



**COMMITTEE
FOR THE
WELFARE OF
PRISONERS**



ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

2024

This report is published by the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners in partnership with Home Department, Government of Sindh





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About Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners

Vision, Mission, & Values

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners is a Government funded not for profit Committee established in 2004 founded by Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid. In March 2024, the Committee was reconstituted with new Chairperson and members; it is currently Chaired by Mr. Muhammad Siddique Memon. The Committee has been highlighting the plight of vulnerable prisoners and is bridging the accessibility gaps in the conventional justice system by providing free legal assistance and representation for first time petty offenders across Sindh since its inception. Its key areas of work are: Litigation, Legal Empowerment, Welfare and Research and Policy Advocacy.

With the continuous support from the Home Department Sindh, the Committee expanded its presence to cover 21 prisons, facilitating the release of numerous innocent prisoners. Presently, the Committee has a team of 31 dedicated lawyers who visit Central and District Prisons across Sindh multiple times a week to assess the legal requirements of new inmates. In 2019, the Sindh Government introduced updated legislation known as the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act and Rules 2019. This legislation provides a modern and progressive framework for prisoner admission, classification, rehabilitation initiatives, and other entitlements. It serves as the foundation for effective and compassionate prison governance and administration.

The Committee actively advocates for speedy trials and case resolutions on behalf of under-trial prisoners, aligning with the Government's priority areas outlined in the Rule of Law Roadmap. This approach helps alleviate the burden on prisons, reduces overcrowding, and addresses the challenges faced by the under-resourced prison system. The Committee remains functional through a notification of the Home Department and has been provided statutory footing under Section 55 of Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act 2019.

Message from the Chairperson

Alhamdulillah, I feel humbled and honoured to be assigned the responsibility as the Chairperson of the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners. I am thankful to the Chief Minister Sindh for placing his trust in me, for discharging responsibilities as the Chairperson. It's a great honour to continue the great legacy and remarkable work initiated by my predecessor Justice (Rtd) Nasir Aslam Zahid Sahib. As a then junior Government functionary, I was a witness in the Court of Chief Justice, to his benevolence and care for the underprivileged applicants who couldn't hire advocates to represent themselves. The benchmark of public service set by my honourable predecessor is way too high.



**Mr. Muhammad Siddique Memon,
Chairperson, CWP**

Under his remarkable leadership the Committee has been able to represent over 29,000 under-trial prisoners which constitute 78% of the prison population in Sindh Province. Being a humble son of this land of Sufi', may Allah give me vision and determination, along with my colleagues and associates to provide assistance to those in need of legal assistance and protection of their rights. I bring with me 40 years of public service in various positions like Chief Secretary Sindh, Federal Secretary and Chairman of various public sector corporations as well as magistracy.

I am committed to further the cause of the Committee to the best of my ability. I must place on record the appreciation for the very supportive role of the Home Department Government of Sindh and Office of Inspector General of Prisons Sindh. Moving forward, our mission remains clear, to ensure that each single under trial prisoner has access to justice and we will be working for a reform oriented, equitable and humane prison system in Sindh.

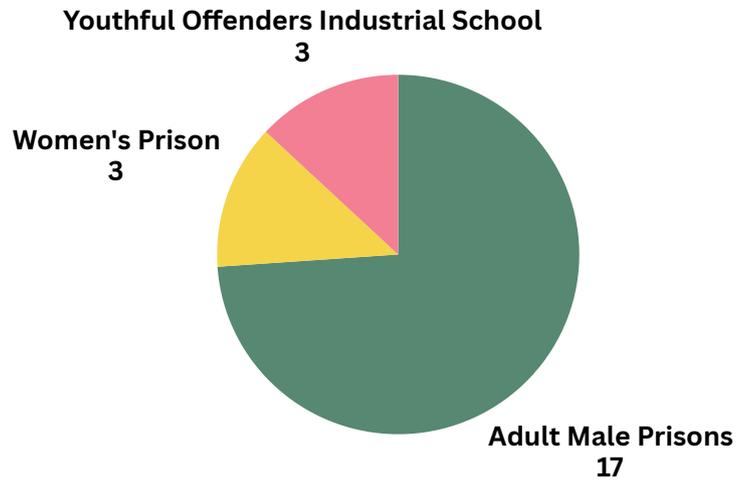
May Allah Be my Hami O Nasir.

Overview of Prison Facilities in Sindh

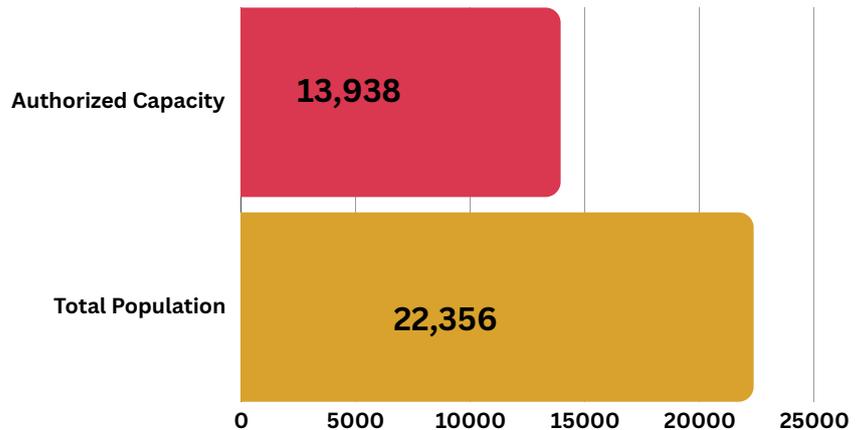
There are a total of



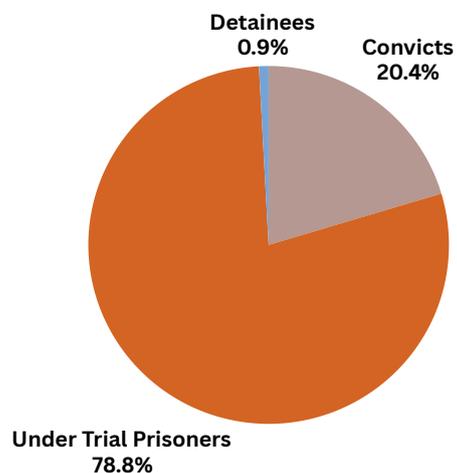
of which



The total **authorized capacity** for all 23 prison facilities is **13,938**. The **prison population** as of 30th June 2024, is **22,356**. Prison facilities currently operate at **60% over capacity**.



Of the 22,356 prison population, **4,553 are convicts**, **192 detainees** and **17,611 under-trial prisoners (UTPs)**. **Under trial prisoners make up for 78% of the prison population**.



Detailed Breakdown of Prison Facilities

Prison	Authorized Capacity	Current Population	Difference	Overcrowding (Percentage)
Central Prison Karachi	2400	7,149	4,749	197.8%
District Prison Malir Karachi	1800	5,203	3,003	135.5%
Youthful Offenders Industrial School Karachi	350	244	-106	-30.29%
Women's Prison Karachi	250	159	-91	-36.40%
Central Prison Hyderabad	1527	2,264	737	48.26%

Detailed Breakdown of Prison Facilities

Prison	Authorized Capacity	Current Population	Difference	Overcrowding (Percentage)
Special Prison Nara Hyderabad	300	383	83	27.67%
Youthful Offenders Industrial School Hyderabad	150	37	-113	-75.33%
Women's Prison Hyderabad	150	71	-79	-52.67%
Central Prison Mirpurkhas	1000	702	-298	-29.80%
Central Prison Sukkur	1666	1,451	-215	-12.91%
Youthful Offenders Industrial School Sukkur	100	13	-87	-87.00%
Women's Prison Sukkur	20	38	19	90.00%
District Prison Ghotki	250	273	23	9.20%
Central Prison Khairpur	1175	1,093	-82	-6.98%

Detailed Breakdown of Prison Facilities

Prison	Authorized Capacity	Current Population	Difference	Overcrowding (Percentage)
Central Prison Larkana	650	677	27	4.15%
District Prison Larkana	150	305	155	103.3%
District Prison Shaheed Benazirabad	100	278	178	178%
District Prison Sanghar	250	268	18	7.20%
District Prison Dadu	250	249	-1	-0.40%
District Prison Naushero Feroz	250	324	74	29.60%
District Prison Jacobabad	250	267	17	6.80%
District Prison Badin	250	738	488	195.2%

*Based on Prison Population Statement as of 1st July 2024.

Outreach in Concerned Courts

The total number of judicial districts in Sindh are **27**. With the expansion of the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToRs) our outreach includes **8** districts: Karachi, Hyderabad, Larkana Sukkur, Dadu, Khairpur, Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad . These **8** districts are covered by a team of **31** dedicated and sensitized lawyers.

