

**The Tenth IDCA International Conference  
Poverty Eradication and Climate Change Mitigation in India**

**Children in Charge of Change**

**An effective strategy for breaking the cycle of Poverty  
By creating Child-Friendly Environment**

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Shaishav - India**

**October 6-7, 2012**

**Illinois Institute of Technology, Rice Campus, Wheaton, Illinois**

# UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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- ✘ The UN adopted the CRC on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1989.
- ✘ 54 articles ensuring different rights and procedures
- ✘ Can be broadly divided into four categories
  - + Rights to Survival
  - + Rights to Protection
  - + Rights to Development
  - + Rights to Participation

# RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

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- ✘ **Child participation is a process that leads to empowerment of children without overburdening them with responsibilities**
- ✘ Acknowledges shift in view of children from beneficiaries to **“Right Holder”**
- ✘ The child becomes the one who determines the nature and quality of **provisions** and **protection**
- ✘ It improves decision making on children’s issues by ensuring voices with direct experience are heard
- ✘ Increases visibility of children’s issues and helps to improve the accountability of adult organizations including the government

# RIGHT - RESPONSIBILITY CLAIM

Duty Bearers - Adults  
(Responsible)

Protect &  
Provide



Participation



Right Holders - Children  
(Right)

# NEEDS AND RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES

## Rights based approach

1. Claim and entitlement
2. Clear obligation
3. All have same rights
4. Active participation
5. Always look at the root cause
6. Non-negotiable
7. Access and control over resources

## Needs based approach

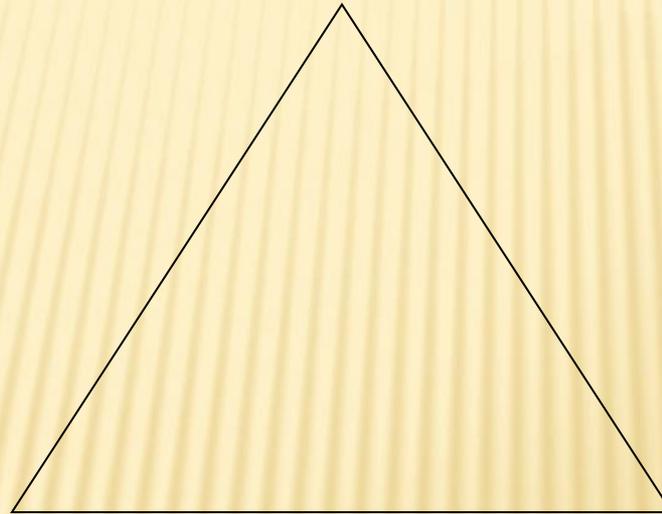
1. Receiving
2. No one is obligated
3. Some have to be left out
4. Minimum or no participation
5. Look at only the immediate cause
6. Can be compromised
7. No access or control over resources

