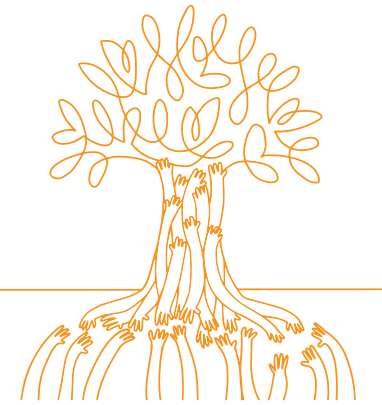


# Build the field. Build the movement.

ENGAGING YOUNG MEN & BOYS IN INDIA



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ENGAGING YOUNG MEN & BOYS IN INDIA

SEPTEMBER 2021



# foreword

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Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies (RNP) supports ideas, individuals and institutions doing ground-breaking work that enables a strong samaaj (society). The areas of work constitute a wide range spanning Access to Justice to Water. RNP has identified Active Citizenship, Climate and Biodiversity and Young Men and Boys as priorities.

## Accelerating the work that is ‘well begun’

While the good work for betterment of women and girls in India has to continue, the work in gender equity shall remain incomplete unless young men and boys are brought within the ambit of interventions. We need to onboard men, not only for causes of women such as achieving goals of women empowerment and zero violence against women, but also for men’s own development.

India has 200 million young men, bringing to mind certain questions.

- How will they be liberated from the identities that patriarchy, religion, caste and society have defined for them?
- Do they have safe, shared spaces to explore questions and discover themselves? How do they use their human potential?
- What gaps in their education do they want to fill and how will they do that?
- What kind of pressures does the role of ‘the primary breadwinner’ impose on them?
- Given that the meaning of work and nature of jobs are going to change dramatically in the next few decades, are we going to continue to define men by these parameters?

When a movement towards addressing these issues is put in place, there will be a holistic integration of men and boys into the movement for rights of women and girls.

Over the past three years, RNP has partnered, through “learning grants”, with ten organisations that either exclusively focus their work on Young Men and Boys, or include men and boys in the gender empowerment efforts for girls and women. This blue-book intends to present a snapshot of the models and approaches being taken by RNP’s partners, and serve as a public resource for others who might be interested in gender transformative work.



## THE GRANTEE ORGANISATIONS

**Arpan**, with a vision of a world free of child sexual abuse, runs a Personal Safety Education Programme for school children in grades one to ten at schools in Mumbai, and Training and Capacity Building Programme for adults in government and the social sector across India.

**Equal Community Foundation (ECF)** engages boys aged 13-17 years from low income communities in Pune in a gender transformative programme.

**CORO** works to create a gender equitable society through behavioural change and nurturing leadership among young men and women from marginalised communities of Maharashtra.

**CEQUIN** engages with adolescent boys in four North Indian states, to challenge stereotypes, build leadership skills and create a gender sensitive local environment that serves to benefit both men and women.

**Pradan** works with young men and women in Madhya Pradesh, unlocking their potential and improving their employability, thus enabling them to take charge of their own future.

**Project KHEL** instills gender sensitivity and inclusion in boys and girls through sports and various modes of play in Uttar Pradesh.

**Swayam** engages young men in communities at Metiabruz in Kolkata and Diamond Harbour in South Paraganas, West Bengal with the vision of a non-discriminatory, violence-free and gender-equal society.

**The Gender Lab** empowers adolescents to question existing gender narratives through critical and meaningful engagement with their communities through in-school programmes in Mumbai and Delhi.

**The Young People Foundation (TYPF)** supports and develops youth leadership to advance rights of young women, girls and other marginalised youth.

**Uninhibited** works with men and women in the same communities in Madhya Pradesh on Menstrual Health and Hygiene and Sexual and Reproductive Health issues.

## Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies & niiti consulting

*Build the tools.*

*Build the evidence.*

*Build the narrative.*

RNP invited [niiti consulting](#) to observe the operating models of the ten grantee organisations, and record the challenges faced, along with approaches adopted for mitigation of these. The intent was also to record the implementation, monitoring and measurement programme templates, the narrative of the results and the change in young men and boys. The experiences of each grantee organisation could be drawn upon by implementing organisations, governments and funders across the country for inspiration, guidance or refinement of their own interventions for young boys and men.

## Common threads

While each grantee organisation's journey during the grant period is unique, there are trends and similarities that niiti consulting observed across the organisations' experiences that merit a mention.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GRANTEE ORGANISATIONS

### Boys and Men 'caged' in moulds

Young boys are urged not to cry and are subject to peer pressure to use bad language and engage in fist fights. Teenagers have to take on a 'man's role' as breadwinner, quickly. Young men adopt 'protector' and 'provider' roles, and are sometimes hesitant to pursue livelihoods perceived as 'female oriented' due to societal pressures, denying themselves wider opportunities.

### Impact of the Pandemic on the Grantee Organisations' Programmes

In the first few months of the pandemic, all organisations had to address immediate needs, rather than focus on their core, programmatic interventions. They were involved in distribution of dry ration, hygiene kits (mask, sanitiser, soap), in providing financial aid (for young men who had been laid off, to start small businesses), educational support (online, academic classes for children with no access to school). This involvement could possibly continue in some cases, in the medium to long term as well. During the lock-down, the organisations kept in touch with participants of their programmes, alumni and their families through phone calls, phone conferences, messaging applications and text messages.

Communities perceived presence and involvement of these organisations during the pandemic as a demonstration of their commitment. The aid and support activities of the organisations in this time have enhanced their credibility in the communities.

For the young men who were participants in programmes by these organisations, the pandemic provided opportunities to demonstrate the skills that have been enhanced because of the various programmes. For example, the young men took the lead in aid and relief distribution in the communities, disseminating information on the pandemic and raising awareness on issues such as domestic violence that showed sharp spikes during the pandemic.

Organisations have collaborated with one another extensively, in sharing content, participating in each other's online programmes, and in distributing aid. Online engagements do not involve investments of time and expense for travel, thus staff and participants of programmes were able to participate in training programmes and webinars organised by each other. Significant cross learning has happened, with the erasing of geographical barriers.

For some organisations, the content of the programmes, when they resumed, was expanded to include themes and topics that were of concern such as mental health, addiction. Some organisations are considering inclusion of such topics, in addition to gender-based topics, going forward too. They expect to reach more young men and boys, longer, in this manner.

Programmes that had sessions at schools as the primary outreach channel had lower reach than the

previous year. Schools were shut for many months, and large numbers of children dropped out because of resettlement of parents or inability to pay school fees. When online classes began, they had limited attendance. Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not have access to devices with internet connection. Often, the primary bread winner has the family's only device and is out of home on work most of the day. This phone is not internet enabled and in instances where it is, the internet connection is unstable or limited. In addition to hosting online sessions of their programmes over meeting applications, organisations have devised creative methods to reach content to participants – such as audio clips on messaging applications.

Access to a phone, data services, lack of privacy and quiet at home for online sessions – these challenges were common for both the participants and facilitators of the programmes. Both participants of the programmes and staff in organisations went through a steep learning curve to move to an online engagement. Both time and resources were invested by organisations for this. Physical meetings had the constraint of the number of people who can be accommodated in a small space, with the adequate safety protocols.

Overall, the organisations had to be resourceful, creative and persistent in tackling the constraints and challenges that arose because of the pandemic.

## Low hanging fruits versus deep roots

Some changes are relatively easier to bring about – participation of young boys in household chores, girls being given a fair chance to play. Other societal divides have roots that run deep – heckling at a school boy choosing a beautician's course over electrician's training, violent reactions to choosing one's own life partner. While the former outputs can possibly be realised within the grant period, the latter need long term work.

## Working with 'young men and boys' in contrast with women

Residential training sessions over weeks found fewer takers among young men than women as there is a perceived 'sacrifice' of freedom to 'roam around'. Boys seem to take longer than girls to develop a rapport with the facilitator or deeply engage with the programmes. While women and girls are accessible at homes in communities, over several years, many young men and boys migrate for work, making sustained work with them difficult.

## Male-female status quo in India

While the grantee organisations were aware of sensitivities in the existing constructs of male-female interactions in India, some backlash in programme delivery took them by surprise. Sexual harassment inflicted by school boys on female facilitators, and objections raised by resort owners for hosting residential training for young men and women together are two such instances.

## Unexpected stakeholder behaviour

Most grantee organisations have mapped out the expectations and actions of not only their primary stakeholders, the young men and boys who are participants of the programmes, but also those of school principals, parents and teachers. There were instances when actualities were at variance with expectations. One organisation had to extend programme delivery to other states as there was a fall-out in obtaining permission from government schools in their geography of work. Another grantee had to reconfigure research, because of a miscast assumption about the duration taken by young men to determine their interest in types of livelihood.

## Sarkaar's role

Government seems to have been largely passive in addressing structural patriarchy. Support for NGOs, however, was observed in two instances. The 'Chief Minister's Fellow' programme in two states of Maharashtra and Haryana, have aided the grantee organisations' efforts. Young men and women in the 21-30 years age group, appointed on short tenures of about a year, in public administration roles, seem to be enthusiastic and co-operative in initiatives from non-governmental organisations.

## National level events that mattered

Upheavals in the year 2019-2020 had a wide reaching impact on the work of many of the grantee organisations. Confusion, apprehension and protests following the passing of the Citizenship Amendment Bill, created disturbances in communities, especially those dominated by minority groups. Facilitators had to engage in discussions pertaining to these issues, that took precedence over programmatic gender and identity related questions.



## BEST PRACTICES THAT EMERGED

### The younger the better

All grantee organisations focus on school going boys and young, working men, with the premise that older men are set in their views and beliefs about gender, whereas younger men would be more open to questioning the status quo.

### Engagement with the ecosystem

Conversations with direct stakeholders such as parents, teachers, school principals and indirect stakeholders such as the sarpanch (village leader) are critical. Periodic group and individual meetings are conducted.

This is done so that there is ongoing support and understanding for the young men and boys, and also so that adverse reactions from stakeholders can be avoided. Encouragement is given to participants to create and lead support groups in the community to extend the reach of the programme and for long term impact.

### Promoting healthy interactions between boys and girls, young men and women

Boys and girls learn personal safety, play games, and are trained for livelihoods together. Enabling shared spaces, either in the course of programme design or implementation, is a constructive step towards normalising interaction between young men and women and boys and girls.

### Programme content

Meaningful and relevant topics such as self-awareness, empathy, gender stereotypes and sensitivity, power relations, masculinity, human rights, leadership qualities, collective action are taken up during the sessions with young men and boys.

### Play-way method

Games and activities lighten the atmosphere and make the message palatable and relatable to the participants. Such an approach helps participants internalise complex and nuanced topics such as gender roles and masculinity.

## RESULTS

### For men and boys

**Unintended:** It was observed that participants demonstrated confidence, better communication skills, and the ability to stand up to peer pressure. Young men often became the 'go to' resource person in the community (for reporting events to police, applying for ration cards etc.), and took responsibility for issues faced by the community. Alumni of the programmes were seen to take on leadership positions in the organisations that they work for.

**Intended:** Participants reported improved ability to relate to women in the workplace and more comfort speaking to girls. Youth have safe spaces to discuss their aspirations, anxieties, concerns, or to divulge the impact of abuse or struggle with self. They understand their own potential better and seem more comfortable with themselves.

### For girls and women

As a consequence of young men and boys undergoing interventions, the women and girls in their lives experience positive outcomes. They see 'caring' men, who converse more with the women in the family and understand their difficulties and views. They seem to have more 'freedom' - to venture outside the home, dress freely, use smart phones, opt for courses such as nursing, better acceptability (from men) to be primary wage earners. In schools, girls experience less teasing by boys and improved communication with them.

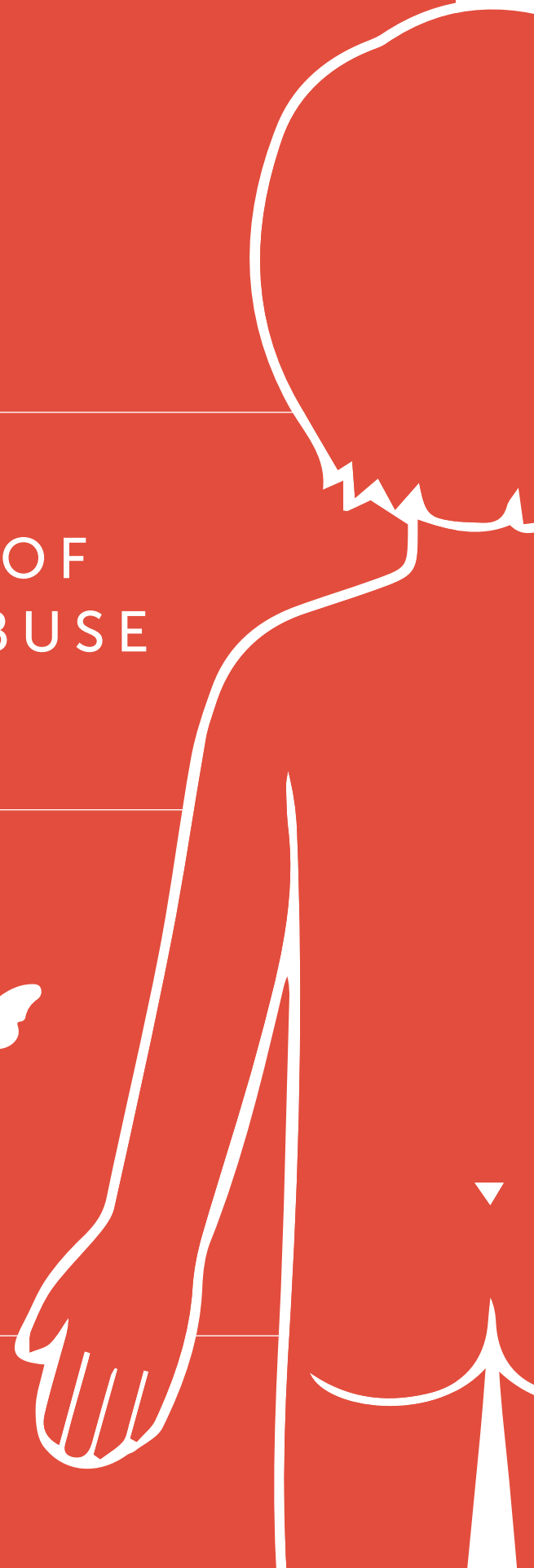
## BUILD THE FIELD. BUILD THE MOVEMENT.

Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies believes in the power of openness to harness innovation. Sharing as a form of collaboration can multiply the efforts of funders, social organisations and change makers. The reader is encouraged to reach out to the individual grantee organisations for additional inputs or information or to explore partnerships, mentorships or training.



A WORLD FREE OF  
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

*arpan*   
Towards Freedom from  
Child Sexual Abuse





## ORGANISATION PROFILE

### SINCE 2008

In a country where there is a tremendous social and cultural taboo around sexuality, the dialogue around child sexual abuse is almost non-existent, yet the prevalence continues to be high. Arpan provides a comprehensive prevention model to respond to Child Sexual Abuse.

### UNIQUE ASPECTS

Going beyond imparting awareness to children about child sexual abuse, Arpan has a disclosure component to its programme, providing a safe, private space for children to open up about their experiences.

'Step up' aspect of the programme delivers age-appropriate information as the child grows – Arpan goes back to the same group of children in a school after two to three years.

Training other organisations to conduct child safety programmes in their settings, through strategic partnerships, Arpan trains stakeholders to implement the programme across geographies and builds their capacity to counsel children who have faced abuse.

### KEY NUMBERS

No. of boys covered under PSE programme  
2813 boys across nine schools

No. of adult caregivers covered under PSE programme  
2258 parents, 131 teachers, 48 non-teaching staff

No. of boys who disclosed about abuse and received counselling: 162

No. of adults trained: 510

No. of adults for whom awareness sessions were conducted: 2007

### GEOGRAPHY

PSE for children  
Schools in Mumbai and Thane in the state of Maharashtra in West India  
Training and Capacity Building for adults  
Across India

### TESTIMONIAL

*"We are 'Personal Safety Champions'. We speak to other children (who go to schools where Arpan has not yet done the sessions) in our community about personal safety."*

*Class 8 Boys at a private school in Mumbai*



### CONTACT DETAILS

Website - <https://www.arpan.org.in/>

Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/ArpanCSA>

Twitter - [https://twitter.com/Arpan\\_CSA](https://twitter.com/Arpan_CSA)

Instagram- [https://www.instagram.com/arpan\\_csa/](https://www.instagram.com/arpan_csa/)

Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/user/arpancsa>

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# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

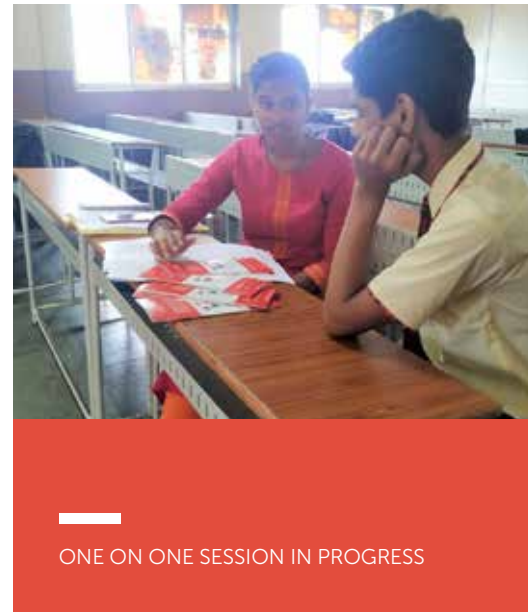
APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

## Personal Safety Education Programme (PSE)

To conduct the PSE programme with 2452 boys (spanning Grades One to Ten), awareness sessions on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and personal safety with caregivers (teachers, guardians, support staff), healing sessions with 100% children who disclose experiences of sexual abuse and other concerns and children who indulge in inappropriate behaviour. To stop all ongoing cases of child sexual abuse and provide psycho-education to concerned caregivers of children who disclose.

## Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Training Programme (TP)

To train 500 trainees (NGO professionals, school teachers, institutional staff, health/mental health professionals, government duty bearers) and conduct awareness sessions with 2000 individuals/professionals.



ONE ON ONE SESSION IN PROGRESS

## PARTNERS

Arpan implements the Personal Safety Education Programme in partnership with schools in three districts of Maharashtra. Arpan also trains and builds capacity of Government, non-Government and NGO partners, shares the content of the PSE programme with them, and handholds them in onwards implementation of the PSE programme, thus furthering the reach of the PSE programme to other states in India.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- » Schools - provide access to children and adult caregivers.
- » Government and non-government stakeholders - aid in adult/teacher training at state/district level.

# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

## Personal Safety Education Programme

Child Sexual Abuse is a significant form of Gender-Based Violence. CSA is widespread across India, impacting children of all ages, socio-economic classes, and genders. In its 2018 report, the National Crime Records Bureau stated that 38802 children had faced child sexual abuse. Out of these, 94.8% of the offenders were known to the victim as caregivers. Despite its high prevalence, violence against children is often hidden, unseen, or under-reported; a meta-analysis of global data finds self-reported Child Sexual Abuse 30 times higher and physical abuse 75 times higher than the incidence in official reports.

Caregivers do not have the knowledge to support children either by being watchful or by talking to them and hand-holding them in the case of abuse. In such a context, the onus is on the education system to provide children with essential life skills. However, the education system is not fully geared, both in terms of curriculum design and attitude, skills, and knowledge of teachers.

The core idea behind Arpan's programme is that every child has the right to feel safe at all times and that all adults should protect children from all forms of sexual abuse. It is a researched fact that if children are imparted information and skills related to Personal Safety, there will be an increase in knowledge and skills to identify, refuse, and report unsafe situations. Parents and caregivers also need to be aware of the nuances of Child Sexual Abuse so that they can create a safety net for children.

**53%** of Indian children have faced some form of sexual abuse, with **21%** having faced severe sexual abuse.

Boys account for around **53%** and girls for **47%** of all children reporting abuse.

*Source: Study on Child Abuse: India 2007*

## Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Training Programme

By providing knowledge and skills through training and capacity building towards preventing and intervening in the case of CSA, the child protection mandate can be mainstreamed and the Personal Safety Education programme can be replicated and scaled. The programme increases the professional capacities of individuals - both duty bearers and from civil societies - to be effective support personnel who will be able to prevent CSA by implementing the PSE programme in their respective schools and train other adults for building a protective ecosystem.

## CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

**PSE:** Any school in Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, and Thane that gives permission to Arpan to run the programme as per their protocol and procedure.

**Training Programmes:** Any governmental/non-governmental organisation interested in equipping its members with the knowledge and skills needed to prevent and deal with child sexual abuse.

# PROJECT APPROACH

## Personal Safety Education Programme

### FOUR LEVELS OF PREVENTION

<b>Risk Reduction</b> Empower children to prevent sexual abuse.	<b>Primary Level Prevention</b> Create awareness in children about empathy and personal boundaries (own and others); also provide space for working with children who touch other children inappropriately– prevention of potential offenders.	<b>Secondary Level Prevention</b> Immediate response after the abuse has occurred, to respond to short-term consequences, and prevent additional harm. Includes teaching trusted adults about the first level of care and support post-disclosure.	<b>Tertiary Level Prevention</b> Referring children who have abused others as well as children who have been abused for psychotherapeutic services and by engaging trusted adults in their children’s healing and treatment processes.
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The model responds to CSA by working at the societal, community, family, and individual levels in the following manner:

<b>Societal</b> Change social norms that accept or allow indifference to sexual abuse, reinforce and perpetuate it.	<b>Community</b> Make school as an institution aware of and proactive in prevention of CSA and developing effective response mechanisms.	<b>Family</b> Make parents and caregivers demonstrate respectful, gender neutral and healthy communications, create emotionally supportive families, and skills to initiate conversations around personal safety.	<b>Individual</b> Develop problem solving skills, skills to manage emotions, identify unsafe situations and touches, refusal skills and help-seeking behaviour.
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## Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Training Programme

Provide knowledge and skills in preventing and intervening in case of CSA.	Increase the professional capacities of individuals who will be able to prevent CSA by implementing the PSE programme in their respective schools.	These adults will in turn train other adults for building a protective ecosystem.	An environment conducive to the protection of children from sexual abuse.
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# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

MEASURABLE GOALS	OUTPUT INDICATOR(S)
Personal Safety Education to be conducted with 2452 boys.	Number of boys reached out through PSE.
Awareness sessions on CSA and personal safety to be conducted with 981 caregivers (teachers, guard-ians, and support staff).	No. of caregivers made aware through the school network (teachers, guardians, and support staff).
Healing sessions to be conducted with 100% of children who disclose. All ongoing cases disclosed to be stopped.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of children who disclose an experience of sexual abuse reached out through the PSE programme.</li><li>Number of children who indulge in sexual misbehaviour.</li><li>Number of ongoing cases disclosed and stopped.</li></ul>
Psycho-education to be provided to concerned caregivers of children who disclose.	Number of caregivers who received psycho-education for ensuring effective support to children.
Training and Capacity Building to be conducted with 500 trainees for them to replicate and sustain Arpan’s prevention and intervention models. Awareness sessions to be conducted with 2000 individuals and professionals for spreading awareness on the issue.	Number of trainees reached out through training and capacity building programme and the number of individuals reached through awareness sessions.

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Demographics

Arpan delivers the Personal Safety Education programme in a range of schools, with children and adults from different socio-economic strata, religion, ethnicity, castes, and other differentiating factors. Overall, the response from lower and middle-income segment schools has been more encouraging when compared to higher-income segment schools. While the mainstay of Arpan's work is in urban areas, a few experiences in the rural areas have showcased that the programme is responsive to children in rural areas as well.

Training programmes have been tailored to the diverse needs of stakeholders; customised modules have been developed for government school teachers, mental health professionals, police, social workers, institutional staff, duty bearers, and so on.

### Cultural highlights

The programme is responsive to work with children from diverse religious and caste backgrounds, and other differentiating parameters.

Participants in rural and semi-urban areas (Kolhapur, Allahabad) reported feeling awkward talking about the body, sex, and gender. The training helped them understand their awkwardness.

Further, some teachers (Training)/schools (PSE) expressed reservations about doing the PSE lessons in a mixed class, that included both girls and boys. They do not have experience in discussing sensitive topics openly. Women participants were found to be circumspect about topics relating to the body, sex, and gender.



CLASSROOM SESSION WITH CHILDREN IN PROGRESS

## MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

Given that the outcomes for the PSE programme have been established in the past, a decision was reached not to carry out a baseline study and pre-post- studies for the RNP-funded project. An evaluation study was planned and undertaken as part of the research plan, to assess the effectiveness of the training programme and incorporate learnings into programme design.

## RESEARCH PLAN

Arpan identified four research questions and carried out studies for each of these:

- **How do longer and shorter prevention programmes compare in their ability to make children internalise and retain the key messages, and disclose instances of child sexual abuse?** Preliminary findings from a dipstick study done in 2019-20 will be used later to design the main study.
- **By the end of short-term therapy, to what extent are children able to identify triggers and build resources to deal with them?** The conceptual framework and part of the methodology were worked on. The research will begin once the situation due to the global pandemic is close to normal and study subjects (children in schools) can be approached.
- **Are younger children more open to accepting key messages than older children (because they have fewer external influences)?** The research was completed.
- **How effective is the PSE Training of Trainers model in equipping participants with the knowledge and skills to implement the PSE programme with children, and to handle disclosures?** What are the other key factors that contribute towards either enabling or preventing, training participants from implementing the PSE programme? How effective are training participants in empowering children with the knowledge and skills related to personal safety? Research was completed by January 2020.