District	Regions Covered	No. of Lawyers
Karachi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District and Session Court Malir 2. District and Session Court East 3. District and Session Court West 4. District and Session Court South 5. District and Session Court Central 6. Judicial Complex 7. Anti Terrorism Court 8. High Court of Sindh, Karachi Registry. 	16
Hyderabad	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. District and Session Court Mirpurkhas 10. District and Session Court Tando Allahyar 11. District and Session Court Hyderabad 12. High Court, Hyderabad Bench 	3
Larkana	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. District and Session Court Larkana 	2
Sukkur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. District and Session Court Sukkur 15. District and Session Court Ghotki 16. District and Session Court Shikarpur 17. High Court, Sukkur Bench 18. Rohri 19. Garhi Yaseen 20. Lakhi 	2

Outreach in Concerned Courts

District	Regions Covered	No. of Lawyers
Dadu	21. District and Session Court Naushero Feroze 22. Moro Court 23. District and Session Court Dadu	2
Khairpur	24. District and Session Court Khairpur	2
Sanghar	25. District and Session Court Sanghar 26. Tando Adam	2
Shaheed Benazirabad	27. District and Session Court 28. Qazi Ahmed 29. Daur 30. Dolatpur 31. Sakrand	2

Total number of Courts covered

31

Total number of lawyers

31

Geographic Footprint



Executive Summary

During the project cycle from 1st July 2023– 30th June 2024, the Committee has had the following successes:

Legal Aid , Advice and Assistance achievements as per the Prison Rule (R 865 (a), (b), (c)) are as follows:

- **1358** legal aid clinics were conducted (**1202** in adult male & juvenile prisons, **156** in women prisons) (**104%** of the projected annual target achieved);
- **3618** interviews conducted with inmates, (**3,512** adult male prisoners, **106** women prisoners) including the provision of on the spot legal advice to **4,271** prisoners (**4,058** adult male prisoners, **213** women prisoners); (**136%** of the projected annual target achieved);
- **2999** vakalatnamas signed and filed in Courts (**2,936** adult male prisoners, **63** women prisoners) (**92%** of the projected annual target achieved);
- **1,482** applications for bail granted (**1,453** adult male prisoners & young offenders, **29** women prisoners) (exceeds projected annual target by **6%**);
- **2019** cases disposed off (**2,002** adult male prisoners, **17** women prisoners) (**95%** of the projected annual target achieved);
- **34** prisoners (**20** adult male prisoners, **7** women prisoners, **7** young offenders) were provided with fine and surety amounts.

Legal Awareness and Empowerment achievements as per the Prison Rule (R.865 (d), (h)) are as follows:

- **84** free legal aid & advisory camps organized in **21** prisons across Sindh by the Committee's advocates to provide topic specific free legal advice to **679** under-trial prisoners (UTPs) and convicts.
- **125** paralegal sessions with convicts in Central Prison Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur conducted. A total of **1,873** new inmates provided crucial legal awareness through the Prison Paralegal Program.
- Hosted **training session** with the (Former) Inspector General Prisons Sindh, Syed Munawwar Ali Shah, focusing on **Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service Act and Rules 2019** on 3rd Feb, 2024.

Welfare and Rehabilitation achievements as per the Prison Rule (R 865 (g)) are as follows:

- **34** children imprisoned with their mothers received pre-primary education in Early Learning Centers (ELCs) established by the Committee in the Women's Prison Karachi and Hyderabad;
- **54** women engaged in weekly sewing classes in the Women's Prison Karachi and Hyderabad. These provide a recreational avenue and employment activity for women inmates, allowing for income generation inside and outside of prison;
- **Menstrual Hygiene Awareness session** organized by the Committee in collaboration with **Santex Pakistan** in the Women's Prison Hyderabad on 24th July, 2023;
- On 20th October 2023, the Committee held an **extensive training session and health workshop** at the newly established training center in Central Prison Hyderabad, gathering legal experts and health professionals to exchange knowledge and improve the well-being of the incarcerated population;
- A **Nigerian women** prisoner who had finished her sentence at the Women's Prison Karachi was successfully repatriated;
- With the generous assistance of a donor, the Committee provided winter clothing to **110** women, **10** children, and **40** young offenders in the Women's Prison and Youthful Offenders Industrial School Hyderabad;
- Through collective advocacy efforts with the **National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR)**, **80 Indian fishermen** were successfully repatriated from District Prison Malir Karachi on November 9, 2023, signaling a positive development in international relations;
- The Committee partnered with the **Sindh Prison & Corrections Service** to organize a **two-day capacity-building workshop** at the Sindh Prisons Staff Training Institute in Hyderabad on December 18th and 19th, 2023, aimed **enhancing the capacity of key personnel in Sindh Prisons**;
- A **certificate distribution** ceremony was held in the **Women's Prison Karachi** to honor women prisoners and staff who completed their first course under the **Google Certificates program** offered through **Tech Valley Pakistan**;

Welfare and Rehabilitation achievements as per the Prison Rule (R 865 (g)) are as follows

- Organized a two-day Traditional **Kashikari Ceramic Painting** Workshop at **Women's Prison Hyderabad** in collaboration with **NITA Crafts Development Cooperative Society Nasarpur** on 1st & 2nd Feb, 2024, aimed at empowering women prisoners through skill development;
- **Football kits** distribution to participants of training camps in collaboration with **Karachi United Football Club** on 5th March, 2024 to promoting self-confidence and healthy activities among young offenders;
- Organized **International Women's Day** Celebration at **Women's Prison Hyderabad** on 8th March 2024, highlighting the challenges faced by incarcerated women and showcasing their empowerment through legal knowledge and rights awareness.
- With the generous assistance of a donor, the Committee provided **Ramzan packs** to **80** women, and **30** young offenders in the Women's and Youthful Offenders Industrial School Hyderabad.

Policy and Research achievements as per the Prison Rule 865 (e), (f) are as follows

- The **Committee** initiated a small scale research project funded by **Interactive Research and Development (IRD)** Pakistan to address **mental health issues among female inmates** in the Women's Prison Karachi, particularly focusing on the effectiveness of group art therapy in reducing depressive symptoms and improving mental well-being.

Annual Snapshot

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners is a Government funded not for profit Committee that operates under the Chairpersonship of Muhammad Siddique Memon. The Committee seeks to support Sindh’s criminal justice system by advocating for speedy trials and case resolutions on behalf of undertrial prisoners. This, in turn, reduces the burden on prisons and de-congests the overcrowded and under-resourced prison system, which aligns with the Government’s priority areas under the Rule of Law Roadmap. The Committee, with the support of the Home Department, Government of Sindh, provides its services to prisoners in 14 adult male prisons, 3 youthful offenders industrial schools, 3 women’s prison facilities and 1 remand home facility in Sindh.

How many prisoners did we represent?



2,999

Cases represented in Courts



2%

women



98%

men
(adult male & young offenders)



63 women

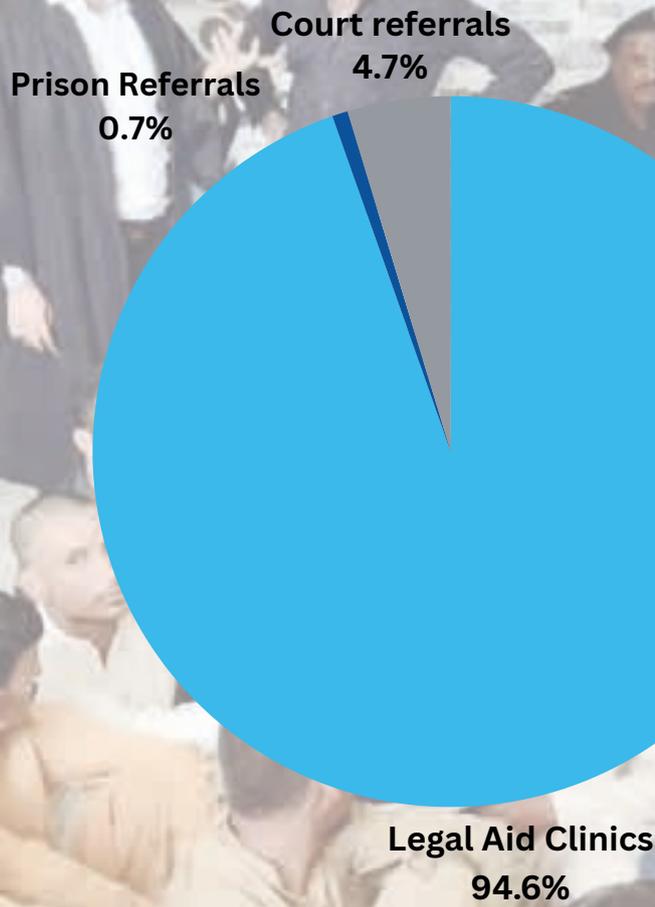


2,703 adult male



233 young offenders

How do our clients get in touch with a lawyer from the Committee?



