

Pakistan's Prison Paralegal Program

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PAKISTAN'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE system, similar to many other legal systems, is based on a complex web of procedural and substantive laws. Marred with colonial era legislation, there are numerous challenges facing those who are caught in its vicious trap. To begin with, the police service is designed to act more as a "force" for exercising control over the local population as opposed to building ties with the community for furthering law and order. Investigations typically rely on torture to extract confessions. An overburdened judicial system provides little light at the end of the tunnel for the exasperated litigant or the innocent under trial prisoner languishing behind bars. This situation is exacerbated by frequent adjournments of court hearings and weak court caseload management system that protracts cases. The prison, probation and reclamation departments remain underutilized and underfunded and fail to provide viable alternatives to custodial sentencing which would yield rehabilitation related outcomes. Added to this are the endemic levels of corruption that are deeply entrenched at each stage of the criminal justice process. Underprivileged, marginalized and illiterate citizens face impossible odds that lead to inevitably desperate solutions. Worse yet, the miserably low conviction rate, estimated to be under 4 percent for convictions on merit, indicates that the criminal justice system is not only failing to deliver justice, it is simply incarcerating the innocent and is being deliberately misused by those that wield influence and power.

Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners

In this backdrop, the provincial government of the province of Sindh in Pakistan established a quasi-government committee called the "Committee for the Welfare of Prisons" (CWP) in 2004. The CWP has since its inception been headed by Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid, a retired Chief Justice of the province who was later elevated as a Judge of the Supreme Court. The CWP was tasked with primarily providing legal aid to female prisoners and

juveniles and to undertake related welfare work. Over the course of the last fifteen years of its trajectory, the CWP has strengthened and institutionalized into a premiere legal aid service provider which offers legal aid to first time petty offenders incarcerated in twenty five of the province's twenty seven prisons. Its reach was expanded to adult male prisoners in 2011 and the terms of reference were widened to include policy and research work but most notably "legal empowerment" related work. The CWP has continued to play the role of a *de facto* public defender's office in the absence of such agency within the formal state apparatus. The unique aspect of this quasi-government initiative is that it is premised on a public-private partnership model in which its operations are privately managed.

As part of its on-going research mandate, the CWP conducted a baseline survey of 1,042 adult male and female prison inmates from across five prisons in early 2018. The primary purpose of this starting point survey was to identify, for the first time, the current levels of situational and legal awareness, empowerment and access to legal representation and legal aid for prisoners. The study also provided the opportunity to assess inmates on rehabilitation needs including vocational and skills-based training and medical and psycho-social services. The study allows for an evaluation of the satisfaction of under trial prisoners with the legal representation that they are currently receiving from the CWP and allows measured assessments of the awareness of legal aid services in general.

The principal findings of the survey reveal that when prisoners were asked if they had legal representation, only 58.35 percent answered in the affirmative (four hundred thirty one under trial prisoners [UTPs], one hundred seventy seven convicts) while 36.85 percent prisoners indicated they had no legal representation (three hundred thirty UTPs, fifty four convicts). The majority of female respondents (91.84 percent) had legal representation (thirty five UTPs, ten convicts) which is not a surprise considering that they comprise small numbers in the overall population of prisons.

Out of the 1,042 prisoners surveyed, only four hundred forty six (43.56 percent) knew what stage their trial was at and five hundred eighty respondents (56.66 percent) did not know. Out of the five hundred eighty respondents that did not know what stage their trial was at, four hundred sixty-four were under trial. Further to this, three hundred thirteen who had legal representation had no understanding of the trial process. Absence of such basic information about their own case indicates a complete exclusion from

their own defense or control over the trial process. When prisoners were probed further about whether respondents know about the various stages in a criminal trial two hundred thirteen male respondents (20.80 percent) knew the stages in a criminal trial, while the vast majority – eight hundred twenty-two respondents (78.89 percent) – did not know the stages in the criminal trial. This figure included one hundred sixty nine convicts that had been through the process themselves.