# CHILDREN ARE EMPOWERED BY ENABLING THEM TO OBTAIN:



## Structure

Democratic organization and leadership



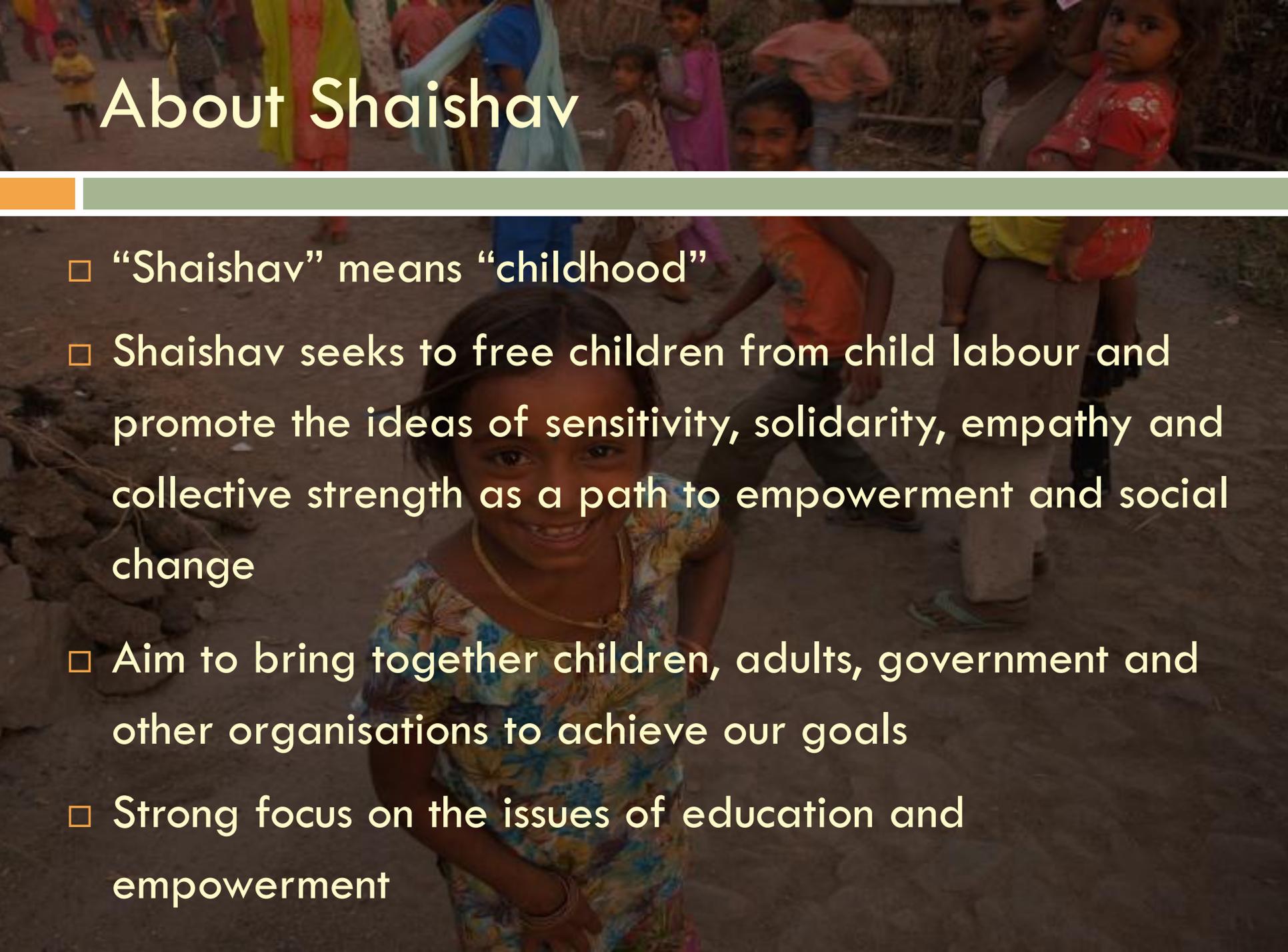
## Resources

Access to and use of financial,  
material and human resources

## Information

Ownership of information  
Access to analysis and  
use of information

# About Shaishav



- “Shaishav” means “childhood”
- Shaishav seeks to free children from child labour and promote the ideas of sensitivity, solidarity, empathy and collective strength as a path to empowerment and social change
- Aim to bring together children, adults, government and other organisations to achieve our goals
- Strong focus on the issues of education and empowerment

# Vision & Goals

- Shaishav believes that all children should enjoy basic rights and experience the joys of childhood equally
- Shaishav strives to:
  - ▣ Ensure that all children achieve the basic right to free and compulsory quality education
  - ▣ Create a child centred environment and provide opportunities where children and youth can realise their basic rights
  - ▣ Develop learning resources for children and make them available to all those who can influence children's holistic development

# BALSENA



- ✘ Balsena means “children’s collective” and is the first of its kind in Gujarat
- ✘ Founded in 2002 upon the principles of **equality** and **unity** for all, regardless of gender, caste, class or religion
- ✘ Run and managed by the children themselves
- ✘ Organised into 60+ teams across Bhavnagar with a total membership of more than 2800 children of 6 -18 years.
- ✘ Teams organise monthly meetings and activities to work together to tackle problems at home, school or in the community



# BALSENA PROGRAMMES

- ✘ **Balsena Point** – Launched in response to the communal violence that occurred across Gujarat in 2002, with the theme “**Play together, Stay together**”. 45 of these centres are operating in slum areas, and a further 18 in schools
- ✘ **Savings Bank** – Enabling children to save money independently, and giving them skills in financial responsibility and decision-making.
- ✘ **Book Bank** – Implemented in response to the lack of appropriate educational materials. It provides Balsena and Balghar members with access to textbooks and other learning materials, in three different centres.
- ✘ **Adolescent Programme** – More than 500 girls and boys are provided with extra training and support in small groups, helping them develop self-confidence through activities that enhance empowerment
- ✘ **Events** – Balsena members participate in common programmes throughout the year, such as Leadership Camp and Vacation Camp, where they receive training and participate in activities

# KEY CONCEPTS

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- ✘ Enable children to experience the power of collective strength
- ✘ Satisfy emotional needs, develop empathy for others and derive support from each other
- ✘ Empower children with the tools to build a better society where rights, equality and solidarity prevail
- ✘ Children are the owners of Balsena, and demonstrate the values of democracy and free speech while listening and respecting the views of others
- ✘ Focuses on qualitative processes and values rather than quantitative targets or numbers
- ✘ Promotes Indian values of sensitivity, co-living, inclusion and tolerance

# Impacts & Achievements

- More than 11,000 out-of-school children admitted into formal mainstream schooling
- Balsena children have participated in state, national, and international processes, and demonstrated their leadership, and are now providing training to other children
- Successful campaigning by Balsena children to build a new high school in Kumbharwada, Bhavnagar's largest slum
- Large variety of innovative materials and activities have been created, several of which have been accepted for larger application by the Gujarati Education Department and other NGOs

# IMPACTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✘ Shaishav developed the first educational programmes for the safety and protection of adolescent girls, resulting in girls gaining greater acceptance in their communities
- ✘ Children are leading rights based initiatives in their communities and with local government
- ✘ Balsena and Shaishav led the nationwide effort to establish the National Forum for Child Participation, the first of its kind in India
- ✘ Shaishav has received various awards at local and state levels, and its founders have been recognised as Ashoka, CRY, and Hubert H. Humphrey Fulbright Fellow
- ✘ Shaishav is accredited under the Credibility Alliance and member of Give India and Guide Star India.

# CHALLENGES

- ✘ Children remain a low priority in many development projects
- ✘ The current economic climate has put more pressure on children to work
- ✘ Continues to be difficult to restore the faith of marginalised communities in formal education with poor quality education in the government schools
- ✘ Increasing pressure to provide expensive tuition classes to supplement school based learning which is very time consuming and children have very less time for after school activities
- ✘ Continuing difficulties in mobilising sustainable finance and in acquiring permanent space for activities

A close-up photograph of a mosquito on human skin. The mosquito's abdomen is significantly enlarged and darkened, indicating it is full of blood. The skin is covered in fine, light-colored hairs. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

**‘If you think you are too small to be effective,  
you have never been in bed with a mosquito’**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0M0EZ8T5J8&feature=fvsrc>