

Introduction

This is the seventh report of the Ombudsperson for Children (OC). The Ombudsperson for Children's Act 2003 (OCA 2003) which regulates the office of Ombudsperson for Children, provides that: "The Ombudsperson for Children shall, not later than 30 September in each year, submit a report on its activities during the preceding year, to the President" Section 11(1).

Section 11(3) provides that "The President shall cause every report sent to him under this section to be laid before the Assembly within one month of its submission".

The Annual Report is an important tool for any National Human Rights Institution. It is the method *par excellence* which allows the OC to describe the actions taken and activities carried out for a given year.

It is also an occasion for the OC to analyse situations related to the rights of the child and formulate proposals or reiterate those made to various stakeholders. It is one way of carrying out her mandate which is mainly to "ensure that the rights, needs and interests of children are given full consideration by public bodies, private authorities, individuals and associations of individuals."

The Annual Report is usually made public just after it has been laid on the table of the National Assembly. Members of the National Assembly can use this tool for their own advocacy. The media can also play a key role in ensuring a wide coverage of the different issues raised.

Last year's Report (2008-2009) had a huge public impact. This was rather unexpected. But it did contribute to a very wide dissemination of the contents of the Report and created great awareness both on the Rights of the Child and on the exact function of the OC.

Chapter I

Protection of the Child – the Chain of Services

For the past six years, the OC has analysed the situation as regards children who are at risk, wherever they may be, whether in their own homes or at school and in other places. The objective of this analysis is to evaluate services that already exist to protect the child who needs specific attention. In order to give a balanced view of the services available and progress achieved, Ministries and Departments concerned are invited to send their reports to the OC in time for inclusion in the Annual Report. Most stakeholders seem to think that this is an important exercise and they send their contribution which is included as far as possible in the Report whether in this Chapter or elsewhere where it is more appropriate. Of course the OC cannot include very lengthy policy documents and will concentrate on progress achieved or new programmes and services reported.

In order to make specific or general proposals to the government or to other stakeholders as per the Ombudsperson for Children's Act, the OC bases herself specifically on first hand data available in her own office through the various investigations carried out. The standards set up for such an evaluation are contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), its Optional Protocols as well as various Human Rights Instruments which bind Mauritius at international level.

The Law

The OC also bases herself on the law which is applicable in Mauritius, mainly the Child Protection Act 1994, the Civil Code and the Criminal Code.

It is important to underline that section 6(a) of the OCA 2003 provides that the OC shall “make proposals to the Minister on legislation, policies and practices regarding services to, or the rights of, children”.

This means that any evaluation is made taking into consideration the present legal implications. But whenever it is considered that the law is not adequate, the OC may propose an amendment or new legislation altogether. This has been the case, for example, for improving the rights of grandparents and other members of the family to have access to children. The Civil Code was amended on 20 December 2007. New article 371(4) provides that "l'enfant a le droit d'entretenir des relations personnelles avec ses ascendants. Seul l'intérêt de l'enfant peut faire obstacle à l'exercice de ce droit. Si tel est intérêt de l'enfant, la Cour suprême fixe les modalités des relations entre l'enfant et un tiers parent ou non."

Further a new amendment of the Child Protection Act was made to introduce child mentoring orders. As we proceed in this chapter, specific references will be made to the law and the various reforms which have taken place and necessitated new legal provisions.

A Children's Bill is also now in preparation at the State Law Office. Preliminary discussions have already taken place between the Ministry and the drafters. The OC has been closely associated to this exercise. By the time the Annual Report will be made public, it is hoped that consultations with all stakeholders will already have taken place on an advanced version of the Bill. The new Minister has also stated that she wanted children to be consulted. This is a proposal which she has made after agreeing to the OC's proposal to set up the Children's Committee which is already provided for in the National Children's Council's Act. She has thus immediately shown her commitment to promote the participation rights of the child.

The Attorney General's Office is also currently working on the following Bills which concern children:

The Juvenile Offenders Bill, the Child Safety On-Line Protection Bill, the Adoption Bill, the Reform Institutions Bill.

The Protection Chain

The Protection Chain proposed by the OC has been summarised as follows:

1. Parental education and their rehabilitation and support;
2. Mentoring for children who are not removed from their parents;
3. Placement of children with a next of kin or another member of the family;
4. Placement of children in foster families or institutions with proper monitoring of these "places of safety";
5. An adoption policy which would cater for abandoned children and cover local as well as inter-country adoptions;
6. A proper monitoring of international adoption;
7. An improvement of the procedure for tardy declaration;
8. Better coordination of all services to fully respect the best interests of the child.

The reasons for these 8 headings have been explained in each Annual Report and during regular meetings with Officers of the then Ministry of Women's Right's, Child Development and Family Welfare (MWRCDFW).

Tardy Declaration

The Attorney General's Office reports that the fast track system to declare undeclared persons, including children, operational since 2005 is still ongoing. There are still to date about 220 unregistered births. There is a close collaboration with the MGECDFW and the MHQL to proceed with these declarations.

The CDU reports that 28 children have been declared and the other cases are presently under process. There are 109 new cases reported. It appears that declarations of adults are the most difficult and time consuming cases.

Monitoring of Cases

The gist of the OC's proposal can be summarised as follows: The Ministry must invest its time and energy in detecting and preventing child abuse and neglect. When cases are reported, it must react urgently to seek a first social report on the actual situation of the child who is at risk. Following that report a decision must be taken urgently to better protect the child, if it is considered that the child is indeed living in conditions which will cause harm to him.

What are the options available? The child who is at great immediate risk of harm must be removed through an Emergency Protection Order and must be transferred to a "place of safety," that is, "any place designated by the Minister and includes a foster home, a convent, a charitable institution, an institution for children and a hospital", according to the Child Protection Act 1994, as amended. This law defines harm as meaning "physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or moral injury, neglect, ill treatment, impairment of health or development". Of course, one must be sure that the "place of safety" is indeed safe and secure which is why we have been insisting on the adoption of norms and standards for such alternative care institutions. Unfortunately this has not been done up to now.

Further the officer dealing with the case must have sufficient experience to be able to evaluate the situation and take the proper decision.

During our exchanges with the Ministry (MWRCDFW) we have raised this issue as in many cases there were complaints which were not attended to for very long periods. Children who were at great risk were not removed and placed, sometimes for several months. Officers in the field were not able to take a decision but had to refer to the Head Office, which caused unnecessary delay. Of course the main reason given is lack of staff and transport. This is, in fact, a reality and the problem must be tackled urgently.

The Ministry had taken the decision to engage in a more systematic monitoring of cases. Every Friday morning urgent and important cases were to be discussed and decisions taken. It was also agreed that simple first reports would be available to everyone to follow up, including our office. This would be followed by a more detailed report. In

some cases even verbal reports are acceptable. This has led to a definite improvement of the situation. The OC has laid emphasis on capacity building of officers but also on the curtailment of red-tape which is very damaging for cases of serious child abuse. Now that the Ministry has recruited new officers, the need to receive more ongoing training is obvious.

Before closing the present Report it was difficult to know how the monitoring is being done at present. However it is important to bear in mind that the CDU has stated that reported cases are on the increase. Last year it appears that 4909 cases were reported. From January to June 3158 new cases have already been reported. The CDU states that these cases are more and more complex which is true as complex cases are also reported to our own office.

In view of the explosive situation, there is an obvious need for new policies, new strategies and an increased budget to be able to respond efficiently to all cases. One cannot continue to sacrifice quality to quantity. The normal administrative procedures which are relevant to the Civil Service in general may not be appropriate for such a challenging situation. We must all think out of our hats and apply the remedies that will give results.

The Challenge

The difficulty for the Child Development Unit remains the fact that, apart from the increasing number of children who are victims of child abuse and neglect, they also have to make policy and devise strategies. They cannot just concentrate on child protection but must also focus on child development. In order to efficiently deal with such cases ideally there should be flying squads in each Family Support Bureau. And one officer, at least, should remain in the office to attend to new complaints, provide information and give advice. As it is, only one officer deals with all cases. For the district of Flacq, for example, the same officer has to cover the whole district of Moka and Flacq. He must proceed on visits to interview minors and their parents, he goes to schools, he goes to Court and he attends meetings, case conferences etc. In some District Courts, officers are made to wait for long hours.

The second aspect is the rehabilitation of families in order to prepare for the return of children. This is a professional job and needs continuous effort. But who should do this? How many families have received the necessary support to be able to welcome their children back in their home? Very few. And, of course, family dysfunction is also on the increase and must be tackled as such by the Family Unit of the Ministry. Needless to say how important it is to promote greater collaboration between the different units of the Ministry.

The Community Child Protection Programme (CCPP)

We have commented at length on the CCPP in our Annual Report of 2006-2007. The programme was launched on 27 August 2007. Its objective is to involve the community in child protection and focus on prevention. It is organised district wise through District Child Protection Committees which have now been set up in all the districts in Mauritius and the setting up of such a Committee in Rodrigues is also envisaged. Capacity building programmes as well as training on specific child-related issues has been carried out.

A Community Child Watch (CCW) to act as surveillance will also be set up in high risk areas. Its role is "to ensure early detection and reporting of cases of children at risk". The CCW will consist of members of the *forces vives* of the locality and a member of the DCPC will act as liaison officer. High risk areas are now being identified and a launching of the CCW is planned to take place in October this year.

At this stage it is difficult to comment conclusively on this project which has been developed over the last three years. It is very interesting and holds great promises. As for the other wonderful initiatives of the Ministry responsible for Child development, we must hope that sufficient funds will be available to make it become a success. We have explained time and again how important it is to engage in prevention. Community involvement is essential. The empowerment of all is a tall order and will necessitate a certain number of persons who are well versed in child protection to ensure that the project becomes a reality. The same officers cannot be expected to be on all fronts at the same time. Some officers will have to specialise and ensure proper evaluation and monitoring.

Foster Care

The place of children is to live in a warm and caring family and not in an institution. This was the reason for the setting up of the foster family system. There are 42 children presently in foster families out of which 9 have been recently placed. 12 new applications have been received. Foster families are not so numerous.

This is also why the OC has been proposing to amend the Child Protection Act to place children with their next of kin. The law still needs to be amended to that effect. This is also why, in appropriate cases, it has been proposed to seek a child mentoring order so that the child remains in his family but is supported by a third party who is specifically trained to help and protect him despite his precarious situation.

Mentoring

After the passing of the amendment to the Child Protection Act, which sets up the Mentoring Scheme, the Ministry set up a Mentoring Committee, screened and trained some 30 would-be mentors of whom 16 have been enlisted. Up to now training has been taking place with the mentors themselves, more particularly on their tasks and the ethics

related to their charge. Modules for training them further has already been developed and they have followed seven half day training sessions on the most important aspects of child development and psychology, with emphasis on how to deal with aggressive behaviour and difficult situations .

The scheme will be set up on a pilot basis and the Magistrates will have to be apprised of the possibility of issuing a mentoring order instead of an emergency protection order. The Ministry will be discussing this issue with the Master and Registrar. The Ministry has already identified the children who will benefit from this scheme. The parents of those mentees have been consulted. A sub-Committee has been set up for the matching exercise.

The OC is of the view that while this scheme starts on a pilot basis, it is important to prepare an evaluation and monitoring system which will be ready for the months to come. The next step, if the scheme works well, is to start identifying new mentors.

Alternative Residential Care

The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that the State shall ensure alternative care to children who are deprived of a family and who need special protection.

Our country has had charitable institutions for a very long time where children and old people are accommodated and taken care of. Since the adoption of the Child Protection Act in 1994 and the setting up of the Child Development Unit, the State has started to coordinate this sector in order to place children and provide for their per-head expenses. Government shelters have also been set up to provide for temporary accommodation for emergency cases.

Unfortunately the capacity of all these institutions is now not meeting the demand. Further, there is always a difficulty concerning handicapped children as there is only one institution which caters for five children on a residential basis. Other institutions deal with such children as day-care centres only. Children who return home are often victimised as their parents cannot cope with them and often undo whatever has been achieved in those centres. Parents caring for the disabled also need support.

As regards children victim of sexual abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation, they are still only being dealt with at the Drop-in-Centre in Bell Village. In fact, an investigation has revealed that most girls who attend the centre are teenage mothers seeking a medical check-up, psychological help or just mere advice. There is only one officer and he is not entitled to act as a counsellor as he is not trained to do so. Lack of transport is also a problem.

Fortunately, the Ministry has planned for the creation of a residential centre at Grand River North West to cater for victims of all forms of sexual abuse. The foundation stone was laid on 19 November 2009 and the Centre should be ready soon.

The OC has now discussed with the new Minister as well as with the Minister of Health and Quality of Life on the need to set up a special Unit outside the Brown Sequard Psychiatric Hospital (BSH) for children who have very severe behavioural problems and who need to take medication.

There are more and more children who go as outpatients to BSH, and are returned to their families. As often these children are also victims of child neglect, their situation deteriorates and they are constantly being sent back to BSH by their parents who cannot cope with them. Further, some children have stayed for long periods at the BSH, where even in the special wards reserved for them, they cannot be said to be given the best that a child of their age should have.

Both Ministers have agreed to the principle that a special institution would be more suitable, the more so as such children cannot be placed in normal institutions because they put other children at risk and they do not benefit from specialised medical attention.

How this will, in fact, materialise is still to be determined. One possibility it seems would be to create such a unit in the Children's Clinic announced in the Presidential Address.

Of course, if that is the case, the Unit would have to be quite separate from the normal clinic but would presumably benefit from all the administrative and organisational set up of the said clinic.

One would also like to see these children either attend school or receive their schooling on the spot depending on their situation. They would ideally also benefit from all forms of therapy which are known to have a positive impact on them.

Hospitals being considered to be places of safety for the purposes of the Child Protection Act, the Ministry would then have specialised institutions where to place such children, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health which would be in charge of the medical side.

Parental empowerment

The manual for the Parental Empowerment Programme is now ready for peer review. It provides for the training of trainers at three levels. Core trainers will be identified to train National Trainers who will in turn train members of the community. The latter will then

train parents. It appears to be a rather complicated system. At least trainers themselves should train families who after all are members of the community.

The OC has proposed to the Minister to start a positive parenting programme which will target two groups of parents either at the level of women's centres or community centres or directly at the place of work.

Although a lot of stakeholders are presently speaking of parenting, most of them, including at the level of the Ministry are doing sensitisation. It is important now to go one step further. There must be a real *école des parents* with courses spread over several months and a regular attendance of parents who need to be motivated.

The manual provides a curriculum and trainers, who are already versed in specific fields covered, need to be enlisted to carry out these training courses of parents, based on the manual so that there is uniformity. The Ministry reports on "the operationalisation of an extensive programme of *école des parents* through all the welfare and community centres, as an offshoot of the National Parental Empowerment Programme".

The OC thinks that it is urgent to train parents with the basic elements of child psychology and the principles that are favourable to a proper physical, psychological and social development of the child. There are two target groups who need training in priority; parents of toddlers and those who have preadolescent and adolescent children. The first target group seems to be taken care of by the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority. The Ministry, which runs the day care centres for children under three years old, may wish to improve the training already being done. But, in view of the number of cases that involve children aged 10 to 16, this should be a priority group.

It is obvious that a parental programme, by whatever name called, should also bear in mind the need to reach out to the children of the group targeted, so that the whole family is touched.

The Ministry's report rightly states that adult learners have different cognitive development and abilities. The need for experiential and participative learning is well recognised internationally and it is well advised to adopt such a method rather than pure lecturing. In France and Belgium, for example, some prefer to put emphasis on *écoute* and sharing in groups which are led by a professional.

Some NGOs are already doing parenting courses. Logically the Ministry should, at least, identify them and ensure that there is a *programme d'ensemble* which covers different regions and that as many parents as possible will be touched.

The OC has given her approval to work in close collaboration with both the Ministry and the NGOs who need support. Some projects will be done in the context of Corporate

Social Responsibility. Others can be funded by the Women and Children Solidarity Programme.

The main challenge in this respect is to find the appropriate trainers and make the project sustainable and productive. The Ministry rightly lays emphasis on the fact that "the final outcome after 48 hours of contact is not only improved knowledge but also transformed mindsets and attitude towards the child, child rights and the need to ascertain maximum support to ensure optimum development of the child...". This rather optimistic and the number of sessions may need to be at least doubled, depending on several factors. Only an evaluation at one point will give an idea of the quality of the transformation.

Children's development

Regularly research reminds us of the importance of nutrition and health care for small children. It is important to remember that one of the main focus of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the right of the child to development and survival. In Mauritius, the immunisation package for babies, pregnant women and school children is quite good.

There is a school health programme implemented in pre-primary, primary, secondary and pre-vocational schools. At the first two levels, children undergo medical examination and are screened for nits and lice, visual problems, dental caries and scabies.

The Ministry of Health announces that "screening programmes for early detection of risk factors leading to chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension will be strengthened". The Ministry also undertakes education of secondary school children for promotion of healthy lifestyles. This is so important because of the negative impact of poor lifestyles on the overall development of a child resulting in poor school performance.

In this respect, in January 2009, the Pre-Primary school project concerning 500 school children who were not attending school included a food programme, that is, meals on school days. In 2010 the number increased to 843. The same programme has been extended to Rodrigues where 437 children are being given the same school facilities.

This was initiated by the Ministry of Finance for children aged 3 from very poor families. It is a package which the Ministry put up for families in the identified 229 pockets of poverty. In the context of the Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme, children also benefited from school and pedagogical materials, school fees, free transport. Case workers also provide an *accompagnement scolaire*.

The new Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment reports that 222 children who were given such facilities in 2009 moved to Standard 1 and have continued to benefit from the support.

It also informs us that poor children who have dropped out from the school system, who are from the pockets of poverty are also being given a second chance. 38 Children of 16 years of age are being trained by the Mauritius Scout Association at St Hilaire/St Hubert. They concentrate on literacy and numeracy, civics, social work and entrepreneurship. 15 youths are being trained in handicraft by the Craft Academy of Poste de Flacq.

Further standard 5 and 6 students are also benefiting from remedial classes which include teaching on life-skills, human values and hygiene.

This new Ministry, which has taken over the Empowerment Programme, also reports as follows: “The integrated community Development approach provide for intervention for a number of areas which encompass housing, employment, training in adult literacy and life-skills”. These include teaching of parenting skills.

Under this heading we also want to highlight the different programmes carried out by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Though this Ministry caters for youngsters from 14 to 29, we insisted on knowing what programmes they have which touch those who are considered children, that is, between 14 and 18. It appears that they even actually have programmes which concern children below 14. They undertake life-skills education. They run leadership training workshops for deprived children. In particular we were interested to know that they deal with children of the illois Community. They also have Community based programmes, special programmes targeting young girls, for example, on their sexual and reproductive rights. They also have programmes for young talented artists. For youth at risk, they have a *Projet d'accompagnement de réinsertion sociale (PARS)*. They also run youth exchange programmes with foreign countries. The OC regrets however that there is no inter-ministerial coordination to be able to ensure that the same programmes are not being carried out by different stakeholders and touching the same children. Also sharing among stakeholders is always enriching.

Early Childhood Development

The objective at this stage is not to deal extensively with the excellent initiative to make Mauritius a *centre d'excellence* in early childhood care and education as we have reported on this issue previously. Suffice it to say that the amount of work done to improve the education and care of children aged 0 to 8 years is huge. Rightly so as this is the foundation of childhood and we are all aware of the need to give all children the best opportunities as from their birth.

We want to include however the initiatives of the Ministry responsible for child development. This Ministry deals with children under three years. The Ministry reports that it is engaged in a very rich sensitisation programme for parents, would be parents and the community at large. It also monitors the ECD guidelines for all managers and caregivers of all child Day Care institutions. 165 caregivers, who were not adequately

trained, have benefited from a four months foundation course prepared with the MIE. The monitoring of institutions engaged in ECD, and which must comply with the norms and regulations concerning their sector, is ongoing. Non compliance forms can be issued and eventually court proceedings can be engaged for non compliance. However again, because of shortage of staff, inspections cannot be carried out regularly.

We are told that 265 Day Care institutions exist, out of which only 65 are compliant and 40 have been issued with provisional registration. 113 institutions are under scrutiny for lack of compliance. It is imperative to improve the staffing to ensure that this mandate of the Ministry is carried out properly. Too often in the past we have heard of cases of children being at risk, often too late. It is unwise, and may even amount to child abuse, to leave such important institutions dealing with toddlers without proper monitoring.

Social Security

Article 26 of the CRC recognises "for every child the right to benefit from social security...the benefits should, where appropriate, be granted, taking into account the resources and the circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other consideration relevant to the application...".

Mauritius is a Welfare State and, up to now, social security has remained and even been increased. This is important as long as there are poor people and that the eradication of poverty programme has not had a structural impact on society.

Under the National Pensions Act, there are child allowances for children below 10 years and those above. These apply to beneficiaries of the Widows Basic Pension, Invalid's Basic Pension. There is also Basic Orphans Pension for children and youngsters up to 20 years in full time education. The Social Aid Act provides for child allowances for children whose parents are in receipt of Social Aid. These vary depending on the age of the child. It is to be noted that this allowance is available for children between 15 and 20 in full time education as well as those between 20 and 23 who are pursuing a full time course at a recognised tertiary institution as well as those between 15 and 20 who are physically or mentally disabled.

The Ministry also provides for refund of examination fees, assistance in kind (wheelchairs, hearing aids, spectacles), refund of travelling for attending treatment, allowance as cyclone refugee, flood victim, fire victim etc.

Of course there are allowances for children who are severely disabled, incontinent and bedridden. There is also an allowance for purchase of rice and flour for those in receipt of social aid, as well as an allowance for school related expenses.

Regarding births, there is an allowance for single mothers having at least one child aged between three months and seven years and whose income is less than 7,500 per month. There is, moreover, an allowance for a woman who gives birth to more than one child during one confinement and this is multiplied for each supplementary child up to 24 months.

Under the Unemployment Hardship Relief Act, there is also a child allowance.

Severely disabled children up to six months also benefit from an *ex-gratia* allowance.

Further a carer's allowance is available to parents whose income does not exceed Rs 150,000 annually for a child aged 6 months to 15 years who needs constant care. Those who suffer from HIV/Aid, Muscular Dystrophy or are severely disabled etc. also benefit from the same allowance and the ceiling of the income is Rs 250,000 annually. This ceiling is increased if there is more than one child in this case.

Transport is free for all children including those with disabilities, however those who travel by special means of transport have a refund of their bus fare as well as those of their parents, if applicable.

Last and not least, there is a special scholarship, the Sokhalingum Award, for deserving disabled children who are pursuing their secondary education.

The School Child Protection Clubs (SCPC)

While drafting this Report, the CDU informed us that the SCPCs will be launched on 2 September 2010. The project is described as a "multi-staged holistic project which aims at initiating home grown protection clubs for children at the level of the school itself." Basically, information, education and communication campaigns "tailored for the needs of students" will be developed and used. The objective is to empower children for the "creation of a violence-free and child-friendly environment conducive for the overall development of the child".

This is a laudable initiative. We will not be able to comment on the project until we are in presence of the material used. But the idea is good, specially as it promotes the participation rights of the child and is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The OC, who has been putting emphasis on the training of school personnel to promote the prevention of violence at school since 2007, is particularly pleased with the setting up of these clubs. Emphasis should be placed on violence perpetrated by children on other children, or occasionally on teachers and schools but also on violence perpetrated on children by adults. Children will need to be trained on how to protect themselves, how to report cases, and how to avoid negative peer pressure and participate to solve problems rather than create them. This seems to be taken care of. The CDU even

intends to train teaching and non teaching staff. We just hope that the CDU, which is already engaged with a very heavy work load, specially as explained above in terms of child protection and monitoring of cases, will have the staff needed to make this project become a reality.

Child protection clubs cannot function in schools which are not child-friendly or teacher friendly. That is why the "holistic approach" is so welcome. We understand that the Ministry of Education has fully collaborated to the setting up of such clubs.

The OC just thinks that this is a little in contradiction with the proposal of the said Ministry to try and deal with violence at school in a piece of legislation termed "Juvenile Offenders Act." Surely to eradicate violence at school it is not child-friendly to associate children having committed acts of indiscipline with criminal offenders. Only criminal acts can be part of that law. Then the setting in which such crimes take place is, in fact, not so important. A child having committed an act which is criminal in nature will be dealt with like all "juvenile offenders".

Although the present version of the Juvenile Offenders Bill is quite in favour of rehabilitative measures, school indiscipline has to be tackled in a different manner. Otherwise we will no longer see schools as places for education or socialisation. Students and their schools will be branded. But maybe there is a great misunderstanding on what the Minister of Education really has in mind. Time will tell.

Chapter II

Violence against Children

Since November 2004, the Ombudsperson for Children's Office (OCO) has been campaigning for the prevention of violence against children, based on the then UN Study which was led by Professor Paolo Sergio Pinheiro and which was the basis of the UN Global Report on Violence against Children. This Report was made public after having been communicated to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 11 October 2006.

The leitmotiv of the Report is that “no violence against children is justifiable and all forms of violence is preventable”

The study looked at the human rights perspective of violence based on all relevant Conventions of the United Nations, specially the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The campaign of the OCO has been ongoing and has touched children, parents, teachers, carers, several units of the police force, lawyers, magistrates and many other partners working with children. In 2007, the OCO has published a Kit on prevention of violence in educational settings which has been used for the training of head teachers, inspectors, teachers of the Primary Sector both in Mauritius and Rodrigues. The training, which is taking place at regular intervals, has also been held for school psychologists and teachers of the Pre-Primary Sector. This kit is still being enriched and contains the following documents: a general document on the importance of having child friendly schools, a document to explain why corporal punishment is counter productive and how teachers can effectively use alternative constructive discipline, a third document to teach them how to recognise signs and symptoms of child abuse and guide them on what to do when they do detect such abuse, a document on bullying and a short version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The definition of violence

Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines violence as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.”

Articles of the Convention are to be read together. Articles 2 and 3 relating to non discrimination and the best interests of the child are the pillars of the Convention. Every other article must be read in the light of these basic principles.

The definition given in the World Report on Violence and Health is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity.”

In defining any policy or strategy with regard to violence, it is important to bear these definitions in mind.

Corporal punishment at school

The UN Global Report has studied the expressions of violence with regard to five different settings: The home, school, the community, the workplace and institutions. Different strategies are required for each specific setting.

One must also look at the different forms of violence and devise strategies likely to impact positively when these types of violence exist in one or several settings.

The most common form of violence which is practised almost always with impunity is corporal punishment. The term corporal punishment only exists in the Education Regulations of 1957. Section 13(4) provides that “no corporal punishment shall be inflicted on any child in any school.” Unfortunately there is no definition of corporal punishment. The attention of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources (MEHR) has been drawn to this. Fortunately there are circulars which are sent to all schools and in which the MEHR draws the attention of all concerned on this issue. In fact the MEHR refers also to section 13(1) of the Child Protection Act which provides that “any person who ill-treats a child or otherwise exposes a child to harm shall commit an offence” as well as to article 19 of the CRC.

Despite this there is a resistance in the education sector as some teachers and head-teachers believe that corporal punishment is the only way to discipline a pupil. Some people even declare that they do practice corporal punishment in their schools. Since very few reported cases are in fact sanctioned, they can do this in total impunity.

It is only when a child is severely beaten and the case is reported to the police that there may be some kind of sanction.

In the circular, mention is also made of sexual harassment. The term sexual offence would have been more appropriate.

The subject of school discipline is dealt with more extensively in Chapter 3.

Corporal punishment at home

As regards corporal punishment at home there is nowhere in our laws any specific reference to this term. But the Criminal Code does now provide that in cases of assault, or infliction of wounds and blows, if the victim is under the age of 16, it is considered as an aggravating offence carrying a minimum term of imprisonment of “not less than two years” if such violence has caused any sickness or incapacity, irrespective of the maximum penalties of ten years imposed for each specific type of offence.

If there has not been any sickness or incapacity, or death, and if it concerns a minor under 14, there is a minimum penalty of three months imprisonment.

In fact, unless parents, who use physical violence against a minor, have caused great injury or caused the death of the minor, it is rare that the parents would be prosecuted because of the strong belief that parents have the right to “correct” their children. Despite the proposals of the OC to legislate to ban all forms of corporal punishment as such, there is still a lot of hesitation to do so as it is still a very sensitive issue. The problem is that this reinforces the idea that parents may use violence against their children and many still do. Sometimes this has even ended up in the sudden death of very small children who cannot resist. One must also bear in mind that there is always an escalation of violence. Parents who know that they will never be accountable for small beatings may feel free to be more violent than they probably planned.

It is also important to lay emphasis on the fact that violence against children is mainly occurring at home. The UN Global Report shows that this is the situation the world over, and concerns all forms of violence.

Other forms of physical violence

Unfortunately children are also victims of other forms of physical violence which may not be related to punishment as such. These are illegal as explained above. Parents, but also other persons related or not to the children may beat them up for all sorts of reasons including the fact that the perpetrator is under extreme stress. This year we have been confronted also with cases of infanticide, or the shaken baby syndrome. Every day we also have reports of cases of child abuse which often include physical violence.

A Report sent by the *Brigade pour la protection des mineurs* (BPM) stresses the fact that their specific role in the Mauritius Police Force (MPF) is to eliminate child abuse, promote the rights of children and their best interests and protect them. The strategies of the MPF are based on prevention, protection and prosecution. Both the Police Family Protection Unit (PFPU) and the BPM work closely together to create greater public awareness on child abuse and possibilities of preventing same and the protective measures for child victims. They give talks around the island, hold public exhibitions and

use the written and electronic media to get their messages across. Working sessions are also conducted with school administrators on such issues.

Crackdown operations

The OC has also been informed about the crackdown operations against school truancy and “mendicity”. According to the Report of the MGECDW, 550 crackdown operations have taken place by them and the BPM in various regions. “Contraventions have been established against business operators selling cigarette and liquor to minors, as well as the licensees of places of amusement which are found to be operating during prohibited hours and harbouring minors” Contraventions have also been established concerning child labour and “mendicity”. Those found begging, and who are destitute, are also referred to the Ministry of Social Security and the Trust Fund for Vulnerable Groups. Children are sometimes removed and placed.

According to those involved in these operations, they are very fruitful. Adolescents however complain about the aggressive approach of some of the officers who use unacceptable language and humiliate them when they are just holding hands or talking to their friends. Clearly there should be a distinction to be made regarding behaviour which is illegal or grossly immoral and acts which are just normal specially among adolescents. But then by whose standards should we decide on what is immoral? Sometimes by overreacting we may be sending the youngsters the wrong messages. They will then look for private places to meet their friends and go further than just holding hands.

The CDU should organise refresher courses for those who engage in such operations, so that they remain child-friendly. The objective of the operation must be clearly spelt out and be agreed to by all parties involved. The term “crackdown” itself could also not apply to operation concerning children. It goes completely against all the modern principles which privilege rehabilitation rather than mere repression and the exercise of raw power. Regarding real truants, one must not rely on the immediate effect of such interventions. It is important to evaluate in the longer term if those children are in fact attending school. The introduction of the SMS to parents may also help. But for sustainable results, an in-depth reform is needed. The introduction of school child protection clubs will make a lot of difference in the long run, as explained in Chapter 1. The introduction of sports as an examinable subject is also a good initiative. Curriculum change and introducing more child and teacher-friendly environments must be envisaged if we want to get good results as regards absenteeism, poor school performance and violence in schools. The National Education Counselling Service of the MEHR should be strengthened.

Sexual violence

Unfortunately nowadays minors are very often victims of sexual offences. There is a Sexual Offences Bill which is in the pipeline according to the new Attorney General. This Bill will be an improvement of the first version which has been examined before a Select Committee of the National Assembly. Let us hope that the provisions relating to minors will adequately protect children.