There is a marked difference in knowledge levels between male and female inmates with 42.22 percent of female inmates knowing the various stages in a criminal trial. This can be attributed to the fact that a legal literacy initiative has been running in the female prison in Karachi for a longer time than in the other prisons.

In discussing the state of legal literacy or general awareness of legal rights it appears that a large percentage of respondents 88.89 percent of the males and 77.55 percent of the females could not identify a single fundamental right provided under the Constitution of Pakistan, including the right to a fair trial, prohibition against torture, illegal detention, the freedom of movement etc. For male respondents, 9.75 percent of respondents could only identify one out of the twenty-three Fundamental Rights and only fifteen out of the 1,026 male respondents could identify two or three rights. No respondent could identify more than three fundamental rights.

In terms of assessing the potency of such laws and rights through application and utilization, the respondents were asked “What can a person do if they are illegally detained?,” “if their property is taken by the government to construct a road?,” “if their child is prevented from going to school?,” “if they are denied government employment based on their religion?” 76.34 percent male and 79.59 percent female respondents did not know what to do if they were illegally detained. 76.88 percent male and 77.55 percent female respondents did not know what to do if their property was acquired by the government for public use. 77.88 percent male and 81.63 percent female respondents did not know what to do if their child was denied education. 88.21 percent male and 93.88 percent female respondents did not know what to do if they were discriminated against based on religious beliefs.

Much like the criminal and civil procedure codes applicable in Pakistan, prisons are governed and managed under colonial era legislation. While the enabling framework is found in the Prisoners Act and Prisons Act, the day-to-day administration is detailed across 1,250 rules contained in what is

known as the Jail Manual/Pakistan Prison Rules (1978). Segregation, food, admission, visitation, remissions and other aspects are detailed in these. Access to and knowledge of prison rules and legal entitlements created by these rules can help detained people improve their lives in detention, and benefit from rehabilitation and reform activities as well as earn remissions in their sentence. Prison rules also provide a system of protection by providing for an oversight and complaint mechanism for inmates who may have a grievance against another inmate or against prison staff.

To gain an understanding of the level of knowledge prisoners had of this scheme, the respondents were asked basic questions such as “Are there any rules regulating prison living conditions?” or “Is there a mechanism to file a complaint against another inmate?”

Respondents were asked about prison rules governing living conditions; 35.22 percent of adult male respondents were able to state one or more rules governing living conditions, 10.75 percent of respondents said there were no rules governing living conditions in prison, whereas 53.74 percent of adult male respondents said they did not know if there were any rules. Awareness of prison rules appears to be higher at the Women Prison Karachi with 59.18 percent of female respondents knowing rules governing prison conditions while 18.37 percent of respondents said there were no rules and 20.41 percent said they did not know any of any rules. When asked if there were any rules regulating prison visits, only 28.98 percent of male respondents answered yes and could specify how often a prisoner could receive visitors every week. The majority of adult male respondents (68.81 percent) said they did not know of any rules regulating prison visits. Knowledge of prison rules regarding visitation was significantly better among female respondents with 75.51 percent of respondents knowing that there were specific rules regarding visitation and that prisoners could meet with visitors every week. 14.29 percent of female respondents said they did not know of any rules regarding visitation.

Remissions in sentences, i.e., reduction in the number of days a convict has to remain in prison, are allowed for various charitable and rehabilitation-oriented activities including donating blood, gaining education, learning the Holy *Quran* by heart, or for good behavior and assisting with prison chores, etc. Unfortunately, the vast majority of male (68.81 percent) and most female (40.81 percent) prisoners did not know of this available incentive mechanism while a further 7.1 percent male and 28.57 percent fe-

male respondents said that there was no such system. Only 23.70 percent of adult male and 26.53 percent of female respondents said they knew of the remission system.