2,019
cases disposed of

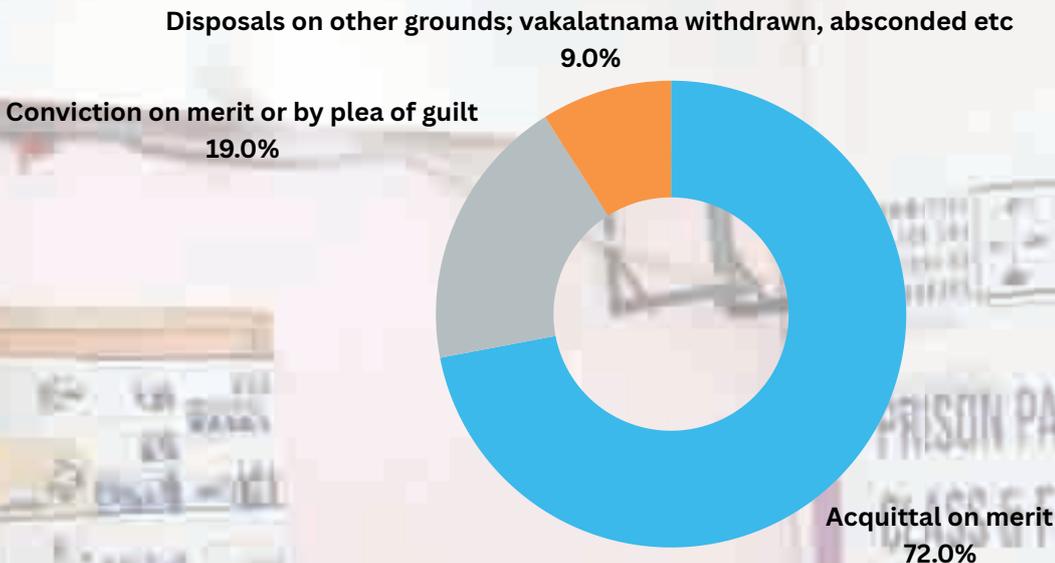


Adult Male
2,002



Female
17

Resolution of cases



In 2023-2024 the Committee conducted **3,618** interviews with inmates (**3,512** adult male prisoners, **106** women prisoners) including the provision of legal advice to **4,271** prisoners and filed **2999** cases which required legal assistance and representation.

Number of bail applications granted



29 women



1,363 adult men



90 young offenders

Financial Assistance for bail/surety amount provided by the Committee



7 women

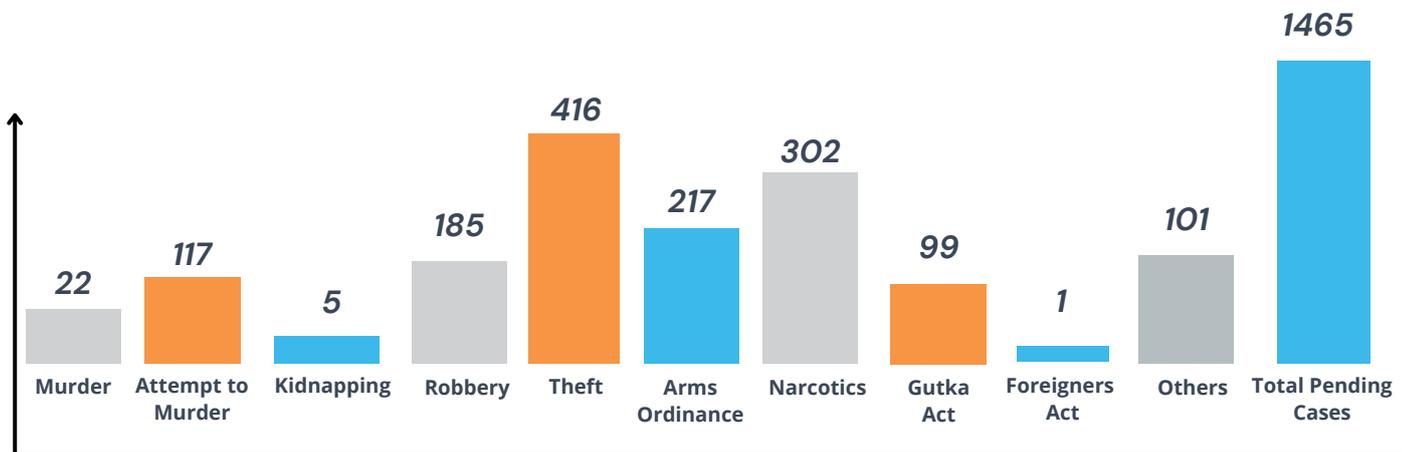


20 adult men

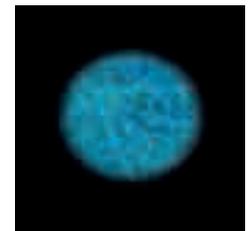


7 young offenders

Offence categories for filed and non filed cases in courts until June 2023:



Cases represented through Public Private Partnership



Nai Zindagi provides needs-based services to marginalized people who use drugs and those associated and vulnerable, in particular their spouses/sexual partners and families. The Committee has collaborated with Nai Zindagi to provide free legal aid to prisoners in drug addiction imprisoned in prisons across Sindh.

This **partnership includes assistance to prisoners in understanding their legal rights, representation during legal proceedings, and support in navigating the legal processes related to drug offenses.** Offering legal assistance to prisoners who struggle with drug addiction is an important step towards addressing their unique needs and ensuring that their rights are protected.

The Committee has represented **115** cases from **1st July 2023 to 30th June, 2024** through this collaboration.

Prison Visit Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Central Prison Karachi Women Prison Karachi District Prison Malir Karachi	Youthful Offender Industrial School (YOIS) Karachi Remand Home Karachi			
Central Prison Hyderabad		Youthful Offender Industrial School (YOIS) Hyderabad Women Prison Hyderabad Central Prison Mirpurkhas	Special Prison Nara Hyderabad	
Central Prison Sukkur Youthful Offender Industrial School (YOIS) Sukkur Women Prison Sukkur	District Prison Shikarpur	District Prison Ghotki		
District Prison Larkana		Central Prison Larkana	District Prison Larkana	
Central Prison Khairpur			Central Prison Khairpur	
District Prison Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawabshah)			District Prison Shaheed Benazirabad	
District Prison Sanghar			District Prison Sanghar	
District Prison Dadu		District Prison NaushahroFeroz	District Prison Dadu	

Activities in 2023-2024

Capacity Building

Capacity-Building Workshop for the staff of Sindh Prisons in collaboration with Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service

In a significant collaboration aimed at enhancing the skills of Sindh Prisons' key personnel, the Committee partnered with Sindh Prison & Corrections Service to organize a **two-day capacity-building workshop at the Sindh Prisons Staff Training Institute in Hyderabad** on the 18th and 19th December 2023.

The first day of the workshop was dedicated to enhancing administrative, operational, financial, and technical skills crucial for the effective functioning of Sindh Prisons. Participating Superintendents were equipped with practical tools to excel in their daily roles. Specific attention was given to understanding the role of the Oversight Committee, its mandate, formation, and an introduction to new sections, reporting, and inspection formats.

The second day provided a comprehensive overview of the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners. Participants gained insights into the Committee's mandate, key streams, and achievements over the past two decades.

The Committee was privileged to host **(Former) Honorable Home and Prison Minister Sindh, Brigadier Haris Nawaz** and **(Former) Inspector General Sindh Prisons Syed Munawwar Ali Shah**, who not only added their valuable insights to the discussions but also highlighted the significance of such collaborative initiatives in shaping the future of the Sindh Prisons.

The Committee expresses deep gratitude to **Mr. Aslam Malik, Principal of Sindh Prisons Staff Training Institute**, and **Mr. Asif Ali Lakho, Vice Principal of Sindh Prisons Staff Training Institute**, for their gracious accommodation and support in hosting the workshop.

The collaborative workshop is a vital step towards improvement within the Sindh Prisons. By providing practical tools and a comprehensive understanding of key institutional roles, the Committee and Sindh Prison & Corrections Service aims to foster a culture of continuous improvement and commitment to the highest service standards.



Training Session with the (Former) Inspector General Prisons Sindh, Syed Munawwar Ali Shah on Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service Act and Rules 2019

It was a pleasure to host (Former) Inspector General Prisons Sindh, Syed Munawwar Ali Shah, at our Karachi Head Office for a training session.

The session centered around the intricate nuances of the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service Act and Rules 2019. During the training the Committee's lawyers had the chance to delve into the depths of this legislation, gaining invaluable insights into its practical implementation.

Key highlights of the training included a comprehensive overview of various facets, including Prison Oversight Committees, Remission, Prison Industries, Prisoner Family Support Program, and Prisoners' well-being and rehabilitation. Through engaging discussions, participants gained a holistic understanding of these critical components, paving the way for informed decision-making and effective action. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Syed Munawwar Ali Shah for sharing his knowledge and expertise.



Coordination meetings

Collaboration with Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC)

The Committee continued to collaborate with the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to enhance access to justice and ensure that legal aid reaches those who need it most.

In our collaborative visits to Women's Prison, Youthful Offenders Industrial School, Central Prison Hyderabad, and Special Prison Nara, our team offered on-the-spot legal guidance to **16** inmates, ensuring access to justice behind bars. The Committee also facilitated visits to Central Prison in Sukkur, Khairpur, Mirpurkhas, Karachi, and District Prison Malir.