As it is, we rely on the Child Protection Act (CPA) and the Criminal Code. The general principles in the Criminal Code (section 249) are that children under 12 years are not to have any sexual activity of any kind. Minors under 16 cannot give consent to sexual intercourse and the perpetrators in both cases are likely to be prosecuted. The first offence is sanctioned by a maximum sentence of 5 years except if the victim is a “specified person” then the maximum is 8 years. The second carries a sentence of 10 years imprisonment maximum. The Criminal Code also criminalises incest, even if the term itself is not used and the law refers to illegal sexual acts on a specified person. This term means a relative who would not be allowed to get married to the perpetrator by reason of his blood relationship with that person but it also includes a step child or adopted child, a child entrusted to someone as guardian, and also the child of the partner of the perpetrator.

Section 14 of the CPA 1994 provides that

(1) *Any person who causes, incites or allows any child-*

(a) to be sexually abused by him, or by another person;

(b) to have access to a brothel;

(c) to engage in prostitution,

shall commit an offence.

(2) *A child shall be deemed to be sexually abused where he has taken part whether as a willing or unwilling participant or observer in any act which is sexual in nature for the purposes of –*

(a) another person’s gratification;

(b) any activity of a pornographic, obscene or indecent nature;

(c) any other kind of exploitation by any other person.

A conviction under this section will be for a maximum term of 10 years imprisonment. If the victim is mentally handicapped, the sentence is 15 years imprisonment maximum.

Statistics on sexual abuse

Cases related to sexual abuse seem to be on the rise. But in the absence of reliable data, it is impossible to affirm that this is so. In previous years, cases were not reported because of the stigma attached to such abuse which placed the minor in such a position as to victimise him or her over and over again. Even now, with the present set up for enquiries and court procedures, many victims prefer to keep their secrets to themselves, thus leaving perpetrators unpunished and free to commit other offences.

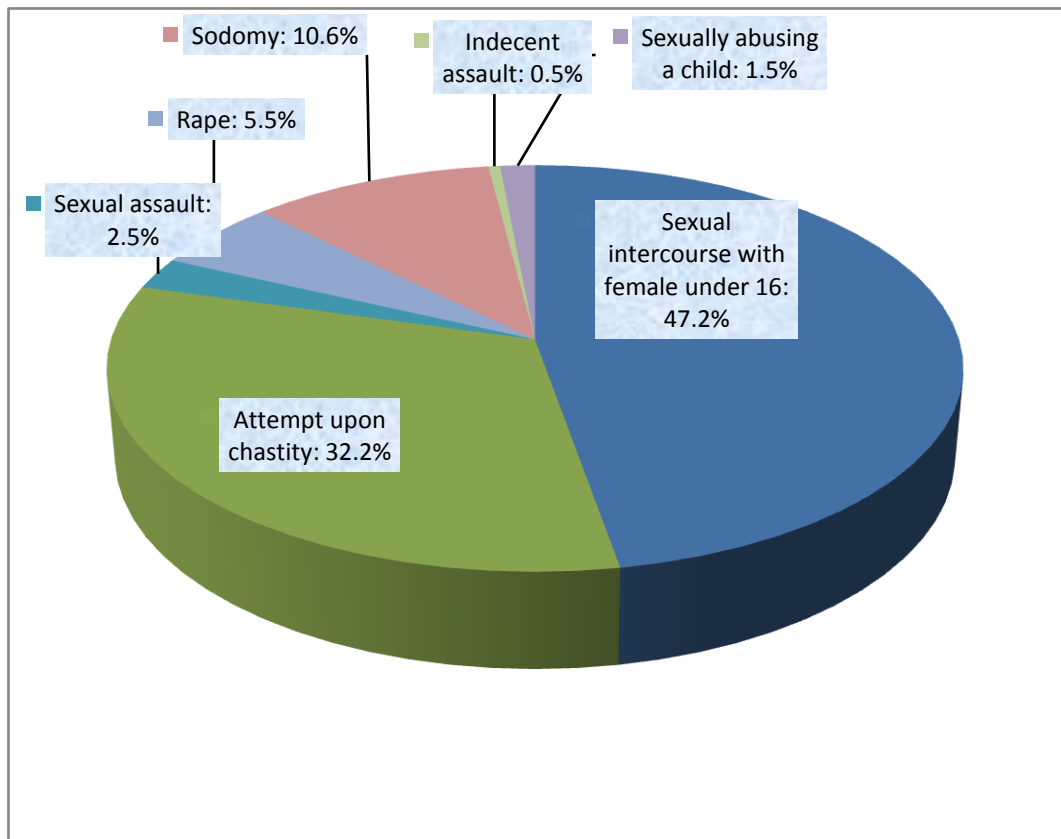
We live in a paradoxical society. On the one hand there is resistance to the introduction of sexual education at school. On the other we seem to be very disturbed by the obvious interest of youngsters in sexual activity. We bury our heads in the sand and wake up discovering America with amazement.

What should be of concern however is the rise in sexual violence. We should also question the reasons for young girls involved in fugues with men who could be their fathers, nay their grandfathers sometimes. The statistics prepared by our office, based on information gathered regarding reported cases to the police, can allow some analysis. The analysis refers to the offences reported during the year 2009. One must always remain careful however in drawing hasty conclusions.

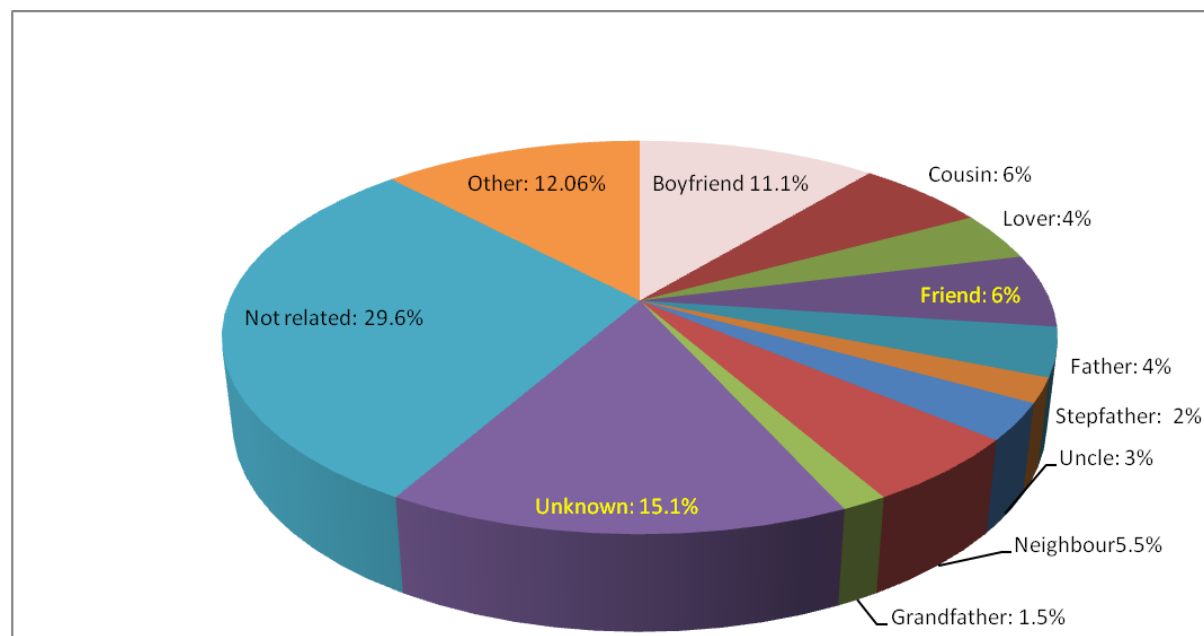
The first pie chart shows the types of sexual offences against children reported to the police for the given period. An analysis of the figures shows that the majority of offences committed were sexual intercourse with female under 16 (47.2%), followed by attempt upon chastity (32.2%) and sodomy (10.6%). An average of 16.5 offences was reported monthly for the year 2009. It must be underlined that many cases are not reported to the police for a variety of reasons.

We have analysed the relationship of accused with victims in the second pie chart. 15.1% of the accused have not been identified while 84.9% of the accused have been identified. Out of the 84.9%, 29.6% of the victims are not related to their perpetrators. Moreover, 16.5% of the victims are related to their perpetrators who are immediate members of their family (cousin, father, stepfather, uncle, grandfather). However, 26.6% of the accused are very well known to the victim. This includes lovers (4%), boyfriends (11.1%), friends (6%) and neighbours (5.5%).

Nature of offence (January - December 2009)



Relationship of accused with victims: (January - December 2009)



Child-friendly procedures

The OC has proposed the introduction of child friendly procedures for both the stage of police enquiry and for trials so that child victims are not unnecessarily victimised by the usual insensitive procedures which inevitably discourage victims of sexual violence from coming over to denounce their perpetrators. The Prime Minister has declared to the National Assembly that the Commissioner of police is in favour of the introduction of all child friendly procedures including the taking of statements through audiovisual recording. Many meetings have taken place between all stakeholders. It is now for the Ministry of Gender, Child Development and Family Welfare to work on the proposals.

It is interesting to note that screens are already being used for identification purposes. Furthermore the CDU is involved in the procedure each time that a child is sexually abused. The child sees a psychologist before the statement is taken.

Child abduction

The CPA 1994 also deals now with the offence of Child Abduction, which we want to treat separately as it is a vast subject in itself and need not be sexual in nature. With regard to International Child Abduction, we have already fully described this in Chapter 1 and in greater detail in our Annual Report 2008-2009

In 2005 the CPA was amended to introduce a certain number of offences, some of which were imported from the Criminal Code. Section 13 C defines child abduction as follows:

- (1) Any person who by force or fraud, without the consent of the legal custodian-*
 - (a) Takes away or causes to be taken away a child; or*
 - (b) Leads away, decoys, entices or causes to be led away, decoyed or enticed, a child out of the keeping of the custodian or from any place where the child has been placed or is with the consent of the custodian, shall commit the offence of abduction, and shall, on conviction be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding 12 years.*

If there is no fraud or violence the term is reduced to 8 years. This section also applies to those who “unduly fail to present a child to the person who has the right to claim the child...” This is a regular feature with parents who kidnap their children or who fail to

return them after a legal right of visit or *hébergement*. In such cases the maximum sentence is 2 years plus a maximum fine of Rs 100,000.

There have been several cases of child abduction before the Supreme Court recently. One of them was highlighted by the press whereby a father came to Mauritius and, while the case was pending before the Supreme Court, he was granted a right of access to be exercised in the presence of the Probation Officer. But as this was done in two separate cars, which is very odd to say the least, he fled and took the child back to the United Kingdom (UK) though he himself had alerted the Central Authority in Mauritius, through the Central Authority of the UK.

The application of the Convention on International Child Abduction, which is now part of our law, is very complex. It will be interesting to know the legal implications of such “double abductions”.

Trafficking

In 2009 the Combating in Trafficking in Person’s Act was adopted and a consequential amendment was made to the CPA 1994 in respect of parents who abduct their minor children. Section 13A of the CPA was amended to give the court the right to suspend the parental responsibilities and rights of the perpetrator and also to order the placement of the minor to a place of safety.

Under this new Act it is also important to highlight the new definition of exploitation which is also incorporated in the CPA.

Exploitation includes-

- (a) All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, including forced marriage;*
- (b) Sexual exploitation.*
- (c) Forced labour; and*
- (d) The illegal removal of body organs*

“trafficking means-

- (a) The recruitment, sale, supply, procurement, capture, removal, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person-*

- (1) By the use of threat, force, intimidation, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or abuse of a position of vulnerability; or*
- (2) By giving or receiving of payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person having control or authority on another person; or*
- (b) The adoption of a person facilitated or secured through illegal means, for the purpose of exploitation.*

The law provides for a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment for all those convicted of trafficking. This law was adopted as a result of negative comments made by the State Department of the United States of America. Indeed the downgrading of Mauritius in the Trafficking in Person's Report came as a shock in 2004. Mauritius was placed in Tier 2 Watch list and was branded as a source and destination country of women and child trafficking.

Over the years the State has taken this issue very seriously. There was already a Plan of Action on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women. But the law was considered to be inadequate to really be meaningful. A few networks have been dismantled but unfortunately, because of the very nature of the offence, it is difficult to get reliable information. The new law imposes a general duty on the population to come forward to denounce such practices, by ensuring confidentiality. But a proviso that the courts could forego this does not encourage whistle-blowers to come forward.

We must also again draw the attention of one and all on the fact that the drop-in centre which was meant to help victims of sexual exploitation is in fact dealing with other types of cases. The new law provides for the creation of centres for victims of trafficking. A foundation stone was laid on 20 November 2009 in Grand River North West. It is meant to be a specialised residential centre for minors. Hopefully it will be ready by the end of the year and become operational in 2011.

In the last United States Trafficking in Person's Report, Mauritius has been put back in Tier 1. This is because now it is considered that Mauritius fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Apart from the new law which was not implemented in the reporting year, the US Report mentions "increased anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts...the government reported 8 child sex trafficking convictions... Ten trafficking cases remain under investigation...including three for causing a child to be engaged in prostitution. The Mauritius Police Force used a data base for tracking trafficking-related cases."

The OCO has organised a Capacity Building Workshop on Counter Trafficking in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). An expert from

the Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme (SACTAP) ran the workshop which was attended by 20 officers of the OCO, CDU, the police, Rehabilitation Youth Centres, and several NGOs working on the issue. A follow up workshop will also be organised.

The issue of violence must be tackled in a holistic manner and all stakeholders must act in consultation and coordination. The OC having decided to respond to the recommendation of the UN Report “that all States develop a multifaceted and systematic framework to respond to violence against children which is integrated into national planning processes,” the OCO has been working on a draft Plan of Action and will be advising the MGECDWF on the finalisation of such a strategic document. It will then be for that Ministry to ensure that there is a National Committee to monitor action by each stakeholder.

Chapter III

School Discipline

There is a strong perception shared by the majority of adults, parents, teachers, heads of schools and other duty bearers that our children and adolescents are becoming more and more difficult to manage. For many of them, the main reason for the degradation in the behaviour of our children is that these young ‘immature persons’ have got rights which are clearly enunciated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In fact as from November 20, 1989, children as human beings have been officially given rights. Adults, as duty bearers, have the responsibility to ensure that these young rights-holders enjoy fully their rights in their best interests and according to their age, maturity and evolving capacities. Parents need to guide their children so that they exercise those rights in a responsible way, and while respecting the rights of others.

With the ratification of the CRC in 1990 by Mauritius, major changes were supposed to occur in several fields including education. Some important articles of the CRC relevant to education are:-

Article 2 which deals with **protection of the child against all forms of discrimination or punishment** on the basis of the race, colour, caste, status, activities, expressed opinions or beliefs of the child’s parents or legal guardian.

Article 3 which states that in all actions concerning children, the best **interests of the child** shall be a primary consideration.

Article 6 – the right to **life, survival and development**.

Article 12 – the right to **all** children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them in accordance with their age and maturity.

Article 14 – the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 15 – the right of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.

Article 16 – right to privacy.

Article 17 – right of access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources.

Article 19 - right to be protected from all form of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.

However, two main articles deal specifically with the right to education.

Article 28 *(1) State Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:*

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;*
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational educational, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;*
- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;*
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;*
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.*

2. *State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.*

Article 29 *(1) State Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:*

- (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;*
- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;*
- (c) The development of respect of the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;*
- (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship, among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;*

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

Article 31 – The right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities.

Article 37 (a) – No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The situation today is very complex. On one hand, our children and adolescents are exposed to so much, through television, specialised magazines and internet. It is not always easy for them to receive such information and not be negatively influenced by them. From a very young age, some of them adopt behaviour and lifestyle which are completely unknown to the adult duty bearers, including teachers and other staff of the school, for example, the ‘gothic’ or ‘emo’ culture. The reality is that, apart from a small group who are adopting extreme behaviour patterns, most children are going through their normal developmental stages, seeking their own identity. The small group mentioned above need help and are, in fact, sending SOS signal to the adult duty bearers.

On the other hand, our institutions like the family or school have hardly changed. The school is still rejecting more than 30% of pupils at the end of the primary cycle. Competition at all levels is strengthening. Private tuition at all levels is a **MUST** today. The curriculum is still not adapted to the needs of the pupils. Child participation in our school, if any, is symbolical or inexistent. Violence in our school is increasing. The rights of our children continue to be violated. Today, many children rebel against the repressive approach in their school. They find it difficult to fit in their school culture.

School managers, rectors, headmasters and teachers are experiencing great difficulty to impose school discipline on the pupils. They are voicing out their frustration. As most of the time, they are overwhelmed by these situations, they still resort to repressive and authoritarian measures like corporal, humiliating and degrading punishment to try to restore discipline in the schools or classes. However, it is now well established that this form of punishment is ineffective as, instead of helping to modify unacceptable behaviour at school, they result most of the time in perpetuating the cycle of violence, anger, resentment and promote other disruptive behaviour.

The OC firmly believes that school discipline should be maintained in all schools at all time. As a place of learning, the school should be kept safe for both pupils and teachers. Violence, in any form, should be eradicated. Disciplinary measures should be taught to all pupils and aim at ensuring that teachers can teach and learners can learn.

During the past year, the OC received many complaints from pupils or parents. In some cases the parents were asked by the school management to look for another school,

without resorting to a disciplinary committee or providing the children with the services of the educational psychologists of the MEHR. Many schools also make abusive use of the rustication measure. The OC requested one such school to submit its rules and regulations. She then asked the MEHR and the PSSA to give their stand on some articles of the document. She also asked them about the procedures for rustication and expulsion in both state and private secondary schools.

Some relevant parts of the reply of the MEHR and the PSSA are reproduced below:

The procedures for rustication and expulsion in State Secondary Schools as laid down in the School Management Manual are as follows:

Rustication

- (i) *The Rector is empowered under Section 13 of the Education Regulations to temporarily suspend a pupil.*
- (ii) *The Responsible Party of the Student to be rusticated will be requested by phone to call at school to be informed of the decision of the School Disciplinary Committee.*
- (iii) *A registered letter will also be forwarded to the Responsible Party with an 'avis de reception' and rustication will take place within 48 hours following the issue of the letter if the Responsible Party has not reported at school. The Zone Directorate should also be informed.*
- (iv) *Rustication must be recorded in the student's term report and personal file.*

Expulsion

- (i) *This is the ultimate sanction and will be considered when all possible attempts to improve misbehaviour have failed. A student can be expelled only upon approval given by the Minister – Section 13(1) of Education Regulations refers.*
- (ii) *The Rector will submit the case to the Zone Director, supporting the request by a detailed history of the case and giving full justifications with evidence of all actions taken towards solving the problem.*
- (iii) *However, the Responsible Party should be given ample warning, in writing, if this decision has to be taken.*

According to the PSSA, the procedures of rustication and expulsion in private secondary schools are as follows:

(a) Rustication

There is no provision in the regulations concerning procedures for the rustication of students. It is understood that this sanction forms part of the internal discipline of the school and it is applied reasonably by the school administration.

(b) Expulsion

The Private Secondary Schools Regulations makes provision for the following:

Regulation 10:

“(1) Subject to regulation 12, no student attending a secondary school shall be expelled unless he has been absent from school for a continuous period of not less than four weeks without reasonable justification.

(2) Where a student has been expelled under paragraph (1), the Principal shall forthwith inform the Authority in writing.

(3) A student who has been expelled under paragraph 10 (1) may apply for readmission.”

Regulation 12:

“(1) No Manager shall expel a student, unless he has first obtained the prior approval of the Authority.

(2) The Authority may on good cause shown by the manager and pending its final decision authorise him to expel a student.”

- (c)** When considering requests made for expulsion of students, the PSSA ensures that no alternative solution exists to the case submitted. In many cases, the PSSA would recommend the issue of a Transfer Certificate to a student instead of his expulsion.

In general, Rules and Regulations should provide a code of behaviour. However, these should in no way debar a student from his right to education. Any sanction should be proportionate to the fault committed and the power of expulsion should be left to the appropriate authority.

	Rules and Regulations of the school	Views of PSSA	Stand of the MEHR
3(b)	Punctuality Right of admittance to school	Late comers should be admitted on the school premises, the	• Management and staff have the responsibility to ensure

	may be prohibited to late comers.	reason for their lateness should be inquired into and where management of the school is not satisfied with the explanations provided by the student, the Responsible Party should be informed thereof and of the need to ascertain that the student is punctual. In case of recurrence, the school may consider inflicting a reasonable sanction.	the rule of discipline which includes punctuality. • The Rules and Regulations should contain appropriate procedures for latenesses. • However, under no circumstances should the right of admission be prohibited to a late comer as this will encourage him/her to go loitering or indulge in anti-social activities, without the Responsible Party being aware.
7(i)	Discipline It is strictly forbidden for students to pierce their ears and eyebrows during their stay (Form I to HSC), expulsion will follow any eventual piercing/trace of.	The wearing of accessories relevant to piercing may be prohibited on the school premises only. The school should obtain prior approval of the PSSA before expelling any student.	The views of the PSSA are concurred with. The Rules and Regulations become applicable only after the student has been duly admitted to the school, in which case the Responsible Party undertakes to ensure total adherence to the school's rules. The school cannot refuse admission to a student who has traces of piercing, such having been made at a time prior to admission day.
7(j)	Students will not be allowed to wear necklaces, rings and bracelets at school.	Students may be allowed to wear discrete pieces of jewellery.	Such prohibition should be exercised for cases where the wearing of jewellery does effectively project a poor image of the student in a way to tarnish the image of the school.
7(k)	Colouring of hair, complete shaving of the hair, long hair style, use of hair gel, beard style and shaving of eyebrows will not be tolerated. Non compliance will lead to rustication for a period of not less than one month	The alteration of the outward appearance of a student (colouring of hair, shaving of hair, long hair beard style, use of hair gel etc., without justification may be prohibited and the sanction for departure from the rules should not be disproportionate.	
7(l)	The school uniform must always be properly worn – even before and after school hours. It should never be in contradiction with conditions specified in (j) and (k) above. Failure to do so tarnish the image of the school and is subject to disciplinary measures.	The Authority is unable to link the articles 7(j) and 7(k) with the wearing of uniform. However, the Authority is agreeable to the fact that school uniform must be properly worn.	• The policy on the wearing of school uniform should be brought to the attention of parents in the School Rules and Regulations. The Rector, in consultation with staff, students and parents, will decide on the type of uniform students will have to wear. • It is the responsibility of the

			Rector, Deputy Rector, Usher and teaching staff to ensure the proper wearing of uniform. • Except where flexibility is required because of cultural or religious consideration, all the components of the school uniform should imperatively be worn.
7(m)	Under no circumstances should any student come to school with a mobile phone. Same will be confiscated and returned back to the Responsible Party at the end of the academic year – when results will be issued.	Students should switch off their mobile during study time. In case of non-compliance, disciplinary action may be envisaged but it should be proportionate.	Use of mobile phone is strictly prohibited during classes and examinations. Non-compliance with this instruction renders students and staff liable to disciplinary action.
7(n)	Students should not bring electronic games, compact disc, steel rulers, pocket knives, correction fluid, ‘blanco’ and large sums of money to school. The school will not assume responsibility for any loss or injury. The above will be confiscated. Detention or rustication might follow depending on the seriousness of the offence.	The PSSA has no objection to the provisions of the part of the regulations but would recommend that any sanction taken by the school should not be disproportionate.	Confiscation of mobile phones and other devices forms part of the procedures in cases where these have been proved to have interfered with the good running of the classes. Parents should be requested to call at school and that these are returned to them. In no way is it ethical to keep these till the end of the year (except may be in case of relapse) or when it is used as an exhibit for police/ or other official enquiry.

The Ombudsperson’s observations and comments

1. The OC concur with the views of the MEHR and the PSSA on the role of parents as the first duty bearers to ensure that their children follow the rules and regulations of the school so that they may enjoy their right to education fully.
2. She would like to reinstate her recommendation made earlier to the MEHR on the urgency to work on core rules and regulations, applicable to all schools, so that the same disciplinary approach would be used in all schools. These rules and regulations should be based on positive and constructive discipline principles fully described in the kit on the Prevention of Violence at School (PVAS). Children should participate in the elaboration of these regulations which would guide their behaviour at school.
3. Children should be involved in the implementation of the rules and regulation as well as in the running of the school. They should also play an active role through a well organised and democratic students’ council and in other instances like the disciplinary committee, sports committee and so on. Children should be regarded

as partners and not as liabilities. Ideally the PTA could also be reformed and include pupils' representatives.

4. An appropriate mechanism should be set up in all schools to look into any case of violence reported by any child against his/her person. This mechanism should be transparent, accessible, child friendly, democratic and just.
5. Rustication should be used as a measure of last resort. Support systems should be developed at school level involving teachers and older pupils to act as peer counsellors. Heads of school should also involve educational psychologists and social worker of the MEHR as well as volunteer parents and NGOs in their plans to support children with disruptive behaviour.
6. Life-Skills Education as well as Human Rights Education should be introduced in our school to help our children to become more responsible, reliant, supportive and committed, respectful of the rights of others. The OC firmly believes that discipline should be taught and not imposed. Its main aim should be the profound transformation of the child who would have learnt self-discipline.

Chapter IV

Children in the Media

In August 2005, the OC wrote to all Editors in Chief of the newspapers published in Mauritius as well as to directors of all radio and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation regarding the role of the media concerning children. She drew their attention on Article 16 (1) of the CRC which reads: “No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation. She also sent the different guidelines on children and the media to them. Since then, gradually, a change in approach in most newspapers was noted.

However, during the past few years, several incidents involving children occurred and the press reported on them. In some newspapers, the photographs of children were published and in others the details provided helped in identifying the children concerned. In each case, the OC wrote to the Editor in Chief of the newspapers. Once again, she sent the different guidelines to the persons concerned. The guidelines are reproduced below for ease of reference.

The OC urges all professionals of the media to refer to these guidelines each time they have to report on an event involving children, specially child victims of abuse and violence.

The Convention on the rights of the child recognises the importance of the media when it comes to promoting and protecting all the human rights in general. By revealing cases of abuse and violence against children, they work for the protection and the promotion of the rights of the child. Besides, the Convention underlines the important role of the media in enabling the child to exercise his participative rights as ensured by its Articles 12, 13 and 17. However, Article 16 states that the child should be protected from arbitrary and unlawful interference with his or her privacy, home and family as well as from unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation. In this point of view, the media should learn how to treat cases involving children with respect, keeping in mind that they cannot use the image or exploit the situation of a child as a marketing tool. Article 17 of the Convention also underlines the key role of the media as an educational tool which should be appropriate, aiming for the promotion of the child’s social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. It encourages the States parties to adopt appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from harmful and injurious information.

➤ **The OSLO Challenge**

The challenge to media professionals at all levels and in all media is:

- *to raise awareness in the media professions about the rights of children and how they can be protected and promoted by good professional practices or harmed through inappropriate policies or actions;*
- *to work ethically and professionally according to sound media practices and to develop and promote media codes of ethics in order to avoid sensationalism, stereotyping (including by gender) or undervaluing of children and their rights;*
- *to resist commercial pressures that lead to children's issues and the rights of children to freedom of expression, fair coverage and protection from exploitation, including as consumers, being given low priority;*
- *to work to enhance the relationship between children and the media so that both grow and improve in understanding of the positive and negative power and potential of the relationship.*

The challenge to the private sector, including media owners is:

- *to take into account the rights of children to access, participation, media education and protection from harmful content in the development of new media products and technologies;*
- *to make the best interests of the child a primary consideration in the pursuit of commercial and financial success, so that today's children become adults in a global society in which all people are protected, respected and free.*

➤ **International Federation of Journalists Guidelines.**

1. *All journalists and media professionals have a duty to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards and should promote within the industry the widest possible dissemination of information about the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for the exercise of journalism.*
2. *Media organizations should regard violation of the rights of children and issues related to children's safety, privacy, security, education, health and social welfare, and all forms of exploitation as important questions for investigation and*

public debate. Children have an absolute right to privacy, the only exceptions being those explicitly set out in these guidelines.

- 3. Journalistic activity which touches on the lives and welfare of children should always be carried out with appreciation of the vulnerable situation of children.*
- 4. Journalists and media organisations shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs and, in particular, they shall:*
 - Strive for standards of excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children;*
 - Avoid programming and publication of images which intrude on the space of children with information which is damaging to them;*
 - Avoid the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children;*
 - Consider carefully the consequences of publication of any material concerning children;*
 - Guard against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest;*
 - Give children, where possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind;*
 - Ensure independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to ensure that verification takes place without putting child informants at risk;*
 - Avoid the use of sexualized images of children;*
 - Use fair, open and straightforward methods for obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of children or a responsible adult, guardian or carer;*
 - Verify the credentials of any organization purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of children;*
 - Not make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interest of the child.*
- 5. Journalists should put to critical examination the reports submitted and the claims made by governments on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in their respective countries.*
- 6. Media should not consider and report the conditions of children only as events but should continuously report the process likely to lead or leading to the occurrence of these events.*

➤ The UNICEF checklist

UNICEF has developed a checklist linked to Articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to help journalists keep children's rights on the news agenda and gauge the extent to which the protection and promotion of children's rights have been integrated into the journalistic process and the media industry.

General:

- *Media professionals have an obligation to respect children's human rights, in the way they operate and how they represent children. Would your work stand up to scrutiny in this regard?*
- *Did you approach your story with a fixed view about how you want the children to respond? Have you done justice to what the children actually said?*
- *When conducting interviews with children did you ensure that the children were comfortable and not under duress? Did you allow enough time to explain your intentions?*
- *Did you obtain the child's consent for the use of their names, quotes, and the taking and publication of their image?*
- *Do they know how to contact you and how to obtain a copy of the finished item?*
- *Have you assessed the risk to the child of using her or his name or image? Have you discussed it with the child, the child's parents or guardian, and with editorial colleagues?*
- *Have you applied the same checking procedures as you would with adult informants, before publishing allegations or assertions made to you by children?*
- *Is your language and terminology patronising, insulting or demeaning?*
- *Have you avoided naming or using emotionally exploitative pictures of the children?*
- *Are the best interests of children (their safety and security) served by your story? Is the story presented in a rational and balanced way?*
- *What can you do to help children understand the role of the media in society? Has your media company considered ways of producing information in accessible forms that might attract children and even assist teachers in their classroom work with children?*
- *Has your publication or programme made arrangements to provide reliable (and, where appropriate, confidential) support or advice to children who respond to*

items concerning personal health, physical or sexual abuse, commercial exploitation or other forms of criminal activity?

- *Are you providing information that will enable members of the public to assist children in need of care and protection to obtain the necessary help from state or non governmental bodies?*

The OC has reiterated a proposal made since August 2005 to the Attorney General and to the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, to amend the Child Protection Act 1994 so as to set the standards which would help her in protecting children from harmful exposure in the media. These should now be included in the Children's Bill.

Children and Internet

The world of Information Technology has become part and parcel of the life of every youngster. Children also use the Internet to learn, experience new things, have fun from social networks and exchange e-mail. The internet offers a wide range of opportunities for the integral development of our youngsters but while exploring the internet, children can also be exposed to information or images that are inappropriate for them and can cause much harm to their emotional and psychological well being.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly specifies that the child has the right to have access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well being and mental health. In case it is detrimental to the developmental well being of the child, preventive measures have to be taken.

The social networking sites such as Youtube, Twitter, Facebook are very popular among our youngsters nowadays. The purpose of social networking is purely social, allowing users to establish friendship or romantic relationships while other may focus on establishing connections. These sites encourage users to provide a certain amount of personal information. However when deciding on how much information to reveal, children may not exercise the same amount of caution as they would when meeting someone in person.

Children in such circumstances become easy prey for online predators because of the accessibility and amount of personal information available to them. These predators may form relationship online and then convince young persons to meet them. The personal information can also be used to conduct cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is any harassment that occurs via Information Communication Technology (ICT) particularly mobile phones and Internet. Vicious forum posts, name calling in chat rooms, posting fake profiles on web sites and cruel email messages are different forms of cyberbullying.