Prisons are a setting in which the imbalance of power is at its greatest between the detained and the detainer. Hence, knowledge of redressal mechanisms and how to access them effectively is essential in ensuring transparency in the systems and accountability for state actors involved. Respondents were asked about their awareness of procedures for filing a complaint against another inmate. 38.87 percent of male and 69.39 percent of female inmates knew how to file a complaint against another inmate. Only 29.27 percent of adult male respondents said they knew of prison rules permitting them to file a complaint against a prison official. This is significantly lower than the 73.47 percent of female respondents that reported that they knew of the mechanism for filing a complaint against a member of the prison staff.

Moving Towards Legal Empowerment Methods

The CWP has been providing legal assistance to underprivileged under trial prisoners since 2004. Over the course of its operations during the last fifteen years, it has provided legal representation to 16,674 prisoners and has assisted 4,300 prisoners secure bail. On average, it is estimated that about ninety-two cases of incarcerated prisoners are resolved every month through its efforts. However, at any given point in time, the CWP's resources permit it to provide legal representation to around 1,000 prisoners. The population figure of under trial prisoners had fluctuated between 12,000 to 18,000 over the last thirteen years. As of 31 December 2018, under trial prisoner population stood at approximately 15,040. One can easily conclude that the need for free and effective legal representation continues to exceed the supply of this service.

Rule of Law and Access to Justice oriented initiatives tend to focus singularly on improving the capacity of the state and state actors to provide justice-related services. On the other hand, legal empowerment programming works on improving the capacity of the consumer of justice, i.e., the citizen struggling for the entitlements the law provides him or her with. In 2014, the CWP shifted its gears from an approach that relied exclusively on the supply side of providing pro bono legal representation to an approach

that includes legal empowerment approaches to increasing legal knowledge among prisoners. The approach is understood in three parts:

- **Knowing the Law:** Prisoners form one of the vulnerable segments in the justice system, and as such focus was placed on enhancing legal awareness and access to practical information which could help them understand their legal position and their legal options. This can in turn uplift them especially out of the vicious circle of victimization. This can vary from simply knowing who to approach to complain against an abusive prison warden or understanding the rights and modalities of filing appeals;
- **Using the Law:** Unfortunately, simply knowing the law is often not enough to be able to use it. Once a person knows about the relevant substantive and procedural laws, they should be able to use them, i.e., act upon them to seek justice. This translates into being able to know which judge you can complain to or how and when you can approach the members of the local district oversight committees that are meant to conduct external oversight over the local prison. There are still numerous barriers to justice that an average person has to overcome. They may need resources to seek legal representation. They may need community support to stand against a powerful opponent. Legal empowerment programs extend support to justice seekers to help overcome these odds and actually use the law;
- **Shaping the Law:** Quite often governments, especially those in developing countries, suffer from resource constraints which do not permit them to collate the latest statistics and data to base their policy decisions on. As a result, they often rely on stale data. Regrettably, this is the case with most policy reform in Pakistan as we notice new policies being based on perception rather than evidence. There is a severe lack of primary data, without which there can be no meaningful impact assessment or continuous improvement. Legal empowerment programs can help gather primary data. In assisting people to access the justice system, programs can document user experiences to create an evidence base for policy reform. If we look at the data that the CWP has collected, meaningful recommendations can be made based on an analysis of sentencing patterns, procedural issues such as non-appearance of witnesses, or non-production of the accused etc.

These three components of a Legal Empowerment program can improve the outcome for an average justice seeker. An empowered justice seeker can compel justice providers such as the police, judges, lawyers, prosecutors, investigation officers and prison officials to improve their performance and deliver on their duties and obligations. The collective experience of a large number of justice seekers can help improve the state of the justice system by making it more responsive to the needs of the people. Within this context, this paper describes the workings of the unique prisoner-led paralegal program conceived by the CWP to assist a wider array of prisoners in achieving justice outcomes and is currently operational in four prisons in Sindh province.

