butt at the Wazir Khan Mosque about nine months ago, but it took many meetings and much persuasion before he agreed to an interview. At 85 he has seen a lot of history and had much to say about his experiences before and since Partition.*

### **Monitoring Visits by ActionAid**

**23<sup>rd</sup> May**

The ActionAid team paid its first visit to the Walled City Project almost one year after its inception. They were provided with a detailed account of activities and a visit to project sites was organised. The team met with the students and principal of FJ College and the VTI and also made one home visit. While the team enjoyed its visit to the college and claimed to be impressed by the students, the walk in the walled city, which brought team members face to face with the living conditions of the economically under privileged, was an eye opener and found to be quite disturbing.

**20<sup>th</sup> December**

The ActionAid team, comprising Aariya Nijaat, Aqsa Khan from Islamabad and Ambreen Fatima from Lahore, made its second monitoring visit to the Walled City Project in December. Other than reviewing the project at the Simorgh office, the team visited project sites and expressed their satisfaction with the project. Future plans and the need for extra resources was also discussed.

4

### **Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts (WEMC)**

Simorgh was approached by ShirkatGah in 2005 to join the WEMC programme in partnership with them and the Agha Khan University Community Health Department. This project is part of a four-country action research project. Simorgh agreed as much of the work entailed dovetailed with and extended the research component of the work undertaken under the Walled City Project. However, due to a variety of reasons, chief among them being a possible conflict of interests between the terms of Walled City Project supported by AAPk and the WEMC Programme supported by DFID, Simorgh withdrew, somewhat sadly, from the WEMC Programme after the completion of the Inception Period.

This was a valuable learning experience and the following activities were undertaken:

;  
**16<sup>th</sup> August, Focus Group Discussion**

Participants comprised twelve women ranging from 20-55 years of age with the average age being in the 30s.

Discussions were personalised and analytical with participants expressing views on family, society and government responsibilities. They also led to personal narratives which were often painful and disturbing.

;  
**17<sup>th</sup> August, Social Mapping**

Participants were asked to identify areas/spaces connected with their lives as well as resources within their immediate geographical boundaries. In itself not particularly productive, this exercise provided entry points for personal narratives and issue based discussions.

;  
**18<sup>th</sup> August, Time Line Exercise and Networking Diagram**

Two days of sharing ideas generated a mood to talk without prompting among participants. This was a useful exercise in that gave depth to the discussions and subsequent understanding of problems.

The Network diagram exercise was less successful in that it failed to engage participant interest. This was primarily because this exercise has been designed for a rural and not an urban community.

;  
**23<sup>rd</sup> August, The Transact Walk**

This exercise is based on the ethno-methodological approach. A team of five members took part in this exercise.

;  
**19<sup>th</sup> September, Interviews**

This was the last exercise of the WEMC component and entailed interviews with women from the group. While five members of the Focus Group showed a willingness to be interviewed, others were reluctant to do so. Each interview took from 3 to 4 hours approximately.

;  
**14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November, Policy Dialogue**

Held at the Sun fort Hotel, this was the last activity of the WEMC component undertaken by Simorgh before withdrawing from the project.

Participants included DSP Ms. Asmi Khan, Mr Yusuf Ahad, Nazim Ravi Road, Lahore, Justice (R ) Nasir Aslam Zahid, Kauser. S.K., AKU, Karachi, Tahira Abdullah, Islamabad, Nasrene Shah and Samina Rahman, Lahore along with the Simorgh team. The Policy Dialogue was chaired by Ferida Sher.

## 5

### **Asia-Pacific Advisory Forum for Judicial Education on Equality Issues**

Simorgh has been a member of the Advisory Forum since 1996 and a member of the Management Team since 1999. Formed with the view to conscientising senior members of the judiciary regarding women's issues and ground realities, the Advisory Forum is a regional body that has undertaken different activities especially workshops and Protocol Meetings nationally and regionally for this purpose. Since its inception, Management Team Meetings have been held regularly to assess ongoing activities and plan for the future.