A total of **46 vakalatnamas** have been filed as a result of these visits.



Coordination meeting with Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) on case referrals

Mr. Habib Jiskani, Litigation Manager, and Ms. Sana Sharif, Program Manager, met with the Honorable Justice (R) Arshad Noor Khan, Member Judicial I, Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC). The agenda was to deliberate on the progress of cases referred to the Committee by SHRC. These coordination meetings are not only instrumental in fostering a stronger collaboration between the legal and human rights sectors but also play a significant role in ensuring efficiency, transparency, and accountability within the system.

The Committee met with Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Memon Additional Chief Secretary Government of Sindh

Barrister Haya Emaan Zahid, (Former) Secretary of the Committee, engaged in a meeting with Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Memon, Additional Chief Secretary Government of Sindh.

The discussion revolved around a comprehensive briefing on the Committee's interventions and the progress achieved thus far.



This meeting served as a platform to showcase the tangible impact of our collective efforts. The meeting highlighted the pivotal role that key stakeholders, such as the Government of Sindh, play in supporting and advancing the Committee's objectives. The importance of collaborative efforts cannot be overstated, It is through the unwavering support of the Government of Sindh that the Committee can truly make a difference in the lives of those impacted by incarceration.

Strategic meeting with Mr. Jalaluddin Mehar, (Former) Special Secretary Prisons

Ms. Sana Sharif, Program Manager, met with Mr. Jalaluddin Mehar, the (Former) Special Secretary Prisons, where he was briefed about the Committee's interventions and their impact.

A key focus of the discussion was on strengthening partnerships through shared synergies. Ms. Sharif and Mr. Mehar explored avenues for collaborative action, recognizing the importance of strategic alliances in driving positive change within the realm of prison reform.



Commissioner Sukkur Commends Legal Aid Efforts During Youthful Offenders Industrial School (YOIS) and Women's Prison Visit

Commissioner Sukkur Mr. Fayaz Hussain Abbasi, along with Deputy Commissioner Dr. Raja MB Dharejo and Assistant Commissioner Miss Sobia Falak Rao, visited the Youthful Offenders Industrial School and Women's Prison Sukkur with the Committee's team. They inspected the facilities, including barracks, classrooms, and vocational training programs, and praised the Committee's team for their dedication to providing legal assistance and free legal aid to inmates.



Legal Empowerment Approaches

Prison Paralegal Program

The Committee acknowledges the lack of facilities available to new UTPs and other prisoners, leading to limited access to regular and essential legal information. In 2017, the Committee piloted a Prison Paralegal Program in Central Prison Karachi to promote legal literacy among under trial prisoners. The program was later scaled to the Central Prisons in Hyderabad and Sukkur.

This is a unique, one-of-its-kind convict led program with the objective to create a sustainable mechanism for all new inmates in prisons to be informed on rules, laws and norms. Its sustainability is ensured through training convicts as paralegals who then transfer knowledge to other prisoners. The Committee successfully completed 125 Prison Paralegal sessions with new inmates at the Central Prison Karachi, Hyderabad & Sukkur in the year 2023- 2024. These legal literacy sessions have provided legal awareness to 1873 new under trial prisoners (UTPs).

Free Legal Advisory Camps

The Committee organized a total of 84 free legal aid advisory camps between 1st July 2023– 30th June 2024, in 21 prisons across Sindh. 679 prisoners benefited from free legal advice. As a result of these advisory camps, 551 vakalatnamas were signed. These camps raise awareness on the rights and responsibilities of users of the justice system and disseminate multi-format IEC materials to inform prisoners about prison rules, the availability of mechanisms for access to justice, their eligibility for support, and legal aid and social services that interface with the justice systems.

Welfare and Rehabilitation initiatives

Early Learning Centers (ELC)

The Committee's Early Learning Centers (ELC) in the Women's Prisons in Karachi and Hyderabad provide pre-primary education to children incarcerated with their mothers. The ELC curriculum is in line with the **National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education**. By tailoring education methods to the prison context, the ELC caters to **children aged 3 to 9 in a multi grade system** encouraging **peer-to-peer learning**.

During the reporting period from 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024, a total of **34 children attended the ELCs in Karachi and Hyderabad**. Quarterly parent teacher meetings with the mothers of the children are conducted to discuss the progress of the students' learning and address any factors that may impact their education, including behavioral and social development.

Independence Day Celebration at the Early Learning Centers (ELCs) Karachi and Hyderabad

On Pakistan's 76th Independence Day the students at ELCs in the Women's Prison Karachi and Hyderabad celebrated a day filled with joy and smiles as the young ones enjoyed the spirit of independence and patriotism. The Centres were adorned with colorful balloons and other decorations to ensure that the children had a memorable and enjoyable experience during the celebrations.

The highlight of the day included a delightful cake-cutting ceremony, enthusiastic flag-waving, and the heartwarming gesture of sharing gifts with the Prison officials.

Children's Day Celebration at Early Learning Center, Women's Prison Karachi & Hyderabad

Amidst the confines of the Women's Prison Karachi & Hyderabad, we cherished the laughter and curiosity of the children in ELC, we extend our thoughts and compassion to those facing adversity in faraway lands, particularly the children of Gaza on Children's Day.

We came together in the belief that every child, regardless of their circumstances, deserves a childhood filled with joy, possibilities, and boundless dreams.



Early Learning Center Progress Meetings and Back-to-School Event

Our quarterly progress meetings with the mothers serve as a means to update mothers on their children's development and provide a platform for open discussions and addressing any concerns they may have.

During this progress meeting, the students were provided with new backpacks, uniforms, and stationary for the upcoming term. This initiative not only addresses practical needs but also instills a sense of pride and excitement in the young learners. The event was graced by esteemed guests, **DIG Women's Prison & YOIS Sheeba Shah and Superintendent Humaira Qayoom.**

Red Day at Early Learning Center Hyderabad

A day filled with laughter, creativity, and community spirit! Our Red Day celebration at ELC Hyderabad was a huge success, leaving smiles on every face

Spreading Joy: A Heartwarming Eid Celebration for Children Behind Bars

We're immensely grateful to our **pro bono partner, Mr. Hasan Mandviwala, and CEO of Bisconni, Mr. Hamid Ismail**, for joining hands with us to bring smiles to the faces of children behind bars at the Women's Prison and YOIS Karachi. Our distribution included not just toys, but also everyone's favorite treat - Cocomo! This collaboration serves as a reminder of the power of empathy and the importance of reaching out to those often neglected by society. Every individual, regardless of their circumstances, deserves to feel the warmth of Eid and be treated with dignity and equality. We hope we continue to spread love and compassion to all corners, embracing the true spirit of humanity.



Kashmir Day Celebration with Students at Early Learning Center Karachi

Early Learning Center Karachi celebrated Kashmir Day to stand in solidarity with the people of Kashmir, fostering empathy, understanding, and a shared spirit of togetherness.

The event provided a platform for our students to express their solidarity and support for the people of Kashmir. From colorful posters adorned with messages of peace to heartfelt poems and drawings, our students showcased their compassion and empathy in tangible ways. At the heart of this event was the belief that education is a powerful tool for fostering understanding and compassion. By providing our students with the opportunity to engage with complex global issues in a meaningful way, we hope to instill in them the values of empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility.

Sewing Centers in Women's Prison Karachi and Hyderabad

Sewing Classes in Women Prison Karachi & Hyderabad provide incarcerated women with valuable hands-on skills in sewing and crafting, aiming to facilitate their rehabilitation and promote financial independence.

With weekly sessions conducted by dedicated trainers, the sewing classes provided by the Committee currently have a total of **28 women in Karachi** and **26 in Hyderabad actively enrolled**.

Continuing Our Commitment: Sanitary Napkins Distribution in Partnership with Santex Pakistan

The Committee continues its partnership with Santex Pakistan, a remarkable feminine hygiene brand. Since 2021, we have been working together to provide

Santex

essential feminine hygiene products to women prisoners in three women's prisons in Sindh. Our mission is to ensure these women manage their periods with dignity and knowledge. Over 250 women prisoners continue to receive menstrual hygiene products in prisons.

Breaking Taboos and Promoting Menstrual Hygiene in collaboration with Santex Pakistan

Menstruation, a natural and recurring aspect of a woman's life, is often surrounded by stigma and taboo, making it a challenging subject to discuss openly. This hesitation to address menstrual hygiene is even more pronounced in vulnerable communities, including incarcerated women in prisons. Of the **23,551** prisoners in prisons across Sindh; women account for only **1.2%**. In the context of women prisoners, menstrual hygiene becomes an issue of utmost importance, yet frequently overlooked. The challenges these women face are unique, as they not only contend with the emotional and physical strain of imprisonment but also grapple with managing their menstrual cycles in restrictive environments.

One of the primary challenges is the lack of proper knowledge and education about menstrual hygiene. Many incarcerated women come from disadvantaged backgrounds, where access to information about menstrual health is either limited or non-existent. This lack of awareness can lead to misconceptions, fear, and embarrassment around menstruation, further isolating these women and impacting their overall well-being.