Prison Paralegal Program

The prison paralegal program was conceived in 2014 by the CWP. The objective was to create a sustainable mechanism for all new inmates in the prison



A trained female prisoner leads the paralegal class at the Women's Prison in Karachi. The class is attended by new admissions in the prison. The prison currently accommodates one hundred twenty-three adult female prisoners.



Lawyers from the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners monitor and supervise the paralegal class which is being conducted by a trained prisoner at Karachi's largest prison facility the Central Prison. The prison currently accommodates 4,758 adult male prisoners.

system to be informed on prison norms and rules, prisoners' rights and duties as well as the criminal justice system and to spread legal literacy among all prisoners in selected prisons.

The basic concept of legal empowerment is gaining an understanding of the law and having the ability and human agency to make independent decisions and to exercise control over one's life. A paralegal is a person who is trained on substantive knowledge of legal matters but is not qualified as a lawyer.

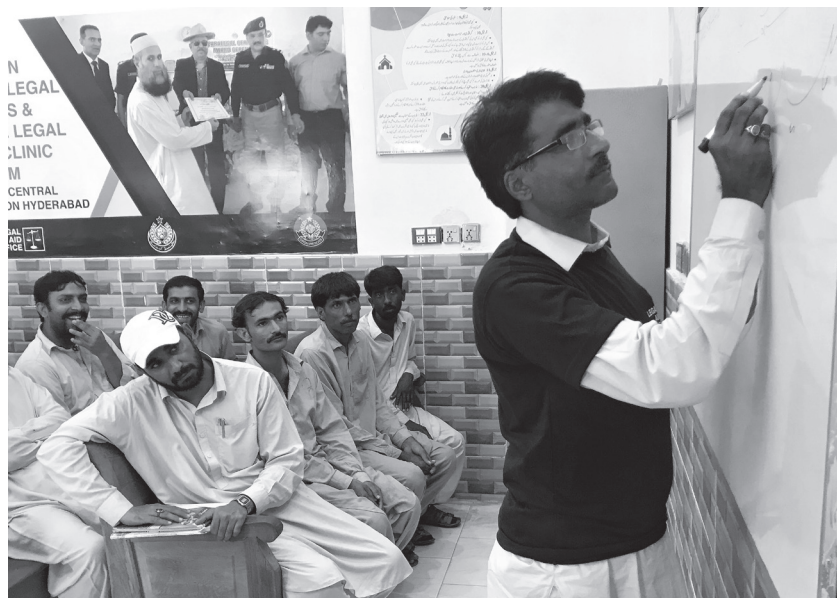
Paralegals work to help their community and assist individuals and the community on different legal issues. A "prison" paralegal is a prison inmate who is trained on knowledge of basic laws including criminal law, prison rules, fundamental rights, criminal trial process, as well as other relevant civil laws such as property law and family law. What this paralegal can do is provide information instead of rendering legal advice. All Prison Paralegals are volunteers who take up the role because of various motivations most of which stem from an internal need to find satisfaction. Prison Paralegals are convicts and have experienced the frustration of being a new arrival in

prison with little knowledge of laws and procedures and limited options of navigating through the system effectively.

Paralegal programs inside prisons in countries such as Malawi and Sierra Leone are successful. However, their model has utilized community paralegals, i.e., paralegals who are non-prisoners accessing prisons to provide legal literacy and information. The CWP model, therefore, differs as the main providers of information are those who have the same set of experience in most cases as that of those who are seeking justice. The prison paralegal is from the same community in this way and hence the authenticity of his or her voice is established from the onset in terms of him being empathetic towards others. His or her legitimacy is further established as the convict has experienced the trials and tribulations of the criminal justice system as a whole in some ways.

Selection of Trainees

A unique methodology was established for selecting and training paralegals as well as monitoring and supervising their performance. Each prison has a



A trained prison paralegal conducts a class at the Central Prison in Hyderabad. The prison currently accommodates 2,300 prisoners and is classified as a high security prison.

unique environment and peculiar culture (quite often the tone is set by the relevant Superintendent in-charge) and inmates of different profiles. District prisons house the under trial prisoners or those that are serving shorter sentences for less severe crimes while the Central Prisons have the high value targets or those convicts serving longer sentences. When implementing the Prison Paralegal Program across four different prisons variations had to be made keeping in mind the prison population, ratio of convicts to under trial prisoners, security concerns, resources and the cooperation of prison authorities.