Children taking part in things like this must be told that it is not harmless fun. Whoever is the victim of this type of treatment is being cyberbullied and there are things that can be done to stop the harassment.

The most important thing a victim of cyberbullying can do is not to respond to the bully.

Tips for children

- Do not play into the bully's games;
- Do not answer emails or short message service (SMS) or calls.
- Do not respond to posts;
- Do not engage in a chat room exchange;
- Do not copy what the bully is doing.
- Ignore the bully and get help from parents and teachers.

While ignoring the bully, be sure to save the evidence so that school officials, Internet Service Providers and even the Police can properly deal with the bully. In fact, cyberbullying appears as an easy way to bully without revealing one's identity, but any kind of activity on the web leaves traces of evidence on the computer which may later be used to locate and identify the perpetrators.

Repeated or excessive harassment via sms, email, forums or chat rooms is an offence and should be reported to the police. Threats of violence should also be reported to the police. The parents and educators have an important role to play to ensure the security of the children online. They have to watch on what kids do and who they meet online. Before children start using the Internet, discuss the kinds of sites that are off limits, what information that should not be shared and set the boundaries within which the child can communicate. Explain to the child that the purpose of those rules is to protect but not to control him/her.

Children should be made aware that once data is published online, it may be viewed by hundreds of person and will remain permanently so. Their privacy on the internet relies on their ability to control the information they reveal about themselves and who may have access to it.

Ten rules for online safety

1. Do not give your real name or any personal information that may identify you when you are chatting online.
2. Do not give out your address, even indirectly. The person you are chatting to may use trick questions to get this out of you, like asking about the places you visit.
3. Use nicknames for family members when online.
4. Do not tell people on the Internet where your parents or carers work, or how long they are out of the house. You may accidentally tell someone who is contemplating a robbery, or far worse, a pedophile.
5. Do not give out the name of your school or the names of your classmates.
6. Do not send your picture to someone you do not know.
7. Do not give out any telephone numbers. Be especially careful of people who ask for your mobile number.
8. Do let your parents or carers know which message boards and chat rooms you will be using and who you are regularly talking with.
9. Do let your parents know if there is an email you receive that makes you uncomfortable, or when anything unpleasant is said on a message board or in a chat room.
10. Do enjoy yourself on the web, but let your parents know what you are doing.

Parents must detect on-line risks

Parents must be aware of the signs indicating that their child may be at risk online. Here are a few of them:

- The child lies about the time spent online, that is, if he is “sneaking” onto the Internet while no one is watching.
- The child becomes moody, angry, irritable or shows other behavioural problems when not online, but seems to have a better mood once he is online again.
- You find pornography on the child’s computer.
- The child receives phone calls from people you do not know or is making calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers you do not recognize.
- The child receives mail, gifts or packages from people you don’t know.
- The child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on the monitor when you come into the room.
- The child becomes withdrawn from the family, or may also be skipping meals to spend more time online.
- The child is using an online account belonging to someone else.

Due to the huge challenge that the world of information technology represents to our youngsters, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology has in fact established a Child Safety Action Plan and has made various recommendations to safeguard our youngsters from the negative impact of this new technology. In line with the recommendations of the Child Safety Online Action Plan, a Central Coordinating Committee has been set up to monitor implementation of actions and review of action plan.

The National Computer Board has set up a Safer Internet Day Committee to plan activities for the Safer Internet Day held worldwide on 9th February of each year.

The National Cybercrime Prevention Committee has been set up under the aegis of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority to enhance the national approach to combat cybercrime as per the recommendations approved by the cabinet:

- a) Improvement of the policy, legal and regulatory frameworks to adapt to international legal instruments and provide for proportionate and dissuasive sanctions;

- b) Establishment of a mechanism to increase exchange of information on IT security and cybercrimes at local, regional and international levels;
- c) Provision of a safe and secure environment to users, particularly children and young adults; and
- d) Improved detection of and responses to cybercrime.

The Mauritian Computer Emergency Response Team, CERT-MU has been set up by the National Computer Board. Its mission is “to provide information and assistance to its constituents in implementing proactive measures to reduce the risks of information security incidents as well as responding to such incidents when they occur”.

With regard to the Child Safety Online Bill, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology has submitted the drafting instructions to the State Law Office for the preparation of the appropriate legislation.

During the past year, the OC received several complaints of cyberbullying or harassment, many through sms. She also had to deal with problems regarding children putting comments on Facebook or children sending love sms (see selected cases).

Chapter V

Rodrigues

During the reporting year the OC went to Rodrigues twice.

The first visit took place from 20 November 2009 to 22 November 2009. She was accompanied by investigators Chandhanee Sewock and Ismail Bawamia.

During that visit she launched the Booklet on Children's Rights during an event organised by the Deputy Chief Commissioner and Commissioner for Education, Training, Arts and Culture, Library Services and Human Resource and the Commissioner for Social Security, Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare and Alleviation of Poverty at Baladirou on Saturday 21 November 2009.

On that occasion there was the laying of the foundation stone for a new shelter in Rodrigues for Children and the OC made a speech on Children's Rights and appealed to all adults present to respect children and support them to denounce all cases of child abuse.

It must be noted that the booklet was launched in Mauritius only two days earlier, on 19 November 2009, as it was prepared in the context of the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child celebrated on 20 November 2009 worldwide.

During that visit the OC and the investigators received members of the public to register their complaints.

The OC again visited Rodrigues from 29-31 March 2010. She met members of the public on Monday 29 March 2010, and registered several complaints. On Monday 30 March she proceeded with a full presentation of the Booklet on Children's Rights called "*Les droits de l'enfant à travers les aventures de Tico, Tify et Rajoo*" at Marechal College, in the presence of the Commissioner for Social Security, Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare and Alleviation of Poverty, Ms. Marie Thérèse Clair who also delivered her message on Children's Rights. Both intervenors laid emphasis on the concept "**R**ights, **R**espect and **R**esponsibility". A sticker on the new 3Rs was also given to children who each received a booklet.

These booklets are meant for children in Form I. During the interactive session that took place, the pupils participated actively and demonstrated that they were well aware of their

rights and responsibilities. Again the OC appealed to teachers to help children to understand the extent and limits of their rights.

In the afternoon the OC had a working session with primary school teachers. She distributed the kit on the prevention of violence at school to the participants and commented on its contents. The OC laid emphasis on the need to have a child friendly and teacher friendly atmosphere at school. She explained why corporal punishment was counter productive and informed those present that it was always better to use alternative constructive discipline fully described in the kit. She also explained that teachers and non-teaching staff have a legal obligation to inform the Child Development Unit of all cases of child abuse. The kit also described in detail the signs and symbols of all forms of violence including physical, psychological and sexual abuse.

On Wednesday 31 March 2010, the OC had an interactive working session at the Ste Thérèse RCA School at Rivière Coco. Again children were sensitised on their rights and responsibilities. The OC had a general discussion with the staff and took note of their various concerns.

During the last visit, the OC was made aware that there was an increasing number of cases of children with “behavioural” problems. But there were no specialists or therapists to attend to such cases. During both visits the OC once more noted that there were many cases of teenage or abandoned mothers. In many cases women fell pregnant very young but were abandoned by their male partners. But they were then trapped in more unstable relationships but always ended up with several children fathered by different partners. Most of these partners did not assume their responsibility.

Thereafter, the abandoned mothers had to seek social aid which was not always legally available to all the children. Often, they had to stop working and were living at mere subsistence level. Unfortunately children born and bred in such precarious conditions were facing serious material and psychological difficulties.

There is a great need to engage in mass sensitisation with both women and men to teach them their reproductive rights and responsibilities. Fortunately, both the Commission and some NGOs are seriously giving energy to tackle this difficult problem.

It is interesting to note that many Rodriguan NGOs have benefited from funds from the Women and Children Solidarity Programme. The OC as member of the Steering Committee of the Programme always promotes it with NGOs in Rodrigues. During this last visit the OC had to meet activists of two of those who had applied to check some

sensitive questions raised. That was also an occasion to have an exchange on civil society involvement in Rodrigues.

Chapter VI

International Obligations

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) have the duty to ensure that the State gives due respect to its international obligations. The Ombudsperson for Children (OC) in particular has the duty, under section 5 (c) of the Ombudsperson for Children's Act 2003, to promote compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

In order to do this, the OC draws the attention of the various stakeholders on their duties towards children and the loopholes in their policies which affect children's rights negatively. The OC also makes specific proposals to the Minister responsible for child development in order to improve the laws, policies and strategies relating to children. Throughout the Annual Reports the changes brought are highlighted and the remaining challenges are also analysed to help government and all those concerned to improve the situation in the best interests of children of the Republic.

In order to optimise the capacities of all government departments to comply with the CRC, the OC has set up a Compliance Committee. Regular meetings have helped the close and efficient monitoring of children's rights based on the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child of January 2006 (hereinafter referred to as the CRC Committee). Indeed a template has been in circulation and stakeholders are invited to fill the template as and when they make a significant progress.

It is important to bear in mind that Mauritius will have to submit its Consolidated 3rd, 4th and 5th Report to the UNCRC by March 2011. The formal submission and discussion will take place in 2012.

The attention of the OC has also been drawn to the Concluding Observations of the 44th Session of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the 25 May 2010 (hereinafter referred to as the Ecosoc Committee). Several Observations concern the rights of children directly or indirectly.

The Ecosoc Committee is very concerned with de facto discrimination against certain sections of the population and urges our State to "develop an effective strategy targeting poverty, specifically amongst Mauritian Creoles, with due respect to their cultural rights."

It is interesting to note that the new Government has just created a Ministry for Social Integration headed by a prominent Minister of the "Creole community".

Discrimination is also perceived as being practised with regard to children with disabilities, affected or infected by HIV/AIDS or children from disadvantaged families.

One very challenging recommendation to us is the need for paid maternity leave to mothers whether they have completed one year service with their employers or not. Paternity leave should also be available to fathers “regardless of their marital status”. Presumably this would apply only if the father in question has declared his child. That of course creates a legal obligation to provide financially for his child. This recommendation goes far beyond and includes his presence as well, which is the best he can give to a new-born in psychological and emotional terms.

This is revolutionary as it places the responsibility on government and employers to think first and foremost of the child.

There is also a clear recommendation to “explicitly prohibiting corporal punishment at home and in alternative care settings and as a disciplinary measure in the penal system”.

The law in this respect needs definitely to be improved and more specially to be implemented.

There is also a recommendation to combat sexual exploitation and to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

The OC has been calling for such a ratification for several years now. The answer is always that all relevant laws need to be amended first.

Regarding education, the Ecosoc Committee proposes the extension of the ZEP system and wants our State to continue to persevere with the introduction of Creole as a medium of instruction in schools. It recommends the doing away of the competitive system for admission to secondary schools and encourages regionalisation.

The National Human Rights Institutions which are so numerous in Mauritius-the National Human Rights Commission, the Ombudsman and Ombudsperson for Children- should join hands to ensure that the recommendations of all Human Rights Treaty bodies are indeed implemented.

Chapter VII

Communication, sensitisation and capacity building

Awareness raising is an essential part of the OC's mission. The OC must first of all ensure that everyone knows that there is an institution which defends the rights of children. They must also understand how the OC defends children, what are her specific powers and functions and how she operates.

The OC also has the duty to sensitise both adults and children on the rights of children and speak about the latest research done on several children's issues specially on violence against children.

In fact the OCA 2003 states that one of the objects of the office of the OC shall be the promotion of the rights and best interests of children and the promotion of compliance with the Convention.

Talks and seminars:

The OC attended the following events:

1. On 23 September 2009, an interactive dinner at Westminster House, Floréal, at the invitation of the British High Commissioner, on the theme of "Women empowerment".
2. On 8 October 2009, at the Centre Culturel Charles Baudelaire (CCB), from 17.30 hrs to 19.00 hrs, at the invitation of Amnesty International Mauritius Section and the CCB at the launching of a campaign called "Exigeons la dignité" where she intervened from the floor on the question of economic, social and cultural rights as being essential to fight poverty.
3. On 13 October 2009, at the Labourdonnais Hotel, participated in a workshop on Human Rights organised by the Prime Minister's Office.
4. On 16 October 2009, at the *centre paroissal du village de Bois Marchand, Terre Rouge*, from 17 hrs to 20 hrs. The OC spoke on children's rights and the duty of everyone to report cases of child abuse.
5. On 28 October 2009, at Cyber Tower I, Ebène, at the invitation of Books and Business on the occasion of the launching of the trilingual French – English – Mauritian Creole dictionary for children.

6. On 20 November 2009, at Lycée Labourdonnais (Classe 6ème), from 10.00 hrs to 12.00 hrs, sensitisation on children's rights on the occasion of the Universal Children's Day and the 20th Anniversary of the CRC.
7. On 19 December 2009, at Loreto Convent Rose Hill, from 9.30 hrs to 13.00 hrs, organised by Amnesty International Mauritius Section, sensitisation on Human Rights at Amnesty Award Ceremony.
8. On 20 February 2010, at Glen Park, organised by the Scouts Group of Upper Plaines Wilhems, on the occasion of the Celebration of Founder's Day, Lord Baden Powell, a talk on rights and responsibilities.
9. On 2 March 2010, at Wooton Government School, sensitisation on violence and discipline.
10. On 3 March 2010, at La Plantation, as from 10.00 hrs, sensitisation during the "Happy Day" Celebration organised by G4S for children of La Colombe Shelter.
11. On 8 March 2010, at Lycée Labourdonnais from 10.00 hrs to 12.00 hrs, talk on «les femmes et les métiers d'hommes ».
12. On 9 March 2010, at Bell Village SSS, from 10h00 hrs to 12h00 hrs, an interactive session with Form I pupils on the occasion of the launching of the Booklet on Children's Rights.
13. On 11 March 2010, at l'Ecole du Nord – Delivered message of Prime Minister for Republic Day.
14. On 22 March 2010, at Hotel La Plantation, Balaclava at the International Conference on the Mauritius Africa Initiative in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education, participated in the general debate.
15. On 30 March 2010, at Maréchal College, Rodrigues, from 9.30 hrs to 11.30 hrs, sensitisation of children of Form I on rights and responsibilities. Launching of Booklet on Children's Rights.
16. On 30 March 2010, at Maréchal College, Rodrigues, from 13.30 hrs – 15.30 hrs, a working session with primary school teachers.
17. On 31 March 2010, at Ste Thérèse RCA School, Rivière Coco, Rodrigues, from 9.00 hrs – 10.30 hrs, a working session with ZEP school.
18. On 16 June, at Grand Bay International Conference Centre, from 9h30 – 13h30, gave a speech on children's rights and responsibilities and violence against

children, and commented on the youth debate held on the occasion of the 16 Days 16 Rights Campaign on the Day of the African Child.

19. On 18 June 2010, at Pamplémousses State Secondary School, from 9h30 – 12h30, Message delivered to all pupils on the occasion of the Prize Giving Day and Music Day.
20. On 21 June 2010, at La Colombe, the Government Shelter of Pointe aux Sables, a talk on children's rights and responsibilities to the residents.
21. On 2 July 2010, participated in the interactive workshop on a proposed Code of Ethics organised by the Independent Broadcasting Authority.
22. On 6 July 2010, at the Municipality of Curepipe, on the occasion of the Day of the African Child, organised by the ECCEA, a talk on child rights and responsibilities.
23. On 26 July 2010, at Balfour Gardens, Beau Bassin, had an interactive session on rights and responsibilities with children from Cité La Ferme, organised by SOS Villages Bambous.
24. On 3 August 2010, at Mer Rouge, at the Apostolat de la Mer Complex, from 11 a.m to 1 p.m, an interactive session on children's rights and responsibilities with teachers of the Nicolay Government School (kits and other relevant documentation were distributed).
25. On 12 August 2010, at the Institut Français de Maurice, organised by the Jeune Chambre Internationale de Quatre Bornes et Fondation ENL, participated in a half-day debate on youth violence and spoke on violence by and against children.

The OC also participated in several debates on radio both in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Investigator I. Bawamia attended the following events:

- On 12 and 19 September 2009, sensitised 25 youth leaders at the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) on the role of the OC and on the rights of children.
- On 30 September 2009, at the MGI, participated in a workshop on Human Values, organised by the Indian Ocean Institute of Education in Human Values (IOIEHV) and the ECCEA.
- On 13 October 2009, participated in a workshop on Human Rights organised by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) at Le Labourdonnais Hotel.

- On 20 November 2009, sensitised 50 pre-school managers on positive discipline and on the rights of the child organised by the ECCEA (Zone 2) in Helvetia.
- On 24 November 2009, sensitised 38 pre-school caretakers on the rights of the child organised by the ECCEA (Zone 2) in Helvetia.
- On 7 December 2009, sensitised 25 pre-primary school managers at the Municipality of Curepipe.
- On 10 December 2009, sensitised 50 pre-school managers from the region of Flacq and the East on positive discipline at school.
- On 4 December 2009 at Poste de Flacq RCA, sensitised 50 parents of Poste de Flacq on positive parenting.
- On 08 February 2010, sensitised 20 babysitters on the rights of the child and on child abuse and protection in the region of Vallée Pitot.
- From 22 – 24 March 2010, at La Plantation Hotel in Balaclava, participated in an International Conference on the Mauritius-Africa Initiative in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education.
- On 25 March 2010, at a workshop organised by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life (MOH&QL), sensitised 20 frontline officers of the medical field on the negative effects of corporal punishment and on positive discipline.
- On July 7 2010, at a workshop organised by the ECCEA in Vacoas, sensitised 50 pre-school managers of the Upper Plaine Wilhems region on the Convention on the rights of the child and on positive discipline in the context of the Day of The African Child.

Mr. Bawamia participated in several radio shows on Kool FM, MBC Rodrigues. He collaborated with the MCA in the elaboration of a curriculum for a certificate course in Early Childhood Care. He attended several case conferences organised by the MEHR and the MGECDFW.

Investigator C. Sewock attended the following events:

- On 19 September 2009, sensitised 25 youth leaders at the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) on the role of the OC and on the rights of children.

- On 17 November 2009, participated in the second meeting of the “Child Safety Online Central Coordinating Committee” to ensure the monitoring of the Child Safety Online Action Plan at the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology.
- On 9 February 2010, attended a workshop on the Social Networking Principles organised by the National Computer Board at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) Auditorium Moka.
- On 22 June 2010, attended a workshop on the theme “Youngsters Online Role of School” at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Auditorium, Moka.

Training

The Ombudsperson for Children’s Office organized the following training sessions.

1. A Capacity Building Workshop on Counter Trafficking on 18-19 March 2010 organised in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme (SACTAP). The training concerned 19 front line officers from the following Ministries and Departments:
Ministry of Women’s Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, the Police Force, (Police Family Protection Unit, *Brigade pour la protection des mineurs*), Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institution (Rehabilitation Youth Centre Boys and Girls) and the Ombudsperson for Children’s Office. Several NGOs also sent their officers to be trained (Chrysalide Centre, Drop in Centre, Rado, Amnesty International Mauritius Section).
2. A two-hours training session on the psychoanalytical aspects of issue of violence against children.

The session was run by Ms Jacquemine Latham-Koenig, a psychoanalyst. Several psychologists also intervened. Several Officers from different NGOS working with children were present:

Women in Networking, Gender Links, Terre de Paix, Scouts, Centre I. Goomany, TIPa, IBL Group, Amnesty International Mauritius Section, SOS Village, ANPPCAN, SAFIRE, SOS Femmes, Victim Support, Cedem, Rogers Foundation and 7 officers from the Ombudsperson for Children’s Office and an officer from

the Women and Children Solidarity Programme under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office.

Chapter VIII

Multi-Disciplinary Case Conference (MDCC)

During the past years the OCO has organised several case conferences involving several front line officers from different bodies, both public and private, to help the OC in exploring difficult and complicated cases and contribute in finding the most appropriate solutions in the best interests of the child victims. The OCO also proposed to the MGECDFW to prepare guidelines together in order to standardise the procedures.

The officers of the OCO have also participated in case conferences organized by other government departments like the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources or the CDU as well in those organized by NGO's. The main role of the officers of the OCO are to help in finding the most appropriate alternative in the best interests of the children concerned. It is also important to ensure that the main guiding principles of the CRC, that is, non-discrimination, best interests of the child, right to life, survival and development and the participation of children in all matters involving them prevail in these discussions.

What is a case conference?

A case conference is a multi-disciplinary tool which people dealing with child abuse or violation of child rights may use to explore the problem of a particular child or a group of children affected by the same problem from different perspectives and disciplines. It groups professionals or frontline officers from different backgrounds and sectors who, through their expertise and experience, would help in understanding the child's problem, contribute in finding appropriate solutions and develop care plans.

The focus of the multidisciplinary case conference is on the protection and welfare of the child. A family perspective is also favoured as the CRC, in its preamble recognizes **the family as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth of all its members and particularly children**. So the MDCC will review the safety and welfare of all children as well as the other members of the family. Special interventions may target parents so as to empower them to care for their children.

The major functions and tasks of the MDCC

The major functions of the MDCC and the main tasks to be performed by its members are as follows:

1. To examine the cause for concern, analyse available information and decide from a child rights and welfare perspective whether this is a child abuse or child neglect

case and whether the child is at risk of being abused. The nature of the abuse or problem is then defined.

2. To share information collected through observation or intervention carried out by any member of the MDCC or institution.
3. To assess the level of risk the child may potentially face or is facing at that time.
4. To make recommendations for the welfare planning of the child.
5. To assess the degree of risk and make recommendations for the welfare planning of other children in the family (if any).
6. To assess the overall situation of the whole family.
7. To agree on an inter-agency care plan to protect the child and empower the other members of the family (if necessary).
8. To identify the key social worker/FSPO or any other officer who will lead the intervention and clearly define the roles of the other helping professionals in the implementation and follow up of the care plan for the child.
9. To decide how the child and parents will be informed of the outcome and decisions of the conference and who will be responsible of doing so.
10. To consider the need, if any, for statutory action to protect the child or to ensure the child's welfare.
11. To consider the need for subsequent MDCC with reference to:
 - (a) The need for further information;
 - (b) The need to review any follow up action; and
 - (c) Any important decision of the MDCC that cannot be implemented because of circumstantial changes and which may jeopardize the well-being of the child.
12. To consider the need and timing to issue progress report to related parties involved in the follow up of the case.

The Value of the MDCC

The MDCC is a valuable tool in child protection or child welfare intervention. The positive aspects of the MDCC are as followed:

1. It provides an opportunity for better association and association among professionals from different disciplines working for children. Thus facilitating the creation of comprehensive response protocols that are child friendly.
2. It helps the different institutions or departments or NGO's to understand the concepts and perspectives of the other professionals involved. Thus, they are able to locate themselves in the chain of protection. They understand their roles and responsibilities in facilitating well co-ordinated outcomes for child victim/witness/offender.
3. It prevents overlapping or duplication or interventions which often cause re-victimization of the child.
4. It contributes to the capacity building of each member of the MDCC. Through their discussions and interactions, it helps the different duty bearers to foster relationships among themselves. There is cross pollination and fertilization of perspectives and ideas.

It provides a platform and an opportunity to discuss any legal and ethical dilemmas that the professionals involved may face during their joint handling of the child and in any decision making proceedings.

Factors contributing to successful MDCCs

As explained, the MDCC is a meeting of competent persons who through their expertise, experience and ability to foster interpersonal relationship will try to contribute in finding appropriate solution to a child's problem and in elaborating a care plan for him. The success of MDCCs would depend, inter-alia on the following:

- (a) The personal commitment of each member;
- (b) The development of a shared vision and the setting of common goals;
- (c) Clarity of roles and communication among all members;
- (d) The support and backing of each member of their respective institutions;
- (e) The leadership skills of the chairperson;
- (f) The collaboration and cooperation of various professional bodies like the society of psychologists, the medical council or the Bar Council.

Role of the chairperson of the MDCC

The chairperson of the MDCC has an important role to play in the proper organization and running of the conference. His/her duties include:-

- To ensure that all parties concerned are invited;
- To send a brief of the problem to the professional concerned in advance ;
- To ensure that all participants respect the confidentiality of the case;
- To encourage and ensure that all attendees take an active part in the discussion, decision-making and elaboration of the core plan;
- To keep the discussion focused on the child's problem;
- To ensure that the guiding principles of the CRC prevail in all the decisions taken;
- To see that the best interests of the child guide all attendees in their reflection;
- To ensure that the reports produced after the conference are complete and, as far as possible, contain the following information:
 - (a) Family composition of the child;
 - (b) Living environment (including observation from home visit);
 - (c) Schooling of the child (including adjustment and social relationship in school);
 - (d) Family background (including parents' upbringing, any physical or mental health problems, criminal history if applicable, family financial status and support network, etc.);
 - (e) Family relationship (including pattern of communication, level of affection, roles and functions of family members in the family, relationship among parents and other family members, violent behaviour of family members, etc.);
 - (f) Characteristics and behaviour of the child;

- (g) History of child care, child discipline and suspected abuse (including approach/pattern of parenting, expectations on children and sensitivity to children, etc.);
 - (h) Precipitating incident(s) (including severity, frequency, location and description of harm caused);
 - (i) Attitudes and feelings of the parent(s)/suspected abuser(s)/significant others towards the incident(s) and the welfare plan (including the possibility of further harm to the child and the willingness to accept help, etc.); capacity of the parent(s)/carer(s) to protect the child (including parents' resources and approach in solving problem and dealing with stress, use of drugs or alcohol, perception of self and coping capability, etc.);
 - (j) Attitudes and feelings of the child (towards the parents, siblings, incident(s) and welfare plan, etc.);
 - (k) Any other factors that may induce stress.
- Ensure that a case manager is appointed to implement the case plan of the concerned child
 - To deal with legal and ethical dilemmas which may arise in the participation of professionals in different fields

The Case Manager

To facilitate coordination of the services rendered by different professionals and reduce the child's stress and trauma of repeating the abusive experience, a case manager should be chosen so that the child only needs to interact with the case manager for most of the time whenever the situation so requires. Under most circumstances, the key social worker handling the case would normally take up the role of the case manager. However, other professionals involved should also cooperate with the case manager as appropriate in order to ensure coordinated intervention among different personnel.

The role of the case manager includes:

- (a) To prepare the child and his/her parents/guardians/carers for the steps/ tasks involved in the intervention process so as to reduce their anxiety and enlist their cooperation.
- (b) To collect relevant information from other professionals/personnel involved;

- (c) To share relevant information with other professionals/personnel involved on a need-to-know basis;
- (d) To take necessary actions, including the application for Court Orders, to safeguard the immediate well-being of the child; and
- (e) To ensure that actions taken by the responsible parties are well coordinated;
- (f) To render timely assistance and support to the child and his/her family members;
- (g) To have access throughout the course of investigation to the supervision and advice from a senior colleague/supervisor who has the proper training and experience in handling child abuse;
- (h) To consult other professionals in case of any difficulty encountered.

The OC strongly recommends that the case manager be identified and made known to the child, parents and other stakeholders involved as from the beginning of the case or at least soon after the first case conference. He/she is the person who is responsible and accountable through his/her supervisors, of course, of the intervention with the child and his family.

Based on observation in all the case conferences in which they participated, the OC and her officers would like to see the guidelines proposed to the MGECDFW to include some actions which would improve future case conferences, for example:

1. Keep the focus on the child.
2. Avoid referring to other cases as some attenders may not be aware of these cases which are confidential unless the comparison is in the best interests of the child and,
3. Prepare and circulate a document before the MDCC, on the problem and the situation of the child to help the attenders to prepare themselves in advance.
4. Record the decisions properly and circulate them to the attenders within reasonable time after the MDCC.
5. Summarise the decisions taken and recapitulate the actions to be taken in order of priority. The case manager and each intervener must keep a record on when and where they are intervening.

The OC has been advocating for a multi-disciplinary approach to deal with child abuse cases, during the past year and will continue to do so. The MDCC is a very good tool which should be used regularly by all institutions dealing with children in need of care and protection. The above explanations and observations should be used as guidelines to plan, run and evaluate MDCC. The OCO will continue to support the departments and agencies organizing MDCCs in the best interests of children. It will, in due course, contribute in the evaluation of this tool and make recommendations to improve its functioning.

Chapter IX

Complaints

The cases dealt with at the OCO are very varied and complex. Over the years there has been an attempt to report on all cases. But, in view of the amount of time taken to find long term solutions, a final report is not always available in the reporting year.

This year, the OC has insisted that all stakeholders should send in their reports so that monitoring at the OCO is facilitated. This explains why some cases which were pending previously are now included.

The OCO is now in the process of computerising all data regarding case files. This will facilitate the monitoring of cases over the years.

As usual, some interesting selected cases have been treated separately. Whereas in the template only the gist of each set of facts is given, in these cases there is greater detail and principles are also highlighted.

Selected Cases

The right to Education

Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes the child's right to education. Education is considered to be the most important asset that a child can be endowed with for his integral development. An educated child is someone who respects human rights, knows the essence of values of a society and ensures its sustainability. An educated child is endowed with lifelong skills, creative and resilient capacities. Education helps in ensuring the participation rights and the rights of opinion of all children on the basis of equal opportunity, thus contributing in building up an enlightened nation where peace, harmony and equality of opportunity prevail.

The Convention also stipulates that in cases where the child's right to education is not respected, State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the right is achieved. The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children whose objectives are to ensure the promotion of the rights of the child and to promote compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child has to ensure that all children benefit from their rights to education. Several cases have been reported to our office, where the children's rights to education have not been respected. Our office has intervened for these children to benefit from their rights to education.

Minors who are deprived of their rights to education due to family conflict and separation of parents.

Case 1: OCO/COMP/11/ 2216

Minors' parents are living separately. Minors' mother who is a victim of domestic violence left the conjugal roof with her two children and went to live at her mother's place where she lives in *concubinage* with someone. The children, who have moved to another locality, were not attending school. Meanwhile the minors' mother fell pregnant and she was encountering health problems. She requested their paternal grandmother to look after the minors. The paternal grandmother made the necessary arrangements for the children to be admitted to a school of her locality. She acted as the responsible party as her son was alcoholic.

After the birth of the baby, the children requested their mother to take them back as they were victims of violence by their father and their grandmother. When the minors visited their mother they refused to return to their grandmother's place. The minors' mother made a declaration to the police station and kept the children at her place.

The minors' grandmother attended our office to inform us that her grandchildren have not been to school since one month. She has contacted the CDU, BPM and the MEHR but the children are being deprived of their rights to education.

Our office requested a report from these institutions. We learnt that the transfer could not be made as their grandmother, who was the responsible party, refused to sign the transfer certificate. Besides, the minors' father had entered a case of custody in court. It would be difficult to entrust the custody of the child to either party before the court ruling. The children had nearly missed one semester of their schooling.

The case was followed by the senior educational psychologist but no action could be taken by the MEHR. The report received from the officer mentioned that the Ministry could not intervene as either party could sue the Ministry and the intervention of our office was sought.

Social enquiry reports received from the different institutions revealed that the children were properly looked after by their mother. Minors' mother was assisted by her mother and her concubine. The children like to stay at their mother's place. They were provided with psychological support.

The minors' maternal grandmother was convened to our office. The latter confirmed that she refused to sign the transfer certificate and will wait for the court order. At this stage, according to the OCA 2003, our office could not intervene. However, on the day of the court hearing, the father did not attend and the case lodged by him was struck out.

The Ombudsperson for Children reopened the investigation and requested the intervention of the BPM to bring the minors and their mother to our office.

The minors' mother stated that she had done her best to admit her children to a school but in vain. She had been to court lately in respect of the custody case lodged by the minors' father, the case was filed. The transfer procedure is still pending as the minors' grandmother still refused to sign the transfer certificate even though the case before court had been struck out.

The minors told the OC that they refused to stay at their father's place as the latter did not care for them and they are victims of physical violence by both their father and their grandmother.