Moreover, the availability of menstrual products in prisons is often inadequate. Many incarcerated women struggle to access essential resources such as sanitary pads or tampons, leading them to resort to makeshift and unhygienic solutions, like using torn clothing or even toilet paper. The consequences of such practices can be detrimental to their physical health, increasing the risk of infections and other menstrual-related complications. In recent years, a positive change has been underway; **The Committee's collaboration with Santex Pakistan, aims to provide adequate resources and knowledge for incarcerated women to manage their periods in a dignified and healthy manner.** The collaboration between The Committee and Santex Pakistan has been a transformative step towards breaking barriers. **Through this partnership, feminine hygiene products are being provided to women prisoners in three women's prisons across Sindh.** Beyond providing physical resources, the collaboration also includes menstrual hygiene awareness sessions. A **menstrual hygiene awareness session** was organized at **Women's Prison Hyderabad in July 2023, where 46 incredible women participated.** This session not only equipped incarcerated women with knowledge on managing their periods but also empowered them to disseminate this crucial information to others in their lives, amplifying the impact of this initiative. Santex Pakistan generously distributed feminine hygiene kits to each participant, ensuring they have the necessary resources.

The impact of this collaboration goes beyond the prison walls. By empowering incarcerated women with essential resources and knowledge, The Committee and Santex Pakistan are fostering a sense of dignity and self-worth. Proper menstrual hygiene is a fundamental human right, and no woman, regardless of her circumstances, should be denied access to these basic necessities.

Menstrual hygiene in prisons remains an urgent concern that requires collective efforts from organizations like Santex Pakistan, as well as from policymakers and society as a whole. By acknowledging and addressing the challenges incarcerated women face and providing adequate resources and education, we can ensure they manage their periods with dignity and safeguard their health. Ultimately, empowering women with proper menstrual hygiene is not just an act of kindness, but it is an investment in a healthier, more equitable future for all.

From Barracks to Careers: A Paradigm Shift through Google Certificates

The province of Sindh has emerged as a trailblazer in the reform of colonial-era laws governing the prison system in Pakistan. Striding ahead of its counterparts, Sindh repealed the Prisons Act of 1984 and ushered in a new era with the introduction of the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service Act and Rules 2019. The focal point of the new rules is a marked shift towards corrections and rehabilitation within the prison system.



Under the umbrella of these progressive reforms, the Committee in partnership with Tech Valley Pakistan, has initiated a transformative project aimed at empowering women prisoners. For the first time in history, Google Certificates have been made available to women incarcerated in the Women's Prison Karachi, as well as female prison staff. Rather than being mere facilities of confinement, prisons are increasingly viewed as institutions with the potential to mold individuals into productive members of society. The partnership with Tech Valley Pakistan is a step towards equipping women prisoners with tangible skills, thereby enhancing their prospects of employability upon release. This initiative recognizes the pivotal role skills development plays in the rehabilitation process. The Google Certificates program not only imparts valuable skills but also represents a tangible effort to break the cycle of recidivism. By offering a pathway to meaningful employment, the initiative aspires to transform women prisoners into contributing members of society.



The Committee, in collaboration with Women Aid Trust, hosted a **ceremony in the Women's Prison Karachi** to honor women prisoners and prison staff who successfully completed their first course under the Google Certificates program. The ceremony was attended by **DIG Women's Prison & YOIS Sheeba Shah** and **Superintendent YOIS Humaira Qayoom**. DIG Sheeba Shah emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts, she highlighted that true reform within the prison system necessitates the combined commitment of various stakeholders, including governmental bodies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. She highlighted that this initiative, with its focus on skill development, not only empowers women prisoners but also demonstrates what can be achieved when different entities come together for a common cause.

A similar ceremony was organized for the staff in the **Women's Prison Hyderabad**. Out of the ten, seven women successfully completed the first course.

Sindh's proactive approach to prison reform to address the immediate concerns of the prison population and contribute significantly to the broader goal of societal betterment serves as an example for other provinces. It is hoped that the momentum generated by these reforms will inspire a nationwide shift towards a more rehabilitative approach within the criminal justice system. The partnership between the Committee and Tech Valley Pakistan, with its focus on skill development, exemplifies the potential for positive transformation within the prison walls. It is a testament to the belief that even within the confines of incarceration, individuals can be nurtured to become assets to society, offering them a chance at redemption and a more promising future.

Empowering Women Prisoners Through Skill Development: two-day Traditional Kashikari Ceramic Painting Workshop in collaboration with NITA Crafts Development Cooperative Society Nasarpur at Women's Prison Hyderabad

The Committee is dedicated to exploring opportunities for skill development among inmates to reduce recidivism by empowering prisoners with valuable skills that enhance their employability and facilitate a smoother integration into society upon release.

Understanding the importance of skill development, the Committee partnered with **NITA Crafts Development Cooperative Society Nasarpur** to organize a **two-day workshop** focused on the **traditional kashikari ceramic painting technique** at the Women's Prison Hyderabad on the 1st and 2nd of February 2024. The workshop focused on the traditional kashikari ceramic painting technique, providing participants with invaluable skills and opportunities for personal growth.



Throughout the two-day workshop, inmates engaged in hands-on learning experiences, mastering the art of creating traditional ceramic kashi tiles and mosaic paintings under expert guidance. The enthusiasm and dedication displayed by the participants were truly inspiring, reflecting their commitment to self-improvement and rehabilitation. We believe that providing inmates with marketable skills not only enhances their employability but also instills a sense of purpose and dignity.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the NITA Crafts Development Cooperative Society Nasarpur for their invaluable partnership and support in making this workshop a resounding success.

International Women's Day Celebration at Women's Prison Hyderabad

In commemoration of International Women's Day, the Committee organized a special event at the Women's Prison Hyderabad. The event served as a platform to amplify global efforts for women's rights, equality, and justice while highlighting the unique challenges faced by incarcerated women. Incarcerated women make up for only 1.2% of the prison population in Sindh and therefore often find themselves marginalized and overlooked within the system.

During the event, female prisoners showcased a theatrical performance highlighting the empowerment they have experienced through obtaining access to legal knowledge and information on their rights and entitlements. This powerful demonstration underscored the transformative impact of legal empowerment on the lives of women.

The event was graced by the presence of esteemed guests, Mr. Ayaz Hussain Tunio (President High Court Bar Association Hyderabad & Former Prosecutor General of Sindh) and Ms. Sadaf Keerio (Board Member SIDA). The Committee extends its heartfelt gratitude to all attendees for their support and dedication to advancing women's rights and empowerment.



Toy distribution in Women's Prison Sukkur

Our mission to spread joy reached the Women's Prison Sukkur, where we distributed toys to children incarcerated with their mothers. Every toy carries a message of hope and a reminder that they are not forgotten. We hope to continue to extend our hands of compassion and make a difference wherever we can.

Pro Bono Partnerships: Nurturing Justice for the Marginalized

For nearly two decades, the Committee has been at the forefront of advocating for the rights of marginalized prisoners in Sindh. We extend our deepest gratitude to our pro bono partners, especially Mr. Hasan Mandviwalla, who visited the Women's Prison and Central Prison Karachi. His dedication to following up with old clients and assessing the cases of prisoners awaiting appeal decisions in the Supreme Court exemplifies the transformative power of pro bono lawyering.

We applaud law firms and corporate practices that share our commitment to pro bono lawyering and human rights matters. Their tireless efforts are instrumental in providing marginalized prisoners and other vulnerable populations with access to justice. By showcasing their pro bono work and engaging in advocacy efforts, these organizations and individuals play a pivotal role in promoting human rights and contributing to positive social change. The Committee welcomes and encourages continued collaboration with law firms and corporate practices that align with our mission.



Bridging Borders with Compassion: Successful Repatriation of Indian Fishermen from District Prison Malir Karachi

On **November 9, 2023**, marking a significant step towards fostering goodwill and compassion between nations, a total of **80 Indian fishermen**, who had been languishing in District Prison Malir Karachi, were successfully repatriated after a prolonged period of anticipation. Embracing the humanitarian nature of this effort, our team worked tirelessly to provide the returning fishermen with essential items,



acknowledging the challenges they faced during their time of detention. Bilateral exchanges of this nature contribute significantly to building bridges of understanding and goodwill. Beyond the immediate impact, they lay the foundation for lasting diplomatic relationships grounded in empathy and mutual respect. As this batch of Indian fishermen returns home, there is a hopeful anticipation for reciprocal gestures.

Committee and JAS Travels Collaborate to Repatriate Foreign National Prisoner from Women's Prison Karachi

In the pursuit of justice and compassion, the Committee continues to address challenges faced by Foreign National Prisoners (FNP) from developing countries. One of the most significant hurdles they encounter is arranging funds for their journey home after completing their sentences.