CWP has trained staff with relevant knowledge of substantive laws and training on adult teaching methodologies. This staff engages in screening convicts and selects suitable candidates who are given substantial legal training.

The training comprises of eight training sessions which vary depending on whether the program is in adult male or female prisoners. The substantive areas of training include

- What is Law and the Constitution,
- Fundamental Rights,
- Criminal Law,
- Criminal Procedures,
- Probation & Parole, and
- Prison Rules.

Additional customizable topics include laws about the family, domestic violence, property and inheritance. Juvenile justice may be added for legal literacy classes conducted in juvenile detention facilities. Once this basic training is provided an advanced class session is held to enhance paralegal skills which also revises the substantive content but focuses on the teaching techniques. It is pertinent to mention that the selection of the right candidates for the training plays a big role in ensuring the success of the program in the future.

Paralegals are not remunerated or compensated in monetary terms. They are volunteers who show interest in performing the tasks of a paralegal. Hence during the screening the selectors look for a long-term engagement. The convicts who are serving sentences in excess of five years as a minimum threshold are screened. The paralegal must be literate and must be able to read and write in the local language (Urdu/Sindhi).

Training of Paralegals

The first stage in the training consists of eight training sessions that cover substantive topics as mentioned above. The training is carried out by an



Trained prisoners are selected based upon their ability to read and write Urdu and Sindhi. The trainees in this picture are convicts serving time at the Central Prison in Hyderabad.

experienced lawyer who has been trained in adult teaching methodologies and is an expert in using interactive teaching techniques. The training uses a Paralegal Reference Guide, developed in English, Sindhi and Urdu languages, which is an illustrated tool kit with lesson plans and content for each of the eight sessions.

The substantive training component is spread over eight classes (varying between two to three hours depending on the topic). Once completed, a post-assessment is conducted to ascertain shifts in knowledge base. This is primarily done through a show of hands method. This post-assessment is preceded by a pre-assessment at the beginning of the training.

Out of the batch of trainees, those who would advance to the next stage are carefully selected based on the ability to read and write, eagerness and commitment along with length of conviction. These selected trainees then

progress to stage two of the training. In this stage, sessions focus entirely on delivery of content, teaching methods, interactive teaching and other training skills as opposed to the substantive content. Lesson plans developed by experts at the CWP are used. Each selected trainee is given a chance to conduct a mock training session. Feedback is provided and the process is repeated for improvement. These sessions are attended by other trainees and new jail admissions.

Stage three of the process results when the trainees have become comfortable doing training and have obtained the approval of the supervising lawyers. In this stage the paralegal trainees have progressed onto becoming prison paralegals and are conducting the entire session independently.



A prison warden looks on as a lawyer from the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners conducts a master training of selected prison paralegals at the Central Prison in Karachi.

Paralegal Work

Once the training component is over, the implementation part commences in which CWP's lawyers robustly supervise and monitor the quality of the sessions the paralegals are conducting. The selected convicted prisoners working as paralegals commence orienting new jail admissions on legal rights, remedies and criminal law and procedure. They use interactive

teaching methods in order to ensure participation and meet learning objectives. The population of the prison and estimates on admissions determine how often the classes take place. Sessions are planned twice a week at Central Prison Karachi but only once every two weeks at the Women's Prison. The CWP provides training material, a Paralegal Reference Guide, posters and pamphlets, etc. along with training equipment and resources like whiteboards, markers, note pads, etc. and assist the paralegals in securing adequate teaching space inside prisons.