The minors' mother was requested to enter a case of custody and divorce in court. The Ombudsperson for Children wrote to the Solicitor General (SG) to seek his views on such matters. A stand had to be taken, the children could not be deprived of their rights to education for so long.

Following the recommendations made by the SG, a correspondence was sent to the Ministry of Education. It was clear that the minors' biological parents have the responsibility of their wards unless there is a Court Order granting custody to a third party. In case one of the parties was irresponsible, the other party automatically had the responsibility of the children. The grandparents could only intervene when both parties are not assuming their responsibilities.

Necessary arrangements were made by the Ministry to enroll the children to a primary school near their place of residence. The children are now attending school and are followed by the educational psychologist and the educational social worker.

Case 2: OCO/COMP/11/2313

A complaint was made to our office by the minors' father that his children are not attending school since the first semester of 2010.

The minors' mother left the conjugal roof due to family conflicts. An allegation was made that she had an extra conjugal life. Her relationship with her in-laws and husband had turned sour. The minors' father thought that the respondent would return back to the conjugal roof and has given her time to take a decision.

The children were still not attending school and they are neglected by their mother. He requested the intervention of our office to carry out mediation. The case was referred to the CDU and MEHR for social enquiry.

In the meantime, the minors' mother was contacted. The latter informed us that she was victim of domestic violence and refused to reconcile. As she was facing financial problems, she could not make the necessary arrangements for the minors to be admitted to school, though they had missed for one month.

Reports received from the MEHR and the CDU mentioned that the children are neglected by their mother. They roam the streets all day and are considered to be at risk. The minors' father who visited the children, learnt about the precarious environment in which the children were living. The children also informed him that they witnessed indecent acts between their mother and her concubine. He was eager to take his children back from their mother but he had no one to look after them after school hours. He informed us that the minors' grandmother was a retired person but he could not request her to take care of his children and will look for a "*garderie*" and revert back to us.

The minors' grandmother learnt about the situation of her grandchildren. She contacted our office and informed us that she is willing to help her son in the upbringing of her grandchildren. She requested the intervention of our office for her son to be granted custody of the minors.

The respondent was contacted. She was apprised of the different reports made on her by the different institutions. She was informed that their father is willing to take their responsibility with the assistance of their grandmother. She could, however, visit her children during the weekends, as the children need the love of both parents. The Zone Directorate was contacted to facilitate the admission of the children to a school. The children are staying at their father's place. They are followed by the educational psychologist and the educational social worker.

Case 3: OCO/COMP/11/2267

The minors' maternal grandmother attended our office to inform us that the minors were not attending school. Their mother was refusing to assume her responsibility towards them though she had been entrusted the custody of the children following her separation with minors' father. The minors' grandmother stated that she could not afford to pay the travelling cost of the three children to attend school. The children who attended the office also stated that they preferred to stay at their maternal grandmother's place.

The minors' mother was contacted by phone. She affirmed that she was willing to take the responsibility of her children but the children were manipulated by their grandmother. They misbehaved and do not obey her at all.

The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action. The whole family was convened at the CDU by the psychologist. All parties were requested to assume their responsibilities towards the children. The mother was requested to welcome her children back. The children were provided with psychological assistance. Minors' grandmother was contacted by the OCO and requested not to interfere in the life of her daughter. She was requested to send all the children's belongings at their mother's place so that they could attend school.

Case 4: OCO/COMP/11/2248

The minor attended office and informed us that he refused to live at his mother's place. He was encountering problems with her and could not concentrate in his studies. He would prefer to live at his maternal grandmother's place. In case such situation was not possible, he would prefer to be admitted to an institution. However, if he is forced to stay at his mother's place, he will commit suicide. The minor's maternal grandmother who accompanied the child agreed to take his responsibilities.

Case 5: OCO/COMP/11/2248

The minor attended office and informed us that he did not want to live at his mother's place. He stated that he was allegedly neglected by his mother who was always taken up in her own business. He was encountering problems with her and could not concentrate in his studies. He would prefer to live at his maternal grandmother's place. In case such situation was not possible, he would prefer to be admitted to an institution. However, if he is forced to stay at his mother's place, he threatened to commit suicide. The minor's maternal grandmother who accompanied the child agreed to take his responsibility.

The minor's mother was convened to our office. She refused that her son stayed at his maternal grandmother's place as she was in conflict with her. The Ombudsperson for Children attempted mediation between the minor's mother and his son but no consensus could be reached. She preferred to place the minor at her sister's place. She even attempted to transfer the minor to another school. The minor did not appreciate her decision and refused to attend school.

The Rector of the school was contacted and a report on the minor's behaviour and academic performance was sought. The report revealed that the child was significantly traumatized by the conflictual situation at home. He was provided with appropriate assistance and care at the school to help him to cope with the situation. It was averred that he had well integrated his present school and a transfer would only cause more harm to the present state of the minor. Our attention was also drawn to the fact that, since the minor learnt that he will be transferred, he showed no sign of interest in his studies and is often absent. The Rector requested our office to intervene in the best interests of the child.

Minor's mother was convened to our office anew and was told about the findings of the report from the minor's school. She informed us that she wanted to transfer the minor as he visits his grandmother on his way to school now and then. The minor's mother was requested to take into consideration the best interests of the child rather than focusing on her conflictual relationship with her mother. She was advised not to let this relationship affect the educational well being of her child. She agreed for the minor to stay at his present school. He is assisted by the educational psychologist.

Minor in love refusing to attend school.

Case 1 OCO/COMP/11/2113

Minor's paternal grandfather lodged a complaint to our office. He stated that he has taken the responsibility of the minor after the death of minor's father. The minor is not on good terms with her stepmother. The minor is in love with a boy and is playing truant. She spends most of her time with her boyfriend. She is having behavioural problems. He would like the minor to attend school and benefit from her rights to education.

Minor was convened to our office. She was advised to attend school as it is compulsory up to the age 16. She was also informed that, at this age, she could not have any kind of relationship with a man as it is an offence. The minor was provided with psychological support. The child attended school regularly thereon and behaved well with her grandparents. However, a few months later, she had another boyfriend and started to fugue once more. The minor's grandparents contacted the BPM, CDU and our office to trace out the minor as they were not aware of her whereabouts. The Ombudsperson for Children intervened promptly, requesting the BPM to act urgently. Finally the child returned home by herself. She was brought to the police station and the CDU was informed. But as the minor was behaving rudely towards her grandparents and they were not able to deal with her, they requested the CDU to place her in an institution.

The minor was placed in a shelter. There, she swallowed a needle and had to be taken to a hospital for medical intervention. She succeeded in deceiving the officers and ran away from the hospital. The BPM and the CDU were requested to intervene urgently. The OC requested that the child be brought to our office, when traced out. The child once more returned to her grandparents' place. The CDU and the police were informed. The child was brought to our office accompanied by police officers. The child refused to return to the shelter and asked her grandparents to forgive her. They accompanied the child to our office. Mediation was carried out by the Ombudsperson for Children. The child promised to behave well, to obey her grandparents and to attend school regularly. The grandparents promised to take better care of the child and provide her with love and affection.

The school was contacted and a request was made for the minor to reintegrate her school. The child is now attending school regularly and is followed by a psychologist.

Case 2: OCO/COMP/11/2021

Minor's grandmother attended office to inform us that after the death of minor's father, her mother remarried and left the child in her custody.

Minor's grandmother attended the office to inform us that she is encountering problems with the minor. The latter refused to attend school and had a boyfriend. As she could not control her, she would like her mother to take her responsibility. The minor's mother was convened to our Office. The latter stated that she is ready to take the responsibility

of the minor but she would like her daughter to change her style of dressing and to behave well at her place as minor's stepfather is very strict.

The minor stayed at her mother's place but was not attending school. The minor's mother was requested to make the necessary arrangements for the minor to be admitted to school. She was advised to contact the CDU for psychological support. The minor attended school but, as she was not getting on well with her stepfather, she asked the grandmother to let her return to her place. Minor's grandmother accompanied the minor to our office and stated that the minor was ill-treated and neglected at her mother's place. She had to look after her small brothers and sisters and could not concentrate on her studies. She refused to stay at her mother's place.

The minor's grandmother agreed to take her responsibility and mediation was made between the two. Minor agreed to change her behaviour, to obey her grandmother and to attend school regularly. She refused to go back to her former school. The PSSA was contacted once more by OCO to facilitate the transfer of the minor. She was followed by a psychologist.

Sometime later, the minor's grandmother attended office and stated that the minor has a new boyfriend and she is not attending school regularly. She affirmed that she could no longer tolerate her and requested her to be placed in an institution.

The minor was convened to our office. She informed us that her grandmother did not appreciate her relationship with her boyfriend on account of his physical appearance. She was upset with the prevailing situation and was not in a mood to attend school. As she did not attend school for a few days, she learnt that she was expelled from the school. She informed us that she met her boyfriend for half an hour after school hours but that she would like to attend school. The minor's boyfriend was contacted, the latter stated that he is only a friend of the minor. He encourages her to study and to attend school. He was informed that the minor's grandmother intends to place the minor in an institution if ever he maintains his relationship with her. The latter promised that he will do his best not to interfere in minor's education. He was asked to stop meeting her after school hours.

Minor's grandmother was contacted and was informed of the good intentions of minor's boyfriend. He agreed to meet the minor only with her permission. The minor's grandmother was requested to contact the school manager for the reintegration of the minor. The child is attending school regularly up to now and is being followed by a psychologist.

Children at risk with regard to advertisement made by mobile network operating company

OCO/COMP/11/2278

The Ombudsperson for Children has received complaints from several parents regarding the 'Love SMS' service proposed by a mobile network operating company. As this publicity has also targeted youngsters, parents were preoccupied and believed that their

children were at risk. The Ombudsperson for Children was very concerned as children are vulnerable and can be easily lured by online predators. The matter was referred to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology for enquiry and request was made to ensure the security of our children and to take into consideration the best interests of the child.

Following the complaint, the Minister chaired a meeting with officials from different Ministries. He pointed out the urgency to address the issue of ‘Love SMS’ sent to children as they are vulnerable and unscrupulous persons using appealing pseudo profiles can manipulate them.

The findings of the meeting were as follows-

- Even though the company seemed to be operating legally, there were obligations on the various institutions, as responsible authorities, to protect children.
- The ICT Authority authorised the use of the code ‘8595’ to that company to offer value added interactive services.
- It was noted that the service itself was not harmful, but the wrong use of the service could be an offence.
- The Data Protection Act imposes certain obligations on companies regarding the collection of personal data.
- The deadline for the registration of Data Controllers, as requested by the Data Protection Office had been extended to 30 November 2010.
- An “Enforcement Notice” could be served to the company, requesting it to comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act, in the event that it is confirmed that the provisions of the Act had not been complied with.
- It was pointed out that even if the company eventually complied with the provisions of the Data Protection Act, that would not preclude children from registering to the ‘Love SMS’ service, thence, not solving the problem.
- It was agreed that, in the first instance, an amicable solution would have to be sought with the company. Thereafter, if need be, an enforcement of the Law would have to be resorted to.
- It defeats the purpose of having appropriate legislation if these are not enforced.
- Parents should be sensitized on the issue as well as on their roles and responsibilities in combating the problem.
- The company used media, like radio, to make publicity of the service. The public should be made aware of the harm that the service could do the children. The publicity on the service could be temporarily frozen.

Following a letter from the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to that company, the reply was as follows:-

The following processes have been implemented with effect from 1 August 2010:

- Upon registration, the system rejects any entry of anyone below 18 years.
- The Blacklist function for subscribers not wishing to use the service is ready; and

- A review of questions has been carried out to ensure that there is no reference to minors.

The company has also informed the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology that a warning SMS prior to the start of a chat session to warn customers of the risks associated with sharing and/or exchanging personal data using the service.

The company has also requested for the matter to be referred to the Police Department for a normal police enquiry process. They further stated that the complainants can also send a formal request to the company to deactivate the service from their phones. The Ombudsperson for Children's Office has taken notes of the recommendations and is now following up the matter.

Case conferences

OCO/COMP/11/1967

The OC was invited by a Headmaster to attend a case conference on a child who was reported to be beyond control in class and behaving violently at school. An Investigator attended the conference.

During the conference the following information were gathered. The child's father had passed away. He is an epileptic patient and is being followed by the psychiatrist at the BSH. In Standard Four, he did not create any problem in class. The teacher informed members of the conference that, even if he had learning difficulties, the child was behaving well in class. However, in Standard Five he changed teacher and his behaviour also changed. The Standard Five teacher stated that the child was mentally ill and she urged the members of the conference to remove him from the class in the best interests of the other children.

At the end of the conference it was decided that:

- OCO will request medical reports from the treating doctors
- The CDU will follow up with the family
- The MEHR will start mediating with a specialised institution in case the child needed to be transferred

The mother who was in attendance was reassured that any decision which would be taken, would be in the best interests of the child and in any case, the right to education of the child would not be affected.

The request for medical report was sent to the treating doctors. The child was seen by them and an Electro-encephalography (EEG) was carried out. The reports were submitted to OCO. The doctors described the type of epilepsy that the child was suffering from. It was found that the child could stay at school and that the teacher should make efforts to deal with him; showing care and love. The school psychologist

was called upon to advise the teacher on how to deal with the child. The CDU visited the family on several occasions.

This year the child did not attend school. The Educational Social Worker visited the family. OCO was contacted. The Educational Psychologist saw the child. The latter was admitted in a specialised school for Epileptics.

OCO/COMP/11/1962

The Headmaster of a primary school phoned at OCO to report that a Standard Six pupil in his school aged 11 years, assaulted a lady teacher during school hours. The child was in an aggressive state and no one could calm her down. The mother was contacted but she refused to call at the school as she was not at home. An officer of the OCO phoned her, requesting her to call at the school to fetch the child.

The OC was also informed that the child was sexually abused by a cousin when she was 8 years old. Her parents also had serious conjugal problems and their life was quite unstable. For several months the child had to stay at her grandmother's place as the parents were living separately. There she was beaten by her aunt. The OC learnt that the child was suffering from depression and was an outpatient at the BSH.

The OC met the child in her office. The latter related her version of the incidents. She stated that she did not want to return to that school. The OC convened a case conference in her office, bringing together several officers from OCO, the CDU, the MEHR, the primary school and a representative of an NGO working with children showing behavioural problems.

In the meantime, the mother phoned OCO several times, complaining that she could not control the child as she was very aggressive with her. She even thought of having her admitted at the BSH.

All the stakeholders attended the case conference. The issue was explored from different perspectives. It was found that it would be inappropriate to keep the child in the same school, as she was a threat to herself and to others. It was decided that the child would be transferred to a specialised school.

It was agreed as follows:

OCO would mediate with the school for a seat, the MEHR would provide administrative support for the child to sit for the CPE exams, the CDU to follow up with the family.

The OC mediated with the institution. The child was allocated a seat in their Standard Six class. She was even granted free transport from her place of residence to school and back. The MEHR did the necessary procedures to enable the child to sit for the CPE exams.

The child adapted well in that school. However, the school bus driver reported that the child had to wait on the streets, in the afternoon until her mother returned home. She was at risk.

A review case conference was held at OCO and it was decided that it would be in the best interests of the child, to remove her from her family and place her in an institution. The conference also noted that the parent did not take the child to the BSH for her treatment. However the problem encountered was that there was not any institution which could cater for children with such problems.

A few days later, the child had to be admitted to the BSH. Nonetheless she took part in her CPE exam. She was then transferred to a shelter. However, she was beyond control there and had to be admitted to the BSH once more. The OC visited her there. For several months the child did the ‘*va et vient*’ between BSH and the shelter. She even attempted suicide. The BSH discovered that her blood sugar was very high. She was treated and must now take medication to control her blood sugar level as she is now considered to be a diabetic patient.

In April last, she was brought to court and was handed back to her parents. The CDU is still following the case. The officers met the child only twice during their visits as the other times the house was closed. The child was given appointment with the psychologist but she never attended.

The OC is still convinced that this type of child cannot remain in her family environment where she has been abused over and over again. The OC has discussed the matter with the Ministers of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and of Health and Quality of Life. Both have agreed to promote for the creation of a specialised centre, other than BSH, to deal with cases of children who need both constant medical attention and psychological therapy and who can also carry on with schooling and training.

OCO/COMP/11/705

In 2006, the OC was informed by a teacher of a “complementary school” that a young boy of 9 years was battered by his stepfather. His mother was an alcoholic and was also taking drugs. His father had married again and had no contact with him. The child was considered as “beyond control”. It was also alleged that the child sexually abused another child and the case was being taken by the court.

A Child Welfare Officer of the CDU visited the family at the request of the OC. The mother denied that the child was beaten by the stepfather. An appointment was given for the child to see the psychologist at the CDU.

In the meantime, the OC learnt that the child had suicidal tendencies and was beyond control at school. A group of parents even sent a petition to the OC regarding the safety of their children who are in the same class as the child.

After a case conference, it was decided to send the child at his father's place. However, the latter never sent the child to school and reported that he could not control the child. He wanted to go to court and to have the child admitted in a shelter. The child was returned to his mother's place.

After a second case conference, it was decided to have the child admitted in a specialised school. The mother also received support from the NGO running the school. This case was reported in our 2007-2008 report (11.79-80). However, the OCO regularly enquired about the child.

In 2010, the NGO reported the following:-

- *Child was admitted to our specialised school on 24 March 2008*
- *Since March 2008 – July 2010*

Achievements:

- (1) The child can sit for at least 30 minutes during an activity – which was not the case before*
- (2) Participation in activities has improved*
- (3) Exposure to movement education, literacy, numeracy, music, sculpture, drawing*
- (4) Attendance – for the 1st term 2009 – 30 days present out of 59 school days, 3rd term 2009 – 48 days present out of 57 school days*
- (5) More versed in activities where he has to move*
- (6) Still need to work on his relationships with others. He cannot control himself in case of conflict.*

The OC wishes to express her appreciation to these specialised schools ran by NGO's. They are dealing with children in specially difficult circumstances and are providing an adapted education to these children. Thus, they are contributing to the exercise of the right to education of all children, even those with such difficulties.

Beauty contest for children

OCO/COMP/11/2281

In December 2009, a private company organised a beauty contest for young girls and boys aged between 6 years and 12 years old. Ever since the setting up of the OCO, the OC expressed her preference for the participation of all children instead of competition which will discourage some children from participating or discriminate among young children. For the first four editions of the 16 Days 16 Rights campaign initiated by the OCO in collaboration with the MWRCDFW (now called MGECDWF), this office played an active role at all level of the organising process, the participative approach was always preferred. Idem for the carnival on non-violence organised by OCO in collaboration with the Municipality of Beau Bassin - Rose-Hill, with the participation of more than 1000 children coming from several NGOs. The OC expressed her position of the issue of beauty contest for children. Her stand is reproduced below:

1. All articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child must be respected, in particular articles 2 and 3 on non discrimination and the best interests of the child.
2. Children are today exposed unduly and are prey to sexual predators of all sorts; therefore, they need to be protected under the Child Protection Act 1994.
3. We strongly condemn all actions which reinforce stereotyped images of girls and boys.
4. We are not too keen on competition as was explained year after year in the preparation stage of the 16 Days 16 Rights Campaign. We favoured participation. We regret that this has changed.
5. If competition is sometimes important, it would merely be a way to promote emulation and excellence in certain specific fields where both the talent and the hard work of the participant should be rewarded. But in such cases very strict criteria must be part of rules and regulations of the competition.
6. Physical characteristics should not be a criteria.
7. Under no circumstances should children be made to participate in “defilés” in whatever kind of clothes.
8. No child should be ridiculed or be placed in an awkward position which would affect his/her self confidence.
9. Children who participate must be consulted and give their own consent. This implies an age limit.
10. Parents should be sensitised on the negative aspects of certain types of competition.
11. Children should be allowed to perform (sing, dance, do drama etc...) but not too late at night.
12. Their photographs should not be used without their consent and that of their parents.

OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN'S OFFICE				
Case No.	Date	Nature of Complaint	Action Taken by OCO	Outcome/Follow-up
1134	26.10.06	A complaint was made to this office that the above-named minor is having behavioural problems; he is restless and sleeps outdoors at night. 2nd complaint made that the children are roaming the street and are at risk.	Minor is following a treatment at the BSH and is under medication. Re.2nd complaint, the BPM and the CDU were requested to intervene.	Report received from the BSH revealed that child is an outpatient of the hospital and is following his treatment regularly. 2nd Action - The BPM and the CDU made a site visit and the children were removed and placed in an institution.
1401	08.06.07	A complaint was made that the minor is living in unhygienic conditions which is not conducive to his healthy development.	The parents were convened for enquiry. The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	The parents affirmed that they are living in a hygienic environment. They take proper care of their child. Report of the CDU confirmed same.
1404	13.06.07	Minors' mother, victim of domestic violence, has left her children and husband and has gone overseas. She has been able to find a job there and would like her children, who were neglected by their father in Mauritius, to join her. Minors' father was against and did not want to sign their passports. The grandparents attended office to request minors' father to sign the passport.	The latter was convened and was counselled to act in the best interests of the children, particularly as the children are neglected by him.	The latter has signed the passport and the children have joined their mother overseas.
1406	13.06.07	A complaint was made to this office that the minors are at risk at their father's place.	The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action.	The minors were removed from their father's custody and placed in an institution. Follow up is ensured by the CDU.
1408	14.06.07	The minors' mother complained that she is victim of domestic violence. The minors' father ill-treats and beats the minors. He does not support his family financially. The complainant would like respondent to provide her with alimony.	The respondent was convened to our office and made aware of his responsibilities towards the children. In case the respondent did not support her, the complainant was advised to go to the Supreme Court to enter a case regarding alimony. The complainant was advised to contact the Family Support Bureau with respect to domestic violence.	The family was assisted by the FSB. The couple reconciled. The father is supporting the family.

1410	19.06.07	Complainant stated that she is victim of domestic violence and that she has left the conjugal roof. Her son is not attending school as all his school belongings are at her husband's place.	The complainant was requested to contact the FSB and also to seek a protection order. She was also advised to request an officer to accompany her to seek for all her belongings as well as that of minor.	The complainant was able to get all her belongings and those of minor. The child has been able to attend school.
1434	05.07.07	A complaint was made that after the death of the minor's mother's, her father remarried. The child was battered by her father and step-mother. They prevented her from visiting her maternal grandparents.	Mediation was carried out between her parents and her maternal relatives.	The minor's father agreed that the minor could meet her grandparents under supervision of a CDU Officer. The child and her parents were provided with psychological support. Finally the minor was beaten again and was placed under the care of her maternal uncle.
1435	06.07.07	It was reported that the children are neglected, ill-treated and humiliated by their parents who are alcoholic and irresponsible.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	The children were removed from their parents and placed in an institution. The parents were provided with psychological support, counselling and appropriate therapy.
1441	16.07.07	The minor's grandmother attended office and stated that the child was neglected by both parents who live separately. The child who used to live at his mother's place was neglected by the latter. Presently he is living at maternal grandmother's place. The latter would like our office to intervene to request the parents to take their responsibilities.	The minor's mother was convened to our office. She was made aware of her responsibilities towards the child.	The latter stated that she is assuming her responsibility towards the child but it was his grandmother who was spoiling him by giving him excess money. The grandmother was also requested not to give too much money to the child. The child was followed by a psychologist.
1443	26.07.07	The minor's mother reported that following an incident at the minor's school, the latter was convened to the police station to give a statement. Minor's mother complained that minor was traumatised and refused to attend the police station.	The CDU was contacted. A request was made for the minor to give her statement at the seat of the CDU accompanied by a CDU Officer and a psychologist.	The minor's mother was agreeable to same. The child was followed by a psychologist. She has been transferred to another school.

1449	08.08.07	Minor's parents are divorced. The custody of the child was granted to her mother, but as the father harassed her, she left the child in her father's custody. According to minor's mother, the minor's behaviour seemed to be abnormal.	The case was referred for MWRCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received from the ministry stated that the child seemed to be disturbed by her parents' separation. She prefers to stay at her father's place. She was provided with psychological assistance.
1451	08.08.07	The minor's mother has custody of her child. The latter complained that the minor's father is bullying the minor.	As the case was in court, the latter was referred to the CDU for further advice and counselling.	The family was provided with psychological support.
1453	13.08.07	Two grandparents complained to the OC that their two grandsons aged 7 and 9 years old are beaten by their father and stepmother. Children's mother passed away. The grandparents were denied access to the children. They wanted to keep contact with their grandsons, children of their late daughter.	Grandparents convened at OCO. Parents convened at OCO.	They were advised to enter a case in court. Grandparents opted for mediation by OCO. Father declared that he denied access to grandparents when they started using abusive language against his wife. Both father and stepmother agreed to let grandparents see their grandsons on the conditions that they will not brainwash the children. Mediation successful.
1456	09.07.07	The minors' parents, who are separated, are always in conflict for respecting the court order.	Mediation was carried out by the Ombudsperson for Children and a consensus was reached between both parties.	Both parties agreed to respect the court order and to take into consideration the best interests of the child.
1457	17.08.07	A minor has given birth to a premature baby at home. Allegation was made that she murdered her baby after the delivery.	Following articles in respect to same in the press, the Ombudsperson for Children carried out an own motion enquiry.	The minor was prosecuted for infanticide and the case was in court. A report was sought from the police. Awaiting report

1459	17.08.07	A complaint was made that the minors' parents who are not civilly married, are often quarrelling. The minor's mother is victim of domestic violence and does not want to stay under the conjugal roof. The complainant alleged that the children are being victimised. A request was made not to separate the children.	The parents were convened to the office. Minors' father stated that he has entered a case in court regarding the custody of his children. The minors' parents were made aware of their responsibilities towards the children and also to take into consideration the best interests of the minors.	As the case was pending before court, the office could not intervene anymore.
1460	20.08.07	The minors' mother complained that she is no longer benefiting from social aid. She is encountering financial difficulties for the minors to attend school.	The case was referred to the MSSNSRISC for enquiry and appropriate action	The complainant is benefiting from social aid anew.
1461	20.08.07	Following a dispute with the minor's father, the complainant left the conjugal roof. The baby child was left in the care of the father.	A mediation was carried out at the level of the OCO between the parties.	The minor's mother returned to the conjugal roof.
1463	21.08.07	The minor's mother leads an unruly life. Their father is in prison. The complainant stated that the children are encountering behavioural problems.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	The children were provided with psychological assistance. The minors' mother was advised to assume her responsibilities towards the children.
1464	22.08.07	Allegation was made that the minor are neglected, ill-treated by their parents.	The case was referred to the MWCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action. The parents were also contacted on the issue.	Verbal report stated that children are well looked after their parents. The interference of the maternal grandfather created conjugal problems in the family life. The minors' maternal grandfather was contacted by OCO and was advised not to interfere in her daughter's conjugal life.

1465	22.08.07	Two former inmates of a rehabilitation youth centre were forced into prostitution by a lady who offered them shelter.	The Ombudsperson for Children carried out an investigation.	The minors were provided with psychological support and placed in an institution. The perpetrators were arrested and sentenced by the police.
1467	23.08.07	The complainant stated that he is not on good terms with his neighbour due to a dispute. The latter inflicted corporal punishment on the complainant's daughters. The children are traumatised.	The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action. Request was made for child to be given psychological assistance.	The relationship between the two parties has improved and the minor was provided with psychological assistance.
1468	23.08.07	The minor's mother complained that her daughter is encountering behaviour problems. She is in contact with some friends who are ill-mannered.	The case was referred to the CDU for psychological support.	The minor was followed by a psychologist. Follow up is ensured by the CDU.
1470	28.08.07	The minors are ill-treated, neglected by their mother who is alcoholic.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and eventual removal of minors through an EPO.	The children were placed in a shelter by CDU. The minors' mother was admitted to a detox centre for treatment. After her treatment her children were returned to her but she relapsed and the children were removed and placed in an institution. The case is followed by the CDU.
1471	28.08.07	A complaint was made that a minor was seen begging near a supermarket in Rose Hill.	The case was reported to the BPM for enquiry and appropriate action. The officer of the BPM was also requested to carry out regular patrol.	Report received stated that no minor was found begging at the said place. Close vigilance was maintained there.

1472	29.08.07	Mother complained that her 9 year old son was not attending school as her husband did not want to sign the transfer application form. The parents were divorced and father had the custody of the child. However, for the past two months, the child had been staying with his mother.	OCO wrote to MEHR to request them to deliver a temporary transfer. Mother requested to enter a case of variation order in court.	MEHR refused to give the temporary transfer unless they are in presence of a court order. Mother never entered the case in court. Child returned to the father's place and was attending school regularly.
1473	23.08.07	The complainant stated that after the death of the minors' parents, she has taken the responsibility of the minors. She would like to benefit from social aid for their upbringing.	The case was referred to the MSSNSRISC for appropriate action.	The child is benefiting from social aid.
1474	23.08.07	A person drew the attention of the OC to the fact that a shop was selling all types of knives to anybody including children.	OCO contacted the BPM.	Police explained that it was not illegal for a shop to sell knives. They may intervene only if there was a formal complaint proving that a knife was sold to a child. BPM would carry out surprise checks.
1475	31.08.07	The minors' parents live separately. Their mother is alcoholic and indulges in prostitution and drugs. The children are not attending school and they are considered to be at risk.	The case was referred to the BPM for enquiry.	Report received from the BPM stated that their mother is living at her sister's place with her 3 children. They are attending school. Minors' mother has got a job and is leading a decent life.
1476	31.08.07	A complaint was made that the minor is regularly harassed and humiliated by the Deputy Head Teacher.	The institution was contacted and a report was sought on the allegations made.	Report received and revealed that the child is having behavioural problems and she is not concentrating in her education. The child was referred to the educational psychologist of the school. The child could not adapt herself to her present school environment and was transferred to another institution.

1478	31.08.07	Minor's father made a complaint to this office that following conjugal dispute, the respondent took the minor and went to live at her mother's place. The complainant was deprived of his child.	The respondent was contacted. She stated that she did not want to reconcile with the complainant. She has already entered a case of custody in court.	As the case was before the court, the OCO could not intervene. However the complainant was informed to contact the CDU for advice and counselling.
1479	04.09.07	A complaint was made that minor is harassed and assaulted by her boyfriend. Her parents feared for her security.	The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP for enquiry and eventual removal of child and to be sent to a place of safety.	The minor was placed in an institution and the respondent was given a warning by the police.
1480	04.09.07	Minor was severely beaten by his father when he learnt that he had stolen a sum of money.	The parents were convened to the office. The case was then referred to the CDU for further enquiry and appropriate action. The Headmistress was requested to monitor the case as well.	Parents were counselled to adopt positive discipline. They were advised to accompany minor to a doctor and to provide him with psychological assistance, which they did.
1481	29.08.07	Minor's parents are separated. The complainant, minor's father, would like to have the custody of his child.	The complainant was informed to enter a case in court in respect to custody of the child and to have recourse to the services of the CDU, if need be.	Minor's father entered a case of immediate care and control.
1482	08.09.07	Minor's mother was murdered by his paternal grandfather. Minor's maternal grandfather disagrees with minor's father visiting the child.	The complainant was requested to enter a case in court in respect to custody of the child.	Following case entered into court, the custody of the child was granted to his father.