## TRAINING

Arpan undertook the following training for its staff in the period April 2019 to March 2020:

TOPICS	PARTICIPANTS	MONTH
Basic Fire Fighting Training Session	For Entire Team	June 2019
Presentation Skills Session	Associates, Executives, Managers, Coordinators	June & July 2019
Self Care Session	Managers, Directors, CEO	August 2019
HRMS Training	For Entire Team	September & October 2019
POSH Policy	For Entire Team	November 2019
Stress Management Training	Managers, Directors	December 2019
Political Savvy Workshop	Directors, Managers, Coordinators	December 2019
Basic & Advance Excel Training	Directors, Managers, Coordinators	January & February 2020



## IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

RISKS	MITIGATION PLANS
Low acceptance that CSA is a serious and highly prevalent social issue in India. It is difficult to engage with key stakeholders due to social and cultural taboos.	Arpan has generated goodwill, created inroads, and built linkages with key players and continues to strengthen these linkages. Arpan initiates dialogues with multiple stakeholders in parallel to reduce dependence on a few schools or government departments.
Operational and logistical challenges in schools. Schools can be uncooperative due to lack of time for conducting the PSE programme and due to the fear that identified CSA cases might tarnish the image of the school. Project timelines can get affected if the school is uncooperative/ delays permissions. There is also, typically, high absenteeism of children and teachers in government-run schools.	Arpan invests considerable time in the school acquisition process, identifies cooperative schools, signs MoUs to clarify roles, and works closely with the school management during implementation. Arpan has also created abridged modules for schools for whom time is a constraint (while ensuring that key personal safety messages are delivered). To address absenteeism, Arpan uses structured lesson plans and constant reiteration of key messages in each subsequent session. Confidentiality of cases is critical and Arpan does not reveal details of any case to anyone (except the child's trusted adult(s), as required), including the school management (except if the perpetrator is a school employee).
Apprehension about accessing mental health and healing services. Child and adult survivors of sexual abuse and their families are apprehensive about accessing mental health services due to societal stigma. However, healing is critical to improving the life of the victim in the near term and long term.	Arpan's social impact paradigm itself emphasises the importance of healing and clearly indicates that no prevention programme on CSA is complete without healing services and support. Arpan continues to offer healing services as part of its direct implementation of the PSE programme in schools.
Higher inclination for the uptake of short-term instead of long-term training. Governmental/non-governmental organisations/schools are typically interested in short-term training and find it challenging to commit to intensive training programmes and to integrate the same within their systems and services.	Arpan (i) identifies potential partners who are committed to undergoing long-term training and are keen to implement learnings in their respective environments and, (ii) modifies its approach to suit varied requirements – for example, Arpan is open to delivering a range of training programmes based on the requirement of potential partners, ranging from half-day training programmes to 3-day or 5-day Train-the-Trainer programmes with or without handholding for onward implementation in the trainees' ecosystem.



CLASSROOM SESSION WITH CHILDREN IN PROGRESS

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

### Overview

For PSE, the geographies are Mumbai, Mumbai Suburban, and Thane, and for the training programmes, it is pan India.

### Personal Safety Education Programme

- Step 1. Meeting with school management.
- Step 2. Awareness sessions with adults in school – teachers, support staff, counsellors, etc.
- Step 3. Pre-PSE session with parents.
- Step 4. Classroom sessions with children.
- Step 5. One-on-one sessions with children.
- Step 6. Counselling for reported cases.
- Step 7. Post-PSE session with parents and teachers.

### Training and Capacity Building

- Step 1. Pitching to Schools, NGOs, Government bodies.
- Step 2. Customisation of training content, if needed, based on the requirement.
- Step 3. Training and Capacity Building sessions.
- Step 4. Handholding/observation of participants by Arpan staff.
- Step 5. Seeking data on onwards implementation of the programme by trainees.

*"Acceptance from children is very high as a safe space is provided to share feelings. Arpan's programme is the only one with the disclosure element."*

*Healing Team, Arpan*



GOVERNMENT SCHOOL  
TEACHERS ENGAGED IN A  
DISCUSSION IN KOLHAPUR

## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

- Arpan signs a formal MoU with private schools – this helps in keeping the engagement professional.
- Arpan gets all stakeholders on board before beginning (parents', teachers' workshops). The attendance criterion for commencement of PSE, is that, parents of at least 50% children should have attended the orientation session and/or sent a consent letter.
- Parents are always in the know. Arpan staff shows them the charts and worksheets that will be used during the sessions with the children. This ensures complete support from parents.
- Arpan ensures that the intervention/disclosure component of the programme is made available to every child in the school that the PSE programme is run.
- "Bringing in people from the corporate world has worked for us; they have experience in capacity building, in process building; thus focus on people, process and pedagogy for continuity," shares Pooja Taparia, Founder and CEO, Arpan.
- Since the school is the primary channel for programme delivery, Arpan has to utilise the months in which children are not available. "During the school holiday months and exam months, we reach out to NGOs working in communities and explore the possibility of conducting awareness sessions in residential areas," PSE team.

*"Arpan is very particular about the one-on-one sessions. If a child is absent on the day that grade is covered, they make sure the child gets a chance the next time the Arpan team is visiting. No other organisation does this with students."*

*Teachers at a school in Mumbai*

## CHALLENGES

### Socio-cultural

There is some taboo in dealing with sensitive topics, both in rural and urban areas. "We did not know how to talk about such things earlier... biology topics become easier after the Arpan sessions," say teachers at a school in Mumbai.

### Mobilisation

Dependence on the school channel for programme delivery entails constant communication with school authorities. "Year after year, permission has to be obtained from the school. From initial conversations and pitching to closure, it takes six to eight weeks," reports the PSE team.

### Relationships with stakeholders

Reach to schools is limited by permissions that can be obtained. To further the reach of the personal safety education programme, Arpan's policy advocacy group focusses on strengthening linkages with diverse government bodies such as MHRD, NCERT, CBSE, NCPCR, MSCERT, and others, and undertakes training and capacity building to institutionalise the programme.



SESSION WITH PARENTS OF CHILDREN  
IN THE PSE PROGRAMME.



## UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

At the training programme for government school teachers at Kolhapur, the participants vociferously expressed their unwillingness to come on a Sunday to attend the third day of the programme. (The five-day trainer programme had been condensed into three days while ensuring that key messages are delivered.) Officials from the education department had included a Sunday as it is difficult to find substitute teachers for three days. The participants eventually did come in for the Sunday sessions after talks and discussions with the Education department officials and Arpan staff.

The country-wide lockdown due to the global pandemic impacted the scheduled PSE school programme and planned trainings in March 2020. Arpan continued to work telephonically with children who had disclosed pre-lockdown to check on how the children were doing and whether they were safe. Around 250 children were reached in this manner. Arpan also continued to provide telephonic counseling to these children, assessed on a case-by-case basis, and therapeutic support to parents and/or other trusted adults, as required. As regards training, Arpan had conversations with trainee partners for online training.





GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHER  
DOES A MOCK PRESENTATION OF PSE  
CLASSROOM CONTENT IN KOLHAPUR

## RESULTS

### Outcomes

The PSE programme helps children effectively master social-emotional competencies, facilitates open communication between children and adults (parents, teachers, school management, support staff), and strengthens interpersonal relationships.

"We have observed that inappropriate behaviour by boys with girls stops in 'Truth and Dare' kind of games, respect and empathy between boys and girls increases," says Pooja Taparia, Founder and CEO, Arpan.

*"After these sessions, girls understood that boys are also abused...now girls and boys understand each other...they are able to express better to each other."*

*"Children have become bold after these sessions. They readily quote the UN articles about children's rights....they are confident about their rights."*

*Teachers at a Mumbai school*

*"Children receive the messages 'It is not your fault. We are there for your safety' loud and clear. When we go back for step-up sessions, they remember us as they cherish the sessions that we had done with them. Even after three years, they show us the stickers that we gave them earlier."*

*"Arpan sessions are a platform for children to gain information...on puberty, internet, this is an open space. There was an instance when a child confided to us after two years about abuse, when we went back with the step-up programme."*

*Arpan's field team at Mumbai*

*"Children are free to discuss with Arpan...they may be scared of us. Teachers are happy too since for them, it is difficult to deal with this topic."*

*Principal, Mumbai school*

The Training programme for adults empowers teachers with confidence and knowledge to tackle a sensitive topic hitherto kept under wraps.

*"Child sexual abuse is an important topic; because we don't talk openly, many children are getting affected. Change in attitude will not be quick, at first people may oppose. But change will come. There is no hesitation in my mind."*

*Participant of Arpan's Personal Safety Education Train the Trainer programme.*

*"In our country we think children will be corrupted if we talk about this. But with people like Arpan this misconception should be sorted out. I gained new knowledge from the training – how to handle victims, how to handle abusers."*

*Participant of Arpan's Personal Safety Education Train the Trainer programme.*

*"I have seen the topic in newspapers...I felt it was something I could not talk freely about (hichkichlagta ta). But now, after this session, I feel confident, I feel 'let me think about this, talk about this.'"*

*Participant of Arpan's Personal Safety Education Train the Trainer programme.*

## STORIES OF CHANGE

### Story of Change | One

A Grade 10 child shared that he had lived in a hostel outside Mumbai when he was in Grade Five. In the hostel, some of his friends showed him pornographic videos and since then he had become habituated to viewing them, even after he returned home. The child shared that he would watch porn videos continuously for hours, though he knew that was wrong. The counsellor worked with the child to channelise his urges. With the counsellor's help, the child built resources and coping strategies and also rediscovered his hobbies (dancing, sketching, exercising) that had been neglected due to the addiction.

The counselor worked with the child to address his feelings of guilt and the worry about the social stigma. Arpan provided the child a space of acceptance that his addiction did not make him a bad person.

The counsellor was encouraging and appreciative of the child at every session. There was a session during which the child was asked to see the changes which have occurred in him due to his efforts to stop watching pornography. This boosted his confidence; the child was so empowered that he went on to share with his mother that he was previously addicted to pornography and had sought counseling support from Arpan to overcome it. After eight sessions, the case was closed due to the positive changes visible in the child. The child took up a challenge to keep himself motivated and came up with the hashtag '#SAYNO to Porn Videos for 150 days'.

## Story of Change | Two

A 15-year-old child shared that when he was in Grade Seven, he saw a worker in his father's shop watching a porn video. This made him very curious, and he went home and watched one. Since that day, he started masturbating; the child shared that he would masturbate three to four times in a week and sometimes even daily. The child found himself unable to focus on his studies, faced weight loss, low self-confidence, and low self-esteem. He also shared that he would become aroused on seeing girls, and also when he was sad and angry. He reported that he was getting a lot of wet dreams since he had not masturbated for a month.

The most important aspect in the therapy was building a rapport with the child and providing him a completely non-judgemental space. The counsellor helped the child in identifying his feelings about

what was happening and appreciated him for seeking help for the same. The second step was to focus on psycho-educating the child on puberty and the changes it entailed. Gradually the child and the therapist focused on busting misconceptions around masturbation.

During his journey of 11 therapy sessions, the child faced relapse and reached out to the counsellor. The counsellor focused on motivating the child and developing more coping strategies to overcome such obstacles. At the end of all the sessions, the child was no longer holding on to the guilt. He was able to accept the bodily changes as a part of his growing up years, and also follow a healthy practice of masturbation and physical activities. The child was able to concentrate on his studies and felt happy and safe. A positive shift in the child's self-confidence and self esteem was also noticed.

## Story of Change | Three

A 12-year-old boy shared that some boys from his class would tease him; they would throw paper at him and use abusive language. He tried seeking help from his parents but they held the child responsible for what was happening to him. The child felt demotivated and discouraged by this. In sports, he felt that people were unfair to him. He felt low but did not disclose this to any of the trusted adults. The child added that he was unable to concentrate on his studies and was getting thoughts of self-harm a few times since there was no one to help him.

The child was psycho-educated about bullying and what could be done to stop it. To make the child feel confident, the role play method was used. It helped the child assertively say 'no' in situations when he felt unsafe or uncomfortable. To address his thoughts of self-harm, a resource kit (things that children can do to make themselves feel better) was developed. This child's resource kit included activities such as talking to friends, playing with his younger sister, playing cricket, and engaging in expressive writing.

Due to his experience with his parents, he was fearful and anxious to disclose to them about his problems, but with the help of some counselling and some activities, the child overcame his fear. He identified his father as a trusted adult. During the father's psychoeducation, he shared that he was not aware of the extent the bullying impacted his son. The father was told about the importance of the right language, tone, choice of words, and support toward the child in such situations and how his behaviour could help in boosting the child's self-esteem and trust towards him.

After four to five intensive therapy sessions with the child and one session with the trusted adult (the father), there were significant changes seen. The child was able to say 'no' and stop the bullying. He reached out to the right people in his support system. The bullying and teasing stopped. The child disclosed that he could see changes in the father's way of supporting and communicating after the sessions.

## INFLUENCES THAT AROSE

Trainings conducted in the past or PSE work done in the past have benefitted Arpan's work. For example, the Chief Minister's Fellow for Governance (Maharashtra) invited Arpan to do a training programme at Chandrapur district, was impressed, and when he was transferred to Kolhapur, called Arpan again to conduct the training programme for Kolhapur teachers. Also, some schools in which Arpan conducts the PSE programme, nominate their teachers for the PSE TOT (training) programme, so that PSE can be institutionalised in the school.

## REPLICABILITY OF PROJECT

Arpan carries out training and capacity building initiatives with government school teachers, education department officials, and advocating with government bodies so that the programme can be mainstreamed across geographies.

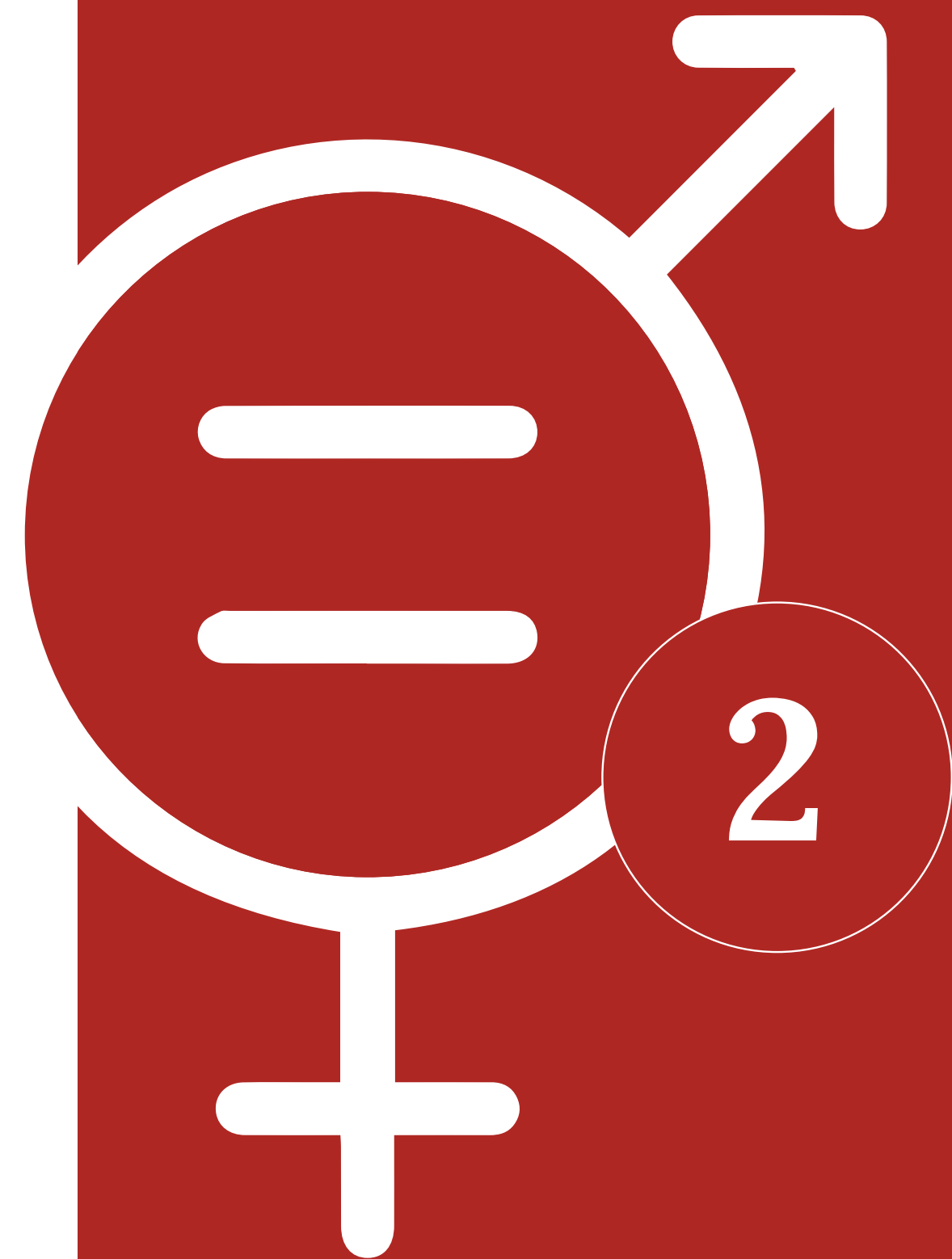
## NEW BEST PRACTICES THAT EMERGED

"Teachers are already well versed in learning content and presenting it to children in an interesting, engrossing way. For example, during a training programme in another district, a teacher made cartoons in posters for her presentation," shared a member of Arpan's field team. Participants of Arpan's training programmes could be motivated by displaying original work/representation of Arpan's PSE content by earlier trainees.

One of the officials from the Education Department was able to ensure that the negativity of some participants did not impact the overall delivery of the programme. The Chief Educational Officer of the district seemed to command authority. 'Champions' of the initiative could help drive the programme by their physical presence from time to time.

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Theory of Change  
Logic Model/Results Chains Diagram  
Organisational Structure  
Programme Content and Lesson Details  
Workflow  
Processes and Protocols



# the gender lab

TO BUILD A GENERATION  
OF BOYS & MEN WHO ARE  
SELF-AWARE, EMPATHETIC &  
SENSITIVE TO GENDER ISSUES





# ORGANISATION PROFILE

SINCE 2017

Headquartered at Mumbai, The Gender Lab runs a programme with adolescent boys in schools.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

Boys undertake projects to assimilate the learning from the workshops

Includes games, writing, sketching – various forms of expression.

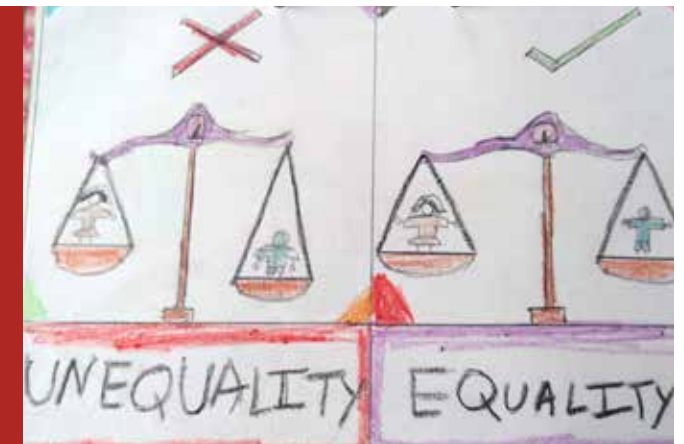
Workshops conducted exclusively for fathers of participants.



## TESTIMONIAL

*"I learnt that everybody has their own right. A boy can wear girls' clothes if he wants to, boys can cry, they can play with dolls etc.."*

Participant



## KEY NUMBERS

No. of boys covered under programme in Mumbai, Delhi and Jind in 2019-20  
**2491**

## GEOGRAPHY

MEN & BOYS PROGRAMME

Mumbai, New Delhi/NCR, Jind (Haryana) (Pilot programme)

## CONTACT DETAILS

Website - [www.thegenderlab.org](http://www.thegenderlab.org).

Facebook- [/thegenderlab](https://www.facebook.com/thegenderlab)

Twitter - [@thegenderlab](https://twitter.com/thegenderlab)

Instagram- [@thegenderlab](https://www.instagram.com/thegenderlab)

CONTACT PERSON

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# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

The Gender Lab had been conducting a leadership skill building programme based on a service-learning model for adolescent girls. After running the programme for seven years, it was observed that challenging gender inequality and stereotypes would be incomplete if boys and men are excluded from the conversation. The Gender Lab Boys' Programme was initiated in the year 2017 to explore and address the impact of patriarchy on boys and men. If this issue is tackled at the root, there will be a positive impact not only on adolescent boys but also on the girls and women around them. The project objectives are

- To create a safe space for the participants to share, learn and reflect.
- To develop behavioural changes towards enabling critical thinking in the participants.
- To have a conversation about the privileges associated with being a man, through critical thinking.

- To make them aware of the role they themselves and the people around them play in propagating gender-based violence and to encourage them to take action against the same through community-based projects.
- To create a gender-sensitive environment in schools by engaging different stakeholders – parents (with special focus on engaging fathers in the process), teachers and principals.
- To build leadership skills in the participants so that they become agents of change for building a gender-equal world.

In 2019-20, the programme aimed to reach out to 2500 boys (13-14 year-old school going boys) across two cities, Mumbai and Delhi, and one block in Jind District (pilot programme).

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Parents of young boys participating in the programme.

## CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

The Gender Lab consciously reaches out to schools that have children from lower socio-economic background, as boys in these schools otherwise do not have access to such resources, especially in the area of gender based discrimination. However, they also work with a few schools from middle to high income backgrounds since gender bias and the need for boys to have a safe space exists in all communities.

It has been observed that boys in Grade Eight (13 – 14 years of age) are at the right age for intervention.

# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

- Because boys feel restricted by the choices currently available to them, they are willing to give up the power that patriarchy gives them for the freedom to make choices that do not conform to traditional notions of masculinity.
- Through doing projects boys internalise (better understand and practise) what they have learnt.
- Boys complete projects due to the following factors: a) their own motivation, b) support/pressure from peers, parents and schools, and c) because they are able to personally connect with the workshop content.

## PROJECT APPROACH

The programme uses a service-learning model, a crucial part of which is the community project. The participants, individually or in groups, identify a social issue that they face or observe in their immediate surroundings. The participants can then choose to do a research project or an action project. Interaction with people in the community or at school, and the use of a gender lens are the two criteria in identifying projects.



## TESTIMONIAL

*"I learnt that everybody has their own right. A boy can wear girls' clothes if he wants to, boys can cry, they can play with dolls etc.,"*

*-Participant*

PARTICIPANTS FROM JIND SCHOOL EXPLAINING THE IMPACT OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT TO TEACHERS.

## Action Project

Participants talk to people in their community in an attempt to create awareness and take a step towards solving the issue that they have identified. The group is required to produce some sort of proof for the action taken. Some of the modes of actions taken up by students include the performance of a skit, creative workshops or activities.

## Research Project

A research project is one in which a group tries to understand more about a particular issue or the perception of society towards an issue. This is done by them through various research methods that involve community interaction. After gathering the data, the group analyses it to reach a conclusion.



## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Demographics & Cultural highlights

Mumbai and Delhi school children that The Gender Lab works with are largely from 'low income' segment. Cultural aspects vary depending on language, socio-economic background and other identities. Hindi, Marathi and Urdu are some of the languages spoken in the homes of the Mumbai participants, while it is largely Hindi for Delhi participants and Haryanvi for Jind participants. In the case of Jind, Haryana, there is a marked difference in the contexts of students when compared to those in Delhi and Mumbai, as the blocks in Jind district where the programme is run is primarily agrarian and also rural. Denial of gender inequality and normalisation of gender stereotypes exist in daily practices.

## MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

The impact of the programme is evaluated in the following ways:

- 1. Project** - stories, types of projects, rate of completion, impact on participants and the community around them based on their own sharing.
- 2. Feedback forms** that explore how participants felt through the journey, and the key takeaways and shifts in their mindsets.
- 3. Response to activities in workshops** and follow ups that indicate thoughts, behaviours and actions of participants on various issues related to masculinity and gender.
- 4. Baseline and Endline evaluation** includes surveys, focus group discussions and interviews with participants from across schools.

\*\*The process of evaluation is constantly evolving because the nature of what is being evaluated is not always tangible. Hence The Gender Lab uses multiple types of tools and a feminist lens as part of the process. The Gender Lab acknowledges that growth and learning occur based on the background, access and exposure of participants, and are also defined by these aspects. The Gender Lab is working on a process that factors in these aspects, and is open to learning and developing this process as the organisation gains more experience.

### In 2019-20

#### Baseline (Pre M&E)

This was carried out in Mumbai, with 60 participants from five schools, in batches of eight to ten. The process involved a mix of group conversations, filling out of individual questionnaires and an activity-based focused group discussion,

#### Endline (Post M&E)

It was intended to follow the same format as the baseline, however, due to lockdown and restrictions because of the global pandemic, the endline was conducted through individual and group phone calls. 49 participants, 30 from Mumbai and 19 from Delhi were engaged for this process. Interviews were taken with 42 participants and seven were asked to fill out a questionnaire.

## RESEARCH PLAN

Research questions identified

1. What, if any, are the choices that boys are making in their everyday lives and career aspirations that do not conform to traditional notions of masculinity? Why are they making these choices? Do they need support in making these choices, and do they receive it? If so, from whom? If not, why not?

2. To what extent does doing projects enable boys to better understand and practise what they have learnt?
3. Are boys able to identify gender discriminatory messages in the media?

Research began in November 2019 on the identified research questions (2) and (3). Given the situation arising out of the global pandemic, it is uncertain when the first research question will be explored in 2020-21.

## TRAINING

The Gender Lab believes in a blended form of training and creation of content. Based on their learnings from the last two years, they engaged in the following activities to build content and train the team.

### JUNE – JULY 2019

The team went through a process of co-creation of the content based on the experience of the last two years. This included activities to be conducted, videos, and images to be used, the chronology of the curriculum and training needs of facilitators.

Following this, the training for the team continued on the field as they tested the new design with the students. Later, in mid-July, a reflection process took place to better the aspects of the programme that were not working and to build the skills needed additionally for the facilitators. The second part of the training revolved around holding space and challenges on the field.

The team then went through a rigorous training process to be able to deliver the programme. Facilitators from Nirantar Trust, along with Tejal Rajyagor (a freelance facilitator), Chintan Modi (a writer, researcher and educator), and Nidhi Goyal (Founder, Rising Flame and a disability rights and gender justice activist) conducted sessions.

A member of the team from The Gender Lab also attended a workshop on 'Understanding the approach of raising Gender Equitable Boys' organised by Equal Community Foundation. The workshop showcased a set of activities that could be used to engage boys in a structured, gender-transformative programme.

### NOVEMBER 2019

Mid-year training was conducted in November to reflect upon the challenges in facilitation and also prepare for the project phase of the programme.

Learning: Following a reflective and co-created process for training and content helps to ensure ownership among the team, and results in more informed and grounded content, and a wide range of perspectives influencing/enriching the work.



PROJECT PRESENTATION BY BOYS AT A SCHOOL IN DHAARVI, MUMBAI

## IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

RISKS	MITIGATION PLANS
Dependency on schools in known geographies.	Go to other geographies or expand the pool of schools in existing geographies.
Donor dependency.	De-risk by diversifying donors, raising funds through small donors and also by going to schools where parents or school management pays for the programme.
Parents are not supportive of non-academic interventions.	Organise parents' meetings to involve them in the journey that their children will undertake with The Gender Lab.

## IV. CLOSING WORKSHOP

- Groups come together to share their reflection in a closing workshop followed by presentations of their projects, their impact and personal learning by each group. The learning and achievements of boys are felicitated with certificates by a leader or a role model.