Two meetings were held this year in Nepal and Delhi respectively. Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid attended the meeting in Nepal, which took place in March and Neelam Hussain participated in the Delhi meeting in September. The focus of both meetings was on the findings of the ten-year evaluation of the project undertaken by CIDA with the view to planning for the next five years.

The next Management Team Meeting is scheduled for January 2007 in Karachi.

## 6

### **Planting the Seeds of Change I: Kaleidoscope and Phuljhari**

Simorgh first long-term partly self-sustaining project, the human rights school texts, the *Kaleidoscope* Primers are in use in over twenty four schools in the major cities of Pakistan. Texts are supplied directly to schools, thus saving on the bookseller's commission, and enabling us to keep prices down. Income from sales enables Simorgh to maintain project continuity through regular reprints. However, as the earnings do not cover salary costs of project staff, further publications have been put on hold until further funding can be accessed.

The *Phuljhari* primers 1 -5, which are for Urdu medium schools, are print-ready. However printing is being withheld until sales commitment from schools ensuring a minimum print run of 1000 books each is received.

*Kaleidoscope* reprints including revisions are undertaken regularly by the editorial staff and Publication Unit.

#### Printing Schedule 2006:

##### *Kaleidoscope* Primers:

Primer 1: 2286 copies – revised edition  
Primer 4: 2250 copies  
Primer 5: 2254 copies – revised edition

## 6

### **Publications**

The following publications were planned for 2006:

*Colonial Roots and Post Colonial Realities*, editor Samina Choonara. Cover title: Maryam Rahman.

*Engendering the Nation-State*, editors: Rubina Saigol, Neelam Hussain and Samiya Mumtaz. First edition \_\_\_\_\_. Work is proceeding on a revised one-volume edition. An Urdu edition of the same book is planned and translation, undertaken by Samira Khalid is underway.

Unfortunately, work on these publications, has been slow to due partly to our editor, Samina Choonara's health problems and partly to our lack of support editorial staff.

## 7

### **Conference and Publication Project Global Fund for Women**

A regional conference on cultural and historical contexts was planned for 2006. Participants had been identified both nationally and regionally and a preparatory brainstorming exercise was organised by Project Coordinator and editor, Samina Choonara. Participants at this meeting included academics and researchers from the Government College University as well as women's organisations. However, this activity was curtailed due to the October 2005 earthquake, when funds allocated for the

conference were diverted towards earthquake relief on the initiative of Global Fund for Women.

## 8

### **The Simorgh Diary 2007**

Simorgh's diary is an annual feature based on a selected theme. This year the diary celebrated the first twenty-five years of WAF's history and struggle for women's rights.

## 9

### **Earth Quake Relief**

#### **The Shang School Project**

As part of its earthquake relief activity, the Simorgh Collective in Partnership with Lahore Grammar School, 55 Main Gulberg and the Lahore Grammar School, Jauhar Town, decided to put up a school in village Shang, Battagram. This decision was based on the desire to make a more permanent and long term contribution to earthquake relief on the basis of funds collected by Simorgh and the concerned branches of Lahore Grammar School for this purpose. Simorgh's contribution to this project consisted primarily of funds allocated for its Conference and Publication Project, which were reallocated with permission from the Global Fund for Women and money collected for this purpose by Eileen Pittaway and her group which is Simorgh's AWHRC partner in Australia.

The site for the school was identified and selected with the help of the SPO head office and team working in the northern areas. Shang is a small village on the silk route to China. Located on a hill overlooking the Indus with a population of approximately 4000 people. The community accepted our condition of enrolling equal numbers of girls and boys and the head master offered to donate land for the school if we could provide the building. The current school, which has been damaged by the earthquake, is housed in five or six pokey rooms with little light and ventilation.

By September 2006, the documents donating the land to the school had been vetted and the design for the new building prepared etc. Due to financial reasons, this project will be staggered over a period of time with the school building being constructed in two or three stages. Construction work is planned for March 2007 when weather conditions become conducive.