1483	06.09.07	A father complained that his 17 year old daughter ran away from his house with her baby to stay at her boyfriend's place (father of the child). He requested OCO to mediate with his daughter to return back home.	Phoned the girl on her mobile. OCO requested father to have a dialogue with his daughter. OCO requested the girl to phone her father for Divali. Father requested OCO to bring back the girl to him by force. He was advised to go to court to seek for a warrant to bring back minor. He was also reminded that the girl would be 18 year old in two days.	Girl informed OCO that she was happy with her husband (she married her boyfriend religiously) and her child. She asked OCO to request her father to stop harassing her as she will be 18 years old. Father proposed to pay for the girl's studies etc., the latter accepted but she would not return to her father's place. Girl phoned father as requested. She even took her child and stayed overnight for Divali at her father's place. She left for her house the next day. Girl phoned to inform OC that she is living happily. She will keep contact with her father.
1484	06.09.07	Complainant stated that she is encountering problems with the minor as the latter refuses to attend school. Minor's father refuses to provide her with alimony as stipulated in the court order.	The child was referred to the CDU for psychological support. Minor's mother was informed to make a statement to the police station in respect of non-payment of alimony and contact the social security office to request social aid.	The child was followed by the psychologist. Minor's father provided her with the alimony as stipulated in the court order.
1485	07.09.07	Two girls, aged 12 and 14 years old left for England to see their father. On their return they were allocated another school far from their residence.	OCO wrote to the MEHR.	Children were admitted in their former school near their place of residence.
1490	13.09.07	Minor's maternal grandmother reported to our office that minor has not been declared by his parents.	The case was referred to the tardy declaration unit of the MWRCDWF for enquiry and appropriate action.	Appropriate measures were initiated for the minor to be declared. In the meantime the complainant was provided with necessary documents for minor to benefit from his right to health.

1491	12.09.07	A complaint was made that minor's mother has gone abroad with minor and refused to return back. Minor's father has been refused access to the foreign country as minor's mother has made an objection for the minor's father to be granted visa.	The case was referred to the CDU and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for enquiry and further action.	Report received from the two institutions revealed that the country in question is not a party to the Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and it is not possible to enter a legal action for the return of minor to Mauritius. However, the complainant can enter private action before the court.
1493	12.09.07	Minor and his mother are ill-treated by minor's father and his grandparents. Minor's mother who lives separately, fears that his father may take the minor to a foreign country.	The complainant was requested to enter a case in court in respect to custody of minor. She was also advised to inform the passport and immigration office to object for the minor to leave the country.	The complainant obtained the custody of the minor.
1495	14.09.07	Complaint was made that after minors' mother death, their father remarried and asked them to sever all ties with their grandparents. Minors were traumatised as they did not wish to stay at their father's place with their step-mother.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	Minors' father's conjugal life deteriorated and he separated from his 2nd wife. He took the responsibility of his children. The latter are staying at their paternal grandfather's place. The whole family was provided with psychological support.
1497	17.09.07	Minors' mother who was encountering financial problems had her children removed through an EPO and placed in an institution. As her situation has improved, she would like to have her children back.	The complainant was referred to the CDU to entail the legal procedures to have her children back.	The minors were given back to their mother.

1498	17.09.07	A complaint was made to this office that two handicapped minors were witnessing domestic violence at home. The children are ill-treated and neglected by their father. The minors are traumatised by the behaviour and attitude of their father towards them and their mother.	The minors' parents were convened. Minors' father was counselled on his responsibility towards the children. He was informed of the negative impact of violence on the developmental well being of his children, specially as they are handicapped, and need special care and attention. Minors' mother was also advised to be more responsible. The couple was referred to the FSB for psychological assistance.	The families are still living under the same conjugal roof. Both handicapped children are attending specialised schools. The whole family is being psychologically assisted. The minors' father's behaviour and attitude towards the children and minors' mother have improved.
1500	14.09.07	A complaint was made to the office that a child was accused of stealing a mobile phone at school. The child was taken to the police station unaccompanied by her parents.	The Head Teacher of the school was contacted, and stated that the child admitted having stolen the mobile phone and the parents were informed of the theft. As they could not attend school, they asked the head teacher to proceed with the enquiry.	The parents of the child wanted to make no complaint regarding the matter. The police declared that they were merely keeping contact with the child as the owner of the mobile had not been traced.
1501	17.09.07	Minor's mother reported to our office that she would like to have access to her daughter who was placed in an institution.	The case was referred to the CDU.	Necessary arrangements were made for the complainant to visit her child.
1504	19.09.07	The minor's parents are separated. The child has developed behavioural problems and refuses to attend school.	The case was referred to the CDU for psychological support.	The child was provided with psychological assistance. Follow up is ensured.
1505	20.09.07	A grandmother complained at OCO that her ex son-in-law was denying her access to her 1 year old granddaughter, child of her late daughter. The child's father was a French national.	Referred to CDU for legal advice and intervention.	Child's father left for his country for a few weeks. Child stayed at grandmother's place during the father's absence.

1506	20.09.07	A complaint was made that the minor would like his parents who are separated to reconcile.	Minor's parents were convened to this office. Minor's mother stated that she refused reconciliation as minor's father is a drug addict and a violent person.	The minor's mother who has custody of the child was requested to contact the CDU for psychological assistance. A psychologist of the Ministry has seen the child.
1507	19.09.07	Allegation was made that the minor who has witnessed the suicide of her brother was forced to give her statement to the police while still in a traumatised state.	The Ombudsperson for Children enquired about the case and sought a report from the police.	Report received from the police revealed that the minor's mother consented for the child to give her statement. The child willingly gave the statement and at no time showed sign of traumatism.
1508	20.09.07	Minor was arrested in a case of larceny and was detained in a very deplorable state. Allegation was made that the minor was ill-treated by the police officers.	The case was referred to the Human Rights Commission in respect to allegation of police brutality.	Recommendations were made to ensure that minors involved in any criminal case to be treated in a fair manner.
1509	01.10.07	A mother complained that her 13 year old son was victim of corporal punishment inflicted by his French teacher in class. The child did not want to attend school anymore.	Letter sent to the MEHR, PSSA and BEC.	Teacher apologised. Teacher would stop teaching in the child's class. Case reported to the police by the parents.
1513	20.02.08	Minors' parents are separated. According to the complainant, the children are ill-treated and harassed by their mother.	The respondent was contacted and was advised to assume her responsibilities towards minors in a positive manner. The complainant was also informed that he could enter a case of custody of minors, as he was their father.	When the case was lodged in court, the complainant was requested to contact the CDU for further advice and counselling.
1513	21.09.07	The complainant stated that his children, who are victim of family conflict, are traumatised. He wants to have their custody.	The complainant was requested to enter a court case for custody in respect to minor.	The complainant has entered a case of custody in court. He was informed that our office could not intervene pending the court order but he can contact the CDU for advice and counselling.

1516	25.08.07	The minors' mother made a complaint that their father reported their passport to be lost. He thus succeeded in abducting them and went to live in another country, his whereabouts are unknown.	The case was referred to the CDU and to the Police for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received stated that the Interpol was informed of the case. The complainant was provided with legal assistance to initiate procedure to bring back her children.
1517	18.10.07	A complaint was made that the minor's health is deteriorating as a nearby mechanic workshop is operating in an illegal manner.	The case was referred to the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Ministry of Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises Commerce and Cooperatives for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received from various ministries stated that the Ministry of Health has to act in the particular case. The respondent was provided with a warning to act in legality. No further complaint was received.
1518	05.10.07	The complainant stated that her child has been arrested for theft and has been sent to prison.	The case was discussed with the police.	Complainant was informed that depending on the seriousness of his offence, a 17 year old minor can be sent to prison. Case filed.
1519	06.12.07	Allegation was made that the minor was sexually abused by her brother in law.	The case was referred to the police and the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	The perpetrator was arrested by the police. He was released on bail pending his case in court. The minor was provided with psychological support and a follow up is ensured by the CDU.
1520	09.10.07	Minor's maternal grandmother complained that the minor's mother is not taking the responsibility of her child. She would like the mother to take her responsibilities. In case the minor's mother is not willing to take the minor's responsibility, she would like to benefit from social aid to assist the minor.	Minor's mother was referred to the MSSNSSCWRI for assistance.	As minor's mother refused to take minor's responsibility, minor's maternal grandmother was provided with social assistance to cater for the minor's well being.
1521	05.10.07	Allegation was made that the minor may be subject to sexual abuse by a private car owner.	The case was referred to the police for enquiry and appropriate action.	Allegation made was not founded. The child was attending school by school van and was not subject to any sexual abuse.

1522	10.10.07	Complaint was made that several school aged minors were roaming the streets all day long and were not attending school. The children were at risk.	The case was referred to the BPM for enquiry and appropriate action.	Frequent patrols and checks were carried out in the locality. Vigilance watch was maintained by the BPM. No further complaint was made in respect to children roaming the streets during school hours.
1523	15.10.07	A woman requested OC to intervene with the Ministry of Social Security to renew her social aid.	Letter sent to the Ministry of Social Security	The mother received social aid under three reason codes in the past. All of them lapsed; so she was asked to make a fresh application.
1524	18.10.07	Minor's father who is in prison requested the intervention of our office in respect of his 16 years old child. The latter, mother of a small baby is living in a precarious environment with a drug addict.	The case was referred to the BPM for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received stated that the minor did not want to report any case against the biological father of her baby who was a drug addict. Counselling was given to the minor and to her concubine. They were advised to attend a "Detoxification therapy" at a Detox Centre. Follow up is ensured by the BPM.
1526	19.10.07	Allegation was made that the child is neglected by his mother who indulges in prostitution.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	A home visit was effected. It was found that the respondent no longer lived there. The respondent was never traced despite several attempts.
1528	22.10.07	Parents complained that their 13 year old son was sniffing fuel and also showed behavioral problems.	Referred to the BSH for treatment and report.	Psychiatrist reported that child suffered from "conduct disorder". He was hospitalised for several months. He was also provided with psychological support. Child stopped sniffing fuel. His treatment continued at BSH.

1529	22.10.07	Minor's mother requested our office to intervene for the minor to benefit from alimony from his father.	The respondent was convened at the office and was counselled on his responsibilities towards the minor. He was also advised to respect the court order or else he will be sued for contempt of court.	The minor is benefiting from the alimony as per court order.
1532	25.10.07	Minor's mother is a detainee of women prison and the minor is under her custody at the prison. She would like to place her child in the custody of another detainee who is leaving the prison.	The Officer in Charge of the institution was contacted and requested to act in the best interests of the child. The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP for enquiry and follow up.	The child remained in the custody of her biological mother.
1533	26.10.07	A mother requested OC to intervene to convince her husband to sign the passport application form so that her 1 year old son may travel to Réunion Island with his maternal grandmother.	OC contacted father for mediation.	Mediation failed as father strongly objected to let his son travel with the grandmother.
1534	26.10.07	The Manager of a school for handicapped children complained that the district council has asked him to stop using the village hall for his school as from 10.12.2007. He requested OCO to intervene in favour of the children who would have nowhere to go in case of closure of the school.	Letter sent to the District Council on 05.11.2007 appealing to the Council to reconsider its decision. Several reminders sent for a decision of the council. OCO appealed through the MOLG.	In February 2008 the Chief Executive informed OCO that the council could not reach a decision at its last meeting. In March 2008 the council informed OCO that the school would have to evacuate the village hall as the building was not free. MOLG requested the council to submit an appropriate reply to OCO. In July 2008 the council informed OCO that it had decided to request the school to vacate the hall as it is not appropriate for such activities. A few months later, the school shifted to a new building. School still running properly.

1536	30.10.07	A young boy was taken to the CDU as he had no place of abode. His mother had been arrested and his father was alcoholic and an irresponsible person.	CDU requested to look into the case.	No relatives ready to accommodate the child. Child placed in a residential care institution.
1538	19.11.07	The complainant stated that following a dispute with his neighbour, the latter slapped his son on his cheeks.	The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP for appropriate action.	A site visit was effected by the CDU. Both parties were counselled. The complainant encountered no further problems with the respondent.
1542	20.11.07	Minors who live with their maternal grandmother are traumatised by the behaviour of their alcoholic father.	The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP for appropriate action and follow up.	The children were provided with psychological assistance and social aid. The minors' father was advised to follow a detoxification therapy.
1544	27.11.07	A mosque complained to the OC that a bar operated outside hours in the vicinity. They alleged that the children of the area as well as their families were at risk.	Letter sent to the Mayor of the town. The Imam of the mosque was informed of the outcome.	Shop owner warned by municipal inspectors.
1546	27.11.07	A complaint was made that the minor who is HIV positive, is neglected and ill-treated by his step father. He is even deprived from his rights to education and health.	The case was referred to the CDU for appropriate action and assistance. The case was followed closely by the OCO to ensure that the child is provided with appropriate care.	As the family was not willing to keep the child at their place, the child was removed and placed at a relative's place. The child now benefits from his rights to education and health.
1551	30.11.07	The OC was informed that the staff at a children's centre are neglecting the children attending the activities there. They let the children on their own, offered routine creativities work. They were not dedicated in their work.	Letter sent to the responsible organisation for explanations.	Report received. The allegations were not founded.

1553	04.12.07	The complainant stated that his son was given a transfer certificate as he was caught using his mobile with pornographic scene during school hours.	An enquiry was carried out into the matter and report was sought from the school authority.	The Management of the school informed the office that the child was indeed circulating indecent clips to his friends on bluetooth. This act is considered as a case of gross misconduct. The parents were aware that their child was rusticated and expelled from the school as they had signed the transfer certificate. The child was admitted to another institution to enable him to continue his schooling. The minor and the parents were counselled and provided with psychological assistance.
1557	06.12.07	A complaint was made that the minor is considered to be at risk at his mother's place because of domestic violence.	The case was referred to the MWCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received and stated that the child was no longer victim of domestic violence. The minor's parents have separated. The minor and his parents were provided with psychological assistance.
1559	10.12.07	A man complained at OCO that his ex wife is denying him the right of access to his 3 year old daughter despite a court order granting him the right of visit at school.	Father was advised to enter a case in court to request for a variation order. Case referred to CDU for social enquiry. Letter sent by OC to the Headmaster requesting him to let the father see the child as per court order.	Father did not have enough means to enter the case. CDU officers convened father and mother on several occasions. Father met the child during Christmas time following arrangements made by the CDU. Thereafter, the father met the child at school.
1561	26.12.07	Minor's father explained that his child has been expelled from school for no reason.	The institution was contacted. Report received, revealed that the minor had misbehaved at school, and his academic performance was low.	The child was provided with psychological assistance. As he could not adapt to his school environment, he was transferred to another institution.

1563	04.01.08	Allegation was made that the minors are ill-treated by their father who is alcoholic.	Both parents were convened at the office. Minor's mother stated that she is victim of domestic violence and has left the conjugal roof. Minor's father was informed of the negative impact of alcohol on his family.	Minors' father agreed to take the responsibility of his children as the couple was on the verge of separation. He stated that with the help of his mother, he would cater for the well being of his children. He has ceased consuming alcohol.
1568	11.01.08	Minor's parents live separately. According to the complainant, the minor was not taken care of properly by his mother.	The respondent was contacted and informed to take care of the minor. The case was then referred to the MWRCDFWCP for appropriate action.	The respondent informed us that she was assuming her responsibilities towards the minor. As she has entered a case of divorce and alimony in court, the OC could no longer investigate.
1571	14.01.08	A child complained at OCO that since the death of her mother, her father is forcing her to stay at her grandmother's place. However, the child has been staying at her aunt's place since she was 4 years old.	OC requested the BPM to visit the family and advise her.	Report from BPM which stated that it is in the best interest of the child to stay with her aunt.
1583	24.01.08	The complainant stated that her children are considered to be at risk as they are threatened to death by neighbours. The children are traumatised by such behaviour.	The case was referred to the Police for urgent action.	Enquiry was carried out, the children stated that they had not been harassed, humiliated and threatened to death by their neighbours.
1588	28.01.08	A mother complained that her husband regularly abused her verbally with the result that their 8 year old son was reproducing this disruptive behaviour towards her.	Father convened at OCO and was explained about the negative effects of his behaviour on his son.	Matter settled. Father changed his behaviour and modelled positive ones to the child.
1591	29.01.08	A person complained that his neighbour was rearing dogs without permit causing pollution which affected the children in the region.	Letter sent to the District Council and the MSPCA.	Report received. Only five dogs were reared and in very hygienic conditions. No noise or air pollution detected.

1594	04.02.08	Minor's maternal grandmother made a complaint that the minor used to benefit from a social aid as he is epileptic. She was informed that the minor would be deprived of the social aid as his mother got a job.	The Ministry of social security was contacted and the officer informed that the claimant was benefiting from social aid due to abandonment. Minor's mother has to submit a medical document, stating that minor is suffering from epilepsy, for his case to be taken into consideration.	The minor is benefiting from social aid.
1595	05.02.08	The office has been informed of the illegal operation of an "autogas" in a residential area.	The case was referred to the concerned authority for enquiry and appropriate action.	A site visit was effected and no such activities was noticed by the authority. No complaint was received in respect to same.
1598	06.02.08	Minor who is mentally retarded, attends a special needs school. At the request of her teacher, minor climbed on a cradle to place a book on a shelf and fell down. She broke her ankles and had to undergo an operation. The family wanted to sue the institution.	The case was referred to the authority concerned for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received stated that the child slipped from a small chair. The parents were informed of the incident while leaving the child at her place. The parents had entered a case in court. As the case was in court the office could no longer intervene. They were referred to the CDU for advice and counselling.
1599	08.02.08	Following a TV programme, where a 15 year old child, member of the Budi's Friends, expressed herself on the issue of violence at school, it was reported that the child was harassed by the teachers at school.	OC decided to talk to the school manager.	Child requested OC to let things cool down. No further complaints received.
1601	12.02.08	A complaint was made that, after the death of the minor's father, the child is neglected by her mother. The child is not following his medical treatment and is not attending school.	The minor's mother was convened. She acknowledged that she consumes alcohol and has missed minor's appointment at the hospital. She was informed of the negative impact of alcohol on her child. She was requested to assume her responsibilities towards her child.	Minor's minor has become more responsible. The minor attends school regularly and follows his treatment at the hospital. The child is assisted by a paternal aunt and a social worker in his education.

1602	12.02.08	A mother complained at OCO that following corporal and humiliating punishment inflicted to her 5 year old daughter by her class teacher, the child did not want to attend school anymore. The child is already followed by the CDU. The mother requested OC to request for the transfer of the child to another class.	Letter sent to MEHR. Minor and her mother were provided with psychological assistance.	Child changed class.
1603	12.02.08	A complaint was reported to this office to the effect that minors' father is an alcoholic, is violent and beats his children.	The respondent was convened to the office. He admitted that he consumes alcoholic drinks and wanted to cease. He was advised to contact the NaTresa regarding same.	The father is following a therapy at the Centre de Solidarite of Rose Hill as well as at the BSH. The minors were provided with psychological assistance.
1608	15.02.08	A father complained by phone that his 14 year old son was regularly bullied by five classmates at school.	Appointment given to father and son.	Father informed OCO that they will not come for their appointment as things are getting better at school.
1612	20.02.08	A father complained that his 12 year old son was slapped by his physics teacher. He reported that the child suffered from psychological trauma.	Letter to MEHR.	Report received. Teacher denied the allegations. School was unable to gather any evidence on the incident. Psychological support provided to the child.
1614	21.02.08	A mother complained at OCO that her 9 year old daughter, who suffered from nasal allergy and malformation of the cheek, was regularly beaten and humiliated by her class teacher.	Letter sent to the MEHR. Mother and child convened at OCO.	Report received. The teacher denied the allegations. Moreover the child told the inspectors that she was never beaten in class. Class was closely monitored by the headmaster. OCO was informed that no corporal punishment was inflicted to the children since the complaint.

1620	25.02.08	A complaint was made that a tourist enterprise was making illegal and immoral trading business and that this had a negative impact on children living next door.	The case was referred to the Tourism Authority for appropriate action.	The license of the Tourist Enterprise was suspended. Despite this, the immoral business went on until the Tourism Authority agreed to monitor closely.
1622	26.02.08	A grandmother complained at OCO that she was denied access to her grand children by her daughter-in-law who, according to her, was also preventing her son from meeting her.	The father and mother of the children convened at OCO. Talked to the parents on phone. Grandmother was informed about the decision but her real interest was on her son.	The parents could not turn up. The father informed OCO that the grandmother was brainwashing the elder child. He agreed for his mother to see the children but in his or his wife's presence.
1628	28.02.08	Minors' maternal grandmother contacted the office and stated that minors' parents who live in <i>concubinage</i> are irresponsible towards their children. She would like our office to intervene.	The parents were convened to the office and informed of their responsibilities towards the minors. As the couple was encountering conjugal problems, they were referred to the Family Support Bureau for counselling.	The relationship between the couple has improved. They are more responsible towards their children.
1629	19.02.08	A mother complained at OCO that she was denied access to her daughter by the father and the stepmother of the latter.	The stepmother was convened at OCO.	Letter returned. The stepmother was unknown at the address provided. Daughter already 18 years of age.
1631	25.02.08	Minor's paternal grandmother complained that she was deprived of her right to visit the minor. Her son was abroad; her daughter-in-law refused her access to her grandson.	The respondent was contacted, the latter stated that she was not on good terms with her mother-in-law and refused to give access to minor. The complainant was informed that she can have recourse to court in respect to access to grand children.	The complainant benefited from right of access to her grandchild.

1633	28.02.08	A mother complained to OCO that her 12 year old son has been allocated a school far from her place of residence. Child was late on several occasions because of bus problems. Minor was punished by the rector because of his lateness.	Letter sent to MEHR for explanation and action at their end.	Report received. Rector gave another version of the incident. He was asked to make arrangements with the bus company and ensure that transport was available to the pupils living in the same area as the child. Child applied for transfer and was granted a school nearer to his place of residence.
1634	28.02.08	An anonymous informant informed OCO that a 10 year old boy was being abused by his parents. The latter forced him to study until very late at night, to attend tuition 7 days a week. Child was also beaten by the father.	Parents and child were convened at OCO. Child referred to a psychologist.	Parents were explained about the negative effects of corporal punishment. They were also requested to let the child have some rest as excess work is unproductive. Child seen by a psychologist of MEHR.
1639	03.03.08	An uncle requested the OC to intervene in favour of a 12 year old boy, whose mother was living in Belgium, so that the child could go to Belgium and live with his mother.	OC met the mother. Report requested from the child's school on his performance. OC talked to the French Embassy.	Child was granted visa to go and live in Belgium.
1641	20.02.08	A complaint was made to the effect that minor's father who lives separately, did not visit the minor nor give him any alimony. The child seemed to be traumatised.	The respondent was convened and made aware of his responsibilities towards the minor.	The child was provided with psychological assistance. The father assumed his responsibilities towards the child.
1645	11.03.08	Minor's parents are separated. Minor's father who has custody of minor, ill-treats and neglects the latter. Minor was traumatised by the behaviour of his parents towards him.	The case was referred to the MWCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action.	The family was counselled on their responsibilities. The whole family was provided with psychological support.

1647	18.04.08	A teacher complained that a 5 year old boy in her class was hyperactive and bullied other children in the class.	OCO referred child to the school psychologist. Father convened at OCO.	Child in crisis. He was referred to BSH for treatment. Father informed OCO that the child is epileptic and hyperactive. He is under treatment at BSH. He was transferred to a specialised school.
1648	20.03.08	A mother complained at OCO that her 16 year old son was not allocated a seat in Lower Six in a National College despite his excellent results for the School Certificate.	Letter sent to the MEHR.	Verbal report from the secondary inspectorate of the Zone. The child did not respond to the criteria to be admitted in that college. The SC aggregate was too high.
1651	27.03.08	A young boy, aged 16 years, was assaulted by a young man after a dispute on a message received through SMS.	Letter to CP.	Police report received. Child was in hospital. The perpetrator was arrested. Provisional complaint lodged against him. He was released on bail.
1662	09.04.08	A complaint was made that the minor was transferred unjustly from Std II Blue to Standard II Yellow, while the 1st term assessment was taking place.	The case was referred to the MEHR for enquiry and appropriate action.	The minor was reinstated in Std II Yellow.
1664	11.04.08	The minors' parents were living together at minors' maternal grandparents' place. Minors' mother died due to illness. Minors' father had problems with his in-laws. He took his three children and went to live at his parents' place. The children were considered to be at risk as they were living in a very precarious environment. Minors' maternal grandparent was willing to take the responsibility.	The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action.	Verbal report received from the CDU officer that the minors were well cared for by their father and paternal grandmother. The children lived in a safe environment and attended school regularly.

1665	11.04.08	A complaint was made that the minor who lived at his mother's place was victim of ill-treatment by his mother.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry for appropriate action.	As the family was encountering financial problems, they were provided with social aid and psychological assistance. The child was placed at his father's place.
1666	11.04.08	Minors' mother was deprived of her children after undergoing a treatment at the BSH. She would like them to be returned.	An investigation was opened at the OCO.	Report received from different stakeholders revealed that minors' mother did not follow her therapy regularly and could not cater for their physical and emotional needs of her children. Psychological report revealed that the children should be left in the care of their present guardian pending minors' mother complete recovery.
1669	16.05.08	A complaint was made that the minor was harassed by a van driver, on several occasions, on the bus stop.	An enquiry was made to trace out the driver. He was convened at the office and advised to stop this practice or else he will be subjected to police case.	The child was no more harassed by the driver.
1670	17.04.08	Complainant reported that due to family conflict, his wife left the conjugal roof with their 15 months old child. He requested for a mediation to be carried out.	Both parties were convened at the office. Minor's mother refused reconciliation and has entered a case of divorce and custody of her child in court.	As the case is pending before court, the office could not intervene.
1673	28.04.08	A complaint was made that minor's parents who are alcoholic, neglected their child.	The case was referred to the CDU and BPM for enquiry and appropriate action.	A visit was effected by the CDU. The parents were made aware of their responsibilities towards the child and the negative impact of alcohol on their family life. The child was removed from his family and placed at his godmother's place.

1675	29.04.08	Complainant stated that he is victim of domestic violence and his wife is irresponsible and does not take care of her children.	The respondent was called at the office. The latter stated that complainant has an extra conjugal life and is irresponsible and does not provide financial support to the family. She does not want to reconcile with the complainant.	The complainant was contacted on several occasions but there has been no response on his part.
1681	17.05.08	Complaint was made that minors' mother is an alcoholic and is irresponsible. Minors' father left the latter and went abroad. He provides the minors with alimony. The complainant requested our office to intervene to make the mother aware of her responsibilities towards her children.	The respondent was convened at the office and made aware of her responsibilities towards her children.	Respondent's behaviour towards her children changed. She became more responsible and caring. She spends her leisure time in a constructive way.
1682	08.05.08	A complaint was made that minors' father was in prison and the minors were neglected by their mother. The children were left under the custody of their paternal grandmother. They were encountering problems to be admitted in a school. She would like to benefit from social aid to cater for the well being of the children.	The minors' paternal grandmother together with the children was convened at our office. The minors stated that they were neglected by their mother. Their grandmother took proper care of them and they prefer to stay with her. The complainant was referred to the Zone Directorate and the MSSNSSCWRI with a referral letter for appropriate action.	The children were admitted to school. She also benefitted from a social aid to cater for the upbringing of the children.
1683	09.05.08	The minors' mother was killed following a conjugal dispute. Minors had gone to live at their maternal's aunt place. Minors' paternal grandmother considered the minors to be at risk and she would like to take the responsibility of minors with the help of some other relatives.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action. The Head teacher of the school where children were admitted was contacted; the latter stated that the children are at loss. They were not properly cared for by their maternal aunt. The children were provided with psychological assistance.	Report received confirmed that the children were neglected by their maternal aunt. The children's head were full of lice. The children were removed and placed at their paternal grandparents' place. The children were assisted by school mentors.

1686	13.05.08	A complaint was made that the minor is beaten and ill-treated by his father.	The case was referred to the MWCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action. Our office contacted the Head Teacher in respect of same.	The child was victim of corporal punishment by his father. The latter stated that he has beaten the child as he had not done his homework. The head teacher was also informed to report any case of corporal punishment in his institution. The child was provided psychological support. The educational worker is assisting the child.
1688	13.05.08	A complaint was made that the minor who is hyperactive is harassed and humiliated by some children in the neighbourhood. Minor's mother stated that her son is not involved in any activities and remains idle all day. She requests the intervention of our office.	The complainant was advised to place minor in a youth organisation. She was also requested to undertake some activities with the child. The case was also referred to the MWCDFWCP for urgent enquiry, appropriate action and for psychological assistance.	The minor has joined a youth organisation. He was assisted by a psychologist. The child's behaviour has improved. He is no more violent as before and is more cooperative.
1694	12.05.08	Minor, 17 years old, who is in love, refuses to attend school. Complainant requested our office to intervene for the minor to attend school.	The complainant and the minor were convened to our office. The minor was advised to attend school and complete her studies. The case was referred to the CDU for psychological assistance.	The minor was provided with psychological support. As her boyfriend continues to harass, her parents preferred to send her abroad to study.
1696	19.05.08	The complainant stated that her son, who has health problems, has to be operated abroad. She would like to benefit from financial assistance.	The case was referred to the MHQL for enquiry and appropriate action. The complainant was informed to contact the NSF and also to seek the approval of the Commissioner of Police for collecting funds from the public.	The MHQL assisted the minor to undergo an operation abroad and she also benefited from a sum of money from the NSF.

1697	20.05.08	A complaint was made that a 1 year old child is neglected by his parents	The CDU was contacted and requested to act urgently in this case. They were also requested to remove the child if need be and to ensure a follow up of the case.	The child received proper treatment at the hospital. After his discharge, he was followed by a private doctor. Minor, who has lost both parents, is presently residing at his maternal grandparents' place who have applied for orphan's allowance at the Social Security Office and is benefiting from same.
1699	22.05.08	A teacher reported that she suspected that a 5 year old girl in her class was beaten by her father. The child broke her arm and had a cut under her chin.	The OC wrote to the CDU requesting information on action taken.	Child was removed and placed temporarily in a shelter. However in court, the psychologist declared that there was no evidence of the abuse.
1700	22.05.08	The Head of a school made a complaint that the minor is not attending school and is neglected by her mother.	The minor and her mother were convened at our office. The minor's mother stated that the child refused to attend school. They were requested to contact the CDU for psychological assistance.	The minor and her mother were provided with psychological support. The child is attending school and is followed by the educational social worker.
1705	27.05.08	A complaint was made that the minors are neglected and ill-treated by their parents.	The minors' parents were convened at our office. They affirmed that they are encountering lodging and financial problems. The children seemed disturbed. They were referred to the CDU for psychological assistance and to the MSSNSSCWRI for social aid. They were also advised to contact the Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups for lodging assistance.	The minors were provided with psychological assistance. The family is benefiting from social aid. The Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups provided lodging assistance to the family. The children were encouraged to attend school regularly. They are followed by the educational social worker.

1707	03.06.08	A father was informed by a rector that his 17 year old son disappeared from school. When the father called at the college, the rector asked the parents to give a statement at the police station. There, the rector phoned them again to inform that the child was at school itself but in the "free period class". Child was given 2 Saturday detention and father did not agree with that decision.	Letter sent to PSSA for inquiry and report.	Report received from the PSSA. It revealed that the parents agreed for the child to be punished. The parents signed on the record book without objecting. Child was kept on detention only on one Saturday.
1708	03.06.08	A complaint was made that the minor is neglected by his alcoholic father. The child is deprived of his basic needs and does not attend school.	The minor's father was convened to our office. He was informed of his responsibilities towards his child and the negative impact of alcohol on his family and on his health. He was requested to contact the CDU for psychological assistance.	The family was provided with psychological assistance. The minor's father has contacted a detoxification centre to undergo a therapy. The minor is attending school regularly.
1709	03.06.08	Complaint was made that minors who are under the custody of their mother are neglected and ill-treated. They may be victims of sexual abuse.	Minors' mother was convened to our office. Since she did not come, the case was referred to the CDU and the BPM requesting them to act urgently in the best interest of the children.	The children were removed and lodged in a place of safety. Minors' mother followed a therapy in a detoxification centre.
1712	09.06.08	A 10 year old child was beaten by his school bus driver. Mother reported the case to the police. The mother complained that the child was being bullied by a Form V pupil in his new secondary school.	Letter sent to CP seeking more information. OCO contacted the Rector for urgent action to be taken to protect the child.	CP confirmed the allegations. Driver has been prosecuted for assault. Rector acted promptly. Child is being followed by the Educational Psychologist of the Zone.
1713	10.06.08	A rector alerted the OC that a 15 year old pupil in a girl's college attempted suicide twice at school.	Letter sent to the rector requesting a report on the child. Mother convened at OCO. Child referred to the psychologist at Suicide Prevention Unit. Educational Psychologist and social worker to follow the child at school.	Rector confirmed the information. Mother agreed to contact psychologist for the child. Appointment with psychologist at Suicide Prevention Unit. Child feeling better at school. Child transferred to another school by mother.