PARENTS MEETING

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

### Overview

#### I. OPENING WORKSHOP

Five-hour long, interactive and interdisciplinary, using audio-visual media, fun activities and discussions on:

- Gender
- Sex vs. Gender
- Gender Identity, Expression Fluidity, Transgender
- Masculinity, Toxic Masculinity
- Gender & Labour
- Gender & Violence

#### II. FIRST TWO FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOPS

Discussions and activities on

- Gender & Body, Sexuality
- Gender & Tradition, Modernity
- Gender & Nation

#### III. LAST THREE FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOPS

- Discussions and mentoring for projects; facilitators help the students in research, planning and documenting their projects.  
(Students take up projects in their communities and/or school towards addressing gender-based discrimination and violence. The participants choose to either do a research or action project as individuals or in groups.)

### Interaction with Role Models

One of the key aspects of the closing and felicitation ceremony is the role model interaction. The role models are men who have in some way challenged the ways of rigid notions of "being a man". The idea is to invite people who the boys can look up to. The leaders share their personal journeys with the boys and their experiences on gender, masculinity and change.

### Stakeholder Engagement

#### PARENTS' WORKSHOPS

The aim is to engage parents and make them aware of the programme objectives and their role towards supporting their boys in promoting gender equality and countering violence against women.

Facilitators introduce parents to the model their sons will be participating in, in order:

- to create a comfortable space for parents to share about their sons
- to ensure parents are aware of the programme structure and context so that they are also involved in the process of empowering their sons
- to gain support from parents and to advise them on how they can encourage and enable their sons to participate to the fullest
- to point out harmful mindset, behaviours/actions of parents and family that shape their sons' personality



## FATHERS' WORKSHOPS

It was observed that, most often, mothers outnumbered fathers in the parents' meetings. While this could be due to various reasons including the lack of time and capacity for fathers to attend the meetings, it could also be owed to the stereotype that it is the responsibility of the mother to take care of the child. The Gender Lab organises separate Fathers' Workshops to engage fathers or male guardians around their understanding of masculinity, how and what their actions speak about 'being a man', and what their sons need from them as role models. It is hoped that the father is able to build a sense of friendship with his son, enabling the latter to be more open and expressive with him.

## TEACHERS' WORKSHOPS

Since teachers are also a big influence on boys, The Gender Lab created a certificate programme with the following objectives:

- To make teachers aware of the key role that they play in shaping the mindsets and behaviours of boys, along with other sources of influence which are family, school, media and the society.
- To inculcate a positive student-teacher relationship, through understanding and challenging notions of power.
- To increase awareness on the ways in which language, curriculum and classroom propagate discrimination.
- To change classroom culture and encourage one that actively promotes gender equality.



FATHERS MEET

## Alumni Programme

In August 2019, The Gender Lab invited participants, teachers and parents of the previous years' boys' programmes for an alumni gathering. The aim of the workshops was to draw in suggestions about how students can be engaged further and what steps adults can take in their upbringing in order to break gender stereotypes.

In March 2020, 'How We Raise Our Boys' - an annual gathering of some of the participants, their parents, teachers and other stakeholders took place. The objective was to discuss the

various relationships and systems where gender inequality and gender based violence are seen, to understand perspectives from different lenses, define solutions that individuals can begin to act upon in daily life and commit to the movement of creating a world that is better, more loving and accepting of the diversities that it has. The event had three parts: screening of a documentary, break out circles and reflections on the documentary, sharing of journeys by the participants of the Gender Lab's Boys' Programme.

## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

### Curriculum

- Based on the learning from the last two years of delivery of the programme, The Gender Lab Boys' Programme was redesigned based on a new curriculum framework. Fiona Vaz, with a background in education and gender, has helped The Gender Lab redesign the curriculum for the programme, based on a research study called 'Textbook Regimes' conducted by Nirantar Trust, a Delhi based non-profit. The programme introduces to the boys, feminist struggles in five areas: Nation, Body, Labour, Tradition and Modernity and Violence.
- It was ensured that there is no element of competition in the programme curriculum and structure. The format was modified to exclude the award for the best project in each school. Each participant was awarded either a participation certificate or a completion certificate, depending on their project work.

### Contextualising

- While Hindi gains currency in all schools in Delhi and Jind, the programme is offered in three different languages in Mumbai (Hindi, English, Marathi). Irrespective of the language of education in the school, the programme is conducted in the language preferred by the participants. This has resulted in better understanding among students in their own lived context and in ensuring strong bonds with facilitators.
- For the pilot in Jind, Haryana, a baseline research was conducted to understand the lived reality of adolescent boys there. The programme was adapted to meet that context. Some sections, that were more relevant for that audience, were emphasised, and some removed. Customisation of programme, based on location and socio-economic background, as the one done for the Jind pilot, yields good response and results.

*"Through the Chief Minister Good Governance Associate (CMCGA), The Gender Lab was able to make inroads in Jind's schools for the girls' programme, which then led to the start of the boys' programme. Since the CMGGAs have influence, it will be a good approach to go through them in various districts,"*

*says Vijeta, City Lead – Jind*



TEACHERS' WORKSHOP

## Activities

- **Expression of participants through drawing**  
Taking into account that not everyone can express themselves well via a written medium and in an attempt to encourage creativity among the boys, facilitators ask the participants during the closing workshop to exhibit their learnings and reflections via drawing.
- **Projects**
  - i. The learning from discussions/workshops is internalised/imbibed when boys undertake projects in their communities. The experience ensures long term learning.
  - ii. Participants were offered the choice of projects that were research or action based, these could be done individually or in a group. This ensured a wide range in types of engagement with the project.
- **Workbooks** were introduced to aid participants while they plan, prepare and complete their projects. One workbook per project was provided to document:
  - why the particular group/individual chose the topic,
  - how the topic connected to gender,
  - where the group gathered the information from and how they gathered it,
  - steps taken by the group/individual towards the completion of the project,
  - learnings and reflections post the project,
  - proof of having completed the project and feedback from people interacted with as part of the project.

*"At first the boys thought that they cannot do the projects. Then they did very well. They made videos too! They remembered all deadlines, important dates, which they don't do even with school work!"*

*Usha Sharma, Class Eight Teacher, unaided private school in New Delhi*

*"We encourage the boys to delve deep into a topic while choosing a project. For example, instead of 'useful resources in case of an emergency such as rape' (helplines, police station numbers etc.), we encourage the boys to delve deep into understanding the root cause of sexual violence and how to address it."*

*shares Aniket, Program Co-ordinator.*

*We don't hit them, or talk down. We don't instruct or teach. The way in which we facilitate wins over the boys."*

*Utpal, Programme co-ordinator.*

## Facilitation

- Training process of facilitators involved listening, mentoring, use of live examples, field experience - these practices ensured that the training delivered was as close to the actual work involved as possible.
- Discussions are always conducted in circles, this emphasises the non-hierarchical format that is followed. The role of the facilitator is to create a co-learning space where each participant counts as the source of learning for everyone.
- The approach is collaborative; in the opening workshop, ground rules are set mutually between facilitator and participants.
- Student to facilitator ratio is consciously brought down so as to maintain the sanctity of a safe space. While each facilitator works with at least 500 participants over the year, a particular batch size is not more than 30 in a school (so in a school with 90 boys, there would be upto three facilitators and three batches).



PARTICIPANTS FROM A NOIDA SCHOOL RAISING AWARENESS ON GENDER STEREOTYPES IN A PARK NEAR THEIR SCHOOL

## CHALLENGES

### Stakeholders

#### SCHOOL

- Obtaining permission from schools, ensuring that a slot in the calendar is set aside and not given up for some other exigency – these aspects are challenging in Mumbai and Delhi.
- Schools dropping out during the course of the programme due to changing priorities, not being able to provide time or disagreement with the programme content.
- Teachers and parents not attending the meetings/workshops due to various reasons.

*"These children are brilliant despite their background and the limited facilities that this school offers. What various NGOs offer will benefit give the children an enriched experience, but how many can I accommodate within the school timetable?"*

*Rajesh Malhotra, Principal of an unaided private school.*

## COMMUNITY

- While some experts (doctors, lawyers) are supportive of the boys who do projects, there are others who are dismissive or discouraging.
- There are instances when the projects are not met with positive responses from community members. Topics such as sexual harassment or women's safety tend to receive some backlash.

## FACILITATORS/ TRAINERS

- Finding men who are willing to work with boys is a challenging task, as it requires commitment to self-work.

## GOVERNMENT

- In the rural district of Jind, Haryana, constant changing of key personnel in administrative staff results in delays in permissions sometimes.

## FACILITATION

- When the class size increases to more than 35, it becomes challenging for the facilitator to hold space in a way that ensures a smooth workshop.
- Getting the participants (boys) to do projects require rigours of implementing certain processes, this has been a learning curve. 'One size fits all' does not work in training the facilitators; while some components can be common for all, others have to be customised.

SESSION AT SCHOOL IN JIND, HARYANA



## UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

At Jind, the facilitators, most of them women, faced different degrees of sexual harassment from the boys participating in the programme. Though this was promptly brought to the attention of the school principal, there was no action taken to ensure that such an issue did not recur. The teachers of the school were also not forthcoming about any such problems that they may have faced among the boys. It was tough to complete the accelerated programme. (Necessary support was extended by The Gender Lab to the female facilitators to ensure their well-being.)

In Delhi, due to political unrest, schools were closed in December and January and some sessions of the Boys' Programme had to be cancelled or rescheduled. The high, air pollution levels in the months of January and February also led to school closure which had an impact on the delivery of some sessions.

There were restrictions announced on non-academic activities at government schools in Mumbai in the months of February and March; this impacted the schedule of ongoing sessions at schools.

The global pandemic caused schools to close in early March. However, the programme had been completed in most of the schools by then.

## RESULTS

Component	Mumbai	Delhi	Jind	2019-20
Number of schools where programme was successfully completed	45	10	1	56
Outreach number	1884	454	153	2491
Number of boys that completed the programme	1795	279	153	2227
Number of fathers' workshops	9	3	-	12
Number of fathers who attended the workshop	87	15	-	102
Number of teachers who attended teachers' training	14	15	-	29
Number of parents' meetings conducted	19	5	-	24
Number of parents that attended parents' meetings	345	29	-	374
No of groups	152	23	15	190
No of citizens reached out in projects	7465	212	218	7895
Projects completed	52%	55%	94%	67%



Research Mode

The table below shows the kind of research carried out by the groups that did an action project. A high number of groups have carried out research online or through discussion with the facilitator in Mumbai because of the time constraint. The following table shows the primary form of research conducted by a group. Many groups have gathered information from multiple sources as well.

	% in Mumbai	% in Delhi
Talking to a facilitator	39.69%	19.05%
Community survey with children/adults	20.61%	33.33%
Reading online	19.85%	28.57%
Survey in school with students/faculty	9.92%	19.05%
Discussion with expert on their topic	4.58%	0.00%
Discussion and observation by the group	4.58%	0.00%
Newspaper/book	0.76%	0.00%

Project Category

	Mumbai	Delhi
Gender Based Discrimination	41.94%	34.78%
Masculinity	14.84%	13.04%
Violence	9.68%	8.70%
Gender and Intersections	9.75%	4.35%
Bullying	7.74%	8.70%
Sexual Abuse	5.16%	4.35%
Gender and Media	2.58%	0.00%
Women Emancipation	2.58%	0.00%
Gender Based Violence	1.94%	26.09%
Sex vs Gender	1.94%	0.00%
Child Sexual Abuse	1.29%	0.00%
Sexuality	0.65%	0.00%



Expression Through Drawing

The Gender Lab analysed 141 drawings from Mumbai and 64 from Delhi, a section of the participants from each city. The biggest gain for participants in Mumbai was an increase in awareness about a myriad of issues such as gender expressions, gender fluidity, gender being a personal choice, and various types of sexual orientation. Drawings from Delhi depict participants having drawn their own behaviours that have improved, specifically related to gender. These include behaviours such as respecting women more, becoming friendlier with girls, and showing an understanding of concepts such as helping out more in the household, or domestic violence and have committed to implement change in their own life around these things. Their drawings depict that either they are more likely now to participate more in housework or that their traditional gender based notions of work are breaking down. Many illustrated choice of work as being a personal choice of the individuals being involved, and there being nothing wrong with men choosing to do housework, or women working outside the home.

Impact Mapped Through Feedback Forms

At the closing workshop, each participant is provided with a sheet of paper with three questions:

- Q1.** What did you learn during the programme and while doing the project?
- Q2.** What is the one thing that has changed in you? How do you think you have grown as a person?
- Q3.** What will be the next step to stop gender-based violence, in your own life as well as for those around you?

The following data represents the number of participants that self-reported a learning/shift they experienced as part of the feedback form provided to them.

What did you learn during the program and while doing the project (categorised as themes) ?	Total	Mumbai	Delhi
1 - Equality between men & women	19.63%	16.84%	24.32%
2 - Increase in knowledge/Terms mentioned	16.61%	17.91%	14.41%
3 - Violence	15.94%	13.10%	20.72%
4 - Equality for transgenders	10.57%	13.10%	6.31%
5 - Values ingrained/Self	10.40%	8.02%	14.41%
6 - Toxic masculinity/masculinity	7.21%	6.68%	8.11%

What is that one thing that has changed in you? How do you think you’ve grown as a person?	Total	Mumbai	Delhi
1 - BC wrt Reduction of violence	22.69%	17.79%	32.05%
2 - AC/BC towards transgenders or sexuality	18.94%	23.49%	10.26%
3 - Ingrained values	13.44%	12.08%	16.03%
4 - Critical thinking	7.93%	8.72%	6.41%

What will be your next step to stop gender-based violence, in your own life as well as for those around you?	Total	Mumbai	Delhi
1- Talk to people about GBV, Discrimination, Issues etc	39.58%	39.44%	39.84%
2 - Take action against GBV, Discrimination, Issues etc	25.07%	31.87%	11.72%
3 - Change their own behaviour	19.26%	11.95%	33.59%
4 - Prevent GBV	13.19%	13.94%	11.72%
5 - Will address this issue with authorities	2.11%	1.59%	3.13%
6 - Open NGOs for the transgender community	0.79%	1.20%	0.00%

Before The Gender Lab  
Perspectives of Participants

After The Gender Lab  
Perspectives of Participants

- “Through this programme, I have understood that boys and girls both can change their gender’
- “If a woman can wear pant-shirt, why can’t a man wear women’s clothes? Each one should wear what he/she wants, I want to say, no one should be teased.”
- “I realise the plight of the lgbtq+ community and am more open minded. I come to accept the lgbtq community and have understood that they deserve an equal place in society.”
- “I have seen in society that boys are told not to cry. I would say let them cry, let them express their sorrow. Never teach anyone that men cannot experience pain, that a man saves everyone.”
- “ Women should also have freedom. Only women should not have to do housework. It is wrong to say that women should not step out of the house. It does happen in our village but that should not be the case.”

Before The Gender Lab  
Perspectives of Participants

“When anyone used to ask me anything, I used to get scared when talking to them. I used to hide when it came to talking to people.”

“I wanted to beat people smaller than me.”

“I discriminated between me and my sister.”

“Main pehle ladkiyon ko ghalath samjtha tha. Voh chotey chotey kapdey pehenthe the aur ladkon ko apni tharaf aakarshith karthey they.” (Earlier, I had a wrong impression about girls. That they wear short clothes and attract boys to themselves.)

After The Gender Lab  
Perspectives of Participants

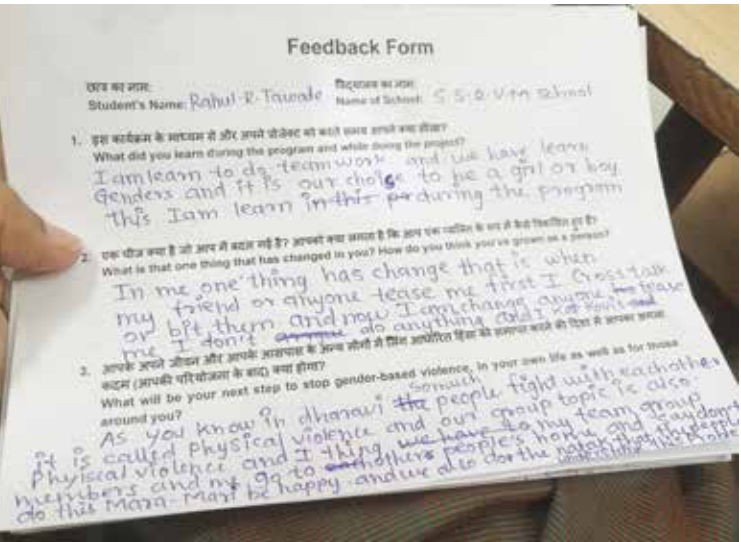
“I gained confidence, and I realised that all this is good work and it also helps the country. Now I don’t hide!.”

“I want to help people who are suffering.”

“I have changed. I have become a good person.”

“Main ghalaththa. Ladkiyan ko bhee apne manpasand kapde aur fashion karne ka hak hai.” (I was mistaken. Girls have the right to wear what they please or to follow fashion.)

FEEDBACK FROM THE BOYS  
THAT ILLUSTRATE THEIR  
JOURNEY



REPLICABILITY  
OF PROJECT

There should be an evaluation of the possibility of recovering the cost of the programme from schools that can afford to pay. Such a model could cross subsidise schools with students from weak economic backgrounds. This would enable the programme to be replicated wider.

The Gender Lab is willing to work with other organisations wishing to replicate the programme, apart from scaling its own programme.

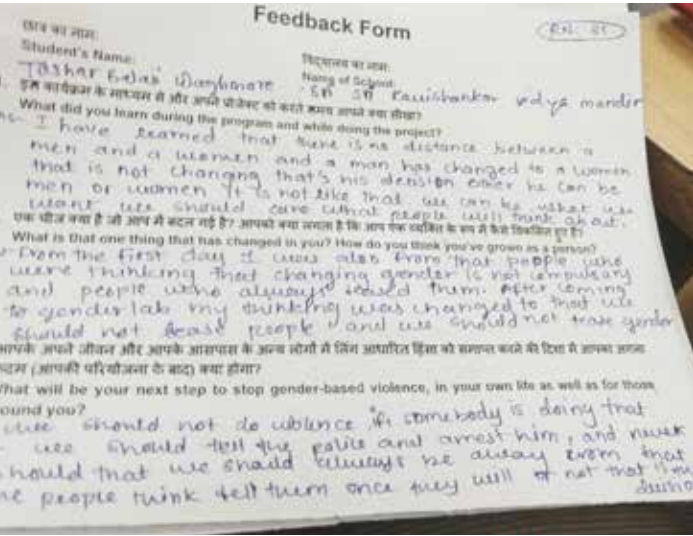
LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

- Curriculum framework
- Workbook format
- Detailed analysis of measurement and evaluation inputs

FEEDBACK FROM THE BOYS  
THAT ILLUSTRATE THEIR  
JOURNEY

“The boys develop empathy and learn the vocabulary to place things that they have felt or experienced.”

Utpal, TGLBP Coordinator





**ECF** | Equal  
Community  
Foundation

RAISE EVERY BOY  
IN INDIA TO BE  
GENDER EQUITABLE





## ORGANISATION PROFILE

### SINCE 2010

Equal Community Foundation's (ECF) core programme Action for Equality (AfE) is a gender transformative programme that engages boys in the age group of 13 to 17 years.

### UNIQUE ASPECTS

Gender transformative programming

Robust monitoring and evaluation

Participatory process - emphasis on consultations with community and team in programme development

Curriculum is based on human right principles

### KEY NUMBERS

Action for Equality programme reached **552 boys** in 2019-20.

### GEOGRAPHY

20 low-income communities in Pune

### TESTIMONIAL

*"We understood how to behave outside home, the right language to use. We met new people, gained knowledge.*

*There were games on leadership skills and qualities. When we were going to the sessions we did not realise the benefits, later we did!"*

*Anand, 21 years, Alumnus – AfE Programme*



### CONTACT DETAILS

Website - [www.ecf.org.in](http://www.ecf.org.in)

Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/ECFIndia/>

Twitter - [https://twitter.com/Arpan\\_CSA](https://twitter.com/Arpan_CSA)

Instagram- [https://www.instagram.com/arpan\\_csa/](https://www.instagram.com/arpan_csa/)

#### CONTACT PERSON

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# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

## Project Objective & Key Milestones

Action for Equality programme (AfE) aims to provide opportunities to adolescent boys, through training and discussions, to identify and challenge gender norms and take gender equitable actions to prevent gender-based violence and discrimination. Further, participants are encouraged to reflect critically on existing gender norms, including concepts of masculinity, in order to change their attitudes and behaviour. Adolescent boys additionally receive

support to initiate and lead actions together with community members on relevant gender issues and to mobilise community members to address these issues.

The number of boys to graduate from Foundation, Action and Leadership programmes in 2019-20 was decided as 400, 280 and 190 respectively.

# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS

BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

The Action for Equality (AfE) Theory of Change summarises the causal logic of the programme design and describes the role of each component in achieving the overall results.

In summary, the programme’s causal logic is as follows:

- Adolescent boys will develop the skills and knowledge to challenge discriminatory social norms related to gender based violence.
- Adolescent boys will work together to raise awareness of discriminatory social norms and gender based violence.
- Adolescent boys will help to build support for change in the community by engaging and mobilising others through communications and campaigning.
- This will lead to individual members of the community to challenge discriminatory social norms related to gender based violence.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Adolescent boys and their parents

## INFLUENCERS

- » Teachers
- » Self-help Groups (SHGs)
- » Anganwadi teachers
- » Corporators
- » Community leaders
- » Community-based organisations

## CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

Adolescent boys in the age group 13 to 17 years in low-income communities in Pune.



*'Big Meet and Greet' is an event held after participants graduate from the final stage of the AfE programme – Leadership programme. The purpose of 'Big Meet and Greet' is to create an opportunity for networking among participants from all communities, and to impart a feeling that they are part of a movement of men and women for gender equality.*

AfE PARTICIPANTS FROM VARIOUS COMMUNITIES NETWORK AT BIG MEET AND GREET

# PROJECT APPROACH

The programme aims at raising awareness and developing understanding among adolescent boys that alternative equitable gender norms are possible and to support them in mobilising their communities to change inequitable gender norms and prevent violence and discrimination against women and girls. The AfE programme is conducted amongst adolescent boys in low-income communities through weekly sessions with an AfE mentor.

The programme is divided in three parts - Foundation Programme, Action Programme and Leadership Programme.

## Action for Equality (AfE) 45-WEEK PROGRAMME

	Foundation Programme (FP)	Action Programme (AP)	Leadership Programme (LP)
Stakeholders	Individual	Peer and family	Community
Focus Areas	Knowledge, attitude and behaviour	Attitudes, skills	Skills
Expected Outputs	Boys change their behaviour	Boys engage others and develop skills to take collective actions	Boys mobilise community members in collective actions

Changes in Programmatic Components

JANUARY 2020 ONWARDS

ECF felt the need to re-examine certain programmatic components and revise them in order to improve outcomes. Key findings of various evaluation reports over the last couple of years showed that:

- Participants were not able to absorb all the information that was being provided through the sustained, structured 45-week interaction.
- Some components were beyond the grasp of 14-15-year-old boys. They struggled to relate to that material.
- Due to attrition at various stages of the programme, a smaller group graduated at the end of the third level, and they did not feel supported or confident enough to take collective actions at the community level.

Keeping these aspects in mind the following key changes were done:

- The Theory of Change was amended.
- The 45-week programme was restructured into a 30-week programme open to all the participants in the targeted age group, coupled with a three-day residential Leadership Camp for selected graduates.
- Newer methods of engagement with the alumni were devised.
- Change process in the skill development tool in the M&E framework was started.

Expected Outcomes  
Qualitative & Quantitative

- Improvement in gender equitable knowledge, attitudes and behaviours among adolescent boys aged 13-17 years.
- Adolescent boys influence change in their households.
- Increased awareness among community members on issues on gender inequitable norms.
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness of the AfE programme.
  - » Number of enrolments  
530 (FP); 180 (AP); 131 (LP)
  - » Number of graduates  
396 (FP); 148 (AP); 104 (LP)
  - » Graduation rate (%)  
74.71% (FP); 82.22% (AP); 79.38% (LP)
  - » Transition rate from Foundation to Action Programme (%)  
93%

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Demographics & Cultural Highlights

RELIGION

The population in these communities is predominantly Hindu, with significant Buddhist and Muslim minorities.

OCCUPATION OF PARENTS

Daily wage earners (labourers, sweepers, waste collectors, domestic helpers)

POPULATION

3500 residents to approximately 40,000 residents in each community, with an average population of about 12,500 residents per community.

INCOME

The approximate average income is Rs. 6,800 per month.

LANGUAGE SPOKEN

Hindi, Marathi



FP SESSION

Revised Action for Equality (AfE) Programme

30-WEEK PROGRAMME FOLLOWED BY A 3-DAY LEADERSHIP CAMP

	AfE 1	AfE 2	Leadership Camps
Stakeholders	Individual	Peer and family	Community
Focus Areas	Knowledge, attitude and behaviour	Attitudes, skills	Skills
Expected Outputs	Participants develop knowledge, skills, attitudinal and behaviour change through group education sessions.	Participants collaborate with girls, and engage peers and family members to address gender-based issues.	Alumni mobilise and take action in the community and challenge gender norms.

In some of the communities that ECF works in, boys from one religion do not mingle with those from other religions. There was a challenge in getting them together in a group; the participants suggested forming different groups for each religion. However, after taking part in some games and because of persuasion by facilitators, the boys could talk to and understand each other. Since the two groups of boys also spoke different languages at home, ECF facilitators conversed in Hindi and Marathi to ensure that all boys felt comfortable.

Both the mother and father in most households go out to work. Mothers generally work as domestic helpers and hence are back home by afternoon. Fathers, however, return home by night. Hence, meetings with mothers are easier to organise, while meetings with fathers have been difficult.

Attendance in the programme drops during major festivals. For example, during festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi, boys are involved in community celebrations over 11 days. ECF factors this while drafting the annual calendar, and schedules action events on such days, so that boys are able to perform street plays to spread awareness on gender and human rights, while being involved in the festival celebrations.



BOYS SHARE MESSAGES OF GENDER EQUITY IN THE COMMUNITY

## MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

ECF has a robust measuring and evaluation system in place, with quantitative and qualitative aspects. Gender Attitude Survey is taken by the participants at the end of Foundation, Action and Leadership phases, to measure their support towards gender equitable norms. Action Log is a record maintained by participants to keep track of actions taken by them such as sharing responsibilities, engaging in discussion, sharing information etc. Focus Group Discussions are done with parents and family members of the participants in different communities. These discussions have been beneficial in understanding the shift in the behaviour of the participants with the family, peers and community. Skills Assessment by participants maps improvement in communication, critical thinking, initiation, teamwork skills. There are challenges in the field faced by mentors during skills assessment, hence this was discontinued in the current grant cycle. ECF piloted Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS), a tool to measure skills developed by 'Dream A Dream' and will use this tool going forward.

