

REPORT OF PANAH SHELTER HOME FOR THE YEAR 2006

The year 2006 saw the consolidation of the rehabilitation program for women, the launch of the gender sensitization for the judiciary, and legal aid service for non-residents. The need for the legal help was felt as a number of women could find accommodation within the extended family but had no clue as to what their rights were and how to avail the services of a competent lawyer

Out of a total of **125 women** (residents and non-residents), divorce was filed in 67 cases and legal proceedings for maintenance or custody were started in 48 cases. Reconciliation with parents or husbands occurred in 23 cases. Jobs were arranged for 15, and financial support to set up home was provided to 25. Accommodation in another hostel or home was arranged for 6.

A number of women are given skill building at Panah, both at the shelter as housekeeper and vocational training, and at the office as assistant at the computer and at office work. However none of them have wanted to work on a permanent basis, as they feel they relive their experiences and also want a different environment for their children to grow up in.

The capacity building of residents has been further strengthened. The products of the vocational training program are regularly sold. Rotary International arranged training in the adult literacy program for our housekeepers. Subsequently, they have been imparting this successfully to the residents here, who then move on to continue formal education in schools or to jobs. The standard of the literacy classes has further improved since the arrival of the principal of a nearby school. She not only conducts literacy classes at the shelter, but also recruits girls for training as teacher's aids, and admits the children at her school for formal education.

We have continued to give financial support to four ex-residents who are illiterate, hence have limited earning capacity, but are eager to educate their children. Full financial support for their education and partial education support to seven other children is also given. Medical aid is also provided to them when needed.

The gender sensitization training for the judiciary was launched in March in collaboration with Amnesty International. The Chief Justice of Sindh has incorporated this in the curriculum of the Judicial Academy. From 2006 the training period of the judges has been increased from two to six months. The first batch under this new training program will be taken in January 2007. In addition to the new recruits, it has been made mandatory for all the 455 judges of the lower judiciary of Sindh to undertake this training during the weekends.

To strengthen prospects for the promotion and protection of women's rights we collaborated with Rozan to have dissemination seminar and orientation workshop for 70 participants from 11 organizations in April 2006. The aim was to ensure that effective services are provided to survivors in a responsible and ethical manner.

During these five years since the inception of Panah, the infrastructure for the protection and rehabilitation of women is in place, and we are now able to move ahead on to the preventive side and to build premises of our own. APWA has offered a piece of land, and we hope to start the construction as soon as possible. A proactive fundraising will need to be done.

Our team of 14 panel lawyers and 5 doctors continue to give us free legal and medical services. The SMS security service, Eastern Federal Union Insurance, Trakker and Zainab Panjwani Memorial Hospital have continued their complimentary services for the fifth year running. The total cash donations were **Rs. 2,100,000**, out of which Amnesty International contributed **Rs. 780,000**, Global Fund for Human Rights **Rs. 600,000**, Infaq Foundation **Rs. 250,000** and private individuals contributed **Rs. 500,000**. The cash expenditure was **Rs. 1,800,000**.