The Committee successfully repatriated a Nigerian prisoner who had completed her sentence in the Women's Prison Karachi. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to JAS Travels for their invaluable support in this endeavor. JAS Travels demonstrated their commitment to humanitarian causes by generously covering 50% of the prisoner's airfare, significantly easing the financial burden associated with international repatriation.

The Committee looks forward to future collaborations and endeavors that uphold the principles of justice, compassion, and human dignity.

Empowering Inmates: Committee's Training Session and Health Workshop at Central Prison Hyderabad

The Committee conducted a comprehensive training session and health workshop at the newly established training center in Central Prison Hyderabad. The workshop brought together legal experts and health professionals to share knowledge and enhance the well-being of the incarcerated population.

Led by our team members, Mr. Zahid Ali Messo and Ms. Shaista Urooj, and lawyer Mr. Abdullah Soomro, the training session delved into vital topics such as Alternate Dispute Resolution, Fundamental Rights, and Rights for Religious Minorities. The interactive nature of the session allowed for a productive question and answer segment, addressing various legal queries from the engaged attendees. To further support their legal journey, attendees were introduced to the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre (SLACC) as a valuable resource for additional assistance.

Dedicated to health and hygiene, Dr. Muhammad Ahmed Khan, a respected Doctor and Hygiene Management Expert, led an enlightening session on Health, Wash, and Hygiene Management. His session covered the significance of hygiene, hands-on hygiene management activities, and exemplary practices. This session aimed not only to educate but to instill habits that contribute to the overall well-being of the incarcerated community.



Sports of development: Provision of Football Kits to Participants of Training Camps in collaboration with Karachi United Football Club

While young offenders comprise only **1.3%** of the Sindh prison population, their delinquency stems from diverse factors such as peer influence, illiteracy, and socio-economic pressures. Despite their minority status, addressing youth delinquency remains a pressing concern, prompting our sustained efforts. The Government of Sindh, recognizes the unique challenges and vulnerabilities of young offenders and is committed to special initiatives that support their reform and rehabilitation.



It is through the commitment and support of the Government of Sindh, that the **Committee** has partnered with **Karachi United** football club since **2017** to provide football and life skills training and development to young offenders. Through weekly training camps at **Youthful Offenders Industrial School (YOIS) Karachi**, over **612** participants have received **professional coaching** and essential **gear**, promoting self-confidence and healthy recreational activities. Since the re-commencement of our football camps on 1st February, 2024, we have successfully enrolled **31** young offenders. In a recent event, we had the privilege of distributing professional football kits provided by Karachi United Football Club among the participants of football training camps.

The provision of these kits not only enhances the quality of training but also serves as a symbol of hope and opportunity for the young participants. Through sports, we aim to instill valuable life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance, laying the foundation for a brighter future.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed guests, **Mr. Hasan Sahito** - Deputy Inspector General Prisons Karachi Region, **Mr. Jalaluddin Meher** - (Former) Special Secretary Prisons **Madam Sheeba Shah** - DIG YOIS and Women's Prison and **Ms. Humaira Qayoom** - Superintendent YOIS Karachi whose presence added immense value to the event. Their unwavering support and commitment to the cause of rehabilitation and reintegration are truly commendable, and we are grateful for their presence and encouragement.

Spreading Joy: Eid Celebrations at Youthful Offenders Industrial School Hyderabad

Our team, along with Mr. Nasir Khan (Deputy Inspector General Hyderabad) and Mr. Parvaiz Qureshi (Member CWP), visited the Youthful Offenders Industrial School in Hyderabad to distribute Eid suits and gifts to the inmates. This heartfelt gesture brought smiles and joy to the young residents, making their Eid celebrations special.



Eid Basket distribution

We expressed our heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated prison department stakeholders by presenting them with Eid baskets. This gesture was a token of our gratitude for their tireless efforts in ensuring fair and equal treatment for all

Donation Drives

Generous Donation Brought Winter Relief to Women Prisoners and Young Offenders in Hyderabad

Donations, both big and small, have the potential to make a significant impact on the lives of prisoners. They go beyond providing physical comfort; they send a powerful message of community support, empathy, and the belief in the possibility of positive change.

Through a generous private donation the Committee was able to provide essential winter items to women prisoners at Women's Prison Hyderabad and young offenders at YOIS Hyderabad. This act of kindness has not only brought physical warmth but also a sense of care and compassion to those within the confines of these facilities.

Research and Policy Advocacy

Development and publication of research and Information, Education & Communication (“IEC”) material is an integrated objective of the Committee. This has assisted in greater analysis of the prison system and criminal justice system and its mechanisms. IEC material contributes to the legal empowerment of prisoners through the dissemination of information amongst inmates on prison rules, prisoners’ rights and fundamental rights provided under the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Committee Initiated Group Art Therapy for Women Prisoners in the Women’s Prison Karachi

The impact of imprisonment on mental health is profound, particularly among women inmates in Pakistan. Despite constituting only 1.5% of the prison population in Sindh, women prisoners face a disproportionate burden of mental health challenges and socio-economic struggles, exacerbated by inadequate healthcare and a lack of structured mental health support within the prison system.

With the support of a small-scale research grant from **Interactive Research and Development (IRD) Pakistan**, the Committee embarked on a transformative journey to pioneer a unique approach to mental health improvement—group art therapy. This innovative method aimed to provide women prisoners with a platform to express and manage complex emotions, such as anger and depression.

The study seeks to assess the efficacy of group art therapy in reducing depressive symptoms, enhancing mental well-being, and improving the overall quality of life for women prisoners. In the first phase of our study, the Committee screened all 153 women prisoners in the Women's Prison Karachi for mental health needs. The comprehensive pre-screening process involved 113 willing participants, with 83 women identified as exhibiting symptoms of depression. A total of 13 women consented to partake in group art therapy sessions supervised by a psychologist conducted once a week.

Since the commencement of the first group art therapy session on December 11, 2023, the Committee conducted 20 group art therapy sessions with a dedicated group of 13 consenting women prisoners. These sessions explored various themes aimed at fostering emotional and mental well-being. Some of the themes covered include:

- Exploring Happiness Through Art: Helping participants visualize and create representations of what happiness means to them.
- Exploring Emotions: Encouraging the expression of a wide range of emotions through different artistic mediums.
- Mandala and Breathing Exercises: Combining art with mindfulness practices to promote relaxation and stress relief.
- Painting: Providing a creative outlet for self-expression and emotional release.
- Showing Gratitude: Fostering a sense of community and positive interpersonal connections by expressing gratitude towards one another.

The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Many women have reported a noticeable improvement in their mood. The sessions have not only provided a creative outlet but also a supportive environment where participants feel heard and valued.

The session concluded on 25th July 2024. The transformative power of art therapy has become increasingly evident, and we are committed to sustaining and expanding this initiative to reach more women in need. A policy brief on the intervention is currently being developed.



Success Stories

Asima*

Asima was a dedicated teacher, just 31 years old, who worked tirelessly to support her elderly parents. Her life revolved around her family, but everything changed when she was falsely accused of carrying an unlicensed weapon. Suddenly, Asima found herself facing imprisonment in the Women's Prison Karachi. With her background of poverty and limited resources, she felt utterly alone against the daunting tide of injustice.

In the midst of this chaos, an advocate from the Committee stepped in, filing the vakalatnama on January 17, 2024. As the court proceedings unfolded, glaring inconsistencies in the prosecution's case began to surface. There were contradictions in the timing and location of Asima's arrest, and no solid evidence supported the alleged recovery of the weapon. It became clear that Asima was not a criminal but a victim of manipulation, caught in a web of false accusations.

On April 30, 2024, justice prevailed. The court declared Asima innocent, bringing her nightmare to an end after 3 months and 14 days. Asima walked out of prison, not just cleared of all charges, but also inspired and hopeful. Her story is a powerful reminder of how solidarity and advocacy can transform lives and bring light to the darkest of times.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Mehwish*

Mehwish's life took a heart-wrenching turn when false accusations threatened to destroy her world. Originally from Punjab and married at 35, Mehwish worked tirelessly as a maid to support her family. Her honest efforts and dedication were overshadowed when she was accused of a theft she did not commit, leading to her imprisonment in the Women's Prison in Karachi. With an underprivileged background, Mehwish felt lost and desperate for a beacon of hope in the darkness of injustice.

The Committee took up Mehwish's case, filing the vakalatnama on her behalf on June 6, 2023. As the legal proceedings advanced, the Committee's advocate meticulously unearthed numerous contradictions in the prosecution's narrative. From the absence of stolen articles to inconsistencies in the time and place of her arrest, the prosecution's case fell apart under scrutiny.

In a courtroom where truth and justice finally prevailed, Mehwish's innocence was upheld. On December 11, 2023, after six months and six days of relentless legal battle, the court declared Mehwish innocent, freeing her from the wrongful shackles of criminal charges. The pro bono legal aid not only restored Mehwish's freedom but also reaffirmed that justice is a fundamental right accessible to all, regardless of their background or circumstances.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Muskan*

Muskan's resilience shines through a dreadful chapter in her life. At only 18 years old, she faced wrongful imprisonment in Women's Prison Karachi on fabricated theft charges. Working as a maid to support her family, her ordeal began innocently when she responded to a work call, only to find herself unjustly detained and accused based on a false FIR filed by the homeowner's son.