## RESEARCH PLAN

2019-20 was the second year of a longitudinal study undertaken by ECF. The aim of the longitudinal study is to understand the sustainability of the Action for Equality (AfE) programme outcomes (attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and skills) among participants who graduated from the programme in August 2018. The study evaluates the outcomes of 84 participants who successfully completed the programme and on whom ECF has data on key outcomes before intervention, after the intervention, and a year after intervention, using tools such as the Gender Attitude Survey.

The study aims to answer two questions:

**Part I:** Does AfE, a gender-transformative intervention, lead to shifts in attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviour in adolescent boys?

**Part II:** Are these shifts in attitudes sustained a year after the intervention has ended?

**In Part I, overall findings** indicated that the AfE intervention is successful in bringing about positive shifts in gender attitude, knowledge, skills and behaviour of the participants. The results show:

- A positive shift in overall gender equitable attitudes.
- Gender equitable attitudes are more positive towards girls' right to education, women's employment outside the home, women's right to choose their own attire, and less progressive towards attitudes related to family maintenance and/or protection.
- Participants have increased knowledge on gender and human rights issues, to help them raise awareness on gender based violence and discrimination in their communities, as well as improved skills to clearly and confidently communicate with people, analyse situations related to gender based violence and discrimination (GBVD) and suggest solutions to solve problems on GBVD.



PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS SHARE OBSERVATIONS

- Overall improvement in the behaviour of the participants. Mothers report positive changes in their sons' behaviour and communication styles. Results also show that graduates have better relationships with their sisters, do more household chores and pay more attention to their studies.

**In Part II,** overall findings showed that shifts in attitudes are sustained one year after the AfE intervention. The results indicate that, similar to the results at the end of the AfE intervention, gender equitable attitudes are more positive towards girls' right to education, women's right to work and women's right to choose their own attire. Moreover, we see that gender equitable attitudes very gradually change towards attitudes related to traditional gender relations/roles of husband/brothers and wives/sisters (for example, tolerating violence to keep the family intact, protectionism and the idea of being a man).



## TRAINING

In order to achieve the stated, desired outcome of increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the AfE programme, ECF continuously provides training programmes for its staff:

ACTIVITIES	Q1 + Q2 APRIL-SEPT	Q3 + Q4 OCT - MARCH	TOTAL
ITT - Intensive Team Training	8 days	1 day	9 days
RMT - Regular mentor training	48 days	48 days	96 days
Staff Away Day - annual meeting	3 days / year	-	3 days

PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS  
SHARE OBSERVATIONS



## IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

RISKS	MITIGATION PLANS
Backlash from the community can arise when gender norms are challenged.	ECF mitigates this risk by maintaining good relations with key stakeholders and keeping them informed about all their sessions and activities.
Political leaders from the community expect that boys enrolled in ECF classes also attend their rallies, work for them etc. They also expect ECF to keep them informed about the activities undertaken by the boys in the AfE programme.	ECF mitigates this risk by clarifying that ECF does not support any particular political party and that ECF's work in the community is in the area of human rights and gender. ECF also tries not to use political venues for the AfE programme. However, ECF does ensure that the political leaders are informed about programme activities.

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

### Overview

Since the year 2011, 22 cycles of the AfE programme have been completed. Cohorts of boys move from Foundation through Action to Leadership Programme. A cohort of boys that underwent the Foundation Programme in the last quarter of 2018-19 thus underwent Action and Leadership Programmes in 2019-20. Subsequent to January 2020, the revised AfE programme was put into place.

Cycle No.	Dates/ Months	FP		AP		LP	
		Enrollment	Graduation	Enrollment	Graduation	Enrollment	Graduation
Cycle 23	Jan - May 2019			188	138	172	94
Cycle 24	June -Sep 2019	262	187			131	104
Cycle 25	Oct 2019 - Jan 2020	290	209	180	148		
Cycle 26	Feb - May 2020					336	
Total		552	396	368	286	639	198

NOTE: Numbers in red pertain to the earlier cohort from 2018-19

Cells shaded in yellow is the cohort for April 2019 - March 2020

**Graduation of Cycle 26 batch in LP was not concluded because of the global pandemic related national lock-down**

## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

- The ECF team has found that using the 'Human rights' approach is effective in ensuring that boys are open to explore aspects of gender inequity. For example, an individual's right to be educated is irrespective of gender. Many families would discontinue a girl's school education and ask the girl to stay home, if she complained of street harassment. Thus a change in behaviour in men could actually ensure that a girl's right (human right) to be educated is fulfilled. Young men could appreciate gender rights in this context.
- "We use many games, this 'fun' aspect helps in drawing boys to the programme," shares ECF's facilitator.
- Expression goes beyond verbal sharing. The sessions provide opportunities for the boys to communicate through writing, drawing, role play etc. This is important as many boys may not be verbally expressive.
- Individual and group meetings with parents are held periodically. The intent is to engage parents so that they are supportive of their sons joining the AfE programme. Furthermore, they are informed of the details of the programme so that parents become enabling factors (instead of barriers) in the transformation process of their sons. These meetings are also a platform for parents to share their observations about their sons' attitude and behaviour changes. AfE mentors emphasise the need for continued support from parents for the changes in behaviour to sustain.
- ECF identifies community spaces (usually samaj mandirs) for the programme; this also ensures that the distance of the venue from the boys' homes is not more than 500 meters.

*"The sessions are also a 'safe space' for boys to talk about everything. We ask participants if something is wrong, if he is teased. We share our own feelings frankly, this encourages them."*

ECF Facilitator

## CHALLENGES

### NATURE OF WORK

Gender equity takes time to build in an individual. "One cannot expect boys to become change agents overnight or even in a matter of 12 months. Thus change cannot be demonstrated easily in the short or near term. Such change can happen but it takes time," says Christina Furtado, Director – ECF.

### COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

It is challenging to utilise community celebrations such as Durga puja pandals or Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations for community engagement. The tightrope walk is because of the danger of being associated with a particular religion, while reaping the rewards of a community gathering.

### PEOPLE

Recruitment of trained staff is a challenge; it is difficult to maintain a workforce well-trained in relevant techniques including facilitation, gender transformation, attitudinal and behavioural evaluation, community integration.

Field team is largely male and the documentation team female. This skew is not desirable, but the available talent pool of college graduates seems to dictate this lop-sided distribution.

### POLITICAL CLIMATE

ECF as an organisation being apolitical, there is difficulty in enlisting the support of local government officials such as corporators. Some colours are identified strongly with certain groups – green, orange, for example. While creating publicity material and kits (t-shirts/caps) for the boys, this becomes a sensitive issue.

### ATTRITION

There are drop-outs from the groups when the older boys go out of the city to pursue employment. Engagement is highest with the 13-14 year-olds as at the age of 16 or 17, priorities change - boys think about college or finding a job.

### STAKEHOLDERS

If parents have seen behavioural problems with their boy, they welcome the ECF sessions as they expect some change. Some parents focus only on school education and view the ECF sessions as distractions.

## UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

Heavy rains and floods in Pune, during the monsoon, had an impact on the achievement of target numbers to an extent. However, since ECF estimated for an extra week in the programme, they were able to complete the programme in time. State and national level restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic were implemented from March 25, 2020. Simultaneously, an increase in gender-based violence during lockdown, combined with misinformation about COVID-19 and economic difficulties in low-income

communities, necessitated that ECF continued to support AfE participants and alumni. ECF worked with and learnt from various organisations while planning online activities. In particular, conversations with the Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ) and access to their resource material were very helpful. ECF started with informal phone interactions with participants and their families and then engaged participants in online sessions on COVID-19 and Gender. LP Cycle 26 Leadership Programme Graduation could not be completed.

## RESULTS

### Outcomes

#### SUPPORT TOWARDS GENDER EQUITABLE NORMS

While 17% of participants demonstrated this during the Foundation Programme, this improved to 21% showing support at the end of the Action Programme.

#### TAKING ACTION

The proportion of participants who took action while in the Foundation Programme (67%) is similar to that of participants who took action in the Action Programme (68%).

However, the nature of action taken by most participants changed from Sharing responsibilities (40%) to Engaging in discussion (37%).

#### DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS

73% of Foundation programme graduates demonstrated skills. Of these, the break-up is as follows:

- » Communication skills 24%
- » Critical thinking skills 30%
- » Initiation skills 32%
- » Teamwork skills 34%

In the grant period, 13 Focus Group Discussions were done with 95 parents and family members of the participants. Through these discussions, some interesting change stories have been found.

*"People at home are happy. I have learnt how to talk to women, how to show respect. At my workplace, I talk in the right way to lady co-workers."*

*Participant*

*"Boys spend more time at home, are more responsible, go to school regularly."*

*- Parents' View*

BOYS COLLABORATED WITH GIRLS IN THE COMMUNITY FOR A STREET PLAY TO RAISE AWARENESS ON GENDER ISSUES



### Caring is Not Being Weak

Sandesh, from Super Indira Nagar, used to be grumpy and unattached with his family members, especially his sister. He would always treat her disrespectfully. He had stopped showing love and affection towards his family members. He would shut down all the emotions that would make him look weak. After attending AfE sessions, he learnt how to channelise his emotions. He has also stopped fighting with his family members and his sister. Now he wants to know how her day went, wants to understand her problems better, wants to be there to support her when she needs it. He has started showing care for his family members - an attribute which is often associated with being less masculine. His parents mention that he has been showing positive behaviour change, and has become a little more responsible than before.

### Choice Has No Gender

Aniket is a participant from Shastrinagar. In a discussion, Aniket's mother narrated a different side of her son. In Aniket's school, students were given options to take up courses, either training to become an electrician or a beautician. As expected, most boys opted for the former and most girls opted for the latter. Aniket, however, told his mother that he is interested in pursuing the training to become a beautician. When he was told that it is for girls, he stated that both boys and girls can be make-up artists and take it up as a career. Aniket completed the beautician course in school and will get a certificate. His mother proudly said that he had done her hairstyle and make-up during the Sankranti Festival this year and all other women were astonished that her son could do such brilliant work.



## Before ECF Perspectives

*"Girls should stay at home."*

*"I tease boys who participate in household chores." - Participant*

*"I used to back answer. I would refuse to buy rations for our home." - Participant*

*"Violence, street sexual harassment is normal." - Participant*

*"Girls are afraid of the boys in the neighbourhood." – ECF staff*

## After ECF Perspectives

*"Girls too have dreams." - Participant*

*"I take part in household chores."*

*"He goes to the mill, gets flour ground," - Father of AfE participant.*

*"After leadership programme, they take responsibility to fix problems in the community – including ones such as child marriage." - ECF staff*

*" 'Normalistic' interactions between boys and girls." – ECF staff*

## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Alumni of the AfE programme have reported remarkable improvement in their communication skills, ability to relate to women in the workplace better. Alumni have also observed, in themselves, superior job skills such as presentation skills, after their association with the AfE programme.

## ANY INFLUENCES THAT AROSE

During the Ganesh festival in 2019, ECF's participants were motivated to have talks with mandals and convinced them to create a platform for ECF's participants to perform street plays/ awareness sessions on gender and human rights. This was successful in most of the communities and participants were given big platforms, attended by hundreds of people.

## ANY NEW BEST PRACTICES THAT EMERGED

Creating safe spaces for ECF participants to interact with girls in the community can go a long way in normalising interactions between them and lead to positive outcomes. Cycle 24 (July 2019) Leadership Programme participants conducted Focus Group Discussions with girls in their respective communities. The benefits of these FGDs were:

- The participants were able to collaborate with girls in their communities in identifying and resolving community-level gender and human rights issues.
- Girls in these communities had a platform to express their opinions.
- There was increased engagement with the community.
- Problems and solutions discussed in these FGDs were used to plan Action Events.

## ALUMNI MEET

ECF conducted their first Alumni Meet in August, 2019. Attended by 14 alumni from as far back as Cycle 1 (year 2011) of Action for Equality, the Alumni Meet gave ECF the chance to observe the long-term impact of the programme as well as to receive programme recommendations and insight from the alumni. Highlights:

- Several alumni have carried out gender equity initiatives independently, after graduating from AfE - a workplace safety for women programme, and campaigns around sexual education and menstruation.
- Alumni have used the skills taught in AfE in their work and education - Various alumni mentioned that communication skills, initiation skills and an increase in self-confidence have helped them in school presentations, in the hospitality industry, in setting up an animal shelter, and so on.

*"It's due to my time here at ECF that I can speak with confidence – I am able to speak out about topics such as gender equality, menstruation, sexism in movies. I also did a Gender Equality project in college and got the highest grade in the class!"*

*Amol, 21 years, AfE alumnus.*

## Anecdote from ECF Alumnus WORKPLACE SAFETY

Amol, 21 years, shared that he had played a large part in implementing a women's safety initiative in his workplace. Amol's female co-workers often had to travel long distances at night, to get home after work, which made them feel unsafe and worried. Amol helped to organise a policy in his workplace which would ensure that women were safe when they had to work late.

## LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

On the Project Raise portal [www.projectraise.org](http://www.projectraise.org)  
Principles for working with boys  
Curricula – Foundation, Action and Leadership Programme  
M&E Tools  
Knowledge building videos focused on Gender, GBV, and Human Rights  
Gender Attitude Survey  
Theory of Change

A NON-  
DISCRIMINATORY,  
VIOLENCE-FREE  
AND GENDER-  
EQUAL SOCIETY



**swayam**

Ending Violence Against Women

4

# ORGANISATION PROFILE

## SINCE 1995

Based in Kolkata, Swayam's project with young men is run at Metiabruz in Kolkata (urban) and Diamond Harbour in South 24 Paraganas (rural) in West Bengal.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

Sessions conducted in the neighbourhoods of young men; their workplaces and homes are used often.

Exposure visits for the young men to NGO-run programmes in other states of India.

Run in the same geographies and only in conjunction with Swayam's empowerment programme for women (to end gender-based violence). Efforts to involve entire families and communities in the areas Swayam works in, bringing about change.



## KEY NUMBERS

No. of young men covered under programme at Metiabruz (at the end of the grant period): **158**

No. of young men covered under programme at Diamond Harbour (at the end of the grant period): **496**

## GEOGRAPHY

### MEN AND BOYS PROGRAMME

West Bengal

Diamond Harbour: Four Panchayats - Mashat, Diyarak, Patra and Kamarpole

Kolkata: Metiabruz, Khidderpore and Mahestala

## TESTIMONIAL

*"I want to change my environment, my district, having changed myself."*

*Khan, participant from Diamond Harbour*



## CONTACT DETAILS

Website - [www.swayam.info](http://www.swayam.info)

Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/endingviolenceagainstwomen>

Twitter - [@swayamkolkata](https://twitter.com/swayamkolkata)

Instagram- [Instagram.com/swayamkolkata](https://www.instagram.com/swayamkolkata)

CONTACT PERSON

Anuradha Kapoor, Director  
9830020030



# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

This programme aims to strengthen Swayam's existing work with women by also working with young men and boys in the same communities, to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. The aim is to make men and boys understand the social structures that determine and perpetuate gender inequality and violence against women and girls and appreciate how their lives can be enhanced by the reduction of violence and access to rights. Further, the programme may transform their patriarchal attitudes and behaviours and build their leadership to act as change agents for equality. Swayam's goal is to capacitate and empower women and girls, men and boys in the same community so that they can work together towards building a gender equal and violence free community.

## Goal 1

Increase in leadership ability and recognition of men and boys/women in the community.

## Goal 2

Improvement in personal relationships and reduction in gender discriminatory behaviour of men and boys at the family level and social level.

## PARTNERS

Swayam does not have delivery or implementation partners for the programme with young men.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Families of young men who participate in the programme. Especially mothers, sisters, wives, girlfriends, daughters.

- While men are hugely privileged under patriarchy, they are also dehumanised by it and have to deal with its pressures and negative consequences in many ways. Hence it is necessary for men and boys to understand patriarchy, its root causes, the role and interest of social institutions and men in perpetuating patriarchy and its negative impact on both women and men.
- Understanding how patriarchy negatively impacts their lives and what they would gain through gender equality is essential to creating positive attitudinal and behavioural change at the personal and societal level.
- Once men and boys understand how gender equality results in positive shifts in their personal relationships, improvement in their personal wellbeing, and a release from suffering and stress they experience due to expectations that masculinity places on them, they are ready to oppose gender inequality and VAWG.
- Building their leadership to act as change agents for gender equality in their homes and communities is integral to this process.

## CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

Men and boys in the rural and urban communities Swayam works in – mostly between the ages 16 to 25. Efforts are also made to bring older men into the groups – either relatives of members of Swayam's women's groups or those who show interest after Swayam's awareness building camps or word of mouth.

# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

- Inequality and violence against women and girls (VAWG) is rampant and on the increase.
- Patriarchy privileges men over women, creates unequal power relations and social norms, places power and resources in the hands of men that leads to men and boys perpetrating inequality and VAWG.
- Therefore, to address inequality and VAWG, it is essential to work with men and boys who are the main perpetrators and an integral part of the problem.

# PROJECT APPROACH

Swayam's approach is based on the understanding that discrimination and violence against women is a structural problem that has its roots in patriarchal ideology and cannot be resolved unless work happens with individuals, communities, institutions and structures that perpetuate this ideology.

At the community level, Swayam's work includes influencing public opinion and action through education and awareness, producing and sharing information and expertise, and motivating women, men and youth to access rights and address inequality and violence against women.

Through this programme Swayam is working intensively with men and boys in the same communities where it works with women, so that they can work collectively to build gender equal and violence free communities. Swayam engages with local governance institutions and schools through men and women's groups to get them to respond to inequality and VAWG.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Activity Categories	Activity Details	Diamond Harbour Target APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020	Metiabruz Target APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020
Mapping change in behaviour in men and boys	Survey	1	2
Field Visits	Number of field visits	400	150
Group Meetings	Number of group meetings	500	170
Group Mobilisation	Number of new groups mobilised	10	5
	Number of Core groups formed	2	2
Capacity building training with change-makers and active leaders  Residential and day long training programme, Gender training, Exposure tour	Training with change-makers and active leaders - day long training programme, gender training	20	2
	Residential Workshop and training with Group members	1	1
	Exposure visit	1	1
	<i>Other trainings Total number of capacity build workshops</i>	22	4
Public Awareness Programmes by staff	Community Awareness programme and campaigns	8	8
	Mobile van awareness	4	9
	<i>Total number of Awareness Programmes.</i>	12	17
Public Awareness programmes conducted by men and boys groups and change makers	Number of school and college awareness programme	8	0
	Number of Kiosk Campaign/ community awareness/Wall Painting	12	4
	Number of Mobile van awareness programmes.	8	1
	Total number of Awareness Programmes	28	5
Producing IEC Materials	Types of materials	6	-

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Demographics and Cultural highlights

#### DIAMOND HARBOUR

##### RELIGION

42 % Hindu, 48% Muslim

##### AGE

25% below 18, 45% between 18 and 22, 28% between 23 and 32 and 2% above 32 years.

##### EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

13% till class V, 18% till Class VIII, 47% till Class IX-XIII, 11% Graduates, .3% post-graduates, 5% illiterate, 3% others.

##### OCCUPATION

40% students, 56% working, 4% unemployed. Amongst those working, approximately 49% are tailors, 20% farmers, 20% provide services such as electrician, barber, hammersmith etc., 8 % have small businesses and 3% are government/ private sector employees.

#### METIABRUZ

##### RELIGION

97.5% Muslim, 2.5% Hindu

##### AGE

5% below 18, 55% between 18 and 22, 35% between 23 and 32 and 5% above 32 years.

##### EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

15% till class V, 35% till Class VIII, 34% till Class IX-XIII, 2% Graduates, 13% illiterate, 1% others.

##### OCCUPATION

9% students, 9% in private employment and the rest 72% are tailors or embroiderers.

Both Metiabruz and Diamond Harbour have communities steeped in tradition. Women, if at all they do, carry out tailoring job work only within the boundaries of the home. Boys start working very early, from the age of 16-17 years. They drop out of school, to fulfil a role expectation of them, that is, one of breadwinner.

## MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

Since the programme has been conducted before April 2019, the study done could be looked at as a mid-line assessment. A survey was conducted amongst 87 men and boys' group members from Diamond Harbour and 40 men and boys' group members from Metiabruz. The parameters used were:

- Understanding of violence against women.
- Relationship with family members/wife/ girlfriend.
- Self confidence and ability to share pressures with group/family members.
- Taking action to stop discrimination and violence against women at home and outside.

- Participation in housework/childcare.
- Supporting mother/sister/partner in her decisions.
- Equality in decision making at home.
- Stopping sexually harassing behaviour/ violent behaviour.

Due to the restrictions caused due to the global pandemic, the endline study could not be conducted.



VARIOUS GROUPS FROM COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER FOR TRAINING SESSIONS.

RESEARCH PLAN

The following were the research questions identified at the beginning of 2019-20. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with 24 changemakers.

- 1. Why do some changemakers participate in Swayam activities more than others? What are the factors that influence their participation?
- 2. What makes some facilitators more effective than others? What traits or types of support do changemakers value in Swayam staff members?
- 3. What skills do staff members need to deal with unfavourable political and religious situations? What strategies do they currently use to adapt to such situations? How are they teaching changemakers to do the same?
- 4. What difference has the programme made to changemakers as individuals and with respect to their friends, families and communities? How does this shift over time?

TRAINING

Trainings are done on a regular basis with group members during the group meetings once the groups are formed. Active group members are identified and given specific day-long and residential training to build their capacities as leaders. Simultaneously, informal trainings in smaller groups or one to one discussions are conducted to keep these group members engaged in case day long trainings are not possible due to inability of group members to devote time.

For the active members/change makers, the training includes: qualities of a leader, group development, how to facilitate a group, creating and running awareness campaigns, intervening in cases of violence, advocacy and linking with relevant departments, working in partnership with women’s groups. One of the main objectives of these trainings is to develop a clear understanding around violence against women and gender inequality so the change makers can identify, intervene and refer cases of violence to Swayam. As the change makers evolve in their roles, they are also asked to attend Swayam’s five-day residential casework training.

IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

RISKS	MITIGATION PLANS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group formation requires numerous informal interactions before a group actually comes together.</li><li>• Difficulty in engaging men due to livelihood and other social reasons - most of them cannot give Swayam time as they work through the day and often are away from their homes the whole week and return only for a day per week.</li><li>• Retaining and sustaining groups – personal change is demanding and shakes one’s core beliefs. Hence drop-out rates in groups are high.</li><li>• Men and boys in existing groups may migrate due to the nature of livelihood and cause groups to break.</li></ul>	<p>Swayam forms more groups than planned for to make up for any groups that may break.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff attrition affects the work as training and capacitating a new person takes time. It is difficult to find staff that are sensitised to the issue and have the capacity to train others.</li></ul>	<p>Swayam addresses this risk by recruiting from existing men’s groups; such persons already have an understanding of the issues and the work.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact of external socio-economic-political conditions in India and increased religious fundamentalism/indoctrination may affect continuity of groups.</li></ul>	<p>Swayam addresses these issues in their training programmes and also engages with the local panchayats and administration to get support for the work.</p>



# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## Overview

### NEW GROUP FORMATION

#### MONTH 1

**Step 1:** Survey the geography of the working field area.

**Step 2:** Attend Swayam women's group meetings. Engage with women so that they recommend men and boys in their families or neighbourhoods to join the men and boys' groups.

**Step 3:** Identify and meet local stakeholders, reputed persons, key persons who would help in mobilising men and boys.

**Step 4:** Random field visits to local clubs, grocers, play grounds through key-persons for mobilising men and boys.

#### MONTH 2

**Step 5:** Organise awareness programmes in the area to introduce Swayam and its work with men.

**Step 6:** Identification of the interested men and boys and collecting their details (name, phone number, etc.,)

#### MONTHS 3 & 4

**Step 7:** Two or three visits to meet identified men and boys (20-30) and selection of the gate keeper.

**Step 8:** Two-three meetings with the identified men and boys and sharing Swayam's work with men and boys and the necessity of forming groups.

**Step 9:** Finalise eight to ten committed members for new men and boys group.

Step 10: Group profile creation.

### BUILDING CAPACITIES IN YOUNG MEN

Sessions are conducted with the finalised groups of young men on the following themes:

- 1 - About Swayam and Introduction
- 2 - Gender
- 3 - Difference between sex and gender
- 4 - Violence
- 5 - Forms of violence
- 6 - Human Rights
- 7 - Rights & Entitlements
- 8 - Patriarchy
- 9 - Masculinity & Power
  - » Power and masculinity
  - » Privileges and disadvantages of Masculinity
- 10 - Child Marriage
- 11 - Sex & Sexuality

### ADVANCED TRAINING

Group members who show commitment, understanding and volunteer during Swayam's public education programmes are given advanced training on these issues. One important training session is on case work and law, focusing on understanding VAW, its impact on women, laws related to women, and how to intervene in cases of VAW.

### EXPOSURE TRIP

The more committed members are taken for an exposure trip to meet men and boys doing similar work, in other states of India to facilitate cross learning.



### CHANGEMAKERS & LEADERS IDENTIFIED.

By the end of this process, Swayam is able to identify changemakers and they are given leadership training and more focused attention.

Changemakers are those who will not only have changed their own behaviour and attitudes but will also take regular actions to prevent VAW and girls in their communities.

### PUBLIC AWARENESS

Public education programmes on issues to sensitise the communities in which men and boys reside. Swayam uses a mobile campaign van which has a stage for theatre, a television as well as a public address system.

Group members also participate and volunteer in related monthly awareness programmes, campaigns and protests. They also participate in larger movements and protests organised by Swayam women's groups.

Changemakers learn to conduct awareness programmes independently, intervene in cases of VAW and work in collaboration with women's groups to address VAW in their field areas.

## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

Swayam uses many games when they do campaigns and awareness sessions in the communities. These games are more effective in conveying the message, than merely talking. For example, in order to sensitise people about gender roles, the facilitator uses a series of sentences beginning with a name that can be applied to both genders. "Shahjahan cycles to work." "Shahjahan cooks everyday." "Shahjahan is a doctor." Listeners have to guess the gender of the person referred to. Swayam also uses a life-sized 'snakes and ladders' game with gender related myths as snakes' heads and progressive ideas as entrances to ladders.

The young men participate in two-day residential workshops away from their localities. These are organised on Tuesday-Wednesdays as the factories' weekly holiday is on Wednesday. Young men are deferential to elders and find it difficult to speak openly in their presence. By taking the young men away from the localities, Swayam provides them the free space to express their views and opinions.