1718	23.06.08	Minor who was sexually abused by her boyfriend, became pregnant. The respondent agreed to take the responsibility of the minor but he ill-treated her.	Minor and her parents were convened to our office. The child seemed traumatised. The minor's parents refused to enter a police case against the respondent. The parents were requested to contact the CDU for psychological assistance.	The minor was followed by a psychologist. She stayed at her parents' place. After the birth of the baby, the minor resumed school. The baby is taken care of by the minor's maternal grandparents.
1723	27.06.08	Minor's mother made a complaint that her child is victim of corporal punishment at school.	Our office contacted the head teacher of the school and requested him to intervene in the best interest of the child. The case was also referred to the MEHR for enquiry and appropriate action .	Report received stated that school's staffs were apprised of the Education Regulations 1957. Minor was transferred to another school, at his parents' request.
1727	30.06.08	Minor's father made a complaint that his daughter was rusticated from school for one week. Finally she was removed from the institution. As the latter is in Form V and has already paid the examination fees, she would like to be reinstated at school.	The Manager of the school was contacted. The latter stated that the minor had been absent from school for 2 consecutive years. She continued to play truant and lied to the school authority. The case was referred to the MEHR and the PSSA for enquiry. A request was made to ensure that the child is not deprived of her right to education and that she is allowed to take part in the examination.	Report received stated that the child can resume school for the third term thus being able to take part in the Cambridge examination.
1728	30.06.08	Minor's father stated that minor who is a little retarded is harassed by her class teacher. Minor is traumatised and refuses to attend school.	The case was referred to the MEHR for enquiry. A request was made to take into consideration the special needs of the child and provide her with proper assistance.	Report received stated that the allegations of the parent were not founded. The child was reinstated in her class. As the minor was considered to be attention deficit, she was followed by a school psychologist. A request was also made to the teacher to give the same attention to all pupils.

1759	14.07.08	A standard two pupil was beaten by her class teacher with a ruler. The latter broke the child's arm. The pupil was admitted in hospital and had her arm plastered. Mother alleged that the teacher proposed a sum of money and asked her to remove her complaint. The child was transferred to another school.	Letter sent to MEHR, Police and CDU for information and relevant documents.	Report from MEHR informing OCO that a team of inspectors is investigating into the matter. Report from the police informing OC about inconsistencies in the statement given by the victim, mother and other concerned persons. Second report from MEHR. The inspectors did not concur with the mother and the child. They declared the allegations as unfounded. The DPP advised for no further action in the matter.
1761	01.08.08	Minors' mother complained that she lives separately from her two children. She left the conjugal roof as her husband was having extra marital affairs. She wanted the OC to carry out mediation.	The respondent was contacted. He refused to reconcile with the complainant. He was informed of his responsibilities towards his children.	He assumes his responsibilities towards his children and provides them with alimony.
1763	04.08.08	A mother complained at OCO that her 14 year old daughter was a member of a sect led by her son in law and that the child may be psychologically affected. She could not contact her daughter.	OCO requested the rector to brief her about the child behaviour and performance at school and with her friends. Mother informed about the positive reports on her daughter.	Report stated that child seemed happy with her group of friends. No negative report from school.
1764	04.08.08	Minor's father was denied access to his child after divorce. The complainant who has a ' <i>droit d'hebergement</i> ' would like to exercise his rights.	Minor's mother was convened. She stated that it was the complainant who was not exercising his rights. The respondent and the minor's maternal grandparents were advised to facilitate the rights of access to minor.	The minor's father is exercising his rights. The relationship between the minor and his father has improved significantly.
1770	11.08.08	A complaint was made that a mother and his child are begging at the Port Louis market's place.	The case was reported to the BPM for enquiry and appropriate action.	The respondent was prosecuted. The case is pending before court. The child was provided with psychological assistance.

1771	12.08.08	A school headmaster informed OCO that he reported the case of a 12 year old boy, who was developing disruptive and unruly behaviour, to the CDU. However, no action was taken. Child is still in distress.	The Child Welfare Officer concerned was contacted. Final report requested.	He intervened quite rapidly. He visited the family. The child was followed by the psychologist of the CDU.
1772	13.08.08	An anonymous call received at OCO informed that the owner of a lorry was employing a young boy, aged around 13 years, to load and unload material on his lorry.	Letter sent to NTA and CDU for urgent intervention.	Information received at OCO was incorrect. Informant unknown to OCO.
1774	13.08.08	The Head Teacher of a school reported that the minor is neglected by his parents.	The case was referred to the CDU. The educational social worker was entrusted with the case.	Minor's parents were advised to send the minor to school regularly and to pay attention to minor's health and hygiene. Follow up was ensured by the CDU and the educational social worker.
1777	14.08.08	A 3 year old boy, who is deaf and dumb, has been abandoned by his mother and left in the custody of a woman. At the beginning the mother sent some money for the child but after a few months she stopped. She never came to see the boy, but the "guardian" fell sick and could not look after the boy anymore. The child was living in very unhygienic conditions. A neighbour alerted the OC.	Case referred to the MWRCDFWCP for urgent intervention and report.	CDU intervened promptly. Parents were in jail. EPO issued by the court and the child was removed and placed in a foyer.
1778	14.08.08	A complaint was made that the minor has subscribed for an insurance scheme at his school but after an incident at school, he had to bear all the medical costs.	A report was sought from the School Authority on the objective of the insurance scheme offered to the students by the school.	Report received mentioned that the fee subscribed for covers only the transport cost incurred in any pupil involved in an accident at school.

1780	14.08.08	Minor has not been to school for approximately 4 months. A request was made for the minor to resume school anew.	The Manager of the school was contacted. He stated that the child has missed schooling for a long period and it would be a difficult for him to follow the class. The complainant was requested to register the minor for the following year.	The child was readmitted to school and is attending school regularly.
1783	18.08.08	A neighbour informed OC that three children of same family, aged 6, 8 and 14 years old are neglected by their parents. They did not attend school, loitered on the streets all day and had unruly behaviour.	Case referred to CDU.	Awaiting report.
1786	19.08.08	A case of attempt upon chastity was reported to OCO by the Head teacher an institution.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action and for the minor to be provided psychological assistance.	The incident took place one month ago. The matter has already been referred to the police for enquiry and appropriate action. The minor benefited from psychological assistance. The Head Teacher was contacted; she stated that the child is attending school regularly.
1790	21.08.08	A complaint was made that the minor was beaten by her father. She was also victim of attempt upon chastity by her paternal grandfather. She would like to benefit from social aid and would like to benefit help from the Trust Fund for the construction of a small house.		The perpetrator was given a warning. The latter has been forbidden to visit their place or attempt to approach the minor. The family is benefiting from social aid. Necessary arrangements have been made by the Trust Fund to enable her to have a lodging.

1791	25.08.08	Complainant stated that her son lives in <i>concubinage</i> with a minor of 16 years. Minor who was attending school refused to go to school.	The school authority was contacted. The minor's parents were convened at the OCO.	The school authority informed us that the minor was not attending school since 1 month. The minors' parents affirmed that the minor was pregnant. The respondent agreed to marry the minor with the consent of her parents. Both parties are agreeable for the minor to get married. The marriage procedure is in process.
1794	29.08.08	Complainant stated that he was refused access to his daughter though he has a " <i>droit d'hebergement</i> ". He would like to exercise his rights.	The complainant attended office and informed us that he has entered a case in court regarding same.	He was informed that as the case was in court, the office could not intervene but he could have recourse to the CDU for advice and counselling.
1797	05.09.08	Minor's mother complained that her daughter has made an allegation of ill-treatment against her to the CDU. She stated that she was apprised of same two weeks later only. She stated that she is against the manner the case has been handled by the CDU.	The CDU was contacted and a report was sought in respect of the case. A request was also made for the child to be provided with psychological assistance.	Report received mentioned that the minor attended the CDU accompanied by her father. She stated that she was ill-treated by her mother and stepfather. But due to lack of staff, the complainant was not contacted. Minor's mother was convened at the CDU and she was given full explanation of the past event. The child and her mother were provided with psychological assistance. The relationship between the complainant and her daughter has improved.
1798	05.09.08	A case of alleged attempt upon chastity was reported to this office regarding a Std V pupil of an institution.	The case was referred to the CDU. The child was examined by the PMO.	The perpetrator was arrested and the minor was provided with psychological assistance.

1802	09.09.08	A complaint was made that the minor was sexually abused and sodomised by her maternal uncle.	A request was made to the CDU to act urgently. In case the child is at risk, appropriate action should be taken to remove her. She should be assisted by a psychologist.	A visit was made at the minor's school for enquiry. The child revealed that she was abused by her uncle since she was 5 years old. Parents were made aware. A declaration was made to the police. Minor was medically examined by the Police Medical Officer. She was also provided with psychological support.
1807	16.09.08	Complainant stated that his son was victim of corporal punishment at school by another classmate's parent.	The case was referred to the MECHR for enquiry and appropriate action. A report was sought on the measures available at the school level to protect children against such incidence.	Report received, mentioned that immediate action has been taken at the level of the ministry. Measures have been taken to control parents' access to school premises by the introduction of a "Movement Book".
1809	22.09.08	Minor's mother is in prison for a case of murder. Minor's father, who is a foreigner, has gone abroad with minor's sister. Minor is left in the custody of a parents' friend.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action. The BPM was also requested to make a site visit at the place where minor resides.	A request was made for the child to stay at his grandmother's place at Quatre Bornes pending the return of his father. The CDU provided minor with a means of transport to attend school. On his return, the minor's father took the responsibility of his child.
1817	24.09.08	A complaint was made that the minor, an inmate of an institution is suffering from behavioural problems.	The complainant was requested to have the minor examined by a medical practitioner at the BSH.	The minor was provided with the necessary care and was placed under medication for a period of time.
1820	17.06.08	A complainant contacted the office regarding the custody of the minor. He wanted the minor to be assisted by a psychologist.	He was referred to the CDU for psychological assistance.	The minor was provided with psychological assistance.

1821	06.10.08	A complainant reported that he is facing financial difficulties to support his family. The children are psychologically affected.	The complainant was requested to contact the CDU for psychological assistance and to contact the MSSNSSCWRI for social aid.	The whole family was provided with psychological support. The family benefited from social aid. Follow-up is ensured.
1825	09.10.08	Complainant stated that her daughter was encountering problems at school so she transferred her. As the minor will sit for the CPE examination and her index centre is at her former institution, she requested our office to intervene to allow the minor to sit for examination in the new institution.	The case was referred to the MES. A request was made to enable the minor to sit for examination in her present school. The complainant was requested to attend the MES for formalities procedure.	The minor will be able to take part in the examination in her new school.
1826	09.10.08	A mother complained that her neighbour threatened to kidnap or assault her 14 year old son. The latter bullied the neighbour's son two months ago and hurt him in the eyes.	Letter sent to the CP requesting protection for the child even if he was a bully.	The BPM accompanied by the CDU provided assistance to the child. Case of threat reported against neighbour. The latter was arrested and bailed out. Psychological help provided to child.
1827	09.10.08	Complainant is victim of domestic violence. Her children are traumatised by this situation. She would like our office to intervene.	The respondent was convened at our office and advised to adopt positive discipline. He was also informed of the negative impact of domestic violence on his family. The complainant was also requested to contact the CDU for psychological assistance.	The whole family was provided with psychological support. The relationship between the respondent and the other members of the family has improved significantly.
1828	10.10.08	A case of alleged attempt upon chastity was reported to this office.	The case was reported to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	A visit was effected at the respondent's place. The latter did not want to report the case to the police. She stated that she will have conjugal problems. The minor was provided with psychological assistance.

1829	09.10.08	Minor was injured while eating a sweet called Goula Goula.	The case for referred to the MHQL and MCPCC for enquiry and appropriate action.	The case was referred to the State Law Office by the MHQL as no presence of blade was found in the samples of candies seized from wholesale points forwarded by the Government Analyst Division. The State Law Office advised that no action could be taken as the time limit of 90 days for prosecution had already elapsed.
1832	14.10.08	Minor's father made a complaint to this office that his wife has left the conjugal roof with his child. He does not want to reconcile with her but wants to have the custody of the minor.	He was advised to enter a case in court regarding custody of the minor and to contact the CDU for advice and counselling.	The complainant entered a case in court in respect to custody.
1838	20.10.08	A complaint was made that the minor is ill-treated and neglected by her mother. Minor does not attend school and is obliged to beg. He has to look after his small brother. The children are left on their own without food. Money gained through mendicity is used by the minors' mother to buy drugs.	The case was referred to the CP and the MWRCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action. As further complaint was received on the case, the CDU was advised to remove the children if need be.	Report received mentioned that the minors' mother has become more responsible after the intervention of the authorities. She is assuming her responsibilities towards the children. The minors are no longer begging. They are attending school.
1841	21.10.08	A complaint was made that the minor is not attending school.	The case was referred to the CDU and the MECHR for enquiry and appropriate action.	Minor's mother was provided with social aid as she was encountering financial problems. The family was provided with psychological support. The child is followed by the educational social worker.
1848	29.10.08	A complaint was made that minors' parents cannot cater for their children's well being and would like the authority to help them. Minors have behavioural problems.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action. Request was made for the children to be provided psychological therapy. The complainant was requested to contact the MSSNSSCWRI for social aid.	The family is benefiting from social aid. The children are being followed by the psychologist.

1849	29.10.08	A complaint was made that the minor was abused sexually thrice by 3 different individuals residing in her locality. Following this incident, the minor became pregnant. The case was referred to the DPP for prosecution. Reply received stated no further action by the DPP.	The OC met the complainant and the minor who was not able to communicate properly.	The complainant was told that she could attempt to enter a civil case of <i>recherche de paternité</i> .
1854	04.11.08	A complaint was made that several parents are using their children to ask for alms in the vicinity of caveau Père Laval.	The case was referred to the CDU and the BPM for enquiry and appropriate action.	Several parents were given verbal warnings. Regular patrols were carried out in the locality by the BPM officers.
1856	07.11.08	A father, who was in jail, wrote to OC to request her to mediate with his wife so that the latter would allow his son to visit him during visiting time.	Mother convened at OCO. Father was informed. Mother convened at OCO several times. Father informed through the Prison Welfare Office.	After discussion mother agreed to take the child to see his father in a week time. Mother never took the child to see his father, mother never turned up. Mother changed address.
1858	10.11.08	An alleged case of neglect and shaken baby syndrome was reported against a 11 months old baby by the medical social worker.	A request was made to the CDU to act urgently and in the best interest of the child.	The CDU attended the office after the discharge of the baby. The family could not be traced out as they have moved elsewhere. The whereabouts of the minor's parents were traced out by our office and submitted to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action. It was found out that the minor's parents have got a stable job. They had a better standard of living and were taking care of their child.
1860	13.11.08	A complaint was made to this office that the minors are deprived of their rights to social aid after the death of their father.	The case was referred to the Social Security Office of Mahebourg requesting for a reinstatement of the social aid.	The minor is benefiting from social aid, now.

1861	13.11.08	An allegation was made that the minor is victim of ill-treatment by his stepmother.	The case was referred to the CDU for psychological assistance and also to ensure that the child is not deprived of his right to education.	The minor and his family were provided with psychological support. The child is followed by the educational social worker and the school psychologist.
1863	18.11.08	A complaint was made to this office that the children are neglected by their parents who are alcoholic and irresponsible.	The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP for enquiry and appropriate action.	The whole family was provided with psychological support.
1871	26.11.08	Minor's father is in prison. According to him, his daughter is victim of child neglect and mendicity by her mother.	The respondent and the minor were convened to our office. The case was also referred to the CDU for social enquiry.	Minor's mother together with the minor attended office. Minor's mother rejected the said allegations and informed that she takes care of her child. The minor also stated that she does not ask for alms and that her mother takes care of her. Report received from the CDU confirmed same.
1880	05.12.08	Minor who is suffering from bronchial asthma was admitted to a State Secondary School where the level of humidity is quite high and is affecting the fragile health of the minor.	A request was made by our office to the MEHR to facilitate the transfer of the minor to a state secondary school where the climatic conditions is convenient to his health.	The minor was transferred to another state secondary school near his place of residence with better climatic conditions.
1881	08.12.08	Minor's parents live separately. An allegation was made that the minor's father, who has custody of minor, is ill-treating the child. The latter is not attending school.	The father was contacted and informed that he should treat minor well and the case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received revealed that minor is well looked after by his father and his paternal grandmother. The child was provided with psychological support.

1882	08.12.08	Minors' parents are irresponsible and alcoholic. The children are ill-treated and neglected when they are under the influence of alcohol. The eldest daughter has been victim of sexual abuse.	The case was referred to the CDU for immediate action at their end. A request was made to remove the children and lodge them in a place of safety as they are considered to be at risk.	A visit was carried out and it was found that the children were shut in the house and left on their own in unhygienic conditions. The children were taken care of by the CDU and were brought to the hospital to be medically examined. They were then placed in an institution.
1884	08.12.08	An allegation was made that the minor was sexually abused by her step father.	Minor's mother who attended office was requested to make a declaration to the police station of her locality. She was also referred to the CDU for psychological assistance.	The child was examined by a police medical officer and was provided with psychological support. The perpetrator was arrested.
1889	26.11.08	A complaint was made that minor is neglected by his mother, who is a mental patient, and his father who is a heavy drunkard. The minor is living in an unhygienic and precarious environment and is deprived of basic needs.	The case was referred to the CDU for urgent action as the child was considered to be at risk.	A visit was effected. The minor was found in an unhygienic environment with his father dead drunk. Minor's mother was not present at home. The child was removed under an EPO and placed in an institution.
1890	06.01.09	Minor's mother who has custody of the child, reported that her child was snatched from her by minor's father while the latter was at hospital. She wanted to have her baby back.	The police of her locality was contacted by the OC and requested to intervene immediately in this case.	The minor was returned back to her mother.
1892	07.01.09	Minor's father made a complaint that his child is at risk at his mother's place. The latter neglects the minor.	The minor's mother was convened at our office. She affirmed that she takes care of her son. The case was also referred to the CDU for social enquiry.	Visit effected by CDU officer averred that the child was well looked after by the mother. The child was provided with psychological assistance. The father was informed to contact his attorney in case he intends to have the custody of his son.

1898	02.01.09	A complaint was made that minor is being illtreated and severely beaten by his stepfather. The latter is deprived of food.	The case was referred to the CDU for urgent action as the child was considered to be at risk.	Minor was removed and placed in a crèche.
1899	13.01.09	Minors' mother who lives separately with her two children made a request at the OCO for her to benefit from social aid.	The complainant was referred to the MSSNSSCWRI for social aid	The complainant is benefiting from social aid.
1900	13.01.09	Minor's parents are often in conflict. Minor's mother has left the conjugal roof and has gone to live at her mother's place. Minor's father is harassing minor's mother and grandmother.	The respondent was convened at the office. He was advised to take into consideration the best interests of the child. He was requested to contact the CDU for psychological support.	The whole family was provided with psychological support. The relationship between the respondent and the other members of the family has improved significantly.
1901	14.01.09	A complaint was made that a minor is roaming near an institution the whole day. The latter does not attend school.	The officers of the CDU and the BPM were requested to carry out site visits at the said place immediately.	They reported that minor's mother had passed away. His father, who is alcoholic, neglects the child. The child was removed and placed in an institution.
1904	10.01.09	Minor's paternal grandmother stated that she has brought up her granddaughter since the latter was 8 months old. Presently she is 4 years old, her father who lives separately, threatened to take her. The grandmother wants to have the custody of the child.	She was informed to contact the legal adviser of the CDU for advice and counselling. She could enter a case of adoption with the consent of both biological parents or enter a case of custody.	The complainant entered a case in court in respect to custody of the minor.
1906	21.01.09	Minor is neglected by her mother who is alcoholic.	The minor's mother was convened to our office and was counselled about her responsibilities by the OC. She should contact a detoxification centre or the BSH for appropriate therapy. She was also requested to contact the CDU for psychological support.	Minor's mother was provided with psychological support. Minor's mother attended a detoxification centre to undergo a therapy.

1909	27.01.09	A father made a complaint that the minor's mother has left her child at her maternal grandmother's place and has gone to Ireland. The child does not want to live at her grandmother's place and prefers to live at her father's place. The complainant who like to take the responsibility of his child. He would like the minor to be transferred to a school nearby.	The minor's grandmother was convened to our office for mediation. She was informed of the responsibility of the father towards his child. She was requested to entrust the custody of the minor to her father. The Director of the Zone Directorate was contacted by OC to facilitate the transfer of the minor.	The child went to live at her father's place and was transferred to a nearby school. During the weekend she visited her grandmother.
1918	04.02.09	An allegation was made that the minor may be victim of attempt upon chastity by her stepfather.	A request was made to the CDU to act immediately in the best interests of the child.	The child was no longer residing at her parents' place. She was staying at her aunt's place in a safe environment.
1920	05.02.09	Minor is encountering difficulties to learn at school. The head teacher and class teacher were not taking care of the child.	The case was referred to the CDU for psychological assistance. The case was also referred to the MECHR requesting them to take into consideration the learning difficulties encountered by the child.	The child was followed by a psychologist of the MECHR. Pedagogical support was given to the minor to enable her to improve in her education.
1922	06.02.09	Minor's grandparents made a complaint to this office that they were denied access to their grandchild by the minor's father.	The father was convened. He explained that the relationship between them has deteriorated. He is not willing to let the minor have access to his grandparents due to various reasons.	The complainant was informed of same. They were informed that they can have recourse to court to have access to their grandchild.
1923	09.02.09	A father complained to OCO that following the CPE, his twin sons were allocated a college far from their place of residence. He applied for a transfer and the two brothers were separated as they were allocated different schools. They could not bear this separation.	Letter sent to MECHR requesting them to reconsider their decision on humanitarian ground. OC mediated with the officers of the MECHR.	No seats available in the requested school.

1924	11.02.09	An allegation was made that the minor is indulging in prostitution after school hours.	The case was referred to the BPM for social enquiry. The Officers were requested to ensure close vigilance on the minor after school hours.	The minor was closely followed by the officers of the BPM. The child attended school regularly and did not have abnormal behaviour. The child was provided with psychological assistance. She revealed that she invented the whole story in order to draw attention. Report from the BPM revealed that the child is not indulging in prostitution and she is attending school regularly.
1933	20.02.09	Minor's parents are separated. Minor's mother has custody of the child while her father has a ' <i>droit d'herbergement</i> '. Allegation of sexual abuse was made against the minor's father while he was exercising his rights.	The minor and her mother were convened to our office. The OC talked to the child who confirmed she was victim of sexual abuse by her father. The complainant was referred to the CDU for psychological assistance. She was also advised to contact the police.	The child was provided with psychological assistance. The child was examined by the PMO. Minor's mother has entered a case of variation order in court to prohibit father from exercising his rights.
1939	03.03.09	A mother complained that she did not have enough financial means to cater for her 8 year old daughter suffering from cerebral Palsy. She cannot accept a fixed job as she has to be back home before her child returns from a specialised school.	Interviewer accompanied mother to the social security office in the same building as OCO. Interviewer phoned to confirm if allowance is paid regularly.	Mother filled the application. An additional allowance of Rs 1000 was allocated to the child. Child seen by the Board of the Social Security Office.
1940	04.03.09	A complaint was made that two minors are not attending school.	The case was referred to the MEHR for enquiry and appropriate action.	Both minors were admitted to a school near their place of residence.

1941	04.03.09	Minors' mother left the conjugal roof as she was victim of domestic violence. She went to live at her mother's place with her children. As she did not have the custody of the children, she encountered difficulties with regard to the transfer of her children to another school. The children were not attending school.	A request in respect of transfer was made to the MECHR.	The minors were transferred to a school near their place of residence. The complainant has lodged a case of divorce and custody of children in court.
1948	16.03.09	A standard one pupil is alleged to be victim of corporal punishment inflicted by her teacher to the extent that she did not want to come back to her class nor to come to school.	Letter sent to the MECHR for enquiry and report.	Report received. Educational Psychologist met the child who restated that she was regularly slapped. Child was transferred to a neighbouring school. Other children were showing similar reactions and were transferred. Teacher warned. Her class was closely monitored by the inspector. No further complaint received.
1950	19.03.09	A father complained that his son was beaten by a group of pupils (with the help of the teacher) during the PE class. The child was badly hurt and was brought to hospital by the father.	Letter sent to MECHR for investigation and report from the Rector. OC was not satisfied with the action taken. Letter sent to the Minister for appropriate action.	Report received from Rector. The case of assault was confirmed. 7 pupils confirmed having beaten the child as ordered by the teacher. Teacher was transferred. Report received. Case has been reported to the police. A disciplinary board has been set up at Zone level to carry out further inquiry and take appropriate sanctions. The case is still being followed by OCO.

1953	20.03.09	A 15 year old girl was reported to stay away from her house very often. She led an unruly life. Her father is a foreigner and mother a street vendor. Both parents have great difficulty to manage the child.	Case referred to the BPM for inquiry and report.	BPM reported that the minor was explained about the dangers and consequences of her acts. Child and mother agreed to have a good understanding between them. Child changed the disruptive behaviour.
1960	26.03.09	A standard four lady teacher informed OCO that a 9 year old boy of her class bit her on the hands. She was brought to hospital. Child also showed other behavioural problems.	Letter to MECHR	Report from MECHR: inspectors visited the child. Child and mother seen by the psychologist of the MECHR, educational social worker carried out home visit, child referred to BHS for treatment by psychologist. Basic problem was that the mother was getting married to her new partner. No mental pathology detected by psychiatrist but child would still be followed by the clinical psychologist of the BHS. Headmaster decided to change child's class, teacher objected as she wanted to help the child. Child's behaviour started changing slowly but surely. The inspector will provide support to the teacher in helping the child.
1961	30.03.09	Minor has not been to school for approximately one year. Minor's father who has her custody, requested for his daughter to be admitted to a school.	The case was referred to the MECHR requesting them to act urgently in this matter as the child has been deprived of her rights to education for such a long time.	Necessary arrangements were made for the minor to be admitted to an institution. The child is attending school and is followed by a psychologist and the educational social worker.

1966	31.03.09	The OC was informed by a well-wisher that a young boy of 6 years was regularly beaten by his mother.	Mother convened at OCO.	Mother was explained about negative effects of corporal punishment. She was sensitized on positive discipline. No further complaint received.
1967	31.03.09	A Head Teacher informed OCO that a standard IV pupil was bullying his classmates and teaching them abusive language. The parents were furious.	Head teacher was advised to seek the help of the Educational Psychologist and social worker.	Child seen by the school psychologist. No further complaint recorded.
1970	02.04.09	Minor is behaving violently at school. The school authority cannot cope with him in spite of all the psychological and emotional support provided to the child. The child was at risk at school and also represented a risk to other pupils.	A case conference was organised to find a solution to minor's problems. It was found that the child needed an intensive psychological therapy. Consent of parents was sought and child was admitted to an institution. At the institution the child reacted violently towards the inmates, tried to jump from the balcony of the building. The minor's grandfather was contacted to take care of his grandchild.	The minor was not attending school. His grand-father was contacted; he affirmed that he was coaching the child. He considered taking him abroad to be examined by professional doctors. The child is presently under the care of a Child Protection Institution abroad.
1973	06.04.09	A complaint was made that several children are roaming in the streets during the whole day from 9.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m.	The case was referred to the BPM and the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	Visit was effected by CDU and BPM Officers. The minors' parents were contacted and were advised to take the responsibilities of their children. No further complaint was made.
1974	07.04.09	Minors' father made a complaint to this office that he is deprived of his right of visit to his children since his separation with his wife.	The respondent was convened to the office and was advised to allow the minors to meet their father.	Respondent agreed for the complainant to meet his children. The couple reconciled and the minors' mother returned to live under the conjugal roof.

1981	14.04.09	It was reported to our office that the minor was entrusted to his maternal aunt by the CDU soon after the delivery, as her mother was unable to take proper care of the baby.	The complainant was convened to the office for mediation. A report on the case was requested from the CDU. Minor's biological parents were convened to our office, they agreed for the minor's aunt to be the legal guardian of the minor. The MSSNSSCWRI was contacted so that the complainant could benefit from social aid. Both parties were convened at the social security office for formalities.	The minor's aunt has been entrusted with the custody of the minor. She is benefiting from social aid.
1985	24.04.09	Minor who has behavioural problems was sexually abused. The latter became uncontrollable and was sent to RYC.	Minor's mother was convened at the office for enquiry.	Minor's mother affirmed that minor has changed positively following her release from the RYC. The child is followed by a psychologist.
1986	27.04.09	Minors' mother reported that she is encountering financial difficulties for the upbringing of her three children. She would like her eldest son to attend school instead of roaming the street.	She was advised to contact the social security office for social aid. Necessary arrangements were made by our office for the minor to join an educational institution of her locality.	The complainant is benefiting from social aid and her son is attending school.
1987	28.04.09	A 15 year old boy called at OCO with his mother to complain that, as he had not have his hair cut, as asked by his father, the latter did not let him enter the house in the evening. He has examinations for the coming weeks and needs his writing materials and books to prepare himself for the examination. Note that the parents are divorced.	Letter sent to the school to allow the child to sit for the exams even if he is not wearing his uniform. Mediated with father at OCO. Father was requested to show more consideration to the child.	Minor sat for his exams. Father explained that he was out of home on that evening. He tried to contact the child but the latter's mobile was off. As the child was at his mother's place he was not so worried about the child. He asked OCO to tell his son to come back home. Child and father reconciled. Child returned to father's place. No further complaint received.

1989	05.05.09	Minor's parents are separated following conjugal dispute. Minor's mother would like to reconcile and ask for a mediation to be carried out at OCO.	Both parties were convened to OCO. Respondent is not yet ready to reconcile. He was requested to provide the forthcoming baby with an alimony and to assume his responsibilities as father.	The complainant was provided with an alimony.
1995	14.05.09	A mother complained that her 3 year old son was beaten and locked in a room alone by his preschool teachers because he misbehaved in class.	Case referred to the inspectors of the PSTF.	The teachers were given a severe warning. Child was transferred to another preschool in the region.
2003	26.05.09	A preschool manager sent a letter to the OC reporting some violent acts perpetrated by a parent in his school compound.	Contacted the ECCEA for further information.	The officer in charge Zone 4 of the ECCEA reported that the problem did not concern a child but a father and the school manager. The child was transferred and there is a civil case in court.
2012	05.06.09	A father complained that his 12 year old son was slapped twice by a classmate's father, who is also a police officer. Child suffered from heart disease and was very fragile.	Father was advised to give a statement at the police. He was also asked to contact the CDU for psychological support.	Father met perpetrator and removed his complaint from the police. Child seen by psychologist at school.
2013	05.06.09	A mother complained that her son was expelled from his Prevoc school following some gross misconduct. He was not attending any school.	Letter sent to BEC. Mother convened at OCO.	Child admitted to another school.
2018	18.06.09	Parents are separated. Minor who was living with his father has gone to live with his mother. Child is not attending school	The minor's mother was convened to our office and requested to respect the minor's rights to education.	The transfer formalities were done by both parents. The child is attending school near his place of residence.