The Committee filed a vakalatnama on Muskan's behalf on June 16, 2023. The proceedings began to unveil the absence of any evidence linking Muskan to the alleged crime and her name being noticeably absent from the initial FIR. Each revelation of contradictory information made her innocence increasingly apparent.

On October 23, 2023, justice prevailed. The Court acquitted Muskan, lifting the weight of wrongful criminal charges from her shoulders after just 4 months and 8 days of legal proceedings. Muskan's journey from wrongful imprisonment to freedom illustrates the power of legal advocacy in protecting the innocent and ensuring that justice is served.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Ruqaiya*

In the bustling streets of Karachi, Ruqaiya balanced her life as a devoted mother and dedicated sweeper, ensuring her two young daughters had everything they needed. But her world was shattered when she was falsely accused of a crime, facing imprisonment in Women's Prison Karachi. Coming from a deprived background, the weight of these false accusations threatened to crush her spirit and destabilize her already fragile family life.

Amid this dire situation, the Committee took up Ruqaiya's case. On August 30, 2023, vakalatnama was filed on her behalf. As the legal proceedings unfolded, glaring contradictions within the prosecution's case began to surface. The lack of stolen items in her possession and discrepancies in witness testimonies gradually dismantled the prosecution's narrative. Each revelation brought Ruqaiya one step closer to justice, leading to a decisive verdict on November 13, 2023.

In just two months and 15 days, Ruqaiya emerged victorious, free from the false accusations that had imprisoned her. The pro bono legal assistance restored her freedom- It highlights the crucial role of dedicated legal advocacy in rectifying injustices faced by the marginalized.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Shahnaz*

Originally from Gujranwala, Shahnaz lived with her husband and son outside Karachi's Civil Hospital, their home was a makeshift shelter on the footpath, illustrating the harsh reality of their lives. Shahnaz faced false theft accusations that led to her being imprisoned in the Women's Prison Karachi at the age of 40.

Amid these dire circumstances, the Committee stepped in, filing a vakalatnama on Shahnaz's behalf on July 19, 2023. As the legal proceedings unfolded, significant contradictions in the prosecution's narrative emerged. Despite the absence of evidence linking Shahnaz to the alleged theft and the lack of witnesses or CCTV footage, the prosecution continued with baseless accusations.

On October 25, 2023, the Court declared Shahnaz innocent, lifting the unjust burden of false criminal charges after three months and seven days of legal struggle. This swift resolution restored Shahnaz's freedom and highlighted the crucial role of compassion and advocacy in overcoming adversity.

Shahnaz's story is a reminder that with unwavering determination and the right support, justice can prevail even in the face of overwhelming odds.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy

Nazia*

Nazia, a 26-year-old woman from Gujranwala, moved to Hyderabad after getting married. Her life took a drastic turn when she was falsely accused of theft and arrested at a location unrelated to the alleged crime scene. Coming from a severely underprivileged background, Nazia and her family couldn't afford legal representation, leaving her vulnerable and scared.

In her time of desperation, Nazia turned to the Committee for help. On May 6, 2023, the Committee filed a vakalatnama on her behalf. Throughout the proceedings, the Committee meticulously highlighted numerous contradictions in the prosecution's case, particularly focusing on the lack of any eyewitnesses to support the police's version of events.

After a thorough review of the case, the Court acknowledged the weaknesses in the prosecution's narrative and acquitted Nazia on August 30, 2023. Just three months and 25 days after the legal battle began, Nazia's freedom was restored, and her name was cleared of the unjust accusations that had threatened her life.

Her journey highlights the importance of fairness and integrity within the legal system, showing that with the right support, even the most vulnerable can find justice and hope.

Arifa*

Arifa's journey is a powerful story of resilience and the pursuit of justice amidst adversity. Originally from Rahim Yar Khan, she moved to Karachi with her large family in search of better opportunities. Despite financial struggles, she worked as housekeeping staff to support her loved ones. However, after getting married, Arifa faced unforeseen challenges.

In December 2020, Arifa and her husband were arrested in connection with the murder of an elderly woman and were sentenced to life in prison by the District Court. The announcement of their imprisonment left them in despair, uncertain about their future.

Determined to fight for justice, Arifa sought legal assistance from the Committee, requesting an appeal to the High Court on humanitarian grounds. The Committee took up her case, pointing out critical inconsistencies in the District Court proceedings, particularly discrepancies between medical findings and the complainant's evidence. After ten months of legal battle, the High Court recognized the flaws in the prosecution's case and declared Arifa innocent on September 21, 2023. This pivotal decision overturned the unjust conviction that had weighed heavily on her and her husband, allowing Arifa to reclaim her freedom and rebuild her life.

Arifa's story is a reminder of the importance of accessible legal aid and the resilience needed to navigate the complexities of the justice system. Her journey offers hope and inspiration to others facing wrongful accusations, showing that with determination and the right support, justice can prevail.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Amjad*

Amjad's life took a tragic turn when he was unjustly accused of narcotics possession, forcing him into a nightmarish trial of wrongful imprisonment. At just 25 years old, he carried the weight of being the sole provider for his family of four, their future suddenly threatened by baseless allegations. From a financially constrained background, Amjad faced the scary reality of defending himself without the means to afford legal representation.

Amjad sought help from the Committee; the Committee took up his case and filed a vakalatnama on April 1, 2023. This marked the beginning of a legal battle.

In the courtroom, the evidence and testimonies were meticulously scrutinized, exposing the weakness of the prosecution's claims. Contradictions among key witnesses and the absence of essential evidence highlighted the injustice inflicted upon Amjad. It became clear that Amjad was innocent of the charges against him. On August 22, 2023, after just four months and 22 days, Amjad was finally acquitted of all accusations.

Amjad's story is a powerful reminder of the strength of the human spirit and the vital role of compassionate advocacy. His journey from wrongful imprisonment to freedom serves as a beacon of hope, illustrating how dedication and perseverance can reshape futures and restore dignity.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Arbaz*

Arbaz, a diligent 19-year-old laborer from Karachi, was the sole breadwinner for his family, earning Rs. 20,000 monthly. His world turned upside down when wrongful accusations of robbery landed him in Central Prison Karachi, threatening not just his own future but the well-being of his loved ones.

The Committee filed a vakalatnama on his behalf on May 15, 2023, initiating legal proceedings. Despite tireless efforts by the court, crucial witnesses failed to appear, leading to non-bailable warrants against negligent police officials and the Assistant District Public Prosecutor (ADPP).

Recognizing the weakness of the prosecution's case, an application was promptly submitted for the case dismissal. It highlighted Arbaz's spotless record and the absence of independent witnesses from the crowded crime scene, casting serious doubt on the accusations and exposing the case's flimsy foundation.

On November 11, 2023, the Court, acknowledging the compelling arguments, acquitted Arbaz, extending the benefit of the doubt. In just 5 months and 28 days, Arbaz regained his freedom—a reminder of how steadfast legal support can transform lives.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Hameed*

Hameed, a devoted 36-year-old father and the main provider for his struggling family hailing from Shaheed Benazirabad, faced a deep crisis. Accused falsely of dacoity, Hameed was imprisoned in District Prison Shaheed Benazirabad. Yet, in his darkest hour, a ray of hope emerged when the Committee took up his case on July 7, 2023.

As the legal battle unfolded, it became clear that the accusations against Hameed were baseless. Discrepancies, such as conflicting accounts of the incident's duration, cast doubt on the credibility of the charges. Despite the seriousness of the accusation, no evidence supported claims of harm during the alleged crime. The meticulous scrutiny of evidence highlighted these inconsistencies, revealing the weakness of the prosecution's case.

Just eight days later, on July 15, 2023, Hameed was cleared of all charges. Hameed's case was resolved in only two hearings, this highlights the urgent need for accessible legal aid for individuals like him who often lack the means to defend themselves.

Imtiaz*

Imtiaz, a 20-year-old laborer from Sanghar, shouldered the responsibility of being the sole provider for his family, navigating financial hardships with unwavering determination. However, he faced false accusations of theft and was imprisoned in **District Prison Sanghar**. In the face of adversity, hope emerged through the steadfast legal support provided by the Committee.

On December 22, 2023, Imtiaz's vakalatnama was filed, marking the start of a crucial legal battle. The proceedings moved swiftly, revealing evident inconsistencies in the accusations against him. Despite being arrested far from the alleged crime scene and lacking any stolen property in his possession, Imtiaz endured the weight of baseless allegations. Even the complainant struggled to verify their claims during court hearings.

Through meticulous examination and a robust legal defense, Imtiaz was rightfully acquitted of all charges on February 6, 2024, just one month and sixteen days after the legal process commenced.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Mohammad*

Mohammad, a 35-year-old laborer from Hyderabad, worked tirelessly to support his four siblings with a monthly income of Rs. 20,000. His life took a devastating turn when wrongful theft accusations landed him in **District Prison Nara**. Despite a thorough search revealing nothing, he was unjustly accused by the authorities.