Successes and Advantages of the Prison Paralegal Program

The Prison Paralegal Program was rolled out in the Women Prison in Karachi in 2014 which has an average population that fluctuates between one hundred fifty to two hundred fifty women. After four years, the program is operational in four prisons (three adult male facilities and one female facility) located in the cities of Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur. The program interventions have recorded one hundred eleven prisoners having been trained as master trainers through training sessions. These trained paralegals have provided legal information to 2,569 prisoners. In fact, the paralegals have also facilitated prisoners in connecting them with support services such as the lawyers of the CWP. The program has secured allotment of three teaching/working rooms for the paralegals in the prisons in Karachi and Hyderabad. This allows the paralegals to feel a sense of belonging and pride and ensures visibility as others can access them routinely in this office space during scheduled times.

Upon completion of the training itself, trained paralegals are entitled to obtain fifteen days of special remission in their sentence granted at the discretion of the Inspector General of Prisons, who heads the department. This incentivizes convicts to sign up and attend the screening sessions. In addition those who undergo the training experience improvements in their legal knowledge and skills as well as enhance their communication, leadership and organizational abilities. Paralegals also develop an ability to teach and may learn social mobilization skills. Further to helping those that attend the training sessions or information sessions, a multiplier effect is observed in the prisons as the flow of information passes. Inmates who need other types of assistance can be connected to other service providers, such as medical services, or to other rehabilitation services such as literacy or vocational

skills classes and this multiplier is likely to continue once paralegals complete their sentences and return to their communities as reformed and law abiding citizens.

Since 2014, CWP has trained more than one hundred prison paralegals in the four prisons of the Sindh province.

Individual stories provided below illustrate the value of the paralegal program.

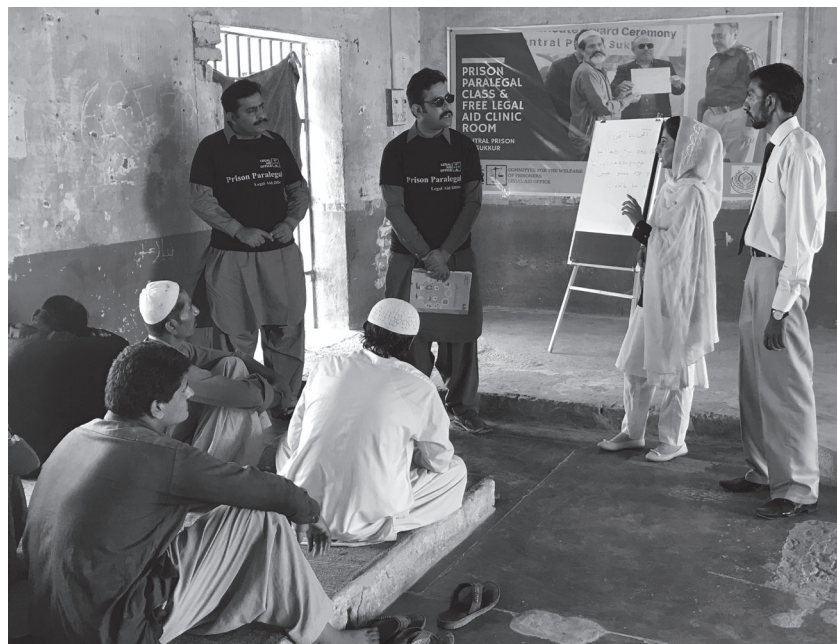


Paralegals in the Karachi Women's Prison use role play techniques to help prisoners understand the system of rights and privileges they are entitled to.

Asim was a twenty-eight year-old paralegal who had been working with the CWP since 2015. He attended the paralegal training classes when he was an under trial prisoner and showed great enthusiasm and promise as a trainer and over the course of three years became the most experienced paralegal that CWP had trained.

He was deployed at the Central Prison in Karachi, which is the biggest prison in the province. The Central Prison currently accommodates 4,876 prisoners.

