



SERVICE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN (SERFAC)

News Letter: Family Focus



*Dear Friends in India and Around the World,
Warm greetings to you and your families.*

Our story of bringing SERFAC into existence continues in pictorial form of the construction of the second building 'ARUNODHYA' meaning 'Dawn of Awareness' on campus and outcomes of two important events that have marked the onset of the Observance of the 20th Anniversary of the Dedication of SERFAC's. They are:

1. The National Advisory Board Meeting held on February 1, 2014 at SERFAC which offered fresh thinking and new avenues for working with families. In brief 'A Remaking of SERFAC' was suggested: a) Research b) Institutional Engagement such as Academic, Governments, International c) Publications.

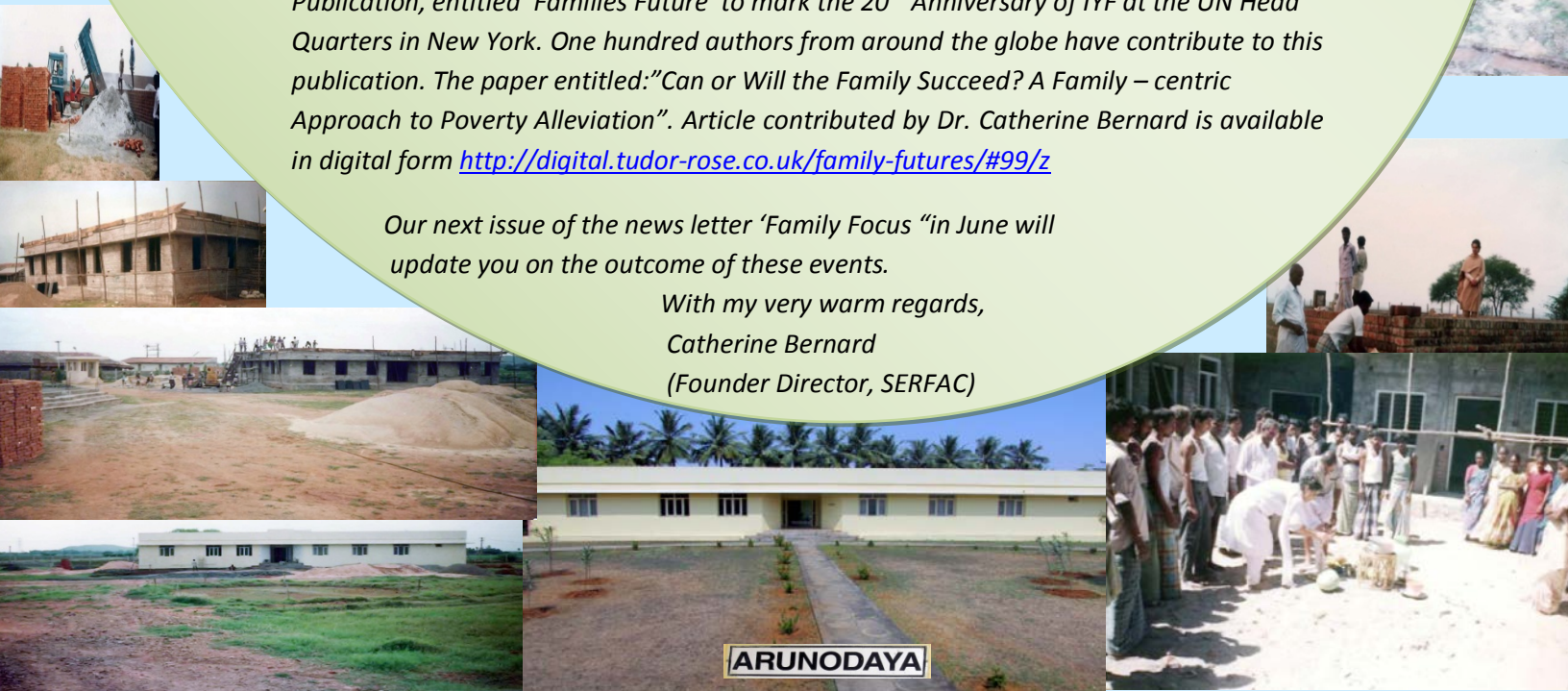
2. A mini conference was held at SERFAC on March 28 and 29, 2014 and was attended by 22 persons from 11 organizations from South India and Malaysia on the Topic "Sharing Ideas, Actions and Best Practices on Child Protection vs. Child Abuse." The three working groups sessions were: Child's Rights, Child Labour, Children with HIV-AIDS. The deliberations focused on the role of stake holders: Family, community, institutions, businesses and governments in contributing to violence by not taking adequate cognizance of increasing violence to children. (Details of this event is on the annexed page).