In his darkest moment, Mohammad found a glimmer of hope through the Committee. His vakalatnama was filed on May 16, 2023. The Court closely examined the evidence, uncovering troubling contradictions in witness statements, especially since all witnesses were police officials.

As the hearings progressed, it became evident that the prosecution's case was deeply flawed. No evidence linked Mohammad to the alleged crime, and inconsistencies in witness accounts highlighted the weaknesses in the case. On September 15, 2023, Mohammad was acquitted, regaining his freedom and the chance to rebuild his life.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Saleem*

Working tirelessly at a mechanic shop to support himself amidst challenging circumstances, Saleem, a 17-year-old laborer from Karachi, found himself wrongfully imprisoned in **Youthful Offenders Industrial School Karachi** after being falsely accused of a crime. In his moment of despair, he turned to the Committee for legal assistance. On October 3, 2022, a vakalatnama was filed on his behalf.

Throughout the Court proceedings, glaring inconsistencies in Saleem's case became evident. Forensic reports showed significant delays in sample testing, raising doubts about the integrity of the evidence against him. Despite the alleged crime occurring in a busy area, no independent witnesses came forward. Key elements, like a broken revolver and the non-appearance of the complainant, further undermined the prosecution's case.

On December 5, 2023, Saleem was acquitted and released from the wrongful charges that had unjustly confined him. This journey from despair to freedom, spanning just 14 months and 3 days, is a powerful reminder of hope and perseverance.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Sheeraz*

Sheeraz, a 52-year-old from Hyderabad, found himself in a nightmare when he was wrongfully implicated in a drug-related case and imprisoned in **District Prison, Nara**. Supporting three dependents on a modest income of Rs. 15,000 per month from labor work, his unjust incarceration became a crisis for his entire family.

On January 23, 2024, the Committee filed a vakalatnama on his behalf. As the legal process unfolded, it became clear that the prosecution's case was deeply flawed. The Court uncovered discrepancies: conflicting accounts of the drug quantities, inconsistencies in the timing of Sheeraz's arrest, and mismatched locations between the arrest and the initial FIR. These inconsistencies cast serious doubt on the charges against Sheeraz.

In just 29 days after the proceedings began, on February 20, 2024, the Court declared Sheeraz innocent. His swift acquittal not only ended a distressing chapter but also highlighted the vital role of legal aid in swiftly restoring justice and dignity to individuals like Sheeraz.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Shahid*

Shahid, a 25-year-old laborer earning Rs. 12,000 a month, was the sole provider for his family. His life took a devastating turn when he was imprisoned in **Central Prison, Khairpur**, on false drug charges.

With no means to afford a private lawyer, Shahid reached out to the Committee for representation. His vakalatnama was filed on January 16, 2024. During the trial, the Court carefully examined all records, including the charge sheet, evidence, and witness statements. Major discrepancies emerged: witnesses gave conflicting accounts of their locations and the distance to the police station, while the arrest and recovery memos showed troubling inconsistencies and overwriting.

These flaws in the prosecution's case led to Shahid being acquitted on April 16, 2024, just three months after his legal journey began. This swift verdict allowed Shahid to return to his family, bringing a sense of relief and joy. Shahid's story highlights the critical impact of timely and dedicated legal support in correcting injustices and reuniting families.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Naveed*

Naveed, a 27-year-old laborer from Sukkur earning Rs. 10,000 a month, found himself in a nightmare when he was wrongfully accused in a drug-related case and imprisoned at **Central Prison, Sukkur**. With two dependents—his parents—relying on him, the baseless charges against him were devastating.

The prosecution claimed Naveed was arrested near Complex Ground on Chohara Mandi Road, Sukkur, with 600 grams of charas and Rs. 100 in cash allegedly found on him. An FIR was filed, leading to his imprisonment.

Naveed's case was represented by the Committee; vakalatnama filed on June 12, 2023. During the trial, several inconsistencies came to light. Witnesses provided conflicting details about their routes and vehicles. There were mismatched signatures on the arrest and recovery memos, no private witnesses to corroborate the events, and delays in testing the recovered property. These discrepancies pointed to serious flaws in the prosecution's case.

On September 8, 2023, just 2 months and 28 days after legal proceedings began, Naveed was acquitted and reunited with his parents.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Abdul*

Abdul, a 35-year-old from Karachi, was struggling to support his family of three dependents when he found himself wrongfully imprisoned at **Central Prison, Karachi**. Unemployed and facing financial hardship, Abdul’s situation became even more dire when he was accused of drug possession.

The trouble began when police, on routine patrol at Bilal Chowk Sector 7-A, North Karachi, stopped Abdul, suspecting him of wrongdoing. Despite his insistence that he was being targeted for not paying a bribe, the police allegedly discovered 60 grams of charas and Rs. 110 in cash on him. He was arrested, taken to the police station, and an FIR was filed.

The Committee filed his vakalatnama on March 15, 2023. During the trial, several inconsistencies emerged. Witness statements did not match up, crucial documents were either missing or unverifiable, and Abdul had no prior criminal record. These discrepancies cast serious doubt on the charges against him.

On August 19, 2023, just 5 months and 5 days after his case began, the court acquitted Abdul of all charges.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.



Risks and Challenges

Risks

Bar Councils and members of Bar Associations have expressed concerns regarding the Committee's legal services within prisons. They perceive these services as potentially challenging the traditional role of legal professionals and view CWP's work as a possible threat to their established practices.

The Committee is responsible for the data and identity protection of prisoners.

The Committee faces a risk that, based on referrals from prison authorities or courts, it may handle cases involving death sentences. Such cases could potentially conflict with the state's stance on capital punishment.

While the Committee has been able to sustain its operations over the past five years with the same funding from the Home Department, Government of Sindh, it is now facing significant challenges. The ongoing inflation and escalating fuel prices are straining the Committee's ability to manage operational costs effectively, which has led to reduced visibility within the prisons. This situation represents a key risk that could impact the Committee's overall effectiveness and reach.

Mitigation

The Committee proactively engages with the legal fraternity by holding strategic meetings with Bar Associations to cultivate a stronger and more sustainable working relationship. Additionally, we have organized events inviting senior members of Bar Councils and Bar Associations to further demonstrate our commitment to fostering a productive partnership.

The Committee is responsible for safeguarding data confidentiality, protecting prisoners' information from unintentional, unlawful, or unauthorized access and disclosure. Research findings are only disclosed with the explicit consent of the participants.

To address this matter, the Committee has established specific criteria and policy guidelines for handling minor offenses. Legal assistance and representation are provided in accordance with these criteria, with ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

In response to these challenges, the Committee has implemented austerity measures by reducing prison and out-of-district Court visits. Consequently, the reduction in prison visits necessitates a corresponding adjustment in overall targets.

Risks and Challenges

Risks	Mitigation
<p>The Committee’s team has been actively operating in challenging conditions, including a critical heatwave in Sindh. Daytime temperatures have risen to 46 – 49 degrees Celsius in Dadu, Nawabshah, Larkana, Sukkur, Khairpur, Jacobabad, Hyderabad, and Badin. Additionally, the team has operated during severe unexpected rains in monsoon season. These conditions increase the risk of heatstroke and dehydration for the teams, potentially leading to delayed prison visits.</p>	<p>In light of the ongoing hot weather conditions and in our commitment to ensuring the well-being of our team members, we have distributed water bottles and hydration kits to those involved in on-ground work at prisons and courts. These kits are provided as a safety measure to help them to stay hydrated and healthy during your duties.</p>
<p>Prison security is another critical factor that could affect service delivery. For instance, in the event of a prisoner escape, increased security measures might necessitate the suspension of regular prison visits.</p>	<p>The Committee upholds a strong and credible relationship with the Sindh Prison Department, established based on the structure outlined in the committee's Terms of Reference (TORS). The team is provided with clear instructions to ensure adherence to the rules and policies during prison visits.</p>
<p>Due to the dissolution of assemblies and the subsequent mass transfers of Government officials in the previous year, the Committee faced challenges that resulted in delays in financial disbursements.</p>	<p>Clear communication channels and contingency plans were established to address potential delays caused by the dissolution of assemblies and mass transfers of officials. These measures ensured that all stakeholders were informed and adequately prepared.</p>
<p>The Committee faced a significant risk following the reconstitution of the new Chairman and members, which led to operational disruptions and delays in services.</p>	<p>The Committee’s team promptly onboarded the new management, conducting an orientation session with the new Chairman to discuss operational modalities and structure. They also updated the bank signatory and ensured that staff salaries were issued on time over the past three months, facilitating a smooth continuation of operations.</p>
<p>The Committee has been allocated the same budget amount for this year, which is already in deficit. This will lead to operational risks and demotivation among employees due to the lack of appraisals</p>	<p>The Committee will explore other business development options through CSR and relevant opportunities to mitigate the deficit amount, ensuring smooth functioning.</p>