Asim came from a large family, with five sisters and three brothers. He was the youngest in the family, and being the most educated, he took on all the financial responsibilities for his mother and sisters when his father passed away in 2007. Asim's family is from the Swat Valley, however his fa-



Lawyers working for the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners assist the trained prisoners in conducting a class at the Central Prison in Sukkur. The prison currently accommodates 1,310 adult male offenders.

ther moved the family to Khairpur in the province of Sindh in search of better economic prospects. The family moved again from Khairpur to Karachi when Asim was in primary school. Asim continued his education completing his Intermediate and some basic computer courses to get a start in the Information Technology (IT) sector.

He was enrolled in the first year of his undergraduate degree in Computer Science when he was arrested and put in prison for the first time in 2012. He was merely twenty-two years old at that time. The arrest was over a dispute relating to his ancestral lands in Swat. When his father passed away in 2007, the family found out that they had substantial property in Swat. The insurgency was in full swing in 2007 and Swat was practically a no-go area. However, Asim returned to Swat to claim his father's property. The property had been adversariously possessed and claimed by distant relatives. A local influential person who refused to recognize the family's claim threatened Asim with dire consequences. Undeterred, Asim pressed his

claim and began the process of regularizing the paper work. When the occupiers of the property realized that Asim would not back down, they used their influence to register multiple cases against him in Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar alleging that Asim was driving a car with fake number plates. All the cases were registered within days of each other and a First Information Report [FIR] was first registered against him on 28 March 2012. Asim has been confined in prison since 2012, and continued to prove his innocence.

Asim has also been the victim of a predatory legal profession and has engaged four different lawyers over the course of his first two years in prison. Each lawyer charged between twenty and fifty thousand Pakistani Rupees. Eventually fed up with inadequate representation, Asim decided to fight his cases himself. He was acquitted in the last case against him in April 2017 and was then transferred to Peshawar to face the cases lodged against him there. The CWP assisted Asim in securing his transfer, which was pending for no reason for almost a year after he had been acquitted of cases in Karachi.

Asim's involvement in the paralegal program proved to be beneficial to the program and to Asim himself. His experience in navigating the legal system on his own has been a big asset for the program. He credits his ability to argue his own case to his learning about the law from the paralegal training sessions and from his interaction with CWP lawyers who would guide him from time to time. He also feels the program has helped him develop teaching skills and improved his relationship with prison administration.

Asim has also been a keen advocate for the program, spreading awareness of the service among prison inmates as well as the prison administration and the media. His commitment to the program was entirely voluntary and was based on his desire to assist others who are in the same position as he once was. Asim claims the program has been hugely beneficial for new inmates – helping them to come to terms with the new environment. Before the paralegal program, older inmates would help explain the law and other issues to new inmates, however, having a structured program to create basic legal awareness has really helped participants feel more confident and helped give people hope. Improved legal awareness can empower people to seek relief. Access to reliable legal information and advice through CWP lawyers is also an essential service. Most inmates in prison complain about being taken advantage of by their lawyers or not being given updates or explanations about case progress. Some unscrupulous lawyers make big promises and then consistently fail to deliver once they have received fees. In such

situations, the paralegal program and access to legal advice can help inmates by either guiding them on procuring legal services or in understanding their cases better.

The Prison Paralegal Program has a long way to go, and Asim's advice is that the program should be spread to reach every prisoner in the province. He says a prisoner is completely cut off from society and compares inmates to a mobile phone from which the SIM (subscriber identification module) card has been removed. Over time, relatives visit less frequently and trips to court, the only temporary respite from prison, also become less frequent. In such situations, any service that can help people secure early release or a reduction in their sentence, or can make their lives in prison more humane and tolerable is a valuable service to society.