Other World Wide Observances: The Doha International Institute on Family will Observe the 20th. Anniversary of the UN International Day of Family with an International Conference "Empowering Families –A Pathway To Development" on April 16 and 17, 2014 in Doha, and have been requested to present a paper on Families in Poverty. I have entitled my paper "Family Breakdown - Incubator for Social ills."

May 15th 2014 - World Day of Families will see the release of The United Nations Publication, entitled 'Families Future' to mark the 20th Anniversary of IYF at the UN Head Quarters in New York. One hundred authors from around the globe have contribute to this publication. The paper entitled: "Can or Will the Family Succeed? A Family – centric Approach to Poverty Alleviation". Article contributed by Dr. Catherine Bernard is available in digital form <http://digital.tudor-rose.co.uk/family-futures/#99/z>

Our next issue of the news letter 'Family Focus' in June will update you on the outcome of these events.

*With my very warm regards,
Catherine Bernard
(Founder Director, SERFAC)*



Report on Programme for India's Neighborhood Countries

The two days mini-conference on 'Exchange of Ideas, Actions, Best Practices and Finding Solutions for Child Protection Vs Preventing Child Abuse' organized jointly by SERFAC and UNGCNI was attended by 22 participants from 11 organizations from South India and Malaysia.

With a Prayer for Children, the lighting of the traditional Indian Lamps, Dr. Catherine Bernard, Director of SERFAC frame worked the event highlighting the following areas.

1. Contextualizing the urgent need for Preventing abuse of Child and creating conducive environment for child well being.
2. Contextualizing the need for Child protection at primary (family), secondary (community) and tertiary levels (institutions, businesses and governments). She made an urgent plea to move beyond 'prevention' to 'protection' which means providing for children a caring environment in family and/or community and institutions.
3. She also made an urgent plea to engage in understanding the rapidly changing social scenarios, unbridled technological advancements and life style that were creating emotional vacuums in family particularly in children who are becoming prey to these newer forms of abuse. Family members, social adults and children themselves are not aware of these trends.

The first presentation was through a film 'On the First Day of Life' which touched the core of one's being in seeing the growth of the child within its mother's womb and at the time of the child's birth. This film gave a strong and positive note to the event.

The next presentation was given by Ms. Anuradha, Regional Director, Childline India who highlighted the sensitive aspects of child rights and prevalent laws that govern these rights. While elaborate laws are formulated the need to implement them needs more attention.

Prelude to the working groups was a panel session: designed to highlight the links between the topics that constituted the three working groups: 1) Child's Rights 2) Child Labour 3) Children with HIV AIDS.

Summary of Outcome of the working groups:

- a) **On Child's Rights:** Children need to become aware of their rights and parents need to create safe and conducive, healthy and appropriate environment for their children. In this way they respond to the rights of the child. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing child rights and education subjects should have a curriculum on Child Protection and Child Rights.

Some gaps identified: Educating the different social, legal system engaging educational system and religious institutions on the Rights of the Child not only prevents abuse but protects children and provides a positive environment for them to grow-up.

- b) **On Child Labour:** Explored the most prevalent areas that engage children as labourers and the inhuman treatment meted out to many of them. Some remedies suggested by the members was awareness monitoring, discrete investigations of actions, immediate justice, severe punishment, implementing watch dog for early detection for perpetrators.

Some gaps identified: Some interventions suggested ranged from what happens in families to occurrences in learning centers. It also suggested the need for involving grass root level communities and educating them on the harm child labour does to children.

- c) **On HIV-AIDS:** Focused on the issues that surfaced when a person or family has been diagnosed with HIV-AIDS. The present listing of services involve NGOs, support communities, governments and philanthropies service that helps run these institutions and services.

Some gaps identified were the need for drugs to treat patients, poor accessibilities for poor children for friendly procurement, abuse of family care service and abuse of long term planning for HIV-AIDS patients. There is no advocacy on their behalf and no family support to the patients.

The remedial interactions suggested was to develop adequate family care giving, support, sustenance, long term care and teaching parents ways of parenting the child. In this the community plays a significant role.

At larger social institutional levels, Rights based approach needs to be engaged in by Governments and NGOs, Training counselors and creating child friendly institution with a second line access and follow up was the need of the hour.

Expectations of the Participants:

- Networking among all participants who attended the program
- Explore new avenues for data sharing and working to create awareness among CSR's for funding, enlarging initiatives for funding possibilities to help take forward these important initiatives forward..
- Community mobilization and participatory approach for creating awareness on the Rights of the Child in family, community and all social and religious institutions.
- SERFAC to be the nodal Institute in these endeavours

SERFAC's next two seminars on the above Topic **“Exchange of Ideas, Actions, Best Practices and Finding Solutions for Child Protection Vs Preventing Child Abuse”** Participation is open to NGO's, Educators, Legal and Medical Professionals, Businesses and Government personnel All participants will have free Board and lodge for both programmes.

- Hyderabad, India on June 28 & 29, 2014
- New Delhi, India on July 11 & 12, 2014

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