Exposure visits to NGOs in other states prove to be an eye opener for young men who often have not travelled outside West Bengal. Young men are inspired by these visits. Once, they observed that dowry as a practice was absent in some tribal communities, whereas in the urban community in Kolkata that is seemingly more advanced in some parameters, dowry is a scourge.

Involvement of young men in community activities is increased step by step. At first, they are given tasks such as distributing pamphlets. Then, they are given a fixed script to announce over loudspeakers during auto/van campaigns. From this step, they progress to holding conversations with individuals in communities, giving speeches etc., and then to conducting campaigns independently.

There is an effort to enrol men from families where women are already part of Swayam's work with women. So some families in Diamond Harbour have become 'Samajdaar parivaar' (Swayam families, where all adults are aware of gender equity). Swayam gave special flags that could be displayed at the front of such homes.

During campaigns, boys are seen, visible. They are on stage, publicly doing things. Action is an important part of the programme. When they do, they see the change. Boys take a pledge to be 'gender champions' and are involved in all community programmes. For example, the young men created awareness about street sexual harassment through wall paintings. Using a wall art with messaging is a powerful way to raise awareness and engage the group members. This model has been used in both communities successfully

## CHALLENGES

### NATURE OF WORK

Retaining and sustaining group members has been a challenge because personal change is demanding and people shy away when their core beliefs related to self, masculinity and religion are threatened. "The drop out rate is pretty high, as we are challenging social norms. They feel 'I am comfortable where I am'. When things get close to the bone, which is what we aim for, many group members leave," says Anuradha Kapoor, Director – Swayam. "A strategy we have used to deal with this is increasing the number of one-on-one, personal mentoring sessions with the group members in order to address their fears and confusions."

### POLITICAL CLIMATE

Change in local government (panchayat level) poses challenges as relationships have to be built again.

### COMMUNITY

Durga puja pandals and Jalshas offer an opportunity for community engagement. However, it is a tightrope walk to utilise such platforms, without being seen as promoting religion.

### MOBILISATION

In Metiabruz, since most group members work, it is difficult to get them all together for meetings at the same time. Hence, many one to one or small group interactions precede larger meetings. In Diamond Harbour, group members who are students find it easy to understand the issues and attend group meetings and activities on a regular basis. However, it is more difficult and time consuming to work with men and boys who are relatively uneducated and who work as tailors, masons etc. They take longer to understand issues and their meetings take place according to their convenience – on weekends, late evenings, near their workplaces – to enable them to attend. Again, similar to Metiabruz, the entire group may not get together as individuals may be caught up with work and unable to make it.

Migration for work leads to drop-outs.



YOUNG MEN, WHO ARE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SWAYAM PROGRAMME, CONDUCT CAMPAIGNS IN THE COMMUNITY.

PEOPLE

Building the second rung of leadership is tough.

Staff turnover is a serious challenge. When well trained individuals leave the organisation, it impacts the work. It is important to find the right people who have the necessary mental make up. Sensitisation of the individual also has to be done before he goes into the field. People who newly join the organisation need a lot of hand holding, experienced people have to spend some time with new people in their areas. Swayam’s work with men and boys also requires men to be in the field, as it has been observed that ‘men do not listen to women.’

STAKEHOLDERS

Parents often have apprehensions about the involvement of the young men. In the cases of Mohammed and Anees, from Metiabruz locality, Swayam’s staff member Rahul had to engage with the father and mother respectively, to set their minds at rest.

Young men often bear the brunt of comments from friends. A participant, Mohammed Firoze Ansari narrates, “My friends say that I am doing work against men - ‘mardon ki khilaaf kaam hai’. But the fact is, I am actually saving men from becoming criminals. Because when a boy hits a girl, he could be jailed.”

UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

Developments at the national level have increasingly escalated tensions in both Metiabruz and Diamond Harbour. The general election results in May 2019 further exacerbated the situation. The tense political climate led to a lot of fear and apprehension in the communities and had negative fall-outs for Swayam’s work. The staff faced demands for action on these issues that were critical to the communities. Gender rights were not considered as high a priority as these issues. There was a push back from the communities, where they asked women to be confined to homes, and embarked on counter campaigns terming the gender rights work ‘Anti Islamic’. Swayam has had to function with due diligence and caution in

RESULTS

Before Swayam Perspectives

- “Why are women equal to men, after all they are weaker!”
- “I am older than my cousin, so it is alright if I hit her.”
- “I used to do ‘eve teasing’”
- “I was ‘man marziyaan’ at home ...would yell at parents, throw clothes everywhere.”
- “They are all for women, they are suppressing men.”
- “Maulana taught us ‘keep girls inside’. So when I saw women in burqas dancing happily, I felt religion is being debased.”

Young men have had a palpable impact in the communities that they work in. Ashraf, from Metiabruz, shares, “I have done some satisfying case work in collaboration with the women’s group. A dowry case was sorted out well and the girls’ parents were happy with me.”

The sphere of influence of the young men steadily expands as their involvement with the programme increases. “I want to change my environment, district, having changed myself,” Khan, programme participant from Diamond Harbour.

“After the exposure visit to Jharkhand, and attending some workshops, I see the change in myself. Earlier I saw my mother, brother involved in Swayam’s work. I saw the change in my brother,” shares Irfad.

After Swayam Perspectives

- “All should have same opportunities, including women.”
- “I fold bed even if my mom insists that I don’t.”
- “My sister has joined nursing course but my brother stopped after class ten!”
- “Who are we to curb her freedom? We wear gamchas and roam about. What about women? Your (men’s) way of seeing is wrong, correct that.”
- “I don’t discourage my sister or girlfriend. I don’t say...don’t go in bus.”

Young men are more connected to their families - “Earlier, I would spend my free time just going out with friends. Now I converse with my parents, I share things, we take decisions together,” Somnath, programme staff from Diamond Harbour.

Young men are looked upon as ‘resource people’ (the ‘go to’ persons) in the communities. When people have to get something done, for example, obtain a ration card or need to speak to a police man, they bank on the young men to guide them correctly.

Young men are finding voices of expression – one in Metiabruz writes poems, another sings at jalsas, yet another makes videos and posts on social media.



YOUNG MEN, WHO ARE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SWAYAM PROGRAMME, CONDUCT CAMPAIGNS IN THE COMMUNITY. VAN AWARENESS PROGRAMME



## NEW BEST PRACTICES THAT EMERGED

- » Working with established women's group provides men and boys' groups support and increases their understanding and ability to address gender equality and violence against women and girls.
- » Collaborative awareness programmes with women and men's groups together create a strong impact on the communities and break barriers between the two groups.
- » Using creative ways of expression and reaching out works well and attracts people to the issue. Example, wall painting, rap, videos, games, creative writing.
- » Exposure of men and boys' groups to other such groups who are working on gender equality/women's rights is a good way of sharing experiences, building their knowledge, confidence and ability to address these issues. This also shows them that they are not alone and there is a community of men who also have similar beliefs and values and have been able to create change.
- » Involving men and boys in conducting awareness programmes and trainings builds their confidence and leadership skills.
- » Being identified as a leader in the community is a great motivator and establishes an enhanced sense of self.

## INFLUENCES THAT AROSE

Some of the experienced changemakers requested trainings on mental health and wellbeing, which Swayam had not originally planned for.

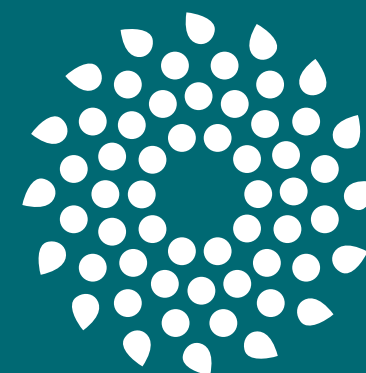
## REPLICABILITY OF PROJECT

Swayam is willing and eager to guide other organisations to do similar work, in preference to scaling their own footprint.

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Organisational Milestones Years 1995 to 2019  
Logic model  
Baseline assessment questionnaire

EMPOWERMENT  
FROM WITHIN



**CORO**

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## ORGANISATION PROFILE

### SINCE 1989

Community of Resource Organisation (CORO)'s mission is to build a world that is based on equality and justice. They nurture leadership from within marginalised communities in order to steer rights-based collective actions for social change. Their work has focused on gender equality, women's empowerment and grassroots leadership development. It is based on the values enshrined in the Constitution of India and on the principles of 'humanism'. CORO views itself as a facilitator in the process of social change, learning together with the communities where its work is embedded.

### UNIQUE ASPECTS

CORO's approach is to address issues at the very foundation – at the level of mental construct and attitude. They work to challenge and change mental models, discriminatory beliefs and social norms that create and perpetuate social problems. Their interventions are designed to be process oriented, long term and aimed at behavioural change.

CORO is an organisation run by, for, and of the people who want to change themselves to bring about social change. The organisation's leadership has evolved from within the communities they work in; upending the widespread belief that people at the grassroots can only be beneficiaries. The team comprises capable and principled women and men, primarily from low-income marginalised, religious minority and tribal households. Founders from privileged backgrounds have gradually been replaced by community-based leadership.

CORO initiates social change through a participatory, multi-stakeholder approach. The diverse, lived experiences of duty bearers of the system and the various stakeholders involved are included. Their method is informed by people's priorities rather than an outside mandate.

### KEY NUMBERS

- Youth Leaders/Fellows that completed an 18-month fellowship programme – **19**
- Number of youths reached through the Support Groups that have been indirectly trained and engaged with – **601**
- Number of youths reached through various informal platforms – **170**

### GEOGRAPHY

#### MEN AND BOYS PROGRAMME

CORO India is headquartered in Mumbai. This project has young men from 17 districts of Maharashtra – covering Mumbai, Konkan, North and Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and Marathwada regions.

### TESTIMONIAL

*"The starting point for effectively engaging young men and boys has to be their aspirations and anxieties."*

*Sujata Khandekar, Founder  
Director, CORO*



### CONTACT DETAILS

Website - [www.coroindia.org](http://www.coroindia.org)

Facebook- [/coroindia](https://www.facebook.com/coroindia)

Twitter - [://twitter.com/coro\\_india](https://twitter.com/coro_india)

YouTube - <https://bit.ly/2qs6nRh>

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# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2021

The primary objective of the project is to facilitate behavioural change among young men in urban/rural poor and marginalised communities so that the prevailing socio-cultural norms and practices that are detrimental to a gender equitable society change, and healthy gender related perspectives are inculcated. The second objective is to improve the capabilities of the youth so that they can identify and address the issues surrounding them in their communities. These may have to do with relationships, education, unemployment, substance abuse, emotional stress, and suicidal tendencies, among others.

The project was intended to run over 1.5 years, ending in September 2020. It was extended to March 2021 due to the global pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

## KEY MILESTONES

- 20 youth leaders are trained through a structured programme to develop leadership skills, a better understanding of gender related perspectives and attitudes. They mobilise and deliberate with other young men and women on gender related attitudes, initiating small scale actions to promote gender equality in their communities and work with a rights-based approach.
- Each of these 20 youth leaders create a support group of approximately 20 peer members who are engaged through stipulated, pre-planned sessions on gender related attitudes conducted by the fellows based on their own training. The aim is to work together on social norms towards gender equality within their communities.
- Each fellow and his/her support group create at least one informal platform (a minimum of 20 such informal platforms in all) that would work on issues faced by and of concern to them through various activities/actions in their communities.

## PARTNERS

The Youth Leaders/Fellows for this programme were chosen from among the staff/volunteers of various community-based organisations (CBOs), non-government organisations (NGOs) and formal/informal youth groups based in Maharashtra. These organisations/ groups work in different domains – education, gender, livelihoods, health, agriculture and livelihoods, to name some. The organisations are integral partners in the programme with the organisational head and/or another staff member serving as a mentor to the fellows over the course of the grant cycle.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The stakeholders in the project include the Youth Leaders of the programme, their mentors and heads of organisations, the youth leaders' immediate families, their peers who they closely work with through the course of the programme, and the larger community that both influences and is influenced by this work.

# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

CORO believes that 'empowerment from within' drives individuals to critically reflect, challenge and change the inequitable and unjust practices in one's personal life and in community. The approach trusts an individual's and a collective's power to impact their near environment. The intervention primarily focuses on stimulating critical reflections, understanding contexts, building perspectives, acquiring necessary skills, and strengthening collective voices and actions. The programme involves working with youth in a comprehensive manner so as to bring about an 'inner transformation' and develop their leadership qualities.

The project is based on CORO's experience of working closely with communities in the past three decades. The learning and evidence from CORO's Grassroots Leadership Development Program (GLDP), Gender Sensitization Program (GSP) and years of action research have been instrumental in informing the recruitment, design and content for the current initiative.

*"Before connecting with CORO, I was unaware. Now I have learnt to be open, to talk to people and not be scared. It is challenging to form a support group and keep it cohesive. I arrange meetings with the other young men and women in my support group every Sunday. I want to change the mentality of the boys towards the problems faced by women and girls."*

*Ashish, a youth leader*

YOUTH LEADER ASHISH WITH HIS MOTHER AND YOUNGER BROTHER IN THEIR HOME IN A MUMBAI SLUM.

GLDP has included aspects on how to create leaders in marginalised/poor communities by helping them discover the power that lies within themselves, facilitating critical reflections on prevailing contexts and stereotypes, aiding them to understand and internalise rights under the Constitution of India along with the relevant legal framework, gathering experience on how to work collectively and unlock the power within communities for positive social change. Past fellows of GLDP have taken on more responsibility and seniority within organisations,

<sup>1</sup> This document captures the progress of the RNP project until September 2020. The pandemic related lockdown and conditions following it significantly altered the programme for CORO – in terms of the timelines as well as the manner in which the programme was subsequently implemented. Maharashtra has been the worst affected state during the COVID pandemic in India. CORO, with its primary operations in Maharashtra, faced a 'work from home' situation from March to October 2020. CORO intends to engage with the youth fellows and bring the project to culmination by March 2021.

become members of statutory organisations or run for elections in local bodies, started their own organisations/campaigns, or become mentors and resource persons themselves.

GSP involves working with both men and women on gender equality and women's empowerment. CORO has worked with women on combating violence against themselves through various interventions such as awareness building, training, counselling and legal aid. From that experience, it was realised that it is essential to engage men as partners in eliminating gender-based violence, with them being both part of the problem and the solution.

CORO's action research on understanding the construction of masculinities (titled 'Yaari Dosti')

and femininities (titled 'Sakhi Saheli') has helped find ways to work effectively with men and boys to address inequitable gender norms to combat gender-based violence and reduce risky sexual behaviour. More recent research on the impact of smart phone technologies on youth highlighted the need to support young men and boys for sharing and addressing their concerns on notions around masculinity, love life, education and employment. CORO's work has demonstrated that gender constructs are formed early on. Thus, while the previous fellows within GLDP have been 30 to 35 years old, there was a need felt to work with younger men/women and adapt the content and methodology of the fellowship accordingly.

## PROJECT APPROACH

The RNP-supported initiative is housed within the larger GLDP programme.

### RECRUITMENT

20 'Youth leaders' are chosen for this fellowship through a structured recruitment process. Most of the youth leaders chosen are men. A recruitment process is also undertaken for mentors from the same organisations as the youth leaders, based on their ability to support and guide the fellows. These mentors can be female or male.

### WORKSHOPS WITH ORGANISATION HEADS/ NETWORK COORDINATORS

Two deliberations are organised with organisational heads/convenors of youth groups where the fellows come from, to enhance their involvement in the programme. The first workshop is done immediately after the recruitment to orient them about the objectives and plan of the fellowship and to seek their suggestions. The second deliberation is held after nine months. This meeting is to appraise them of their youth leader's progress thus far, to hear from them about the changes if any in the young leaders and to plan with them the activities for the next nine months.

### CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

**There was a multistage selection process to identify youth, with a preference for those already associated with NGOs/ CBOs that work on and are aware of youth issues in their respective geographies within Maharashtra. These were youth that demonstrated a high level of motivation, a commitment to work towards a gender equal society, and a willingness to work in their community or in schools/colleges in their area.**



YOUTH PART OF THE INFORMAL PLATFORM, YUVA MANTHAN

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

The pedagogy is a mix of classroom training, activities and assignments. The intervention creates spaces to voice concerns and think together on possibility of changes. It is designed to stimulate reflective thinking, with a focus on improving gender perspectives, including how to propagate these perspectives within the context of their own communities. The programme builds leadership capacities along various dimensions – understanding oneself and local issues impacting one's community, citizenship and one's rights under the Constitution of India, participatory research and communication, community mobilisation and advocacy and the administrative and legal recourse available.

After each training youth leaders are given assignments to apply training inputs to their own contexts and to locate gender-based discrimination at the individual, family, community and institutional level. The assignments also help them to understand how socio-cultural practices reinforce, perpetuate and justify gender-based discriminations.

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Participants have to then implement their learning to solve a social/economic issue affecting their communities. This is actualised by them forming a support group of about 20 peers from their community. The youth leaders are expected to form these groups from the start of the fellowship as the stabilisation of such groups takes time. He/she works with the support group over the duration of the programme period to build healthy, gender related perspectives among them. This is done through formal/informal trainings that are planned and facilitated by the youth leader. This also provides fellows with an opportunity to internalise their newly acquired gender related perceptions, enhance their leadership skills and build the capacity of other youth. The support groups discuss and identify issues affecting the youth in the geography/community and work on it in greater detail. They also discuss the nature and type of informal platform they intend to create for addressing the chosen issue.



## INFORMAL PLATFORMS

The youth leaders, with the help of the 'support groups', reach out to more young men and women in the selected communities to create one or more local informal platforms in the second half of the programme. These informal platforms, together with the leaders and support group through deliberation, identify issues that pertain to youth in their communities. They try to solve them collectively with active engagement of community members while weaving in the learning from the various trainings on healthy gender attitudes. It is envisaged that this would ultimately give rise to formal/informal local institutions that work for youth related issues and give root to alternate, non-toxic understanding of masculinities amongst the wider population.

## SUPPORT AND HANDHOLDING

A monthly stipend to the youth leaders is provided, along with the possibility of a 'grassroots activation fund'. This monetary support is to help fellows implement theme-based projects within a concentrated geography via community-based activities, learning material or conducting other capacity building training programmes. A monthly stipend to the mentors is also given. Their role is to provide inputs to the youth leaders in a prompt and consistent way.

CORO regional level teams and other experts are made available to the youth leaders to help in tackling challenges and mitigating risks. Long term hand holding, facilitation of collective campaigns for advocacy, monitoring and assessment of the progress of youth leaders are integral to this leadership programme.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- An improvement in leadership capacities and in the understanding of healthy gender perspectives in 20 identified youth leaders, the support groups and key members of the informal platforms. Leadership capacity parameters include motivation levels, knowledge, skills, ability to work collectively and ability to plan.
- In each geography/community identified by the fellow, with the help of the support groups and informal platforms, an identification of issues affecting the youth and commencement of work towards solving these collectively.
- The members of the communities, especially the youth, have a better understanding of gender discrimination and healthy gender-based perspectives. The rooting of gender equitable attitudes and with it, the process of challenging and changing the prevailing socio-cultural norms/practices detrimental to gender equality begins.

### OUR LOCAL TEAM

Highly motivated and experienced in social development

### MENTORS

Seniors from the fellows organisation

### LEADERS

Team member at a grassroots organisation selected for the program

### WORKSHOPS

Intensive residential training & peer learning for fellows, mentors & CEO heads

### PROJECT

On the ground implementation of learned skills

### MENTORING

Regular, 1-on-1 support on the projects progress



YOUTH LEADERS DURING A TRAINING SESSION

### Yuva Manthan

A platform created by CORO in 2017 to bring together youth to enable them to critically reflect and work on gender and other pertinent issues in their communities, including drug addiction, education and employment. The aim of such a platform is to expose them to their rights and duties as citizens within the Constitution of India. The youth involved spoke about it in the following ways:

*"Here, one can discuss various topics – be it periods, sex, why people get addicted to drugs, even pyaar mohabbat (love)."*

*"It gives me confidence and motivates me, I have made friends here."*

*"If one wants to do something, one can get suggestions and inputs here."*



YOUTH PART OF THE INFORMAL PLATFORM, YUVA MANTHAN



## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Demographics & Cultural Highlights

The youth leaders are part of urban or rural poor and marginalised communities from within 17 districts of Maharashtra – covering Mumbai Konkan, North and Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and Marathwada. Communities in urban Mumbai are politically sensitive and active. Marathwada communities are largely rural, whereas the fellows from Vidarbha come from remote areas, with very limited exposure.

The youth leaders are in the 18 – 25 years age group with a couple of them slightly older. 75% of the 20 youth leaders are men. They have an educational level of at least completing high school, some are in college, many have or are pursuing a bachelor's degree and a few, a master's level degree - in the sciences, humanities, commerce or social work. 25% of the youth leaders came from the General Category, while the remaining belong to SC, ST or other marginalised sections of society such as Denotified Tribes, Nomadic Tribes or OBC.

## MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

CORO envisions the impact of the programme at different levels – the individual, family, organisation, community and at the level of policy. CORO ranks the impact on the individual and on their family through such a fellowship as the most important. CORO encourages fellows to focus more on internal change and the process of their engagement with the community, rather than aiming to maximise their area of their influence, in terms of the number of other youths reached. The scale up of their work can happen post the fellowship. Impact on the CBOs that CORO partners with is in terms of improvements in their capacities, the network they access and the various campaigns that they initiate and run.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a key feature for this intervention. A baseline survey is undertaken for all youth leaders, and an end line, to gauge the progress made. Fellows self-assess themselves on a "Leadership Development Index". Fellows are monitored through the course of the programme and record their own learning and also give feedback on the trainings undertaken. Regional CORO staff as well as mentors share periodic reports of the progress of their respective fellows. Due to the delay in the completion of the programme due to the pandemic, CORO shall undertake its fellow wise impact assessment in April 2021.

The interdependence between the fellows and the community is also measured through various parameters including the ability of the fellows to work with support groups/informal platforms and to identify and solve youth related issues in their geographies/ communities. Mentor and organisational head participation levels are also assessed every six months.

The programme coordinator for the initiative is responsible for planning and implementation of all activities, troubleshooting and ensuring that the vision of the programme is upheld. The regional coordinators are geographically divided to engage with and support the youth leaders on a regular basis. They undertake visits at least once a month. The progress of fellows is assessed every three months with the CORO senior management. Messaging groups at the level of the entire organisation, programme wise and region wise ensure real time information flow.



HOME OF A YOUTH LEADER  
IN A MUMBAI SLUM

## RESEARCH PLAN

A formal research process is underway where the following questions are being explored:

- What are the factors that influence some youth leaders to be more active, and others to either become inactive or drop out of the programme?
- To what extent do CORO's central and regional teams have a shared understanding of the criteria and process for recruiting youth leaders? Are there aspects of the recruitment criteria and process that could be improved, and if so how?
- How successful have youth leaders been in working with peer groups, and what have been the challenges faced? To what extent do factors such as the contexts of the fellow and the peer group, the characteristics of each, and the implementation process contribute to success?
- What are youth leaders' perceptions of the training and other forms of support received through the programme? What would youth leaders have liked CORO to do in addition or instead? When youth leaders needed assistance, who helped them the most and how?
- How effective have youth leaders and peer groups been in achieving the intended outcomes?

*"When trying to bring about changes in gender-based perspectives among young men, we have observed that there is often, a denial of the existence of gender-based inequities and, even a justification. Boys may find it easier to change certain attitudes such as the right of girls to attend school. 'Freedom to marry as per one's choice' has been observed to be one of the last and hardest aspects to address and alter."*

Sujata Khandekar, Founder  
Director, CORO

# TRAINING

Structure of the Training Programme: There are five residential training modules that take place in the first nine months, each for three to five days. There is a gap of six weeks between each module during which assignments are given to the fellows to help internalise the content of the training by applying the learning in their own contexts. State/regional level resource persons are invited as trainers where necessary. These include the mentors, organisation heads and the members of the CORO GLDP Implementation team. Mentoring and hand holding is provided to each fellow. The methodology is participatory, interactive, and reflective. Separate training sessions are conducted for fellows and mentors.

## Training Modules

• THE SELF & ONE’S CONTEXT

This module focuses on understanding the self and one’s socio-cultural context, including the prevailing gender perspectives. This involves writing one’s own story and also the socio-physical mapping of one’s community. It undertakes a construction, deconstruction of gender and on locating spaces of intervention for reconstruction within the lived context of the fellows.

• GENDER & CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

This module focuses on a deeper understanding of gender, power relations and the patriarchal structure in society. It explores the manifestations of gender discrimination and understanding gender rights. It builds awareness on constitutional rights and responsible citizenship.

• RELATIONSHIP, SEXUAL HEALTH & GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

This module focuses on understanding the body and the mind, sexuality, diversity, importance of relationships and emotions management. It examines sexual anxieties and risk-taking behaviour as this was observed as a significant concern among young men. Linkages between gender, gender-based violence and sexuality are also explored.

“Samvidhan, the constitution, will only be truly enacted if it is part of and in discussions in our daily lives.”

Anand Pawar from Samyak organisation, during a training session of fellows.

“Boys need to earn and support their family. Girls have to marry. These are norms built within a family. The fellows are reflecting on these, challenging them.”

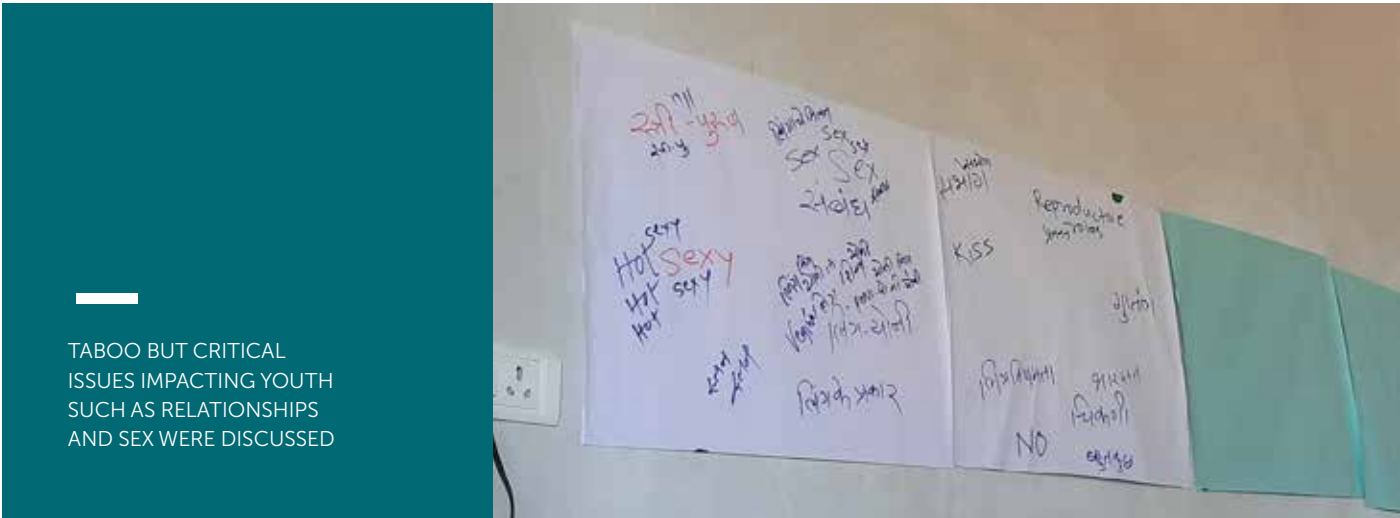
Deepak, CORO team

• LEADERSHIP & SOCIETAL CONTRIBUTION

This module focuses on motivation, qualities of leadership and on value-based leadership while emphasising the need for working at the level of the ‘mental construct’ rather than external events and patterns. The development of ‘process proposals’ over ‘project proposals’ for long term social change is introduced and practised.

