

December 10, 2018

For the Favour of Press Release

‘Respect children’s Right to be Heard’

Marking International Human Rights Day - Cycling For Child Rights: The Norway – India Bikeathon

‘Children’s Right to be Heard is the least respected of all the Rights children are entitled to’ observed Kjetil Utne, politician and Rotarian from Norway at the conclusion of his ‘Norway– India Bikeathon: #Cycle For Child Rights’¹ embarked upon to uphold child rights and child participation, while enlisting support for the work of the Concerned For Working Children (CWC)², an internationally renowned organisation championing child rights and thrice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. *‘The Bikeathon would not have happened if it was not for CWC and my initiation to children’s rights through them.’* states Kjetil. His journey has been endorsed by the Norwegian Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, the Mayor of the City of Trondheim, among many other prominent citizens.

Human Rights and Children’s Rights violations globally are rampant and the raising voices of citizens, especially the young citizens are frequently silenced. In this backdrop, Kjetil Utne and the Concerned for Working Children reaffirm the need to partner with children, who have consistently proven that they can effect sustainable and long lasting change as have done the members of Bhima Sangha (Working Children’s Union), Bellary, who are at the forefront of campaigns against child marriages and also illegal sale of alcohol in their districts, or the members of the Children’s Sanghas in Kundapur advocating for their protection and participation rights through mainstream structures such as Children’s Gram Sabhas.

Beginning his journey in July 2018, Kjetil has cycled for about 10,000 kms traversing through Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Iran, and Pakistan, interacting with children in the 12 countries including children in Armenia displaced by the violence in Russia, marginalised girls in Pakistan, street connected children in New Delhi, working children in Bangalore, school going children in Kundapur to name a few. *“It was very nice to see how children are making their own tools to ensure their voices are heard in a world where adult controlled tools like newspapers*

¹Website: <http://www.norway-india-bikeathon.no/english/>;

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NorwayIndiaBikeathon/>

²Website: www.concernedforworkingchildren.org; Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/workingchildren/>

seldom advocate the views of children, especially vulnerable children” noted Kjetil, when talking about the child journalists of Balaknama in Delhi.

The Bikethon specially highlights the Alternate Care Model of the Concerned for Working Children developed at NammaBhoomi, its Regional Resource Center in Kundapura. The Concerned for Working Children(CWC) is a not for profit, secular, democratic development agency, working for over three decades as a pioneering organisation in the field of children’s rights and civil society participation in India and Internationally. It has a field presence in Karnataka and engages with policy advocacy at the State, National and International levels. (www.concernedforworkingchildren.org)

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