Case Study: Naila

Naila Gulfaraz has two sons aged between ten and sixteen years. She belongs to a conservative family and was married off at an early age. Prior to being imprisoned she worked as domestic help and earned 15,000 Pakistani Rupees a month. Naila has been incarcerated for ten years at the Women's Prison in Karachi. In August 2008, a FIR was registered by the police in Police Station Sachal (AVCC), Karachi under section 365-A/34 PPC R/w Section 7 (e) of Anti-Terrorism Act which provides for a maximum sentence for life imprisonment and forfeiture of property to the extent of 100,000 Pakistani Rupees. She had been punished for the alleged crime of kidnapping of an eight-year-old boy. At the time of her incarceration, she was four months pregnant and her husband abandoned her and took away her eldest son. Her second son was born in prison, and eventually upon her request shifted to an orphanage where he resided for five years. Despite her abandonment and challenges, Naila continues to fight for her rights. In prison, she has participated in several activities including both recreational and capacity-building activities. These have included parlor training, stitching, computer training, and attending the paralegal classes.

Naila is one of the convict paralegals trained by CWP-LAO (Legal Aid Office). As a paralegal she has been able to help herself, and also other female inmates and people in the community by guiding them on different legal issues. She was sentenced to life imprisonment by the court within

eleven months of her case. When she first went to court, she did not have any knowledge on how and what to say before a judge. She said:

If I had knowledge of the law then I would definitely have taken a stand for myself and my scenario would have been different now. Now as I see my case, I totally get it that the crime was imposed on me. False witnesses were presented and I remained silent as I was totally blank and shocked at the moment and had no legal knowledge.

Through the legal aid clinics and paralegal training, she gained legal knowledge and is now able to answer and guide others in avoiding and stopping injustices.

During her imprisonment, she filed a case of *Khula* (divorce) against her husband and won the case. In 2014, she filed an application for her children's custody so the same may be awarded to their maternal uncle and aunt.

She continues to support and help other female prisoners, particularly the newly incarcerated inmates:

New incarcerated inmates discuss their cases and ask me for the best possible option. I provide them with legal knowledge as per my understanding and the limit to which I can counsel them being a paralegal. I have also guided them not pay for the copy of documents even if a court clerk demands for it.

Most of the female who are incarcerated commit heinous crimes after being victim of domestic violence and being abused by husbands. We guide them that it is not necessary for you to adopt the wrong path by doing unnecessary crimes instead of it there are legal ways through which issues can be solved, which includes: by complaining at the police station, through advocacy of media and by support of NGOs.

Naila has been able to extend her support, knowledge and help even outside prison. She advised her cousin Asma who was suffering from an abusive marriage and whose abusive husband took away her son. Naila guided her cousin in using legal options and in successfully filing a *khula* and custody case against him, providing legal support throughout the process. She also counseled Asma's father, her uncle to take a more gender-friendly

and supportive approach towards his daughter, resulting in a happy resolution for Asma.

Experience shows that most of the inmates come to prison with little to no knowledge about the due process of law including the procedures governing bail, prison decorum, types of crimes and their corresponding punishments. Thus, it becomes essential to make the prisoners become aware of these procedures and codes of conduct. This helps them utilize available remedies and also helps them to frame their conduct according to the prison rules and other concerned codes of conduct.

Under the Prison Paralegal program, the convicts are provided training and resources for this purpose, and in turn are rewarded by remissions and the sense of purpose and fulfillment. For prisoners, there is a readily available resource within the prison to provide them with basic legal information.

Future Directions

In order to make the program sustainable, it is imperative to expand the non-financial incentives being provided. Currently, the provision is limited to a fifteen-day remission for every six months of teaching. Additional incentives in the form of special allowance for transferring a convict paralegal to a prison closer to her/his relatives may also be provided. In this way the convicted prisoner is likely to receive more visits from his family members than would be the case if she/he is imprisoned and serving sentence in a far away district prison. The CWP is also desirous of helping reintegrate those trained convict paralegals who complete their sentences and require support to start over in society. The proposal is to reach out to them and connect them to work as paralegal staff or clerks with law firms.

The scaling of the program and its replication in other prisons will require funding for the CWP's trainers and supervisors. It is proposed that one new prison facility be added every year for the CWP. Once the initial three stages of training are completed, monitoring costs will also reduce over time and the program can run sustainably.