• LIFE SKILLS

Essential skills in communication, research, community mobilisation, and team building are covered. Stress and emotions management are given priority. The module also introduces fellows to the need, ways and skills for advocacy. Specialised topics of participatory communication, participatory research and the Right to Information (RTI) act are also covered.



# IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

RISKS	MITIGATION PLANS
<b>ATTRITION</b> Drop out of fellows was perceived as a possibility. CORO faced the drop out of three youth leaders, two due to personal reasons and one due to differing ideology. CORO had to undertake an additional round of recruitment to fill the gap.	CORO shall undertake a careful, stringent and multi-level process of selecting the youth fellows. The fellows as well as their families shall be engaged with to build a clear understanding of the fellowship.
<b>LACK OF SUPPORT</b> There was opposition from families of youth leaders, other youth members and/or other influential people in the community as the programme challenges existing social norms. There could also be a wider socio-political opposition to such rights-based interventions.	CORO intends to undertake home visits of the fellows so as to orient family members about the fellowship. Handholding of fellows is provided through the course of the project to address this risk.
<b>FUTURE FUNDING</b> Unavailability of funding for scale up is a possibility.	CORO intends to reach out to its existing donors, especially those that have funded projects related to women to address the same.

# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## Overview

STEPS	DETAILS
<b>STEP 1:</b> Preparation, Scoping for recruitment of youth leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» CORO GLDP Team de-brief and workshop on programme roll out.</li><li>» Inviting applications from potential youth leaders from CBOs, NGOs and youth groups.</li><li>» Scrutiny of applicant forms.</li></ul>
<b>STEP 2:</b> Recruitment of youth leaders, mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Interviews and due diligence of potential fellows.</li><li>» Workshop with the heads of organisations/ informal youth groups for orienting them about the programme, identifying mentors.</li><li>» CORO GLDP Team meets for final selection of fellows, mentors.</li><li>» Final list of fellows, mentors announced.</li></ul>
<b>STEP 3:</b> Orientation of youth leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Home visits and orientation of fellows and their families.</li><li>» Pre-training assignment given to fellows.</li></ul>
<b>STEP 4:</b> Training of youth leaders and mentors (Months 1- 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Five residential trainings spanning a total of 15 days over the course of nine months covering modules of leadership and gender sensitisation.</li><li>» Three residential trainings spanning a total of nine days over the course of the same nine months for mentors.</li><li>» Youth leaders identify peers to form support groups at the start of the programme and expose them to the trainings sessions on healthy gender perspectives, leadership and community-based action.</li><li>» Assignments undertaken by the fellows between modules.</li></ul>
<b>STEP 5:</b> Facilitating collective campaigns/processes for community-based activism (Months 10-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Formation of informal platforms by the youth leaders and their support groups.</li><li>» Handholding of fellows to facilitate collective campaigns around gender and youth issues with their support groups and informal platforms.</li></ul>

## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

- **CORO’s path breaking action research** on construction of masculinities (‘Yaari Dosti’) and femininities (‘Sakhi Saheli’) form the basis of the training on gender related attitudinal changes and has been integrated within the leadership development processes of the current initiative. These training modules are adaptable, contextual and action oriented.
- **Mixing Genders**  
While most fellows chosen are men, some women were also selected as CORO views gender as relational in nature, where concerns and constructs of ‘the other’ must be incorporated. Their experience demonstrates that the effectiveness of any intervention relies on the involvement of both men and women.



MALE AND FEMALE YOUTH FELLOWS  
MINGLING WITH EACH OTHER  
DURING A TRAINING SESSION

- **CORO as Incubator**  
Over the years, leaders trained through the GLDP (which this initiative is a part of) have come together with CORO’s handholding, to give shape to more formal programmes, referred to as campaigns. These are typically wider in scope, clearer in strategy and likely impact, and funded by reputed donors. It has led to the creation of a cadre of formidable local leaders who are steering various initiatives - to secure the rights of indigenous people to their native forests, of urban populations to safe, clean sanitation and of single women for dignity in a society that rejects them.
- **Support System**  
CORO’s experience has indicated that for a sustained change in and by the fellows, there is a need for a support system for them. Individual leadership is supported and augmented by an ecosystem of formal/ informal platforms/mechanisms, along with links to broader networks. Forming ‘a network of networks’ is the manner in which the programme has been thus designed. It is also viewed as the strategy for future scale up for wider social change.
- **The importance of building capacities** of informal support system structures became more evident during the pandemic, when peer/support groups created as well as other existing mahila mandal structures rose to the occasion, providing food rations, medicines and mobilising financial resources for vulnerable populations within their communities.



# CHALLENGES

## ISSUES FACED BY FELLOWS

Fellows come from economically weak backgrounds, having the pressure of earning and sometimes, even studying. Fellows working in CBOs have to manage the demands at work as well of this fellowship. Fellows have also found it harder to return to their old life post the fellowship – which may involve engaging in low paying, manual labour due to livelihood pressures. CORO has tried to provide support to fellows through their mentors and also planned for trainings/assignments keeping in mind the academic calendar of exams of the fellows.

Fellows sometimes face identity-based discrimination in their work, especially in rural areas – related to their caste, religion or being from a tribal community. Various fellows spoke of the challenge of forming peer groups and keeping them engaged. Fellows also spoke of how people in communities try to gauge what they are getting in return for their own or their children's engagement. There is also taboo on speaking about some topics. Communities sometimes do not value the fellows' work. CORO recognises that changing mindsets of the fellows' peers, families and the larger community is challenging. They have observed that there will be struggle first, resistance and hesitation, but progress and success will happen over time.

## TRAINING RELATED CHALLENGES

CORO is working with youth from both rural and urban areas, making the context of these fellows rather varied. This makes it challenging to conduct contextually appropriate trainings together. Greater attention was thus paid to customise the trainings to the lived reality of the fellows. It was also observed that fellows were not as receptive to the conventional processes of teaching/learning during the residential training programmes. Subsequently, the training sessions were adapted to take on a freer form, with more activities and games. In addition, the youth are technologically savvy and have identities in the virtual world that need to be acknowledged and harnessed.

## STAKEHOLDERS

It has been challenging for CORO to engage the CBOs that fellows come from, in order for them to take greater ownership and view the personal growth of fellows as ultimately benefiting their organisation. CORO has incorporated workshops for the organisational heads and mentors and continuously update them of the progress of their fellows. Yet CORO has observed a gap in the extent of mentoring and handholding that is being given to the fellows by the CBOs.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

CORO faces a shortage of personnel in M&E and Training due to budget constraints, the diverse and distant geographies they work in and due to sharing of staff with other programmes within CORO. They also face shortages in critical, physical resources such as laptops. There is a need to build the capacities of the various staff members, including enhancing their perspectives and vision in their work, their ability to work on computers and in English. CORO intends to conduct training sessions for staff on youth policies and law, construction of masculinities and basic counselling skills.



MOST TRAINING SESSIONS WERE MIXED GENDER, BUT SOME ALLOWED FOR SMALLER GROUP DISCUSSIONS THAT WERE SEGREGATED FOR A FREER DISCUSSION ON SENSITIVE TOPICS.

## M&E RELATED

CORO has found it challenging to monitor, measure and effectively communicate the impact across different fellows, since they come from vastly different contexts and are also working in different domains.

## CHANGING POLITICAL CLIMATE

CORO faced delays at the beginning of their programme due to local body elections in Maharashtra. CORO has also experienced a narrowing space to openly voice opinions and take a stand on a range of issues including forest rights and rights of minorities in the present political climate. It is also observing caste and class-based discrimination practices to a greater degree when engaging with communities. There has been, however, no interference by the government thus far to the current programme.

## LONG TERM IMPACT

CORO understands the need to work on a life cycle approach for men. It has found it challenging to stay connected and engaged with all fellows as the years pass. Fellows, facing economic constraints, struggle with undertaking such rights-based work. They are able to recall the training content and facilitators, but often struggle to implement their ideas due to the lack of an appropriate ecosystem. CORO has tried to extend their engagement with fellows through theme-based alliances and advanced stage fellowships. CORO is also increasing its focus on livelihoods and feels more programmatic focus is needed here. There is a need to engage with changing mindsets of fellows but also of those in the ecosystem – peers, parents, etc. Engaging on the latter - including peer group formation - has been far more challenging to accomplish by CORO within the scope of this project.



PLATFORM - DISCUSSING ISSUES  
WITH YOUTH IN ONE'S LOCALITY

## UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

### Global Pandemic

With the advent of the countrywide lockdown in March 2020 due to the pandemic, CORO had to close their physical offices and the staff had to operate from their homes until October 2020. The field level work of the fellows in the GLDP also stopped. CORO has continued to stay in touch with their field staff remotely, in an effort to keep their morale up. They did make an effort to maintain contact with all their fellows through the period of the nationwide lockdown via telephone, and with their mentors and their respective organisations subsequently. There were/are internet connectivity and access related issues that made this communication difficult. Thus, communication within the CORO staff and between the fellows and the CORO team

became the biggest challenge during the pandemic. Fellowship stipends for the fellows and mentors continued until September as intended to help them tide over this challenging time. Staff members too were supported through a financial bonus that raised their morale in this difficult time.

CORO took on various relief and rehabilitation work in the initial few months of the pandemic, including the distribution of food grains, masks in over 600 villages across the state. The fellows of the RNP programme were engaged with this relief work over four months starting March 2020.

## RESULTS

CORO conducted the nine-month training programme as was scheduled until March 2020. Due to the lockdown and pandemic conditions, the fellowship programme was not implemented as intended from April to September 2020. CORO has been given permission by RNP to extend its programme until March 2021 taking the fellowship to its logical end for each of the fellows.

From the total 20 fellows that were trained, one fellow dropped out of the programme. Each of these fellows has created their own peer/support groups. The focus on building informal youth platforms is intended to be rolled out from September 2020 to March 2021. CORO was also reviving its connection with the mentors of the fellows during this period through its "People's Initiative" programme. This is a programme that CORO initiated during the pandemic through which people in around 600 villages are being mentored to engage more proactively with their respective panchayats to influence how money and resources are being utilised for pandemic related relief.

Here are some quotes and cases on the experience of the RNP programme.

Vishal is a 22-year-old fellow living in a Mumbai slum with his mother. Their home is a single room, 7 ft by 12 ft, with no windows. It is his mother, Vimal, who has raised him, working as a domestic help in people's homes for over 14 years. Vimal has a graduate degree and has earned some money through photography in the last three years.

He connected with CORO two years ago and has been part of their youth platform Yuva Manthan. He said it is during his time at CORO that he realised that he can contribute to society. He did not feel that way earlier. He sees poor healthcare, education and unemployment as the biggest challenges facing youth today. He is now aware of the entrenched patriarchy in our society.

*"Women tend to eat last," he observes.*

He has so far enjoyed the fellowship programme. He has created a support group of about 15 people, of which seven to eight are active.

*"It is difficult to motivate and engage other young people. I realised that to involve them, you have to do it through theatre/activities and by showing respect."*

He is slowly learning to speak to youth on issues that they are concerned and curious about including sex and attraction. One of his biggest learnings in the programme has been in challenging his own stereotype of transgender people. Having engaged with them, he wants to continue to work to improve their access to opportunities and basic rights.



# VIEWS ON IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM

## Stakeholder

### FELLOWS IN THE PROGRAMME

“After the trainings, I have ideas on how to work on gender related issues among the youth. My masters in social work programme was bookish, this is practical.”

“This training has had a huge impact on me. I am facing resistance from my parents and larger family for choosing my own life partner. However, I am calmer and facing them in less violent ways.”

“Post the training, I have started sharing household responsibilities with my wife. My relationship with her has been strengthened tremendously. I am recognised and praised in my basti in Pune as well as my village in Rajasthan due to my work in gender and youth. My parents feel very proud.”

“Through this fellowship, I have gained clarity in thought and action. I have learnt to have an open mind, consider other people’s perspectives, and always question why, so as to get to the root cause of problems.”

“I initially faced resistance from the sarpanch for forming a support group. He was not willing to help. But I engaged with her and slowly I managed to get written permission to have meetings in the village.”

“This training has showed me how to engage with people, help them in an appropriate way, how social change can happen, how to engage with government officials and solve our own problems”

“I realised that girls and women in my community are discriminated against and don’t have access to proper facilities and support, especially during menstruation and child birth. I have worked with the community health facility to ensure government ambulance to our village. I have personally helped in the safe delivery of 13 babies in the hospital from my village. The youth in my community have aspirations, but they need guidance, leadership.”

“We learnt about our constitution and its importance in our daily lives during the CORO training. My support group consists of girls and boys from a school. We have managed to engage the teacher there, and now, every day, during school assembly, after the national anthem, the preamble is also recited by all children.”



A CORO TEAM MEMBER

### CORO TEAM

“Fellows are becoming conscious of their own rights as well as the issues in their communities and how to tackle them. They have started dialoguing with their families.”

“One of the fellows who works with youth in rural areas, has managed to raise Rs.50,000 for his work through the gram panchayat. One has helped start bus services for college students through the state transport corporation in his community.”

“Fellows may be able to articulate the learning from the training sessions during the fellowship, but need more time to internalise the same and act on it.”

“Fellows are engaging with more tasks at home, engaging more with the women in their households. They are questioning their own ways and behaviours. Thinking beyond victimhood and towards concern for others.”

“The strength of this programme is that when one raises the leadership of a fellow, a community builds that too.”



Examples of the kind of initiatives undertaken by some of the youth fellows in the programme

YOUTH LEADER	INITIATIVE
Ashish Jagtap	Ashish mobilised youth in his community and has formed a group of 11 youth. Every Sunday they discuss various topics related to education, livelihood, socio-political situation, gender etc.
Vishal Kamble	Vishal has formed a youth group that primarily works with the transgender community to understand their challenges in health, education and livelihood. He is in the process of forming a group of transgenders to help resolve their issues.
Samadhan Sawant	Samadhan works with school children on the issues of gender, education etc. He is mobilising a group of school children to discuss their issues of concern. He, along with his group has formed a weekly activity named “Konkan Katta” where one of the members of the formed group opens a dialogue on any issue and leads the discussion. He has involved parents in this process.
Swapnil Wahane	Swapnil works on gender, significance of the Constitution of India and socio-cultural activities. Swapnil also guides youth in his community about various skill development opportunities. Some of the members from his group are engaged in street plays to spread awareness about issues that concern youth.
Mayur Padir	Mayur has formed a youth group that works with school children on their education and health. He engages teachers and parents in this process.

REPLICABILITY OF THE PROJECT

Sustained social change in the realm of gender requires that the inputs provided through the programme are contextually relevant to the youth in the community. This has been ensured in the manner in which the programme is designed, especially in the learning around the concepts of masculinity, gender attitudes and norms.

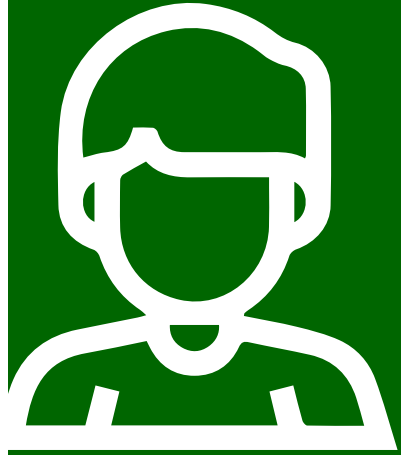
This programme has been undertaken as a pilot intervention. Based on the learning from this programme, CORO plans to modify and formalise the programme and roll it out on a larger scale. For scaling up such an initiative, CORO is reaching out to its existing donor partners that have supported work on gender equality.

CORO envisions serving primarily as a resource organisation at the intersection of gender and youth. It is working to strengthen Yuva Manthan, a regional youth collective based in Mumbai, over the next two years and then proceed to expand the same model in other parts of Maharashtra. CORO shall continue to stay connected to the fellows and their organisations post the RNP programme via the “People’s Initiative”. CORO has also undertaken a pilot in 15 villages where the peer groups created by the fellows play a prominent role in engaging on village level issues and administration, with a focus on food security, health and a safe, non-violent space.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

- Theory of Change
- Research Questions and Plan
- Gender equity movement in schools: A training manual for facilitators  
<http://www.ungei.org/Gender-Equality-Movement-in-Schools-Training-Manual.pdf>
- YaariDosti: Young men redefine masculinity – A training manual  
<https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/horizons/yaaridostieng.pdf>
- Sakhi Saheli: Promoting gender equity and empowering young women – A training manual  
[https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/horizons/India\\_SakhiSaheli\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/horizons/India_SakhiSaheli_Eng.pdf)

6



TO ENABLE YOUTH  
TO TAKE CHARGE OF  
THEIR OWN FUTURE

प्रदान  
Pradhan

# ORGANISATION PROFILE

## SINCE 1983

PRADAN was pioneered by a group of young professionals, who were inspired by the conviction that individuals with knowledge, resources and empathy for the marginalised must work with communities at the grassroots to help them overcome poverty. They initiated a concept called 'Yuwashastra' in 2012 with the vision to create better options for the future of rural youth under the hypothesis that they wanted to work in manufacturing and skill-based vocations that are aligned with their aspirations.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

Youth are encouraged to aspire, and skill matching is driven by the stated aspirations. This is done through a mobilising and training initiative called Reimagining the Future (RTF), aimed at unlocking their hidden potential and improving employability.

Entire lifecycle from stoking aspirations to skilling to employment and engagement is looked at which results in greater efficacy of the process.

All training programmes are mixed gender and residential, and focus on creating safe spaces for young men and women to openly discuss their life, aspirations, and social issues.

Community cadre-driven approach where facilitation and process management are done by the communities, and training and facilitation leads to creation of active youth collectives.

The premise of the concept is that with facilitation and exposure to new ideas and their own hidden potential, youth can take charge of them selves as well as their communities.

## GEOGRAPHY

Districts of Mandla, Balaghat and Dindori in Madhya Pradesh

## KEY NUMBERS

- No. of youth groups formed: **50**, of which 10 were actively managing community issues
- No. of youth participating in the Reimagining-The-Future residential workshops: **925**
- No. of youth imparted skill training: **700**
- No. of youth demonstrating leadership traits (change vectors): **150**

## TESTIMONIAL

*"Earlier, we wouldn't sit and talk together. Now we meet weekly to have an overview of what is happening in the village. We have discussions on issues such as dam management, water source improvement and road improvement, to take collective action."*

*Members of Youth Collective*



## CONTACT DETAILS

PRADAN (Professional Assistance for Development Action)  
#3, Community Shopping Centre, Niti Bagh, New Delhi - 110049

Website - <http://www.PRADAN.net/>,

Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/PRADANofficialpage>

CONTACT  
headoffice@PRADAN.net  
0120-4800800



# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

The objective of the Yuwashatra concept is to help youth, who are otherwise influenced or governed by gender, class, caste, or ethnic stereotypes, make informed life choices. The execution of this concept is done through a programme called Reimagining the Future. Under this programme, boys and girls are mobilised from the communities they live in and invited to participate in a residential, training and facilitation programme. This programme aims at creating safe spaces for young men and women to openly discuss their life and social issues, understand one another and come together in their effort to drive equality in communities. The programme aims at enabling youth from disadvantaged communities to become change makers and bring about a gender just society. The project envisions stoking aspirations in youth, unlocking their own, hidden potential and impacting the communities they live in through the creation of youth collectives.

## PARTNERS

PRADAN works with many partners on this project. In 2018, they had partnerships with 11 training and placement institutes and 22 employers in over 40 vocations. The aim was to increase this base in 2019-2020.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- » Youth - mobilised to participate through recruitment of Youth Service Providers (YSPs) and yuwasakhis (women collective leaders) within the community.
- » Parents - provide access to children and youth.
- » Government and non-government institutions - provide space for training and workshops, content for vocational training and employment opportunities.



*"We understand that employment is simply a means of Income. What we learn through the (RTF) workshop is to understand what we are interested in, which is quite different."*

*Youth Participants*

REIMAGINING THE FUTURE WORKSHOPS ARE RESIDENTIAL AND CONDUCTED WITH MIXED GENDER GROUPS

# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

## Reimagining the Future (RTF) Workshop

Youth face constraints such as a limited world view and narrow vision while determining their future and career choices. Youth in rural areas are not encouraged to have individual aspirations or career goals. There is a dichotomy between what youth think and what they say. Most skilling initiatives focus on volumes and do not take into account employment opportunities or personal aspirations.

## Skilling and Employment

Most vocational and skilling programmes have a top-down approach in terms of focussing on recruitment numbers and do not focus on engaging with youth once they have been provided with employment opportunities. Youth need mentorship, counselling, and support in the first few months of starting a job, especially if it is away from the comfort of their familiar surroundings.

## Youth as Change Agents

Youth are unaware of their own potential to drive civic action and improve their quality of life. If they are provided with essential life skills and tools to drive change, they can become change agents for the communities that they are a part of. The workshop and subsequent engagement with youth leads to the formation of youth collectives that determine community-led solutions for community-based issues.

The core idea behind PRADAN's programme is that youth need safe spaces in which they can speak freely and are encouraged to think and imagine. When provided with vocational and life skills that meet their aspirations, and mentored to form collectives, their energies can be channelised towards constructive action.

Over **30%** of youth in India (ages 21 to 25) reported being neither employed nor in education. Nearly 50% of females reported being neither employed nor in education.

*SOURCE*  
World Economic Forum-ORF  
survey on Youth Aspirations 2018

## CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

### RTF

Any youth between the ages of 18 and 30, willing to participate in a two-week residential programme.

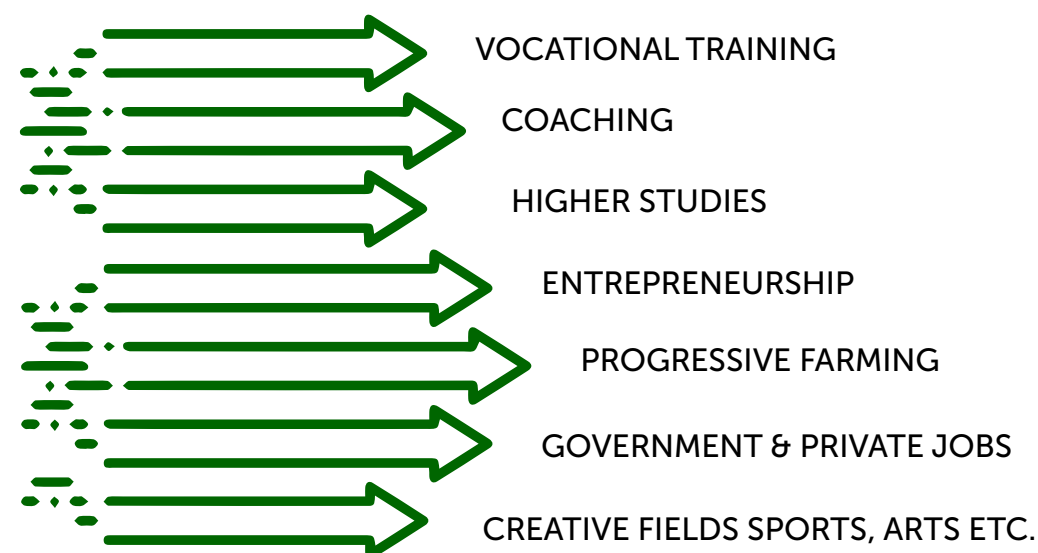
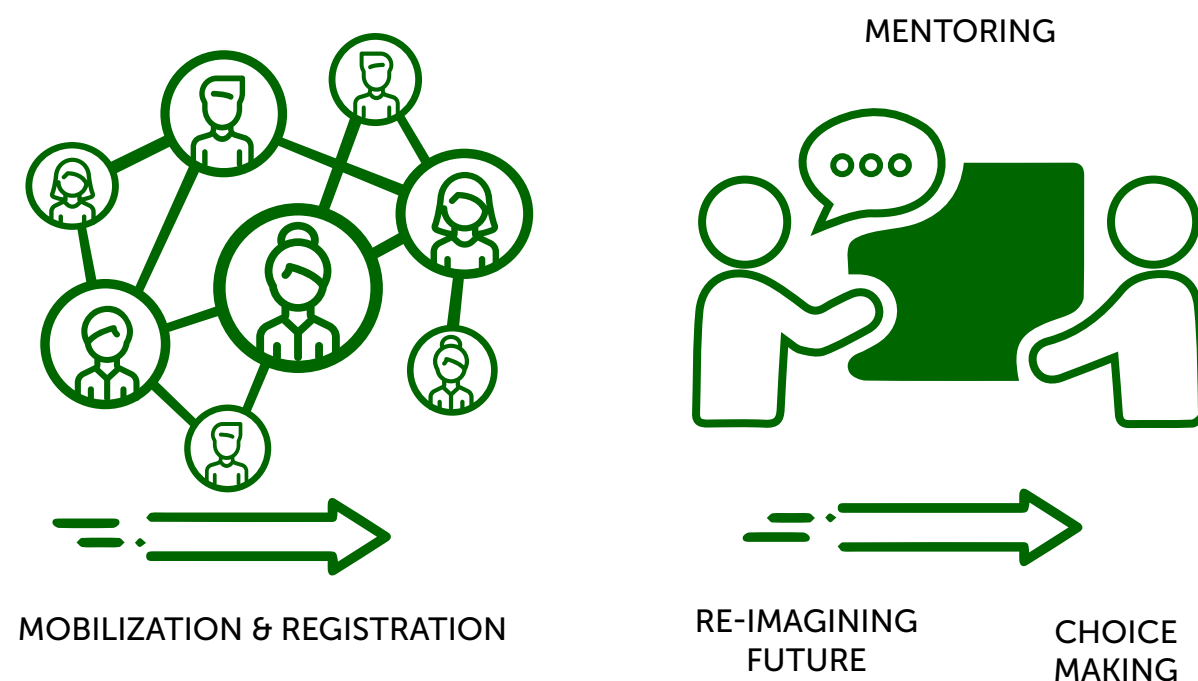
### Vocational Skilling

Youth who have participated in the RTF workshop and have demonstrated interest in a particular vocation and shown willingness to relocate (if needed).

