

**Davis 100 Projects for Peace
Final Report - Summer 2007**

Title: Child Development Center, Karachi, Pakistan

School: Claremont McKenna College

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(include each student's home country and whether or not each student attended a UWC)

1. Project Summary

The fundamental concept of the Peace Project was to create awareness among working children about the importance of peace and its implications. This project was initiated in collaboration with Sindh Education Foundation (SEF), a semi-government organization which provides free education to those who need it. Child Development Centre (CDC), a subsidiary of the SEF is a school located in the industrial hub of Karachi where child laborers are found in abundance. CDC aims to improve the lives of these children by providing them free education while ensuring that the valuable income that the children earn to support their families is in no way constricted. For this reason, we chose CDC as the ideal location for the implementation of the Peace Project.

The project was scheduled to start on the 15th of June and officially end on the 15th of August, giving it a time duration of two months. The total volunteer group consisted of 12 people including myself, seven high school seniors and four kindergarten school teachers. The group was divided into two teams that unanimously decided that the Peace Project would in no way undermine quality of work and should have a long term impact on the lives of the children and their community. Apart from many things, we strongly felt the need to improve the aesthetics of the CDC.

The Peace Project was based on a two pronged approach: providing educational and recreational opportunities for students at the CDC and maintaining close ties with the staff members of CDC in order to sustain the children's self-development. Furthermore, the Peace Project sought to train the full-time staff members at the CDC by providing professional teacher trainers, increasing the exposure of working children through contact with students who belong to different backgrounds, updating the curriculum at CDC, improving basic infrastructural needs at the centre, encouraging students to read and write, and most importantly helping students value their education as a tool to allow their families and themselves enjoy a better standard of living in the future.

2. Project Results

The few hundred children of Child Development Centre (CDC), Sher Shah who participated in the two month long Peace Project belonged to diverse ethnic backgrounds. The Peace Project helped create a healthy learning environment, promoting critical thinking, appreciation for diversity, value for culture, care for environment and love for self, family and peers. The project fostered an open environment and healthy atmosphere at the Child Development Centre.

Multiple social, intellectual, infrastructural and fund generating ventures were put into action by the Peace Project team. Some of those included the revamping of CDC's library, mural painting to improve the aesthetics at CDC, an art exhibition on the theme of Peace, documentary production for the future financial needs of the school and attending a 3 day training session to be well equipped for conducting a pre-planned set of classroom activities. The amount of work that the Peace Project volunteer team did in the allotted time was phenomenal. Everybody put in hard work that paid off in the end. To achieve most things we had planned turned out to be successful and rewarding for everyone involved – especially the school and its children. We worked diligently as a team and tackled all the difficulties and hurdles that came our way.

The art exhibition on five sub-themes of peace was done in a superb manner and I believe it to be the highlight of this project. The bare classrooms needed color to be added to them – we thought this could be improved by showcasing artwork made by the children. Art activities done inside the classroom on themes relating to peace such as friendship, sharing, and caring helped generate enough aesthetically pleasing material. Most walls in the school were bare and we felt that some vibrance could be added to the environment if the walls were made more colorful by hanging pictures and drawings carrying messages of morals and values. Thus a major part of our time was devoted to enhancing the ambience of CDC in order to motivate children and help them love their school. In our endeavor, we found that CDC housed quite a few born and aspiring artists.

The newly made and inaugurated library also turned out exactly the way we wanted it to be, and I hope it will benefit the children in their pursuit of education. A story telling session held there showed how happy the children were to see books around them. The class room activities with non-academic objectives such as 'circle time',

'story web', 'getting to know each other' were very popular with the students and gave us a chance to interact with them and get to know them at a very personal level. Teaching the children how to paint murals took a lot of our sweat, but the end result was worth the effort and gave the children something to be proud of. We produced a documentary on the lives of the working children and the contribution of CDC to the community to promote the ideology and work of CDC. The documentary seeks to draw attention to the external crowd in order to generate more funds for future projects and sustainability of the school. The newsletter we created will give people an insight of what has been achieved by the Peace Project, as well as the learning framework adopted by the Child Labor Education Program (CLEP).

Although most of our goals were met, some remained untouched and others were poorly met. The speech and poetry competitions were not held because of lack of time and lack of commitment from the staff and teachers at the CDC. The rain, thunderstorms, and floods caused delays, which significantly reduced the time available to fulfill our objectives. At the same time, the adverse political situation in the country caused further delays. The level of commitment and sincerity shown by some volunteers was slightly less than expected; a more vibrant and energetic approach by some would have gone a long way. The absence of an introduction of opportunities for vocational skills was one objective that our project failed to achieve to a large extent. The canceling of the peace walk due to political instability in the area was a blow to the project as well.

Nevertheless, I strongly believe that this project has helped to make a difference in the lives of the children and has helped them come closer to each other and value their education. The byproduct of this project for me is an unforgettable memory to hold on to. I received back more than what I put into this project when I saw the smiles on the faces of the children when they would say to me, "We love school now and will no longer go gallivanting on the streets and roads. When we grow up we want to be like you and do good work."

3. Implications

The implementation methodology of the project could not have accomplished its desired results without the help of resources provided by the staff members of CDC and the reliable student volunteers of Karachi Grammar Schools' (KGS) Helper's Society. The Peace Project will be sustained through its volunteer staff members who will commit to working with the children once a week and attend to the needs of the CDC.

I believe the Peace Project will have a long lasting impact not only on the children, but also on the community. The students became closer during the course of this project and learned about peace and its implications and application to their daily lives. The art exhibition and the wall painting delivered a strong message of peace from the students of CDC to the community. It is the students of the CDC who have taught and shown us how a difference can be made by working together.

I have high aspirations that this project will have very good future prospects for those involved. If the resources given to the CDC are used properly they will benefit the students immensely and will open their minds and increase their creativity. If KGS can be affiliated to this institute, the Peace Project will have the potential to go well beyond our imagination. Weekly story telling session by KGS students will be an enjoyable way to encourage students to learn and read. The children may be inspired to go on to do great things once they come in contact with students like us, who come from different backgrounds and have an education to be proud of. There is still a considerable amount to be done to bring about a change in the lives of these working children and give them a fighting chance in the world to fulfill their dreams and ambitions.

I have learned to be a teacher, a painter, an artist, a craftsman, an organizer, an accountant, a negotiator, and a lot more. This was an experience of a lifetime and I have come to strongly believe in the dictum "where there is a will there is a way" - believing strongly in the good that is present in the world today.



MURAL PAINTING ON WALL ACROSS FROM CDC



STORY TELLING SESSION AT NEW FOUND LIBRARY



GIRLS OF GRADE 8 PRESENTING THEIR ART WORK