2021	22.06.09	1. Minor's father passed away. Minor lived with her paternal grand-mother since she was 8 years old. Mother never cared for her. In the meantime the mother changed religion and got married again. Minor is presently in Form IV. She had some behavioural problems at school. Mother came to school one afternoon to take her with her and at the same time requested for a transfer certificate to transfer the child to another school. Minor wants to stay at Grandmother's place. 2. Minor complained a second time against the mother and the latter's concubine. She was beaten and humiliated by the mother and the concubine.	OC called the mother, the grandmother and the minor. She mediated with them individually on several occasions.	Finally it was agreed that the minor will stay at her Grandmother's place but will visit her mother regularly. Minor will continue her schooling.
2028	29.06.09	A father, who was in jail, requested OCO to intervene so that he may have the visit of his 8 year old son during the visiting hours at the Central Prison. The mother has refused to bring the child there.	Contacted mother by phone.	The latter objected to take the child to the Central Prison in the best interests of the latter. She was protecting the child from being traumatised.
2041	21.07.09	An allegation of attempt upon chastity upon the minor was made.	The minor's mother was convened to our office. She affirmed that after her separation with her husband, the child was living at her father's place. She was victim of sexual abuse by a cousin and was removed and placed in a shelter pending the custody issue. The child was victim of sexual abuse allegedly in the institution which did not inform her when she retrieved the minor. Nor was the child provided with appropriate psychological treatment. She requested OC to intervene. A report on the incident was sought from the institution and a request was made for the minor to be provided with psychological assistance.	Report received revealed that the minor did sexual finger penetration on another inmate of the institution. Both minors were provided with psychological support. Follow up is ensured by the CDU. The OC drew the attention of the authorities on the negligence of the carers who did not report the case and on the need to give proper training to all carers of such institutions.

2056	31.08.09	Minors' parents are separated. Minors' mother is a foreigner and does not have Mauritian nationality. Minors refuse to live with their father. Mother has entered a case of custody of minors and once she has this right she will take the minors with her.	The children were convened to the office. They affirmed that they preferred to stay with their mother. The OC requested the complainant to enter a case in court claiming the custody of the minors.	The Court entrusted the custody of the minors to their mother. The minors' father could have access to his children during the school holidays.
2068	15.09.09	Minor's complained that her son is bullied and ill-treated at school by his classmates and head teacher.	The case was referred to the MECHR for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received averred that the minor got hurt during a dispute among classmates. Following the incident, the child was traumatised. The child was examined by a medical practitioner. He was followed by the educational psychologist.
2071	16.09.09	Minor was born out of wedlock. As her mother has her own family, she requested her child to be adopted by someone.	Minor's biological parents were called at the office, they agreed for the child to be adopted.	The maternal grandmother agreed to take the responsibility of the child. She entered a case in court to become the guardian of the child. The child is benefiting from alimony from his father.
2075	23.09.09	Minor's parents are separated; minor's mother has custody of the minor. Minor's father has <i>droit de visite</i> and <i>droit d'hebergement</i> . Minor's father is encountering problems to exercise his rights.	A mediation was carried out at this office.	Both parties agreed to exercise their rights as per court order paying attention to the best interests of the child.
2077	25.09.09	1st complaint: A case of child battering by minor's mother was reported to the office. 2nd complaint reported to our office that the child was ill-treated by carers at the institution	The case was reported to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	The minor was removed and placed in an institution. Following complaint against the institution, the child was removed and placed in another institution. The child was provided with psychological assistance.

2081	30.09.09	Minor's mother made a complaint that her son is suffering from Thalassemia. She is encountering lodging problems as the house owner is asking her to leave his house.	She was requested to contact the NHDC for housing. A benevolent association was contacted by OCO to assist the family financially. She was also referred to the MSSNSSCWRI for social aid.	The complainant benefited from social aid. Her standard of living has improved significantly. The child was closely followed by a professional doctor of another benevolent association. He was also provided with psychological assistance. The minor's state of health has improved.
2082	30.09.09	Minor was victim of violence on her way from the school. A second time minor was kidnapped by some unknown individuals. The latter was very afraid and feared about her security. Minor's parents requested the minor to be transferred to a school near their place of residence.	The case was referred to the MECHR for enquiry and appropriate action. Minor's mother was requested to contact the PSSA for minor to be admitted to a school in case she was refused a state secondary school. She was referred to the CDU for psychological assistance.	Minor was transferred to another state secondary school. She attended her psychological therapy.
2090	07.10.09	Allegation of a case of attempt upon chastity on minor by her father was reported to our office.	A report was sought from the police.	Report received mentioned that following the incident, the minor's parents have separated. The child's custody has been entrusted to her mother. Due to lack of evidence the case was filed. Psychological assistance was provided to the child.
2091	08.10.09	Minors' parents are encountering conjugal problems, this situation is affecting the well being of their children	Both parents were convened to this office and were advised of their responsibilities towards their children. As they were encountering lodging problems, they were advised to contact the NHDC and the Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable groups. They were also requested to contact the CDU for psychological support.	The whole family was provided with psychological assistance. The family benefits from social aid. As the family owns a small plot of land, the Trust Fund provided them with lodging assistance.

2095	15.10.09	Minor's maternal grandmother attended office to inform us that her son-in-law, who is of Indian origin, wants to take her daughter and her grandchild to his country of birth. She suspects that her son in law is not acting in good faith as he concealed his true family identity from them. She would like the OCO to talk to her daughter.	Minor's mother was convened to the office and stated that she was also doubtful about her husband. Her daughter was not acquainted to him as he visited her rarely and spent most of his time abroad. The respondent was convened. He stated that he has his own identity but a print error from the passport office has created all the problems. The minor's mother suspicion aroused when the latter was trying to bribe an officer.	Minor's mother refused to accompany the respondent to his country of birth as she learnt that the respondent was a swindler. He left Mauritius but the child remained with her mother.
2096	15.10.09	Minor's parents practice two different religions. He practices the religion of his mother against his father's will. Such situation was creating problems in the family.	Minor was advised to give priority to his examination, as he was a minor and was under the responsibility of his parents, he has to abide by their authority. He was also referred to the CDU for psychological assistance.	The minor is followed by a psychologist. He is paying attention to his examination as he wants to succeed and become financially independent, in order to take his own decision.
2097	20.10.09	An allegation was made that the minor was ill-treated by his step-father.	The parents were convened to this office. The parents affirmed that the child had behavioural problems and they cannot control him. The child was followed by a psychologist. The parents were requested to contact the CDU once more for the minor to be psychologically assisted.	The child was provided with psychological assistance.
2099	23.10.09	Minor's parents who were facing financial difficulties, agreed for their child to be adopted by a foreign couple. The minors' parents opted for the ' <i>adoption simple</i> ' rather than " <i>adoption plénière</i> " as they wanted to maintain relationship with the adoptive parents. According to the complainant he was deceived by the adoptive parents. They have opted for <i>adoption plénière</i> and they have cut all contact with him.	The complainant was requested to submit the detailed information, phone no. and address of the respondent. He was also requested to inform us when minor's adoptive parents would visit him to enable us to carry out mediation between the parties concerned.	Several phone calls were made by our office but there was no response. The adoptive parents did not pay any visit to the family up to now. The case is still pending.

2101	26.10.09	Minor's parents are separated. Each parent has a new partner and both refused to take the responsibility of the minor.	The parents were contacted and informed about their responsibilities towards their child. They were warned that if they will not take their responsibilities a case of child abandonment could be lodged against them.	The minor's mother agreed to take the responsibility of the child and the minor's father gave her alimony.
2102	27.10.09	A complaint was made that the minor is neglected by his parents. The parents are alcoholic. The child does not attend school.	The minor's parents were convened to our office. They affirmed that they are encountering financial problems .The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	The family was provided with appropriate psychological and financial assistance. The child was followed by the educational social worker.
2103	27.10.09	The child is neglected by his mother and ill-treated by his stepfather. The child does not attend school regularly.	Minor's mother was called at this office. She affirmed that the minor has behavioural problems and did not listen to them. She was provided with psychological assistance.	The child is followed by a psychologist and is attending school regularly.
2106	04.11.09	A grandmother complained at OCO that her grand children, two girls and a boy aged 6, 7 and 2 years respectively, were neglected and battered by her daughter-in-law. The latter led an unruly life with several boyfriends and very often left the children on their own.	Case referred to CDU for immediate action and report. OCO requested a final report.	The two girls were removed and placed in shelter. The 2 year old boy was kept by a relative.
2107	06.11.09	Minors' parents are separated. Their father does not have access to them and would like our office to mediate between the parties.	Minors' mother was contacted, the latter stated that she is not against their father visiting them at her place but she is against the children going to their father's place. Besides the children refused to go there on account of their father's concubine.	The latter was informed of the refusal of his children to come to his place. He was requested to visit the children at their mother's place.
2108	09.11.09	Allegation was made that the minors who were abandoned by their mother may be victim of sexual abuse. Their father is in prison and they are living at their stepmother's place.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	Minor who was staying with her alcoholic stepmother was removed and placed at her grandmother's place. The child was provided with psychological support

2109	09.11.09	Minor's parents are separated. Minor's mother is prevented from visiting her child.	A mediation was made at our office between the two partners.	Both parents were able to exercise their rights towards the child.
2112	18.11.09	Minors' parents are separated. The children are victim of conjugal disputes. They are traumatised.	Both parties were requested to accompany the minors to the CDU for psychological assistance. The parents were also requested to attend FSB for counselling and advice.	The couple as well as the children were provided with psychological support and counselling. The family relationship has improved significantly.
2113	18.11.09	Minor who has a love affair with someone is not attending school regularly. She is having behavioural problems and had fugued. The child was considered missing.	The case was referred to the CDU and the police for enquiry and appropriate action. The minor was found and placed in a shelter. As she had swollen a needle, she was admitted to a hospital. From the hospital, the latter ran away once more. She returned back to her grand parents' place. The child was readmitted to hospital for cure and was brought to the OCO. A mediation was carried out between the minor and her grandparents by the OC.	The child solemnly affirmed that she will change her behaviour and act in a more disciplined manner. She would stay at her paternal grandparents' place. Meanwhile the minor's relationship with her stepmother has improved. She would like to stay with her stepmother till she reaches 18 years. She is attending school regularly.
2115	18.11.09	Minor has left her house and has eloped with someone. Her parents are encountering difficulties to find her.	The case was referred to the BPM for enquiry and appropriate action. Minor's lover was convened and informed of the legal aspects of having relationship with a minor.	Minor is attending school regularly. Minor's parents did not want to enter any police case against the respondent.
2116	18.11.09	An aunt complained that her niece is ill-treated and battered by her elder brother and father. Her mother passed away and she is living with her father. The aunt wanted to have the minor placed in a shelter.	Investigator talked to the aunt. Case referred to CDU for visit and report.	Report received. Counselling provided to the minor, the father and the brother. Child wants to stay with father. Minor will be continuing her psychological treatment.
2117	18.11.09	Minor's parents are separated; minor's mother has custody of child while her father has <i>a droit de visite</i> . According to her, when the minor's father exercises his right of visit, the child is psychologically harassed by him.	Both parties were convened at OCO for mediation. Both parties were advised to act in the best interests of the child.	Minor's mother stated that she will enter a case of variation order in court.

2118	18.11.09	A complaint was made that the children of a family was threatened to death by another family following a fatal incident involving the two families.	The case was reported to the police for enquiry. A request was made to the authority to ensure the security of the children in both families.	Both families were provided with adequate security by the police.
2122	24.11.09	A complaint was made that several families are encountering financial problems. Their children have left the island of Rodrigues, in search of jobs. They have entrusted their children to their grandparents. As the latter are not benefiting from any financial assistance from their children, they would like to benefit from social aid to cater for the well being of their grandchildren.	The Ombudsperson for Children has intervened in favour of the children; recommendations were made to the MSSNSSCWRI for assisting the families encountering financial problems to up bring their grandchildren.	An enquiry was carried out and social aid was provided to the family in need on a case to case basis.
2129	01.12.09	Minor had run away from the parental residence and had been at her boyfriend's place. As the minor did not show any sign of life, her photo was broadcast on TV as a case of missing child. The child was expelled from her school as she had absented herself for a long period.	Both minor and her parents were convened to the office. The child affirmed that her parents showed no sign of affection and love towards her. She feels rejected by her family.	The parents were advised to be more affectionate and be closer to the minor. They were requested to accompany the minor to the CDU for psychological support. They were also requested to contact the PSSA for the minor to be admitted to a secondary school.
2130	02.12.09	Minor was given a transfer certificate on the examination results day. Minor's mother endorsed the document, unaware of its content. Afterwards she learnt that her child was expelled from school. She asked the OC to mediate on her behalf.	The OCO contacted the Rector of the college and requested him to review his decision as the child has well integrated in his school. It would be difficult for the child to get admission in another school on account of her choice of subject. The case was also referred to the PSSA for enquiry.	The minor was reinstated in the school. She is followed by a psychologist.
2136	14.12.09	Minor's parents who were encountering problems with their child, sought the help of a mentor for assistance. The child finally began to live at her place and does not want to stay at her parents' place.	The mentor was convened to the office. She was made aware of the responsibilities of the parents towards the minor. She was requested to ensure that the child lives with her family. The child was provided with psychological support.	The minor has reintegrated her family and is attending school regularly. She is assisted by a psychologist.

2141	17.12.09	A complaint was made to our office in respect of two minors who are not attending school.	The minors' parents were contacted by our office. They affirmed that they were encountering financial difficulties and could not purchase school material for their children.	The parents were referred to the Committee on Eradication of Absolute Poverty. The family was provided with financial help. Necessary arrangements were made for the children to attend school regularly. The children resumed school anew. Follow-up is ensured by the educational social worker.
2142	18.12.09	A complaint was made that a handicapped child was deprived of his rights to social aid due to an increase in his father's salary.	The case was referred to the MSSNSSCWRI for enquiry. A request was made to take into consideration the best interests of the child particularly on account of his handicap and also as the parents were encountering financial problems to meet the transport cost of the child to school.	The minor was no longer eligible to social aid as per the criteria of the said Ministry. However, the minor benefited from a sum of money from the National Solidarity Fund (NSF). A request was made to have the child examined by the Medical Board. In case his handicap happened to be more than 60%, then only he could benefit from social aid.
2144	17.12.09	Minor's parents are separated. The complainant, minor's father, stated that his child is neglected by his mother who has his custody.	Minor and his mother were convened to the office. His mother affirmed that she was taking care of her child. The latter was attending school regularly. The minor also affirmed that he preferred to stay with his mother. A request was made to the CDU to carry out a social enquiry.	The complainant was informed of same and he was requested to take into consideration the best interests of the child and to enter a case in court to have custody of the minor if he considered his child to be neglected by his mother.
2145	21.12.09	Minor reported that following disputes with his mother's concubine, the latter beat him when his mother is not at home.	The mother was convened to the office and informed of the situation. She was requested to talk to her concubine on the negative impact of corporal punishment on children. She was requested to adopt positive discipline.	The minor's mother broke all ties with her concubine. The minor and his mother are now living together peacefully.

2146	22.12.09	Minor's mother reported that she fell pregnant when she was an adolescent and gave birth to a baby. She entrusted the custody of her baby to her mother as she was not mature and wanted to continue her schooling. At present she is ready to take the responsibility of her child as she has become financially independent but her mother refused to let the minor come back.	The grandmother was convened to the office and was informed of the rights of the mother on her child. She was advised to entrust the custody of the child to her mother.	Minor's custody was entrusted to her mother and she was able to maintain contact with her grandmother.
2155	15.01.10	Minor left the school premises during recess and returned home on his own. No one notified his absence.	Case referred to MEHR for a report.	The inspectors of the zone took urgent action to the satisfaction of the OC. A caretaker is now responsible for the gate.
2159	19.01.10	Minors' mother who was pregnant left the conjugal roof with her four children and went to live at her parents' place. She would like minors' father to provide her with alimony. 2nd complaint was made by minors' father. He stated that minors' mother left the 3 eldest children at his place and, as he intends to travel abroad for a holiday, he would like to have the minors' passports so that they could accompany him.	Both parties were called to the office. The respondent agreed to provide the complainant with alimony. With regard to 2nd complaint, the minors' mother was contacted and was requested to act in the best interests of the minors. She was requested to hand over the minors' passports to their father as they are under his responsibility.	Regarding the first complaint, the complainant benefited from an alimony to take care of the newborn and one of the children. Finally she submitted the minors' passports to the respondent.

2162	20.01.10	The OC learnt through the press that a 16 year old pupil was beaten by the school manager as he used foul language against the latter, following rustication due to his hair colour and style. As the school did deliver the uniforms in time he went to school in jeans two days later. There he was beaten and humiliated again. The child was admitted to hospital as he was badly hurt.	Letter sent to MEHR, PSSA, the CP and the CDU requesting information on the abuse. OCO requested further information about the behaviour of the child during the past year and whether he was involved in similar misbehaviour. If so, whether he has been provided with psychological support.	The CP reported that the child made a statement at the Police Station. His parents retained the services of a lawyer. The PSSA reported that because of his hair colour and style, the child had problems with the manager. However the latter denied having hit him. The PSSA reported that the child was involved in several cases of gross misbehaviour since his admission in 2009. He has been warned several times but no psychological support was provided. The MEHR also reported the same information. It added that the MEHR and the PSSA will initiate necessary action in the light of the findings of the police. The child has also been transferred to another school. The case is still being followed by OCO.
2163	21.01.10	Minor's mother made a complaint that her son is traumatised by his father who is too authoritative. He showed no affection towards the child.	Minor attended office accompanied by his father. Minor stated that his parents could no longer live together. Minor's mother left the conjugal roof and went to live at her sister's place. Minor and his sister lived at their father's place. But when his sister turned 18 years old, she left her father's place and went to live at her mother's place. The minor affirmed that his mother has the perception that he was not well looked after by his father who has remarried. He preferred to stay at his father's place but would visit his mother as usual.	The minor's father was advised to take proper care of minor. He was also requested to facilitate minor's visits to his mother.

2166	04.02.10	Minors' parents separated as a result of conjugal problems. Minors' father left the conjugal roof. Minors' grandparents and uncles were harassing the minors and mother. The house was deprived of electricity and water as minors' parents had not settled their bills for several months. Minor's mother requested mediation by the OCO.	Minors' uncles were convened to the office and were advised to treat minors well. Minor's father was contacted. He stated that he has left the house to stop the victimisation of the children for whom he is providing alimony. He has entered a case of divorce. As he was indebted, he could not settle the electricity and water bills. The CEB and CWA were contacted to facilitate payment by installment.	Minors' mother settled the due bills. The children were followed by the psychologist and were attending school regularly. The OCO stopped the investigation as the case was in court.
2168	08.02.10	Allegation was made that the minor was involved in drug trafficking after school hours and during the weekends.	The case was referred to the CDU, Police and the ADSU for enquiry and appropriate action.	Verbal report from the police averred that the minor is not involved in the sale of drugs. She stayed at a relative's place and is attending school regularly. Follow up is being ensured by the police.
2171	10.02.10	A 12 year old girl was bullied by 5 classmates in a private secondary school. The bullies held her on a chair and kissed her by force on the mouth.	OC requested the Rector to brief her on the incident and on action taken. OCO recommended that the bullies also be provided with psychological help.	Rector reported that the bullies were rusticated and given a severe warning. Child is now feeling better at school.
2174	16.02.10	Minors were abandoned by their parents since their tender age. The children have been taken care of by a third party. The latter requested the intervention of our office for her to benefit from social aid as the children's needs were growing and she was encountering financial difficulties. She also informed the office that the minors are having behavioural problems.	The case was referred to the MSSNSRI for the complainant to benefit from social aid. The case was also referred to the MEHR for the minors to be provided with psychological assistance.	The complainant is benefiting from social aid. The children are followed by the educational psychologist.

2176	17.02.10	Minor's parents complained that the minor is harassed and ill-treated by his class teacher and also the head teacher of the school.	The case was referred to the MEHR for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received stated that the minor is a difficult child at school. Her parents refused to cooperate for their child to be psychologically assisted at school. The minor's father was contacted. He stated that his child is psychologically fit and there is no need for her to be psychologically assisted. The minor was transferred to another school.
2177	17.02.10	Minors' father passed away. Their mother is seriously ill. They are neglected and they roam around on the street.	OC requested CDU to intervene and place children in a shelter.	CDU intervened. Children placed in a shelter. Report received. The Psychologist of the CDU is following the children at the shelter.
2180	25.02.10	A father complained that his son who suffers from asthma was not granted a seat in a national college very near to his house despite the fact that he obtained an aggregate of 24 units for his CPE exams.	OC wrote to the Supervising Officer requesting for explanations.	Report received. The SO explained that child could not be allocated a seat in the requested national college as he does not meet the criteria. Moreover the SSS allocated to him is not far from his place of residence.
2181	25.02.10	A medical social worker reported that the minor was admitted to the hospital as a case of child battering.	A request was made to the CDU to act urgently in this case.	Interim report received stated that the CDU has provided support to the child and to his family at the hospital. Follow up is ensured by the CDU.
2183	26.02.10	The minor was expelled from the school when the school authority learnt that she was pregnant. The minor wanted to continue her studies after the birth of the baby.	The school manager was convened to the office. The manager affirmed that other students at school have learnt about the minor's pregnancy. If he tolerated this act, such attitude might encourage other students also and minor would be stigmatised. He has already given the minor her transfer certificate.	The minor's parents were informed of same. The child was provided with psychological assistance. After the birth of the baby, the minor was admitted to another institution and the baby was taken care of by his grandparents.

2186	08.03.10	A complainant informed our office that her stepsister is at risk at her mother's place as the latter is a drug addict and that both mother and daughter were following treatment at BSH.	The complainant said that she would welcome the minor after her discharge. She was requested to contact the CDU for the removal and placement of the child. A report was sought from the BSH.	Report stated that the two respondents were in patients of the institution. The minor's mother is suffering from acute psychotic illness. The child also has the same symptoms. Special care and attention should be provided to both of them. They should take their medication regularly so as to be stable. Both of them should follow their treatment regularly.
2188	09.03.10	An 8 year old pupil, suffering from speech problems and learning difficulties was bullied during recess. When the mother reported the incident to the Headmistress, the latter humiliated both mother and child in the school yard. The mother was asked to take the child away and not to return back to that school. It was also reported that the child is regularly humiliated in class because of her handicap. The parents reported the case to the Zone Directorate.	A letter was sent to the MEHR, seeking more information on the incident and on action taken.	The MEHR reported on the psychological state of the child and support provided by the Educational Psychologist. The inspectors also questioned the Headmistress who denied all the allegations. However, she was asked to show more consideration to her pupils and to seek the help of the psychologist whenever needed. The child has been transferred to a private school but is still followed by the Educational Psychologist. Case filed
2191	10.03.10	A single mother complained that she is denied access to her 3 months old baby by her own mother. The latter is looking after her as the complainant works at odd hours.	Phoned the grandmother to gather information. Mediated with both parties on the phone.	Matter settled in the best interest of the child as the mother moved back so that she can care for the baby as well.
2194	10.03.10	A complaint was made that minor's father is alcoholic and irresponsible. The children are being neglected and ill-treated.	The respondent was convened to our office but he did not attend. The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action and a report to be submitted on action taken.	The whole family was provided with psychological support. Minors' father has undergone a detoxification treatment at the BSH.

2195	10.03.10	The complainant stated that his children are harassed and threatened to death by his neighbour.	The case was referred to the police and to the CDU requesting them to act urgently as the children was considered to be at risk.	The complainant was provided with appropriate assistance by these two institutions but as he could not live there anymore, he has preferred to move elsewhere for the security of his family.
2198	10.03.10	A child called at OCO at 4.05p.m on a Friday. He fugued from his house two days ago and slept on the beach at Flic on Flac. On that day he called the CDU of Phoenix but was asked to come back on next Monday. The child fugued as he is regularly beaten by his father. He also played truant from school for three weeks. Child did not want to attend school anymore.	Mother was contacted and she arrived at OCO at 5.30 p.m. Mediated with an aunt to lodge the child in the meantime. Mediated with father by phone. Appointment given to the mother and child one week later. Discussed with mother and child. Provided information about IVTB courses to mother.	Aunt agreed but provided that the father gave his consent. Father agreed to let the child stay at the aunt's place. Mother and child called at OCO on their appointment. Child agreed to follow a course at IVTB. One week later, child filled an application at IVTB.
2201	15.03.10	Minor was victim of sexual abuse by her oriental teacher at school. The minor refused to attend the same school.	The case was dealt with by the CDU and the police. The child was provided with psychological support. The Zone Directorate was contacted and a request was made to facilitate the transfer of the minor to another school of her region. Request was also made for an inspector to sensitise the school management not to mention the previous incidents at all to anyone.	The child was transferred to another school. She is being followed by a psychologist.
2206	24.03.10	Minor's father, who is in prison, would like his daughter, who was in a rehabilitation centre, to visit him.	The case was referred to the Officer in Charge of the institution requesting him to take into consideration the best interests of the child in any decision taken.	Necessary arrangements were made for the minor to visit her father.
2208	24.03.10	After the decease of minor's parents, his paternal aunt took his responsibility. The minor's grandmother disagreed with this decision and wanted to have the custody of the minor.	Minor and his aunt were convened to this office. Minor informed that he preferred to stay at his aunt's place together with his eldest sister rather than at his grandmother's place. His aunt has already entered a case in court in respect to "guardianship".	The complainant was informed of the decision of the minor. She was also informed that, as the minor's aunt has already entered a case in court, our office could no longer intervene.

2209	24.03.10	Minor's father made a complaint to this office that he was refused access to minor following his separation with minor's mother. He requested the OC to mediate on his behalf.	Minor's mother was convened to our office. She stated that she could no longer take the responsibility of the child as she was encountering financial problems. She would like his father to take his responsibility.	The complainant was entrusted the custody of the child by the respondent.
2210	24.03.10	The mother of a 14 year old child complained that his son is neglected by the father. The latter did not assume his responsibility towards the minor who is presently in Form III in an SSS. He did not provide the child with the necessary school material.	The father was convened at OCO. Phoned the child's elder brother who is a police officer. Talked to mother requesting her not to use the child. Talked to the child and asked him if he would like to stay at his brother's place.	Father explained that the child is manipulated by the mother. However he will give the child money to buy the required school materials. Child's brother explained that his parents quarrel regularly and that the mother would use the child. The child stated that he will stay at his parent's place.
2211	24.03.10	Allegation was made by minor's parents that their daughter was sexually abused by her step-uncle. The minor reported that she had sexual intercourse with her consent.	The minor was convened to our office. She stated that she loves the respondent. She would like to marry him with her parents ' consent. She affirmed that her parents disagree with this union and want her to make a declaration at the police station against the respondent. As she refused, she was beaten and threatened by her father. She would like to be admitted to an institution.	She was sent to a place of safety till she reaches her majority. She has been provided with psychological support.
2214	26.03.10	Minor who was looked after by her paternal grandfather after the death of her mother was taken back by her father. Minor's grandfather was refused access to minor.	Minor's grandfather was advised to enter a case in court in respect to access to minor as per the amendment to the civil code.	Minor's grandfather did not enter a case in court as his relationship with the minor's father was not good.

2215	25.03.10	A father complained at OCO that his 9 year old daughter is neglected by his ex-wife. He alleged that the mother sent the child with dirty clothes to school.	OCO requested the Head Master to submit a full report on the child. Mother and child convened at OCO.	Report received. Head Master declared that child was clean and behaved well at school. No sign of neglect detected.
2217	26.03.10	A complaint was made that the minor was victim of corporal punishment by the Deputy Head Teacher. The latter also informed minor's parents not to send the child to the school.	The respondent was called to the office and was advised to adopt positive discipline on children. The case was also referred to the BEC for enquiry and appropriate action.	The child is attending school. She did not encounter further problems with the respondent. Awaiting report from BEC.
2218	26.03.10	The complainant averred that minor's mother is a mental patient, minor is at risk at his mother's place. Minor's grandparents would like to have his custody.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action.	The child was removed and placed in a shelter for some time and then his custody was entrusted to his grandparents by the court.
2219	26.03.10	A father complained to OCO that his daughter, a Form V pupil in an SSS has been asked to collect a transfer certificate and to stop coming to school. He believed that his daughter is being deprived of her rights to education.	Letter sent to the MEHR requesting for information.	Report received: allegations denied by the Rector. Child failed Form IV twice. However, the Rector allowed the child to sit for the SC examinations.

2222	30.03.10	A complaint was made that the minor attended hospital following a fracture in his forearm. The minor was only prescribed mild medicine without being properly examined by the treating doctor. The child had to attend hospital the next day as he could no longer tolerate the pain in his arm. He was then provided with the appropriate treatment.	The case was referred to the MHQL for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received from the Ministry revealed that the patient was properly treated by the doctor but he could not find any obvious sign of bone injury and did not order an X-RAY for minor. The next day as his left forearm was swollen; he had an X-RAY and was provided with appropriate treatment. The treating doctor has been advised to be more careful in the future.
2223	31.03.10	A mother complained that her neighbour peeped in her bathroom whenever her daughters took their bath. The girls aged 11 and 16 years are traumatized and are afraid to use the bathroom.	Letter sent to the CP for urgent intervention. Letter sent to MGECDW for psychological support to the children.	Psychological treatment provided. Neighbour was arrested and prosecuted for "Rogue and Vagabond"; he was fined Rs 5000 plus charges.
2230	08.04.10	A complaint was made that the minor who was sexually abused was traumatised.	The case was referred to the CDU for psychological assistance.	A declaration was made to the police station. The child was examined by the Police Medical Officer. The minor was followed by a psychologist. The case is before the court.
2238	14.04.10	A mother complained that due to financial problems she could not send her 3year old child to a pre-primary school anymore. Furthermore, her husband asked her 14 year old daughter to leave his house. The stepfather is a violent person.	Letter sent to the ECCEA requesting a seat in a Government preprimary school. Mediated with the child's grandmother to accommodate the child for some time until the mother could find a proper house.	ECCEA allocated a seat in a preprimary school. No fee would be charged. ECCEA contacted the EAP to help the mother. Help was given to the mother. Grandmother agreed. Mother left her husband and is now living with her concubine along with her children. Children are now safe.

2242	14.04.10	The complainant reported that her children are victims of physical violence by their stepfather who is an alcoholic and is irresponsible. She is also victim of domestic violence.	The complainant was advised to seek a protection order. She can also lodge a divorce case. As she is the owner of the house, she could request her concubine to leave her house.	The complainant obtained an interim protection order. She has entered a case of divorce in court and has requested the respondent to leave her house.
2243	14.04.10	Minor, who is mentally sick, was abused by another minor in the school premises.	The case was dealt with by the CDU and the police. A report was sought from each one.	The perpetrator was arrested and released on bail. He was expelled from the school. Both minors were provided with psychological support. School management is waiting for a court ruling to take a decision in respect of the accused minor. As there is a case in court the OCO stopped investigating.
2244	14.04.10	Allegation was made that the minor was victim of sexual abuse by her father.	The case was referred to the CDU and the police for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received stated that the case has been referred to the DPP for his advice. The case will be lodged at the Intermediate court.
2245	14.04.10	Minor's parents are separated. Minor and the other siblings live at their father's place. Complainant, minor's mother, would like to have access to her children.	The minor and the other mature children were contacted. They refused to meet the complainant.	The complainant was informed of same and was informed that she can enter a case in court in respect of right of visit.
2247	19.04.10	A woman complained that her husband asked her and her two children of a previous marriage to leave the family house. The latter kept their twin daughters aged 1 year with him and denied the mother access to the babies.	The husband was convened at OCO for mediation. Mother informed of the outcome. She was also informed that she may enter a case in court to obtain custody of her babies.	Husband agreed to let the mother see the babies during weekends but in his presence. Mother agreed to see the babies on weekends. Mother will contact the legal aid section to enter a case for the custody of the babies.