### Youth Collectives

Any youth who is willing to participate in community activities and shows leadership skills.

## PROJECT APPROACH



## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

### Qualitative & Quantitative

MEASURABLE GOALS	OUTPUTS (2019-2020)
<p>Creating safe spaces for young men and women to openly discuss their life and social issues, understand one another and come together in their strife for equality.</p> <p>Youth from disadvantaged communities becoming change makers and bringing about changes that facilitate a gender just society in the longer run.</p> <p>Stoking aspirations in youth, unlocking their hidden potential and enhancing efficacy towards achieving it, thus increasing employability opportunities.</p> <p>Grooming change agents, leadership, and mentors from within the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 youth groups</li> <li>10 youth groups discussing about or taking action on any issue</li> <li>33 youth leaders facilitating 11 youth groups on civic action</li> <li>11 Village Organisation (VO)s working with youth groups on civic action</li> <li>925 youth attending RTF training</li> <li>700 youth attending livelihood workshop</li> <li>700 youth completing vocational/skill training</li> <li>150 change vectors (Leaders, mentors)</li> </ul>

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Demographics & Cultural Highlights

At present, PRADAN is working in seven blocks in three districts in Madhya Pradesh (Balaghat and Paraswada of Balaghat district, Mohgaon and Narayanganj blocks of Mandla district and Amarpur, Samnapur and Karanjia blocks of Dindori district) deploying six field-based teams, covering 614 villages across these blocks.

The key characteristics of this region are as under:

- Gonds and Baiga are the main tribes, in this tribal dominated region. They have limited access to basic facilities such as access to safe drinking water, sanitation and pucca housing . Effective literacy rate is 76%.
- 52% of total population are contractual workers. Among them 45% are women.
- Agriculture is the primary source of livelihoods. Average productivity of major crop is well below the national average.

*"There is a lot of family pressure on both boys and girls that prevent them from pursuing their own aspirations. Boys in particular are used to whiling away their time and do not like to be tied down inside a classroom and be disciplined. Girls face resistance from their parents to join mixed-gender residential trainings away from their homes."*

*Pramila, Youth Service Provider, Karanjia*



## Cultural Highlights

Participants are from rural areas and have little experience in discussing sensitive topics openly. Girls, especially, are slow to express their views without hesitation. Boys are seen as earning members from an early age and in the contextual socio-economic profile of the residents, the norm has been that these youth migrate for a minimum of four months in a year before or after paddy transplantation to add to household incomes.

## MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

The theory of change for this programme is that the various activities planned lead to youth having an enhanced understanding of their own masculinity and more aware of gender norms that influence career choices which enables them to make informed choices regarding their future. The community cadre is able to train and support youth collectives that enable youth to discuss issues leading to collective action.

This programme has been running for several years (since 2012) and the baseline was conducted when the programme commenced. Consequently, there was no specific baseline study conducted for the RNP-funded programme. The concept of Yuwashastra was based on the hypothesis that youth want to work in manufacturing and skill based vocations rather than involve themselves in agriculture and allied activities. A project progress report published in 2018 shared some valuable insights which were subsequently incorporated in the programme design. Some of the key learnings are shared below:



MEETING WITH YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Youth are keen to play a different role in their life than their parents. Parents also aspire for their children to have a different future than their own
- Most youth participants acknowledge that intensive engagement - opportunity and space to discuss future choices - is important. However, they believe that they are not yet ready and equipped to make a future out of such options on their own..
- It is important to find suitable employment and jobs in local areas which may be low paying but helps youth to remain connected with their families and villages.
- Non-agricultural employment is aspirational, but most of the youth want to stay in the geography, even when availability of local jobs is non-existent.

Based on these learnings, the programme design was modified to include modules around agriculture and entrepreneurship, in addition to formal sector jobs, in the Reimagining the Future workshop and skill trainings. The results of the previously conducted evaluations were considered while fine tuning the logic model and evaluation matrix for the project in 2019-20.

## RESEARCH PLAN

PRADAN initiated an action research titled 'Locating youth in the rural of Madhya Pradesh – unlocking potential' in 2020 that aims to understand the factors that drive livelihood choices amongst youth in Madhya Pradesh.

The specific questions that are being looked at are:

- What were the characteristics of youth who took more than a month to make informed choices about the careers that they would like to pursue? What were the reasons, and what additional support did they require?
- To what extent were youth who wanted to work close to home able to fulfil their aspirations? Where were they able to succeed, and where did they face challenges?
- What were the challenges that youth who wanted to pursue non-stereotypical careers faced? How did they try to address these challenges, and how (if at all) could the programme have been more responsive?
- What are the changes that young men describe making in their lives because of the interventions by Pradan?
- What were the characteristics of youth who dropped out of vocational training, or who did not join their job placements or higher education? What are the factors that led to these actions?

After a discussion in the mixed gender group, most girls exclaimed, **"aisnaichhotthaihumaareyahan, bazaar ma ghoomat, ladkanchhedchaad kart hain. Phirmaata pita akelekahinnahijaane det hain. Hume jhebaandhe, ladkan la samjhaayein."**

*("This is what happens. We get teased by the boys when we are out in the market, and our parents do not allow us to venture out. We want to explain this to the boys.")*

## TRAINING

Training and capacity building (in addition to the training related to the RTF workshop and skilling) are significant focus areas at PRADAN. The training content and delivery calendar is reviewed regularly and improved from time to time. The following trainings are conducted for all team members at least once a year:

**Poverty and Rights/Gender Discrimination:** Participants are familiarised with approaches to enhance and institutionalise effective, economic and political participation of communities impacting their status in family and community.

**Process Awareness and Sensitisation:** Participants are trained in techniques and processes around community mobilisation and management, and their perspectives around development are broadened.

**Partner management:** For some team members who work actively on the field, there are special modules on partner management (government. and non-government).

**Mobilisation for recruiting youth into the RTF workshop** is done by Youth Service Providers (YSP) who are themselves members of the community. Some of the trainings that are conducted for them include:

- YSP training (Group process training and facilitation, mobilisation management, achievement motivation training) done with a cohort of 20-25 once a year.
- Trainers/facilitators for RTF are given additional training and preferably chosen from the pool of youth who have undergone the RTF training themselves.
- Partner NGOs are also involved in facilitation and training.



REIMAGINING THE FUTURE WORKSHOP-  
DINDORI



Once the youth are recruited for RTF workshop, they are sensitised through a set of interventions and trainings. Mixed gender trainings are conducted as the key learning from running the programme since 2012 is that both boys and girls open up more and more towards each other and with the facilitator in a larger group. Key elements of the RTF trainings include:

- Familiarisation with different livelihood options that could be available and mapping them to the aspirations and potential of youth. Sessions on livelihood are organised for youth including aptitude test based one-to-one career counselling and guidance for next steps to pursue their choice of livelihood. After a suitable choice is made, the individual is encouraged to attend specific skill or vocational training in the chosen profession.
- Sensitisation sessions to widen their perspective on the larger society that they are a part of; their rights and responsibilities as citizens, on gender discrimination and gender-based violence, and existing economic and educational inequalities, among others.

On the last day of the workshop, based on the assumption that the group has a deeper understanding of self and the social dynamics at play, the group is divided village wise to discuss how they can use their learnings to reflect on social practices and how they are affected by them. They decide on a common problem that they felt most affected their lives and hopes of realising their own dream, and develop a plan to raise awareness about the issue.

## IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

RISKS	MITIGATION PLANS
<b>Opposition from men:</b> There may be some opposition from men, particularly elder men, as the programme scales up, given the entrenched nature of patriarchy and gender discrimination in the area.	Involving men in other project actions particularly livelihoods planning.  Theatre process at the villages to sensitise men.
<b>Leadership shifting towards men,</b> more in collectives and active movements.	Ensuring guidance is provided through women collectives.
<b>External:</b> Political - Ultra-left movement creating a law and order problem in the project area. The community and the project staff are immobilised in the unrest and many times it leads to delay in timelines. Strong hold of political parties within the community may oppose stereotypes being challenged.	PRADAN works closely with the district administration and they are supportive. Similarly, the ultra-left, seeing the good work and absence of political agenda, do not disrupt PRADAN's work.
<b>Unrest in the community</b> due to fear of displacement because of state-initiated projects such as the Kanha-Achanakmar Corridor and construction of the Bitheldehi dam on Seoni river.	Fight against such projects has been continuous but slow for over two years. They have not posed a serious threat till now. These projects are unlikely to be sanctioned at all because of constant and strong opposition.
<b>Instability of the choices</b> made by youth.	Youth undergo rigorous career counselling and mentoring before making their final choices.



YOUTH COLLECTIVE MEETS WEEKLY TO  
DISCUSS COMMUNITY ACTION



REIMAGING THE FUTURE WORKSHOP - YOUTH  
PRESENTING ASPIRATIONS IN RTF WORKSHOP

# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## Overview

The programme runs two parallel tracks. The first focussed on initiating youth and creating self-awareness amongst them and sensitising them towards community issues. The aim of the first track is to identify trainers, leaders, and mentors from the community itself.

Youth initiation->Forming of Youth clubs -> RTF -> Weekly meetings (with SHG members also) -> Youth club members participate in monthly VO (Village Organisation) meetings -> VO members participate in monthly Cluster Level Federation (CLF) meetings.

The second track focusses on helping youth realise their aspirations and enabling them to make informed choices about their future.

\*Time taken between the end of RTF workshop and making a livelihood choice takes about 45 days

\*The entire cycle takes between 6 months - 1 year

\*Cohort size varies even though aim is to have 20-25 members per cohort



## MOBILISATION

### Step 1

Youth identified for participating in Reimagining the Future (RTF) workshop.

### Step 2

RTF workshop relies on activities and reflection exercises to draw out hidden aspirations and dreams and make youth aware about livelihood options.

### Step 3

Youth are encouraged to select a livelihood option best aligned with their aspirations.

### Step 4

Customised sessions conducted with youth to determine the skill training and impart it.

### Step 5

Placement partners are found, and life skills training is conducted.

### Step 6

Youth placed in jobs/enrolled for higher education/participate in youth clubs.

### Step 7

Follow-up with youth to ensure stability in employment period

## TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

### Step 1

Youth Service Providers (YSPs) are recruited from the community trained for mobilisation amongst youth in the village. Some are selected as trainers of RTF.

### Step 2

Train the trainer programme for YSPs as well as Trainers and Facilitators.

### Step 3

Customising the content - includes rural site immersion, courses on gender, rural economics, and livelihood orientation.

### Step 4

Training and Capacity Building sessions.

*"The ring toss game (one of the interactive games), Johari windows and Ikigai have really helped us to learn the importance of self-realisation and the need to have a goal. Before this programme (RTF), no one really asked us what our dreams were!"*

*Participants of RTF workshop Dindori*

RTF WORKSHOPS ARE RESIDENTIAL AND  
CONDUCTED WITH MIXED GENDER GROUPS





## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

- The content developed is interactive and relies on games and activities that have their foundation in established and peer-reviewed research.
- The Holland Code Career Test, a tool to map personalities with skills and Ikigai are effectively used in the programme.
- Facilitators and leaders are developed from the community itself to run the programme.
- Theatre and music are used as effective tools to inform and engage communities.
- Mentorship and counselling are provided once the participants are placed.
- The establishment of a local network of partners and alliances provides a stable foundation for the programme and ensures sustainability.
- The PRADAN staff management and training as well as the development of robust Statement of Purpose for the programme ensures consistency of output irrespective of geography and community profile.



THEATRE AND MUSIC ARE LEVERAGED FOR MOBILISING COMMUNITIES.

## CHALLENGES

### During training workshops

Getting youth to engage and open up is a big challenge. Boys do not like to be disciplined and find it tough to be in a classroom environment, and girls are not vocal enough. The other challenge is to find suitable trainers and facilitators from the community. In geographies such as Karanjia, finding a suitable location with the right infrastructure for a mixed-gender residential training is a big challenge, as they are either non-existent, or poorly maintained. In several cases, PRADAN has also found getting permissions for a mixed-gender programme troublesome as its frowned upon from a socio-cultural perspective.

### Challenges after placement

Both boys and girls, however motivated, find it really tough to stay in jobs that are far from their home base. It has been observed by the programme staff and volunteers that boys tend to discontinue jobs where they are expected to work hard, and return back more often than the girls. In cases where they are placed in locations with a different language (such as Tamil Nadu), youth find it tough to navigate contracts and payment. Many employers keep their original documents and do not return them in time in case of employment termination which has led to a general disenchantment with getting placed, especially in areas too far from their home base.

### Challenges in self enterprise

Loans for self-enterprises outside of National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) are tough to organise. In some locations, business finance for self-enterprise is available through the federation banks. While the highest opportunity for self-enterprise is in agriculture or allied activities, youth are not interested in agriculture, as it is not considered an aspirational profession. Vegetable growing is useful as income is better and ensures quick returns, but adapting traditional cropping practices to vegetables is challenging. Both boys and girls have firmly entrenched ideas about professions to follow and find it challenging to comprehend the opportunity in professions they have not heard of or seen before.

*“Currently there are 4 YSPs (3 girls and 1 boy). Of these, 3 YSPs are trainers and all are girls. We haven’t found many male YSPs who engage well and have the potential to become a trainer. Boys are usually not regular and find outdoor work more interesting. Sensitising boys to develop soft skills and the patience required for this role is a big challenge.”*

*Deepak Jatav, Development Executive,*

## UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

- » The RTF programme venue for the locations of Dindori/Karanjia was determined to be a resort which had adequate and appropriate infrastructure and was accessible from Karanjia and Dindori. The resort owners however, changed their mind just before the workshop was to commence citing their discomfort at boys and girls in a mixed gender residential programme. With some difficulty the PRADAN team managed to find an option in the SBI training facility in Dindori. It was not the perfect location as maintenance is poor and youth from Karanjia find it difficult to commute, but it was the best option in the circumstances.
- » Higher education modules were not structured. More youth, than what the PRADAN team was prepared for, signed up for the programme. To address this, the process had to be changed during the course of the project, and modules started later than planned.
- » The pool of trainers was not ready in some locations on time. In 2019-20, there was a pool of five trainers of which three moved to other organisations. This will be overcome by ensuring that the trainer hiring, and capacity building process is continuously run.
- » Talent management is a real issue. In three project geographies, two of the project anchors were on leave at the initial stage of the project. To get new project anchors immersed into the programme and ready to lead took time leading to a lag in the project execution.
- » With the earlier trend of wanting to stay at or near home increasing since the spread of coronavirus, a number of vocations, trades or opportunities have reduced. This was addressed by looking proactively at self-enterprise as a preferred vocation and promoting agriculture and allied activities for income generation.
- » Central and residential trainings were impacted due to the lockdown since March 2020. All trainings and workshops were conducted at village or panchayat level since then.



## RESULTS

### OBJECTIVE 1

#### **Organising youth from disadvantaged communities into interest groups**

##### **RESULT 1**

1230 young men and boys were mobilised and engaged within the project geography. 410 young boys went through the cycle of engagement.

##### **RESULT 2**

48 common interest youth groups are being facilitated of which specifically designed inputs and sessions were conducted in 16 such youth collectives.

### OBJECTIVE 2

#### **Capacitating and enabling youth to make informed life and livelihood choices. Converting choices to action**

##### **RESULT 1**

A pool of 132 change vectors from within the community were actively engaged to work with 59 boys and their issues.

##### **RESULT 2**

At present 500 youth are employed or pursuing their livelihood choices. 640 youth were able to take a step further and take some action around improving their choice.

### OBJECTIVE 3

#### **Creating safe spaces for youth in the society. Youth contributing to development of self and the village society**

##### **RESULT 1**

11 Village Organisations of women are actively engaged with youth and thematic engagement. More than 18 such village organisations in the project geography and another 16 such community or women institutions engaged and facilitated an inclusive approach to deal with livelihoods of young men and women.

##### **RESULT 2**

Collectives of youth facilitated during the period in project geography worked upon issues of eve teasing, young men and women's participation in electoral politics and public spaces such as the gram sabha. Youth from 10 villages have been attending gram sabhas regularly, and their youth collectives have managed to get rights to the community centre for their meetings and events.

## STORIES OF CHANGE

### **Impact Story | One**

A youth collective worked on facilitating young girls playing in mixed gender groups and in public spaces and events. They invited youth from different villages who came together to learn and form a theatre group in two locations, performing at various events or village central spots on election awareness, breaking stereotypes and aspiring freely. This gave them an opportunity to experiment, share reflections and make decisions for themselves. One boy, Jitendra, was finally able to successfully convince his parents to follow his chosen career path of improving agriculture which he was unable to do earlier since agriculture was not considered aspirational. Nine youth collectives are working on issues such as education for the vulnerable, and community awareness to tackle the spread of corona virus. The members of Lalpur youth group have gained the confidence and skill to question the panch (five) elders on issues of land division.

### **Impact Story | Two**

Most young men and women, after undergoing the programme seem more confident in raising their voice and approaching authorities. Lekhni from Harra Tola took on the panchayat functionaries, the police and other stakeholders to get a concrete road in their part of the village.

*"We managed to convince the women collectives to initiate vegetable cropping, which was never considered their traditional crop (they are maize and paddy growers) much against the initial feedback of the village elders (all male). This is just the first season, but the increased incomes and other benefits of expanding their agri portfolio have now changed their mindsets."*

*Youth club members of Raja Shankar Shah Sangathan*

*"In addition to income increase, the youth who have participated in the programme demonstrate signs of enhanced self-awareness and identity (confidence, self-assuredness, communication skills and decision making ability)"*

*Mother of a participant, Narayanganj*



## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The education departments of the state government have shown interest in the programme; starting career counselling workshops and sessions on gender awareness in high schools. An unintended but welcome result of this interest is that Pradan's programme has now been extended to students in several schools in the region.

## REPLICABILITY OF PROJECT

The programme is highly replicable as it has been executed since 2012 in various districts of Madhya Pradesh. The programme has created a youth skilling model – looking at it from demand side, that is, 'What youth want'. It has constructively made a difference to the life of rural youth by providing them with an opportunity to relook at their futures.

Another reason the programme is replicable is the self-learning or feedback cycle that is run every two years. By continuously gauging and comparing the impact of the interventions with PRADAN's assumptions and the real picture on ground (through a survey), the programme has grown and will grow further to find its perfect space between the need of the rural youth and livelihoods.

Yuwasakhis, being integral to the programme, keep track of issues related to youth and highlight them in monthly VO meetings. So far, 105 VOs spread across four teams, have been actively working on youth issues.

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Theory of Change  
 Logic Model/Results Chains Diagram  
 Organisational Structure  
 Programme Content and Lesson Details  
 Workflow  
 Processes and Protocols



uninhibited

TO MAKE  
MENSTRUATION  
A NON-ISSUE



# ORGANISATION PROFILE

## SINCE 2014

Uninhibited Foundation has been engaged in working with women in economically weak, urban and rural communities in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, in themes related to Menstrual Health and Hygiene. In 2019, they extended this work to men in the same communities.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

Engaging men and women in the same communities on Menstrual Health and Hygiene and Sexual and Reproductive Health issues.

Multi-pronged approach – content reach, discussions and a helpline.

## KEY NUMBERS

No. of young men targeted (until July 2021): Outreach to around **60000 men**, of which 27500 are expected to subscribe to audio content. 3000 men are expected to call on the helpline.

## GEOGRAPHY

Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh

OUTREACH PARTNERS DISTRIBUTED PAMPHLETS TO GENERATE AWARENESS ABOUT THE HELPLINE



## CONTACT DETAILS

Website - <https://uninhibited.org.in/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/uninhibited.org.in>

Medium.com - <https://uninhibited2016.medium.com/>

Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/uninhibited.org.in/>

CONTACT PERSON

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Organisation Development Lead

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# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

## AUGUST 2020 – JULY 2021

Uninhibited Foundation has been working with women in urban and rural economically backward communities since the year 2014, to create awareness around Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH). With the objective of creating an enabling ecosystem for menstruators around MHH, the organisation developed and implemented for the first time, an on-ground intervention with men, in the year 2019. During the pandemic-driven nationwide lockdown, Uninhibited operated a helpline for women. In 2020-21, the project objective is to develop a scaled-up and robust (keeping pandemic-related realities in mind) version of the intervention with men and women around MHH and SRH.

## PARTNERS

### 'Hands-on' Partners

NRLM - These are community-based organisations with good connections, inclined to work on menstruation and sexual, reproductive health. They are engaged in hiring 'community champions' through whom intense outreach is carried out.

### 'Hands-off' Partners

There are community based organisations that use their existing platforms to increase awareness of the Uninhibited programme. They use vehicles with loudspeakers, distribute pamphlets, phone messaging platforms, wall paintings etc.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- » The participants of the men's programme
- » Their spouses

# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS

## BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

- Having a space for men to talk about Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) will lead to them talking about their SRH needs and resolving them.
- It is more difficult for men to talk to a family member than a stranger about their SRH needs.
- If men acknowledge their own SRH needs, they will be open to listening to women's needs and hence can empathise more with their needs.
- Not all women want to talk about MHH/SRH with men (in the family).
- Support from a single, adult male family member is sufficient for women to seek MHH/SRH products and services.

## CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

Men from low income, urban/ rural communities of Madhya Pradesh. Primarily targeted at adult men with preference for the husbands of women connected to Uninhibited through the women's intervention programme. However, the programme is open to all men in the geography.

# PROJECT APPROACH

The RNP-funded project aims to provide space for men to learn, understand and ask about their own SRH related needs and issues which in turn would lead them to being able to support the choices and access of the women in their families when it comes to SRH and MHH.

Men subscribe to a free service in which audio clips on SRH/MHH issues are played to them through a phone call. After a month or so, these men have the opportunity to participate in group discussions on messaging platforms. They also have access to a helpline in which they can ask questions on SRH.

# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

## PILOT

2500 men to subscribe to the information clip service (per month from January 2021 to March 2021). 300 calls are expected to be made per month to the helpline. For these goals to be met, there should be an outreach of 6000 to 10000 men per month.

After May, the project will be extended to Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra.

Until July 2021, the outreach will be to around 60000 men, of which 27500 are expected to subscribe to audio content. 3000 men are expected to call on the helpline.

# MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

A baseline was conducted in February 2020 and an endline conducted in March 2020. The sample for the study consisted of men from Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh, the chosen geography of the pilot:

- Men who were registered as users of the helpline, who had not yet received the audio content or not undergone any other engagement with Uninhibited.
- Men who had listened to more than four audio pieces sent through the helpline.
- Men who were registered through the Community Champions of the partner organisations.

Based on the objectives of the study, the following tools were used-

- Surveys - The surveys were administered by external evaluators on phone. The surveys had around 20 questions and lasted for 15-20 minutes. Responses were collected orally and recorded in an online spreadsheet application.
- In-depth Interviews (IDI) - For a sample of adult menstruators, the IDIs were administered over the phone, led by a guide which had around 25 questions. Each interview lasted 25-30 minutes. The responses were recorded, while on call in an online spreadsheet application.



POSTER NEAR HOME

# EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

## Demographics FOR THE PILOT OF THE MEN’S PROGRAMME

AREA	Jhabua
POPULATION	10.25 Lacs
GENDER RATIO	965
LIVELIHOOD	Labours, Service Personnel, Small Business Owners
RELIGION	Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Christians, and Buddhists
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS	Rural, Urban Low Income (Around Rs.10,000 per month Household income)

The targeted population of men with whom Uninhibited will be working with would be, adult men and husbands of the women connected to the organisation through the women’s intervention. This would give Uninhibited a complete view of the ecosystem of the menstruators in the community.

PHASE OF ASSESSMENT	QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT	SAMPLE SIZE	QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT	SAMPLE SIZE
Baseline	Remote Surveys	60	Remote In-depth Interviews	20
Endline	Remote Surveys	125	Remote In-depth Interviews	25

## RESEARCH PLAN

Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies is supporting Uninhibited to conduct research through Probex. The research will go on from November 2020 to April 2021. Research questions are:

### Q1.

To what extent did men experience the space that the intervention created for them as “safe”?

### Q2.

Of the total number of men who were part of the intervention, how many raised SRH needs and had them addressed? What are the factors that helped them to do so? What are the barriers that prevented the other men from doing so?

### Q3.

What role do men think they play with respect to women’s MHH/SRH needs? What motivates them to be involved?

### Q4.

To what extent have women brought-up MHH/SRH needs with men in the family? What were their expectations when they brought-up those needs? How did men respond compared to those expectations?

### Q5.

In households where a man has supported a female family member in seeking MHH/SRH products or services, what have been the results? Did they face opposition from anyone else? If so, what did they do?



## TRAINING

Training and orientation will be provided to the helpline assistants who will handle the calls from men. The helpline assistants will be trained in the following aspects:

- Handing inbound calls
- Creating safe space on phone call
- Men’s SRH issues
- Women’s SRH and MHH issues

Additionally, the doctors whom Uninhibited is planning to get on-board will also be taken through an orientation.

## IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

RISKS	MITIGATION PLANS
Low participation of men in SRH conversations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Multiple modes of engagement to engage men – audio content, group meetings on online messaging platforms, and availability of the helpline for one on one communication.</li> <li>» Nudges from various sources - women in the family, on-ground partner organisations and IVR campaigns from the helpline.</li> </ul>
Low effectiveness of outcomes for women even if men engage with SRH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Games or small, fun challenges will be suggested so that men and women in the same family engage in conversations related to SRH and MHH.</li> <li>» Nudges by helpline assistants to women for dialogue – this is important as SRH for men is as stigmatised as MHH for women.</li> <li>» Connecting men’s SRH to women’s SRH via packaging of content. The idea is to use a hook – something that men would want to talk about – and use that to get them to understand women’s SRH. For example, usage of condom.</li> </ul>
Men not feeling safe enough to break stigma around SRH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Multiple spaces personal, group and 1-1 options</li> <li>» Inviting queries and curiosity, along with health concerns</li> <li>» Weekly group calls for building comfort and rapport</li> </ul>
Undesired involvement of men in women’s MHH and SRH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Key messages focus on supporting womens’ decisions rather than pushing specific tasks.</li> <li>» Training men to respond well to a dialogue on MHH and SRH; nudging women to initiate dialogue as per their needs.</li> </ul>
Female helpline assistant may need to field many prank calls (There may be more incidence of prank calls in the helpline for men, compared to the helpline for women).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Training given to the female helpline assistants to understand at what point during the call they must disconnect/block the caller/report inappropriate calls.</li> </ul>



# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## Overview

Uninhibited will be reaching out to men in the community (husbands' of women connected to Uninhibited through the women's intervention). The engagement will be for a period of one month – eight to ten pieces of audio content, weekly group calls for discussion and reflection, a messaging platform forum for Q&A and a helpline for SRH queries and concerns will be the programme elements. The helpline and content delivery will be through the Hello Saheli platform used for the women's intervention. Nudges for dialogue around MHE and SRH via helpline assistants, games, follow ups on SRH concerns and with women for gauging outcomes are all built into the programme design.