2248	19.04.10	Minor is often quarrelling with his mother. He is victim of physical and emotional violence. Minor refused to stay with his mother.	Minor's mother was convened to the office. The latter was not willing for the minor to stay at his maternal grandmother's place. She thought that the minor was being manipulated by his maternal grandmother. As the minor refused to stay at her place, she accepted to place him at her sister's place temporarily.	The minor resided at his aunt's place and is attending school regularly. He is assisted by the school psychologist.
2250	20.04.10	Minor who is going to a private school was sexually abused by her class teacher. The minor's father thinks that the case has been filed as the perpetrator is working in another institution.	A report was sought from the police. The management of the institution was convened to our office. They were informed that there is still a police case against the respondent, in such circumstances; he must not work in an educational environment.	The case is before the Intermediate court. The respondent was expelled from his work.
2251	21.04.10	Mother is reported to be a prostitute, drug addict and alcoholic. She beats the children and does not provide them with the basic necessities. The children are neglected and not sent to school. The alcoholic drinks and the drugs are kept within the reach of the children. The informants also told OCO that they had already reported the case to the CDU and the BPM but no action was taken to protect the children.	Case referred urgently to the CDU for appropriate action and report. Letter sent to the BPM requesting for urgent intervention.	Verbal report from the CDU obtained. A CWO visited the family twice. He stated that the allegations made were not founded. However, the CDU will follow up the situation.
2253	23.04.10	A father complained that the school van driver slapped his 9 year old son and broke his ear apparatus. He did not want to go ahead with a police case but wanted OCO to talk to the driver and asked him to pay for the repairs of the ear apparatus. The CDU officers were requested by the police and by the parents to assist the child in giving his statement to the police.	The driver was convened at OCO. Letter sent to the MGECDFW to get the explanations from the CDU officers concerned on the request to assist the child. Awaiting report from CDU.	He denied the allegations. He stated the child is still travelling in his van and he did not receive any complaint from the parents. He is agreeable to pay partly for the repairs as the apparatus broke while the child was under his care.

2254	24.04.10	Allegation was made that the minor was sexually abused by someone. The minor has suicidal tendencies but refused to confide to anyone.	The child was provided with psychological support. The minor and her parents were convened to the OCO.	The child is presently followed by the psychiatrist. She is attending school regularly and there has been an improvement in her behaviour. The family was advised to provide appropriate care and affection to the child.
2259	27.04.10	Minor, who had sexual relationship with her boyfriend, was pregnant. The school authority reported the case to our office as the child's father ill-treated and threw her out of the house.	Minor's parents were convened to the office. They were advised about their responsibilities towards the child. They were informed that the minor can continue her study after the birth of the baby.	Relations between the parties improved. The child has given birth to a baby girl. The child was declared by her mother. The minor's mother intends to continue her schooling.
2262	28.04.10	A complaint was made by the minor's mother that the minor's father is not providing her with the amount of alimony as per court order.	A mediation was made by the OC.	The respondent agreed to provide the complainant with the alimony.
2266	28.04.10	A father requested OCO to intervene in favour of his 8 year old son, so that the latter could be transferred to a school nearer to his place of residence. The parents are divorced and the mother was granted custody. However mother migrated to Canada. Child is now living at his father's place, but for a few months he has been staying at his maternal grandfather's place. During that time, the latter denied the father access to the child during school term. However during the Easter Holidays the child visited the father and did not want to return to the grandfather's place.	Referral letter to MEHR issued. Father was also referred to the CDU for psychological support. Father was advised to enter a case in court requesting for a variation order.	Psychologist saw the child several times. Child admitted in a private school.

2267	06.05.10	Minors' mother has custody of her 3 children. The children are disobedient and are often in conflict with her. The children left their mother's house and went to live at their grandmother's place. The latter could not support the children financially and requested for social aid.	Both parties were convened to the office and minors' grandmother was informed that the mother has the custody of the children and she should assume her responsibilities. She was requested not to intervene in her daughter's life. The children were provided with psychological assistance and they returned to their mother's place. Minor's mother was advised to make necessary arrangements for the children to attend school the soonest possible.	The children resided at their mother's place. They were attending school. The minors' mother benefited from social aid. Follow up is ensured by the CDU.
2268	06.05.10	A complaint was made by the medical social worker that the minor is neglected and malnourished by her parents.	The case was referred to the CDU for enquiry and appropriate action. Request was also made to take into consideration the state of other siblings in the family.	Visit was effectuated at the minor's parents place. The family was provided with social aid. The family was requested to ensure that the minor follows his treatment at the hospital.
2274	10.05.10	Minor's parents reported that their son refused to attend school. He wanted to go abroad to study. The parents considered it important for their son to be holder of an HSC certificate, or else his studies will cost them too much.	The child was convened to the office and mediation was carried out. He was counselled regarding his rights and those of his parents. He was also referred to the psychologist for counselling.	The child attends school normally.
2275	11.05.10	A grandmother complained that her son-in-law took his children with him without informing her. The children's parents are divorced and the children were living with the grandmother for months. She sent them to school and attended to all their needs. The CDU asked her to look after the children in the absence of the parents.	Phoned CDU immediately.	CDU officers accompanied the grandmother to see the children at the father's place. Children returned to grandmother's place and are attending school regularly. Mother is untraceable.

2278	11.05.10	A complaint was made by minors' parents that their children are at risk of abuse with the SMS love publicity sent to minors by Emtel Ltd.	The case was referred to the MICT for enquiry and appropriate action.	The Minister chaired a special meeting with all stakeholders to deal with this particular issue. The Data Protection Commissioner was requested to enquire into the matter to ensure if the Emtel Ltd is abiding with all the provisions made under the Cybercrime Act.
2280	17.05.10	A father complained that his wife did not get along with her 15year old daughter anymore. He alleged that she inflicted corporal punishment to the child. The latter has stopped communicating with her mother. The case was reported by the mother at the CDU where the whole family was convened. However the father and the child did not appreciate the psychologist's attitude.	Family convened at OCO for mediation. Interviewer requested the father to take the mother to a psychologist as she looked depressed. She may also need medical treatment. Phoned mother for follow up purposes. Advised mother to seek help from the family unit at the MGECDWF and from family members.	Mediation failed as despite all the efforts of the mother to compromise, the child refused to talk to her. The father supported the child. The true problem was between the parents. The mother was too dependent on her husband. Father left Mauritius for some time. The child was at her grandmother's place. The father never took his wife for treatment and was advised to contact the FSB.
2282	17.05.10	Minors' parents are separated. Minors' mother has provisional custody of the children. Complainant, the father has a ' <i>droit d'hebergement</i> ' fortnightly. According to him, the minors were neglected by the respondent.	The respondent was convened to the office. The latter came with the two minors. She also brought a letter certifying that the elder minor was attending school. The younger minor was attending pre-primary school. She was referred to the CDU for psychological support. She was also told not to use rude language in front of the children and also to respect the time of <i>droit d'hebergement</i> exercised by their father. Minors affirmed that they preferred to stay with their mother. They considered their father to be a violent man who used physical violence against them. She has entered a case in court in respect to alimony.	Minors' father was contacted and told to adopt positive discipline towards the minors. He was also informed that as the case was before the court our office could no longer intervene. He could have recourse to the CDU for advice and counselling.

2285	20.05.10	A mother complained that her husband asked her 13 year old daughter to leave the house as the latter had basketball training late in the afternoon. He also threatened the mother not to meet the child or else she also may be thrown out of the house. Mother arranged for the minor to stay at a relative's place near her house, but the stepfather refused.	Phoned the stepfather to fix an appointment. Stepfather was requested to let the mother see her daughter and to let the child practice her sport activities.	Mother phoned OCO to request not to go further with the case as following our phone call the stepfather agreed to let the child practice her basketball. He also allowed her to stay at the relative's place near his residence. The mother is free to meet her child.
2290	26.05.10	A mother complained that she was living in her father's flat with only a mattress and some basic kitchen utensils. She declared that her children were deprived of the basic necessities. She requested OCO to seek help for her children as well as psychological support.	Mother convened at OCO. Referred children for psychological counselling at the Suicide Prevention Unit.	Mother declared that her daughters are living at the grandmother's place. They are safe. Children attended their counselling sessions. Mother was earning more than the income ceiling to obtain social aid. She has already applied for help at the Trust Fund for Vulnerable Group.
2296	31.05.10	Minors' parents are separated. Minors' mother would like to obtain divorce and have custody of her children.	She was requested to contact an attorney and a barrister to enter a case in court in respect of same.	The complainant has obtained her divorce. Her case of custody and alimony is pending before court.
2300	03.06.10	Minor's parents are separated. Minor's father refused to talk to his daughter and to visit her. The child is affected and cannot concentrate in her studies	The minor's father was convened to our office. He was informed about his responsibilities towards the minor. He was requested to keep contact with his daughter as the latter is traumatised by his attitude towards her. She refuses to attend school.	The respondent contacted his child through phone. The child was very happy and asked her father to phone her regularly.

2301	08.06.10	A complaint was made that a Std IV minor was ill-treated and requested to get out of a bus by a bus receiver. The complainant also reported that the beneficiaries of free transport are often left unattended on the bus stop.	The case was referred to the NTA requesting them to act in the best interests of children so that they are not deprived of their rights to education.	Report received, revealed that an enquiry has been initiated. Regular patrols and checks were made by officers. The management of the bus crew was also informed about the complaints received and to take appropriate disciplinary action accordingly. The bus company informed our office that the identities of the two employees involved in the incident could not be traced. Mention was made that all employees of the organisation have been given training in customer care.
2302	08.06.10	A complaint was made that the minor was disturbed and could not concentrate in her studies on account of the violent attitude of her father.	The complainant was requested to seek psychological help for the minor at school. She was also requested to contact the family support bureau regarding the family conflict.	The family relationship has improved. The parents are assisted by the FSB.
2305	09.06.10	Minor was victim of sexual harassment by her teacher through mobile phone at school.	The allegation was reported to the school authority and a report sought on the action taken at their level. The case was reported to the PSSA for further action.	The school authority suspended the teacher. The case is before the Disciplinary Board of the PSSA.
2317	16.07.10	A complaint was made that the minors are not attending school and are roaming the streets.	The case was referred to the CDU, BPM and MEHR for enquiry and to ensure that the children's rights to education are respected.	Report received revealed that the necessary arrangements have been made for the minors to attend school.
2324	22.06.10	Minor's parents are separated. Minor's mother has custody of the minor. The respondent has right of visit. He always exercised his rights under the influence of alcohol and drugs.	The complainant was requested to enter a case of variation order in court affirming that her child was at risk with her father.	As minor's father has stopped visiting the child, the complainant did not enter the court case.

2325	23.06.10	A complaint was made that two minors were not attending school since several weeks.	The parents were contacted and were informed of the legal implications of not sending their children to school. They were advised to contact the social security office for social aid and to contact the National Empowerment Foundation at the Citizen Advice Bureau office of their residence to benefit from school material.	The school authority contacted our office to inform us that the minors are attending school. The children are followed by the educational psychologist. Follow up is also ensured by the educational social worker.
2327	23.06.10	An anonymous informant told OCO that a minor has taken a book from the shelf in a supermarket and has hidden it in her school tracksuit. The minor was caught at the cash office. She was questioned and humiliated in front of other clients.	The management of the supermarket was convened to the office. They gave their version and were counselled on the procedures to adopt in incidents involving minors.	The management of the office was agreeable to same. Henceforth due consideration will be paid to these procedures.
2328	24.06.10	Complainant reported that the minor's father inflicts corporal punishment on the minor. The child is neglected and does not attend school.	The respondent was convened to our office. He was informed to adopt positive discipline on the minor. He was advised to assume his responsibilities towards him and ensure that the child is attending school regularly.	The child was provided with psychological support. The child is attending school regularly. Follow up is ensured by the educational social worker.
2330	25.06.10	Minor's parents live separately. Her mother would like to have custody of the minor, and to benefit from alimony for him.	The complainant was requested to enter a case in court regarding same. The respondent was convened to the office and advised to assume his responsibilities towards the minor.	Minor's father accepted to assume his responsibilities towards the child. Nonetheless, minor's mother will enter a case of divorce custody and alimony in court.
2337	30.06.10	Minor's mother made a complaint to this office that her daughter was encountering behavioural problems.	The school authority was contacted. The OCO was informed that the school has a psychologist. A school counsellor provides assistance to children in need.	The school counsellor informed that the child is well disciplined at school and does not manifest any behavioural signs at school. Follow up is ensured by the school counsellor.

2340	30.06.10	Minor's parents are separated. Minor's father complained that the minor is neglected by his mother who had his custody.	Minor's mother was convened to the office. She affirmed that she took proper care of the minor and that allegations made against her were false. The minor's school was contacted. The Officer in Charge affirmed that the child was well looked after by her mother.	The complainant was reassured that his child was well looked after by his mother. He was also requested to assume his own responsibilities towards the minor.
2354	09.07.10	The minor was admitted to hospital due to an acute belly pain. The child was examined and found to be victim of sexual abuse	The case was referred to the CDU for psychological assistance. The minor's parents hesitated to report the case to the police. They stated that they need to think well before taking a decision.	The child confided that she was abused by her stepbrother. The minor's parents were convened to the CDU. The child is psychologically assisted. The case was reported to the police.
2355	09.07.10	Minor inflicted corporal punishment on another student after school hours. The case was reported to the police. According to the complainant, mother of minor, the minor was unjustly accused and the Rector siding with the other student.	The Rector was contacted; the latter stated that the child was involved in various incidents at school. She misbehaved in class. Following the incident which occurred outside the school hours and outside school premises, he intervened to resolve the problem amicably as the matter was referred to the police. The minor's mother was convened before a disciplinary committee but she did not attend same. The mother did not consent for her child to be followed by a psychologist at school.	The minor's mother was informed of the good intentions of the Rector and of the gravity of the situation. She agreed to attend school in respect of the incident. She agreed to sign the consent form for her child to be followed by a psychologist.
2360	19.07.10	Minor left the parental roof and went to live with her boyfriend without informing her parents. A case of child missing was reported to the police station by the minor's mother as the whereabouts of the minor was unknown.	The minor's boyfriend's mother was contacted by our office. She was informed of the legal implications of her son having a relationship with a minor. The minor eventually returned to her parents' place. The minor and her mother were convened to our office. The OC advised her on all the implications that such a relationship entail. She was advised to attend school and to build up a career.	The minor returned back to her mother's place. She refused to make any declaration against her boyfriend. As she refused to attend school, she was advised to enroll in a training course. Case is still being followed up.

2372	07.07.10	A father complained to OCO that his 15 year old son, a Form IV pupil in a fee-paying private school was beaten by his school manager near the school premises. The child was badly hurt and had a broken leg. The case was also reported to the Police Station of the region.	Letters were sent to the MEHR and the PSSA requesting further information on the incident and on action taken by their officers.	Reports received from the MEHR and the PSSA. It was reported that as a teacher reported seeing the child holding a window, to the manager, the latter slapped the child. Earlier, he had confiscated the mobile phone of the child. The manager admitted having slapped the child to give him a correction. He also refused to return the mobile phone back. The PSSA referred the case to the police. Case is still being followed by OCO.
58/15	24.10.08	A mother complained to OCO that her child was hurt by a classmate and that the staff of the preschool concerned did not apply any medicine.	Manager of school convened at OCO. Mother was informed accordingly.	Manager declared that according to the regulation order of the ECCEA, no school could administer any medicine to a child unless instructed by the parents and that the medicine was labelled properly.
10/47	23.05.08	The PSTF informed OCO that an illegal Day Care Centre was operating in the suburbs of a town. The children were kept in a bedroom.	CDU requested to visit the place	CDU officers visited the house twice. The Day Care Centre had already stopped its operations.
11/10	20.06.08	A complaint was made that a Day Care Centre is operating illegally.	The case was referred to the MWRCDFWCP and Pre-School Trust Fund.	A visit was effected at the said-place and it was found that since end of January 2008, the Day Care Centre is no longer operational and no children were attending the Day Care Centre.
180/19	20.05.09	An adult girl who was deaf and mute was sexually abused and has given birth to a baby who was ill-treated by her step-grandmother.	The case was referred to the CDU for urgent action as the baby was considered to be at risk.	The baby child was removed and placed in an institution.

180/23	20.05.10	Minor's parents are separated. The minor who stayed at her father's place, informed her carer that someone has committed fingering on her.	The case was dealt by the CDU and the police.	The child was examined by the psychologist and the PMO. The perpetrator was arrested.
180/24	30.06.10	Minor was sexually abused by her neighbour. The case was reported to our office by the police for appropriate action pending court rulings.	The case was referred to the CDU for the minor to be provided with psychological support.	The child was provided psychological assistance.
42/34	22.10.07	This office was informed by a letter that a hawker is selling unhygienic food items to school children.	The case was referred to the MHQL for enquiry and appropriate action.	A site visit was effected by the Health Inspector at the said school. The food hawker is the holder of a valid trade licence as well as a valid Food Handler's Certificate issued by the Ministry. The canteen operator was selling prohibited food and a prohibition order was served to him. Report revealed that henceforth, regular visits will be carried out in all schools throughout the island to monitor the hygienic conditions of all food hawkers and canteen holders.
42/48	14.06.07	A complaint was made that the Rector of an institution is aggressive towards the students. She even used provocative and humiliating language against them.	The case was referred to the MEHR for enquiry and appropriate action.	Report received stated that the allegations made against the Rector are not founded and the latter is performing her duty properly.
42/78	23.04.09	Complainant averred that construction was taking place in a school during school days, the children were considered to be at risk. Secondly the noise pollution emanating from the construction and the bad smell from toilets were improper for the well being of the pupils.	The case was referred to the MECHR and the MHQL for enquiry and appropriate action.	Appropriate measures were taken to ensure the physical and health security of the children by both ministries. No further complaint received.

42/84	29.04.10	The OC received complaints from parents regarding the construction work in a school and the relocation of some pupils to another school.	OC wrote to MEHR requesting them to reconsider the relocation and the timing of the construction works.	Children were not relocated to the other school. The construction works will be done during the next winter holidays.
42/88	10.03.10	A group of persons alerted the OC of the insecurity faced by Std V and VI pupils of a star primary school who are forced to come to school before eight o'clock in the morning as the teacher starts his class earlier.	Phone the PPSI of the Zone.	Immediate action taken. The Practice was stopped. Case may be filed.
42/91	26.04.10	A group of pupils of an IVTB Centre complained to OCO that the instructor of that institution used humiliating and degrading language against them.	Letter sent to MEHR for further information and intervention at their end.	Report received. The instructor was on contract and her contract was not renewed. Pupils in that institution declared that the instructor was very severe towards them.
58/12	15.04.08	A complaint was made to the office that fifty children will be deprived of their rights due to lack of amenities. The complainant contacted the different authorities but she did not receive a positive reply.	The case was referred to the ECCEA and request was made to ensure that the rights of the children to education are requested.	Report received, mentioned that appropriate action has been initiated for the children not to be deprived of their rights to education.
58/7	15.04.08	A complaint was made to this office that children living in the region of Baie du Cap are deprived of their rights to education.	The case was referred to the concerned authority. A request was made to ensure that their rights to education are ensured.	The authority contacted the complainant and appropriate action was initiated for the children to benefit from their rights to education.

THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN ACT – 10 November 2003

Act 41 of 2003

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ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Short title
2. Interpretation
3. Establishment of the office of Ombudsperson for Children
4. Appointment of Ombudsperson for Children
5. Objects of the office of the Ombudsperson for Children
6. Powers and functions of the Ombudsperson for Children
7. Investigation
8. Protection of witnesses
9. Immunity from legal proceedings
10. Staff of the office of the Ombudsperson for Children
11. Report of Ombudsperson for Children
12. Regulations
13. Commencement

An Act

To provide for the establishment of an office of Ombudsperson for Children and for matters related thereto

ENACTED by the Parliament of Mauritius, as follows -

1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the Ombudsperson for Children Act 2003.

2. Interpretation

‘child’ means a person under the age of 18;

‘Convention’ means the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989;

‘Minister’ means the Minister to whom responsibility for the subject of child development is assigned;

‘Ombudsperson for Children’ means the Ombudsperson for Children whose office is established under section 3;

‘public body’ means-

- (a) a Ministry or Government department;
- (b) a local authority;
- (c) a statutory corporation;
- (d) any other company, partnership or other entity of which the Government is, by the holding of shares or some other financial input, or in any other manner, in a position to influence the policy or decision of such body.

3. Establishment of the office of Ombudsperson for Children

- (1) There is established for the purposes of this Act the office of Ombudsperson for Children.
- (2) The Ombudsperson for Children shall be a person who has a wide knowledge of the issues and the law relating to children in Mauritius.
- (3) The Ombudsperson for Children shall take before the President the oath specified in the Schedule before assuming the duties of his office.

4. Appointment of Ombudsperson for Children

- (1) The Ombudsperson for Children shall be appointed by the President of the Republic, acting after consultation with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister and such other persons as he considers appropriate.
- (2) An appointment under subsection (1) shall be subject to such terms and conditions as the President may determine.
- (3) The Ombudsperson for Children shall hold office for 4 years and shall be eligible for reappointment for only a second term of 4 years.
- (4) The President may remove the Ombudsperson for Children from office for inability to perform the functions of his office, whether arising from infirmity of body and mind or any other cause, or for misbehaviour.
- (5) The Ombudsperson for Children shall not engage in any trade, business, profession or political activity.

5. Objects of the office of the Ombudsperson for Children

The Ombudsperson for Children shall –

- (a) ensure that the rights, needs and interests of children are given full consideration by public bodies, private authorities, individuals and associations of individuals.
- (b) promote the rights and best interests of children;
- (c) promote compliance with the Convention.

6. Powers and functions of the Ombudsperson for Children

In carrying out the duties of his Office, the Ombudsperson for Children shall –

- (a) make proposals to the Minister on legislation, policies and practices regarding services to, or the rights of, children;
- (b) advise the Minister on public and private residential placement facilities and shelters established for the benefit of children;
- (c) advise public bodies and other institutions responsible for providing care and other services to children on the protection of the rights of children;
- (d) take such steps as he may deem necessary to ensure that children under the care of, or supervision of, a public body are treated fairly, properly and adequately;
- (e) propose measures to ensure that the legal rights of children in care are protected and that the placement facilities promote the safety of children and conform with such norms as the Ombudsperson for Children may, from time to time, recommend;

- (f) initiate an investigation whenever the Ombudsperson for Children considers that there is, has been or is likely to be, a violation of the rights of a child;
- (g) investigate cases relating to the situation of children in the family, in schools and in all other institutions, including private or public bodies, as well as cases of abandoned children or street children;
- (h) investigate any suspected or reported case of child labour;
- (i) investigate cases concerning a child who is a citizen of Mauritius and who may be abroad at the time of the investigation, or a child who is not a citizen of Mauritius but who is residing in Mauritius;
- (j) investigate complaints made by a child, or any other person, in relation to the rights of any child;
- (k) advise the Minister on the establishment of mechanisms to afford children the ability to express themselves freely, according to their age and maturity, especially on all matters concerning their individual or collective rights;
- (l) advise the Minister on the creation of partnerships with parents, teachers, non-governmental as well as governmental organisations, local authorities and any other stakeholders committed to the promotion of children's rights.

7. Investigation

- (1) Where the Ombudsperson for Children considers, either upon complaint made to him or on his own motion, that it is necessary to investigate a matter relating to the rights of a child, the Ombudsperson for Children shall investigate the complaint in such manner as he considers appropriate.
- (2) For the purposes of an investigation under this Act, the Ombudsperson for Children may -
 - (a) request any person, including any public officer, to provide information concerning a child whose rights have been, are being or are likely to be violated;
 - (b) enter premises where –
 - (i) a child is present, either temporarily or permanently, including an educational or health institution and a place of detention, in order to study the environment of such a place and assess its suitability;
 - (ii) a child may be in employment;
 - (iii) there is reasonable ground to believe that the moral and physical safety of a child may be in danger;

- (c) request the Commissioner of Police to enquire and report to the Ombudsperson for Children on any allegation relating to the breach of the rights of a child;
- (d) enter any licensed premises where the Ombudsperson for Children suspects that alcohol and tobacco may be handled, consumed or purchased by children;
- (e) record the statement of any person in connection with an investigation;
- (f) request the assistance of the Commissioner of Police and the Officer-in-Charge of any public body or institution, as the case may be, to facilitate any entry and effect, where appropriate, any seizure pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (d).
- (g) *summon witnesses and examine them on oath;*
- (h) *call for the production of any document or other exhibit; and*
- (i) *obtain such information, file or other record, upon application to the Judge in Chambers whenever necessary under any law, as may be required for the investigation.*

(Amended 08/05)

- (3) Following an investigation under subsection (1), the Ombudsperson for Children shall -
 - (a) act as a mediator to resolve any dispute relating to the rights of the child;
 - (b) make a report to such person or authority as the Ombudsperson for Children considers appropriate;
 - (c) make proposals of a general nature to the Minister on any matter which may have arisen in the course of the investigation.
- (4) The Ombudsperson for Children shall not investigate any case which is pending before any Court but may refer any child involved in such a case to the Ministry for advice, assistance or counselling.

8. Protection of witnesses

Notwithstanding any enactment, no statement made in good faith by any person by way of a written complaint, or by the giving in writing of a statement made in the course of an investigation, to the Ombudsperson for Children, or any member of the staff of the Ombudsperson for Children, shall subject the maker of the statement to, or be used against him in, any civil or criminal proceedings.

9. Immunity from legal proceedings

No liability, civil or criminal, shall lie against the Ombudsperson for Children, or any member of the staff of the Ombudsperson for Children, in respect of anything which is done, or purported to be done, in good faith under this Act or in respect of the publication, by or under the authority of the Ombudsperson for Children, of any report, proceedings or other matter under this Act.

10. Staff of the Ombudsperson for Children

The Secretary for Public Service Affairs shall make available to the Ombudsperson for Children such administrative and other staff as the Ombudsperson for Children may require.

11. Report of Ombudsperson for Children

- (1) The Ombudsperson for Children shall, not later than 30 September in each year, submit a report on its activities during the preceding year, to the President.
- (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Ombudsperson for Children may at any other time, submit a special report on any matter which, in his opinion, is of such urgency or importance that it should not be delayed until submission of an annual report to the President.
- (3) The President shall cause every report sent to him under this section to be laid before the Assembly within one month of its submission.

11A Offences

(1) A person shall commit an offence –

(a) where he –

- (i) fails to attend before the Ombudsperson;
- (ii) refuses to take the oath before the Ombudsperson; or
- (iii) wilfully refuses to furnish any information or to produce any document, record, file or exhibit,

when required to do so under section 7.

(b) Where he –

- (i) refuses to answer to the best of his knowledge any question lawfully put to him by the Ombudsperson; or
- (ii) knowingly gives to the Ombudsperson false evidence or evidence which he knows to be misleading,

in connection with an investigation under section 7.

(c) where at any sitting held for the purposes of an investigation under section 7, he –

- (i) insults the Ombudsperson; or*
- (ii) wilfully interrupts the proceedings.*

(2) Any person who commits an offence under this section shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 10,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.

(Amended 08/05)

12. Regulations

The Minister may –

- (a) make such regulations as he thinks fit for the purposes of this Act;*
- (b) after consultation with the Ombudsperson for Children, make regulations for the purpose of regulating the procedure to be applied for the investigation of complaints by the Ombudsperson for Children.*

13. Commencement

This Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation.

Passed by the National Assembly on the twenty first day of October two thousand and three.

André Pompon

Clerk of the National Assembly

SCHEDULE
(section 3)

I having been appointed to be the Ombudsperson for Children under the Ombudsperson for Children Act 2003 do swear/solemnly affirm that I shall faithfully, impartially and to the best of my ability discharge the trust and perform the duties devolving upon me by such appointment and that I shall not, without reasonable cause, disclose any information imparted to me in the performance of such duties.

(S).....

Before me,

Date:.....

(S).....
President of the Republic

United Nations



General Assembly

Distr.: General
1 February 2010

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 61 (b)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/64/432)]

64/134. Proclamation of 2010 as the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind the Charter of the United Nations and the principles contained therein,

Considering that it is necessary to disseminate among young people the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, solidarity and dedication to the objectives of progress and development,

Recalling the provisions of the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples, proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 2037 (XX) of 7 December 1965,

Recalling also its resolutions 50/81 of 14 December 1995 and 62/126 of 18 December 2007, by which it adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the Supplement thereto,¹

Bearing in mind that the ways in which the challenges and potential of young people are addressed will influence current social and economic conditions and the well-being and livelihood of future generations,

Bearing in mind also that 2010 will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1985 International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, and stressing the importance of commemorating this anniversary,

Convinced that young people should be encouraged to devote their energy, enthusiasm and creativity to economic, social and cultural development and the promotion of mutual understanding,

Welcoming the fifth World Youth Congress, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, European Capital of Culture 2010, from 31 July to 13 August 2010, and the initiative of the Government of Mexico to host a World Youth Conference, in

¹ In paragraph 1 of its resolution 47/1, the Commission for Social Development reaffirmed the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the Supplement thereto as a unified set of guiding principles, to be referred to henceforth as the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Mexico City from 24 to 27 August 2010, both of which will focus on the issue of youth and development in the context of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the inaugural Youth Olympic Games, to be held in Singapore from 14 to 26 August 2010, the aim of which is to inspire young people around the world to embrace, embody and express the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect,

1. *Decides* to proclaim the year commencing on 12 August 2010 the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding;

2. *Invites* all Member States, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and youth organizations to take advantage of the Year to build on the synergies among the activities to be carried out

at the national, regional and international levels during the Year and to promote actions at all levels aimed at disseminating among young people the ideals of peace, freedom, progress, solidarity and dedication to the objectives and goals of progress and development, including the Millennium Development Goals;

3. *Decides* to organize under the auspices of the United Nations a world youth conference as the highlight of the Year, and invites the President of the General Assembly to conduct open-ended informal consultations with Member

States with a view to determining the modalities of the conference, which is to be funded by voluntary contributions;

4. *Requests* Member States, international and, where appropriate, regional organizations, and all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to support all activities related to the Year, including by means of voluntary contributions;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

*65th plenary meeting
18 December 2009*

Acronyms

ADSU	–	Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit
BEC	–	Bureau d'éducation catholique
BPM	–	Brigade pour la protection des mineurs
BSH	–	Brown Sequard Hospital
CCPP	–	Community Child Protection Programme
CDU	–	Child Development Unit
CP	–	Commissioner of Police
CPA	–	Child Protection Act
CRC	–	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSEC	–	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CWO	–	Child Welfare Officer
CYC	–	Correctional Youth Centre
EAP	–	Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme
ECCEA	–	Early Childhood Care and Education Authority
EPO	–	Emergency Protection Order
FSB	–	Family Support Bureau
FSPO	–	Family Support and Protection Officer
IOM	–	International Organisation for Migration
IVTB	–	Industrial and Vocational Training Board
MBC	–	Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation
MCPCC	–	Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizen's Charter
MECHR	–	Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources

MEHR	–	Ministry of Education and Human Resources
MDCC	–	Multi-disciplinary Case Conference
MGECDFW	–	Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
MHQL	–	Ministry of Health and Quality of Life
MICT	–	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
MOLIRE	–	Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment
MOLG	–	Ministry of Local Government
MPF	–	Mauritius Police Force
MSSNSSCWRI	–	Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions
MSSNSRI	–	Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
MWRCDFWCP	–	Ministry of Women’s Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection
NATReSA	–	National Agency for the Treatment & Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers
NCC	–	National Children’s Council
NGO	–	Non Governmental Organisation
NSF	–	National Solidarity Fund
NTA	–	National Transport Authority
OC	–	Ombudsperson for Children
OCA	–	Ombudsperson for Children’s Act 2003
OCO	–	Ombudsperson for Children’s Office
PFPU	–	Police Family Protection Unit

PPSI	–	Principal Primary School Inspector
PSSA	–	Private Secondary Schools Authority
PSTF	–	Pre-School Trust Fund
PTA	–	Parent’s Teacher Association
RYC	–	Rehabilitation Youth Centre
SACTAP	–	Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme
UN	–	United Nations
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	–	United Nations Children’s Fund
WCSP	–	Women and Children Solidarity Programme
WHO	–	World Health Organisation