## I. OUTREACH IN JANUARY 2021

'Hands-on' Partners recruit community champions who go door to door and encourage men to subscribe.

They also source phone numbers of men related to women who are part of Uninhibited's women's programme. Helpline agents call these men and encourage them to subscribe.

Men subscribe to Uninhibited's information service, by dialling the helpline. Helpline operators can also activate the subscription on the system, for men who opt in.

## II. AUDIO CLIPS REACH PARTICIPANTS – FEBRUARY & MARCH 2021

A series of 11 contextualised audio clips is sent to the subscribed users on Saturday and Sunday of each week, during their preferred time slot, by a phone call made to subscribers.

Information is recorded about how many users picked up the call, what duration each user listened, whether on the first or second attempt etc.

Weekly calls with the help of agents will help Uninhibited in tracking why someone did not listen.

## III. OUTREACH IN JANUARY 2021

Hands-off partners publicise the helpline number in the communities. Publicity campaigns are done using autos.

Posters were displayed in Primary Health Care Centres, chai shops etc by community champions. Pamphlets were also distributed widely by them.

There was digital outreach done – through messaging platforms, community champions and influencers sent the poster for the helpline to spread the word.

## IV. CALLS RECEIVED BY HELPLINE FROM FEBRUARY 2021

Calls to the helpline are automatically recorded. Helpline assistants document; create a ticket, if the assistant is unable to answer the query, there is a call back. The caller is routed to a doctor consultation if needed.

## V. GROUP CONVERSATIONS

Groups in messaging platforms are set up for subscribers who have listened to some audio clips. Some videos are shared in these groups to initiate conversations and also create a space where individuals feel free to ask questions.

Subscribers are then tried to be engaged in conversations – around 10 – 12 in each group. The conversations are moderated by Uninhibited staff and the helpline assistants. Topics are common men's SRH issues, women's MHH and SRH topics.

There are weekly nudges from the helpline operators for dialogue.

One and one conversations with the men have been initiated by the Uninhibited team to understand deeper, their experience of the information service and helpline.

## VI. POST-PILOT EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAMME

Post the pilot, from July 2021, Uninhibited will focus on integrating the men's helpline with the women's programme in three geographies - Palghar in Maharashtra (near Mumbai), Jhabua district in Madhya Pradesh and Jamui in Bihar.

Central operation of the helpline will be looked at by Uninhibited team. and Fellows, who come onboard in June 2021, will engage in outreach activities for the programme.

## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

A The helpline for women, run during the pandemic-driven lockdown months, also received some calls from men. In certain contexts, men seem to be more comfortable speaking to a woman who is a stranger rather than a man who is a stranger. Hence the helpline for the men's programme, will be manned by two individuals, one a woman and the other a man. Uninhibited will observe the patterns of response and then determine which composition (only men or only women) is most effective.

For outreach to men, Uninhibited learnt that it is more effective and efficient to go through women who are already part of the Uninhibited women's network, to encourage their husbands to subscribe. Approaching men from families with no prior exposure to Uninhibited did not yield good results. For the pilot, the partners will first approach husbands of women already in the Uninhibited network.

Uninhibited has observed that content developed for men's programmes (such as songs about 'consent') is more engaging. They have decided to include more games and fun components in the content for the men's programme.

POSTER WITH HELPLINE NUMBER AND OTHER DETAILS WAS DISPLAYED WIDELY.



# CHALLENGES

## NATURE OF WORK

Menstruation is taboo and it is a challenge to get people to open up about it. This is irrespective of the region of the country that we work in.

## PEOPLE

Working remotely during the pandemic has proven to be a steep learning curve. Attrition has been a challenge, but when people see that meaningful work is being done, that there is genuineness in the communication with men, they do stay longer.

### Highlights from End line Study

80% of men do not talk to anyone if they face an issue, they would rather talk to a doctor, which does not happen often.

Men do not regularly listen to the audios, listen when they get time from their routine, which is less.

Most men shared that they found the content okay and informative in nature. 90% of men did not remember the last audio they listened to.

Most men feel SRH topics should not be discussed with other men as it is personal in nature. This is similar to the baseline result.

Most men were not able to articulate what support they would like in terms of SRH.

## MEDIUM OF ENGAGEMENT

Groups had been created on messaging platforms for users who had subscribed to the service. These members were found to be non responsive. Uninhibited staff checked with some members of the community and found that online messaging apps were associated with light content – forwarded jokes, humour – and hence men did not really view this as a medium where they could open up about serious issues. This could be the reason for their non-participation.

# UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

Uninhibited had planned to have a doctor on call for the helpline. If a subscriber called with an issue that needed medical attention, the helpline operator would check if they wanted to consult a physician over a phone call, note down the convenient time slots and schedule a consultation in with the doctor. Ahead of the call, the helpline agent would share details of the issue with the doctor, and then conference the doctor and the subscriber at the scheduled time.

However, a doctor could not be on-boarded before the calls to the helpline started. This feature of the helpline (availability of doctor on call) could not be amplified in outreach, and may have had an impact in terms of fewer calls to the helpline.

The contract with the doctor was slated to be finalised in the third week of April, post which this service would be available

# RESULTS

During the pilot of the programme until March 2021, 7600 men subscribed to the service.

Call volume was at 164 against a target of 900 per quarter.

Programme was run for women, simultaneously in the same region. Data is yet to be captured on the cross-influences of the two programmes on the two groups.

# INFLUENCES THAT AROSE

## New best practices that emerged

### CASELET | ONE

Rehan (name changed for anonymity) attended a Uninhibited menstrual and sexual reproductive health session in a low-income community in Bhopal. Until this moment, it had never occurred to him to talk to his wife about menstruation, however after the session, he casually raised the topic with his wife.

Rehan discovered that he had knowledge that his wife often menstruated for more than seven days at a time and experienced severe pain and discomfort. She had never spoken to him about it.

Taking the facilitator's advice, Rehan arranged a doctor consultation for his wife where she was able to access the appropriate medications. He shared that he never realised how menstruation could have complications and that he was grateful for the nudge to be more involved with his wife's health.

### CASELET | TWO

Ramesh (name changed for anonymity), a resident of Jhabua shared that he didn't used to use contraceptive (condom) during sexual intercourse. During a one on one call he shared that after hearing the audio content on family planning (condoms) he realised how important it was to use condom during sex to protect oneself from dangerous STIs. He shared that from now on he will make sure to use one and be more careful.

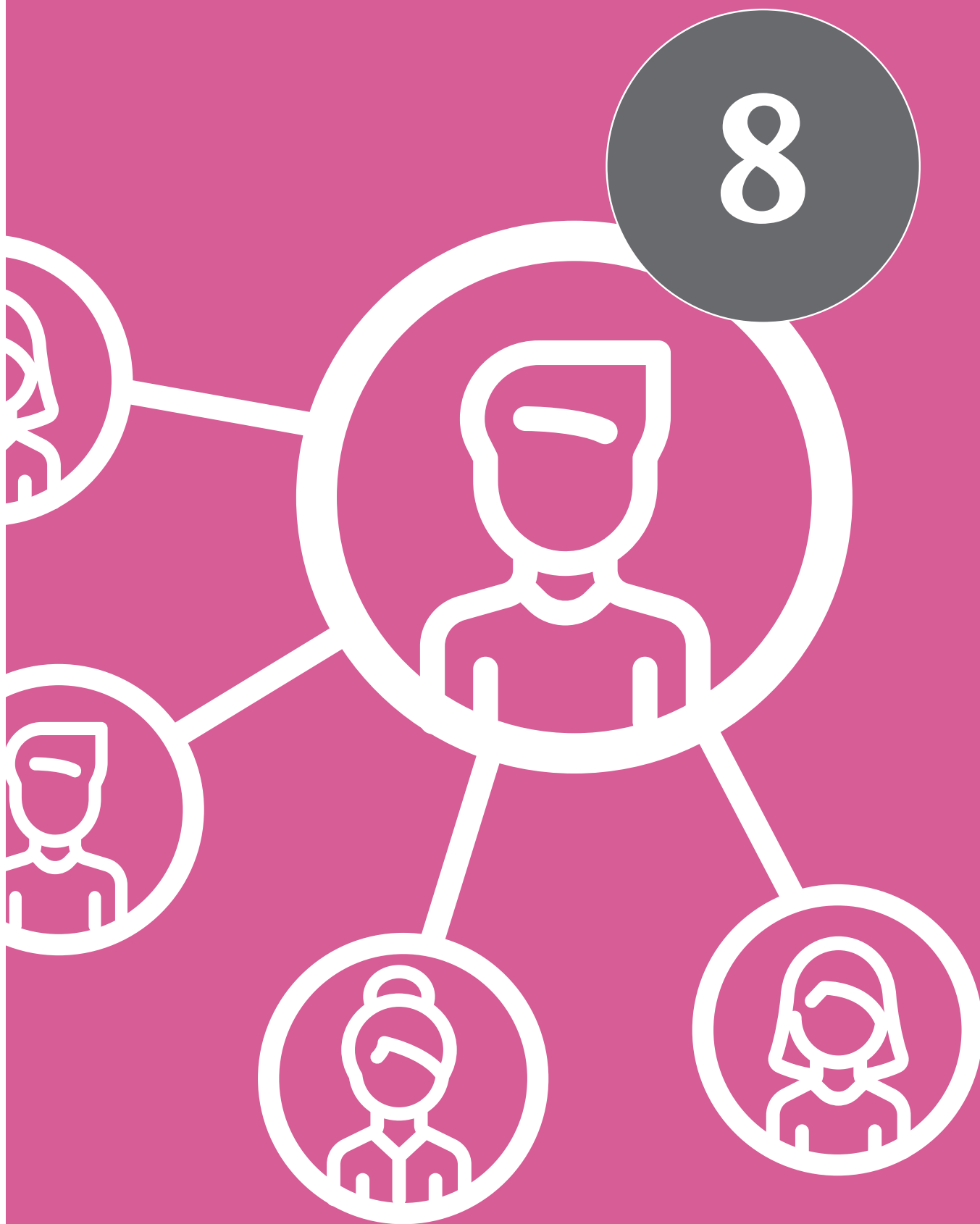
Upon asking if he had any more questions, he shared that he would be looking forward to our next one on one so that he can keep his questions ready and ask them.

# REPLICABILITY OF PROJECT

The programme is meant to be replicated and adapted so that it can be scaled up and reach more and more communities. The plan is to further adapt the programme in 3three languages in the coming year – Hindi, Bhojpuri and Marathi.

## LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Needs assessment questionnaire  
Baseline and Endline questionnaires



A WORLD WHERE ALL  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S HUMAN  
RIGHTS ARE REALISED AND  
THEY ARE RECOGNISED AS  
EQUAL STAKEHOLDERS &  
TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERS

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## ORGANISATION PROFILE

SINCE 2002

The YP Foundation is a youth-run and led organisation that supports and develops youth leadership to advance rights of young women, girls and other marginalised youth.

### UNIQUE ASPECTS

Conversations about gender at the intersectionality of other factors such as caste, religion, sexual orientation etc.

Re-casting an in-person intervention as an Internet-based one.

### KEY NUMBERS

No. of young men targeted : **2600**

### GEOGRAPHY

#### MEN AND BOYS PROGRAMME

Pilot programme: Amongst the youth (from UP) reached out to for the study 'Mardon Waali Baat' in the year 2018-2019.

The online portal would be opened up to groups based in UP through colleges and partner organisations known to TYPF. Subsequently in the long run, could have a nation-wide reach.

### CONTACT DETAILS

Website - <https://theypfoundation.org/>

Facebook- [@theypfoundation](#)

Twitter - [@TheYPFoundation](#)

Instagram- [@theypfoundation](#)

#### CONTACT PERSON

Manak Matiyani  
manak@theypfoundation.org

## PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021

Prior to April 2020, The YP Foundation (TYPF) had designed an exhibition of printed and digital content on masculinities that would use college campuses as the medium to reach young men in the states of Uttar Pradesh, and the National Capital Region.

The global pandemic made it challenging to produce and implement any intervention design that requires in-person group processes. TYPF deferred the production of the on-ground public engagement and decided to adapt the project idea to an online engagement, which would offer individual as well as group interactions on masculinities.

### Objectives

1. Developing and piloting a public engagement toolkit that enables reflection on how culture and society shapes norms and expressions of masculinities among young men and boys.
2. To inform, influence and shift the dialogues and discourse around men and masculinities based programming to address intersectional identities and diverse experiences of men.

### CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

Young men, 18-26 years of age who are enrolled in higher education would be the prioritised primary participants. However, as the platform is web based, it would be opened up to a mixed online audience as well as young men and boys who are in the outreach ambit of the selected partner organisations/groups and their facilitators. The platform would require the ability to engage with online reading based engagement.

### PARTNERS

To be identified

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Young men, Organisations working with young men

## PROJECT APPROACH

TYPF's research on interventions with men in India highlights the gap between programming on prevention of violence and the needs and desires of young men. TYPF's online public engagement model will offer individual and group-level engagements on masculinities using audio-visual prompts based on their own research and lived experiences of men. The web portal will offer visitors multiple modes of engagement with invitations for deeper thematic engagement on most relevant intersections of masculinities with other aspects of men's experience such as social media engagement, relationships and sexuality, caste, violence, friendships and work. It will present the process by which masculinity is constructed for young men in the multiple spaces they inhabit and provide a critical distance from which participants can view this process, its impact on themselves and in the world. This reflective distance will enable an understanding and eventual rejection of violence as masculinity to foreground other models of masculinity that are not considered "cool".

The project thus aims to create an online platform to engage with diverse groups of young men directly. In addition, it aims to enable selected partner organisations to take up this model of engagement with the communities and groups of young men they are engaging with.

# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS

BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

- Men’s reflective engagement with intersectional issues and masculinity in daily life can increase their ability to understand and resist gendered and social norms around men’s behaviour.
- The pedagogy adopted will make it easy for partner organisations to use an intersectional approach.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Number of online thematic tracks created on the online public engagement platform: 5

Number of online interactive audio-visual components within thematic tracks created for engaging men in the online public engagement: 20

Creation of a three-day course on masculinities for in-depth perspective building: 1

Number of participants in the facilitated sessions in the online public exhibition: 500

Number of participants attending the three-day course on Masculinities: 100

Number of curricula developed on conducting reflective sessions on the Masculinities portal: 1

Introductory Training with the selected activists/ professionals conducted: 1

Number of professionals/activists (already reaching out to young men and boys in their work) trained to use the created toolkit for engagement in their ongoing interventions: 20

Number of young people reached out through the reflective sessions facilitated by the cohort of activists/professionals: 2000

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Demographics

The project aimed to primarily reach out to young men between 18-26 years of age in Uttar Pradesh and NCR. TYPF has been conducting research as well as programmes with this demographic in the past and aims to build further insight and experience of understanding the construction, expression and pressures around masculinity for this group. The intervention aims to reach out to young men who are enrolled in higher education across university campuses. The group consists of men who are from the bigger cities (Aligarh, Lucknow, Benaras) as well as others who hail from smaller towns and rural areas and are living in the education centres for their higher studies. The engagement was later changed to online platforms but will be reaching out to the mentioned demographic and also similar groups in other states as well as a mixed online audience.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	CHANGE AGENDA	TOOLS
Individual Interaction with Website	Young men recognize how intersections of masculinities affect their lives	Feedback form in the website; Traffic on the website
Half-day Group Session	Young men recognize masculinities as socially constructed	Participants’ feedback and reflections
Two-day Group Session	Young men are able to reflect on rejecting violent notons of masculinities	Baseline-Endline Surveys; Interviews with sample from participants
ToTs with Partner Facilitators	Facilitators able to use intersectional approach	Baseline-Endline Surveys; Feedback from sessions implemented

## RESEARCH PLAN

There is no research component planned in this project. TYPF is conducting research on the global pandemic and masculinities programming in U.P. in parallel under a different grant.

## TRAINING

The engagement is training based, reaching out to both direct participants as well as a training of trainers. These will be conducted with the objective of building perspectives that masculinities are socially constructed and informed by intersections of various identity positions.

## IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

These are under development as well.

# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## Overview

The project will involve direct online training engagement with young men based on a web platform and pedagogy to facilitate deeper reflection and dialogue on masculinities and violence prevention.

The web portal would invite young people to individually access the audio-visual resources in an interactive manner wherein each resource will be clubbed with prompts and corresponding insights. This would give visitors a chance to engage with these resources in a way that records their responses to the materials as well as shares insights on those materials with the visitors in response to their submission. Moreover, this would also be a space for small groups of young people to come together and participate in facilitated sessions on various themes on masculinities such as relationships, sex and sexuality, body, violence etc. This would be developed as an online course on masculinities that would be offered at regular intervals by TYPF. TYPF will also train partner organisations in running such a course, using the toolkit that is made publicly available online. Facilitators will be able to create their own combinations of resources that they want to utilise for the sessions, with a how-to-use guide already attached to each resource. This design is aimed at creating a space for young people to curate journeys of reflections on masculinities themselves and be able to interact with other people and access resources that are generally absent from any formal curricula.

## Implementation Plan

The implementation plan is currently being finalised in the light of the changed nature of engagement.

## I. DESIGN OF ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

### MONTH 1 : OCTOBER

Framework with five-six themes was drawn up. The content for the online engagement will be organised into these.

‘Relationships and Masculinity’ is one such shortlisted theme.

Discussions with web developers to start exploring possible architecture of an online interactive platform.

## II. UNDERSTANDING REMOTE ENGAGEMENT

### MONTH 2 : NOVEMBER

In order to understand the nature of conversations that TYPF would engage in, in an online mode of interaction, there were group sessions organised. Partner organisations in UP and Bihar implement a sex education curriculum (topics such as ‘Know Your Body’, ‘Know Your Rights’) through online sessions twice a week. Within this programme, TYPF conducted two sessions on masculinities, which helped them test how an online session would possibly play out.

A case-study based approach was used. For example, how inter-faith marriage led to violence inflicted on a boy, how a Dalit man growing a moustache drew flak. The intent was to go beyond a gender framework to a gender-caste framework to examine masculinities.

The groups comprised both men and women. TYPF would examine if dynamics change if the group comprises only men.

### MONTH 3 – DECEMBER

Many possibilities opened up – to take conversations beyond ‘taking consent’ to discuss verbal, non-verbal cues of consent, withdrawal of consent, the spectrum of situations where consent is involved etc.

TYPF examined how to provide anonymity to the individuals accessing the platform as exploration of some themes may need this.

Design of online engagement:

The website would use a story-based organisation, instead of thematically organised content. This would mean that three to four story-lines would be built into the website, which follow a character through some major life decisions such as choice of partner, handling relationships at home, choice of livelihood etc. The participants will have multiple options to choose from at each stage, based on which they will see blurbs explaining the implications of that choice in context of masculinities, along with links of some audio-visual material that they can access for more details.

Web developers have confirmed that such an interactive story-based online architecture can be created, if web designers and story writers are also brought on board.

TYPF also explored the possibility of using content created by other organisations – videos, posters etc. They have deployed a robust filtering process as it is important for the messaging to be nuanced, without triggering content.

### JANUARY – JUNE 2021

- M&E design
- Story Writing
- Illustrations
- Website Design: Process of registering to the portal, back end profiles (facilitator would be able to edit the stories to create custom experiences, for example), method of users sharing with friends, etc.)
- User Experience Design (all touch points from the the time a young person hears of the portal, till the time they exit and tell others about the portal.)

- Direct Implementation of Facilitated Sessions

Examples of storylines that were developed:

- One focussing on consent, primarily in romantic/sexual relationships, extending to how consent is applicable in other contexts too. The story depicted a boy and girl who go out, how the boy ‘reads’ situations and the different ways in which consent manifests within an interaction.
- The second was about a gay young man, trying to navigate an environment that sees homosexuality as a threat to masculinity.

The third was about an upper caste young teenage boy coming to terms with the inherited masculinities in a domestic (family) setting.

- The fourth was about a young Dalit man who faces vilification on social media for dating an upper caste girl. This story explores how masculine hierarchies among men are heavily informed by caste.

### JULY – SEPTEMBER 2021

- Direct Implementation of Facilitated Sessions
- Creation of Facilitation Guides
- Creation of cohort of partner facilitators
- ToTs with partner facilitators
- Social media publicity

### OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2021

- Implementation of tools by partner organisations
- Regular Check-in with partners

### JANUARY - MARCH 2022

- Implementation of tools by partner organizations Regular Check-in with partners
- Project Evaluation.

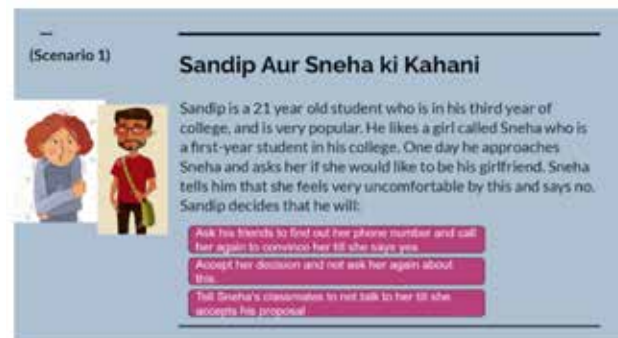


## Design of the Online Engagement

### USER PATH ON THE ONLINE PORTAL



The visitor to the portal is offered choices of storylines to explore



On picking a storyline/scenario, the visitor is shown a description of the scenario, and possible choices of action for the main character



The user can explore each of the options. Associated resources are offered for learning.

## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

- In commissioning the writing work, TYPF engaged two separate teams, to work on two different story lines each. This not only de-risked the process (one team could be the backup in case the other did not deliver on time), but also brought different approaches and perspectives to the process.
- The TYPF team worked closely with the writing teams. This was important to ensure nuanced perspectives in the choices to be featured in the storylines and also in arriving at the learning points for each of the choices.
- Out of a wide range of issues that can be addressed in this intervention, it was helpful to invite the writing teams to identify the topics they were more interested in and felt more comfortable with. Some members of the writing team had experiences of writing stories about viral content on social media. It was important to on-board people with this relevant experience as some of the themes (vilification of certain castes in social media, for example) needed deep understanding of this aspect.
- TYPF engaged an UI/UX expert to design the flow of the online engagement. This input was critical to ensure that the experience of navigating the choices in the storylines would be seamless and flexible. The UI/UX expert provided the inputs to the technology team that would build the online portal. The designs created by the UI/UX consultant would be used by the Web Developers to build the website.
- It was decided that the website would be optimised for a mobile device. Most young men were expected to engage with the online platform through hand-held devices, so this was an apt decision.
- A pilot would be done among earlier participants of TYPF's workshops or programmes. For this, the illustrations and stories could be used as static slides. This step, before the website development, would give valuable feedback on the impact created in young men.

## CHALLENGES

It has been challenging to align the work with the originally planned objectives, timelines and activities, since this is a new modality that TYPF is exploring.

### NATURE OF WORK

Building an interactive, online engagement has increased dependence on technical expertise that is fairly novel to the team working on this project. This challenge is being mitigated by consulting with agencies who specialise in handling the technical architecture of such platforms, as well as trying to recruit individuals with experience in managing creation of digital engagements.

### CONTENT

During the process of developing stories, it was important to cover all the intersections at play with gender – for example, religion, caste, class, sexuality etc. The challenge was in ensuring that all identified intersections were covered in one storyline or the other. While some of these have been discussed in the first four stories developed by April 2021, TYPF will be developing more stories to include further intersections that inform masculinities, while ensuring that there is no stereotyping in the development of characters who featured in the stories.

### PEOPLE

It was critical to identify the right people to draft the choice based storylines, especially those involving intersectionalities of caste and gender, for example. TYPF sought out writers who had worked in theatre, advertising, television etc. Another associated challenge was in estimating the effort needed to create each story while ensuring the key messages are being communicated without re-enforcing any harmful stereotypes.

### TIME INVOLVEMENT BY TYPF

While engaging in the writing process, the TYPF team realised that their inputs in the review process with the writers was time consuming. For example, nine choices at the second level of a story branch into around 30 choices, each requiring validation and inputs for learning points from the TYPF team. The TYPF team also realised that all corresponding learning points within the stories need to be drafted internally, leaving only the story points to the writers.

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Theory of Change

Website Workflow (created by Web Developers)

*NOTE: This document captures the evolution of the programme until April 2021.*

9



CEQUIN

A WORLD WHERE  
GENDER EQUITY IS  
THE NORM

# ORGANISATION PROFILE

## SINCE 2009

Centre for Equity and Inclusion (CEQUIN) has a vision of a gender equitable world, where both women and men have an equal right to lead a life of dignity, exercise their choices, develop their capacities and reach their potential.

CEQUIN's flagship programmes include Mardo Wali Baat, their programme with men and boys, Kickstart Equality that promotes football for girls from vulnerable communities, and Badhte Kadam that incorporates education and skill building of girls and women for financial independence, and running of a Women's Resource Centre.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

The programme 'Mardo Wali Baat' includes boys living in rural, urban and peri-urban contexts across four states in North India.

Apart from working with adolescent boys, CEQUIN is also creating an additional cadre of youth, who serve as support trainers/mentors in addition to the CEQUIN staff. This fosters learning, an exchange of ideas and experiences and promotes healthier gender relations between different age groups.

## KEY NUMBERS

**600** Adolescent boys engaged with as Agents of Change (AoCs).

**50** College youth mentored to become trainers in gender equity related work with young boys and the larger community.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Website - [www.cequinindia.org](http://www.cequinindia.org)

Facebook - [CequinIndia](https://www.facebook.com/CequinIndia)

Twitter - [cequin2009](https://twitter.com/cequin2009)

Instagram- [CequinIndia](https://www.instagram.com/CequinIndia)

CONTACT PERSON

[admin.finance@cequinindia.org](mailto:admin.finance@cequinindia.org)

91-11-23230585 / 43670317

## GEOGRAPHY

### MEN AND BOYS PROGRAMME

Four Northern states of India – Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh

*"Main chaahta hoon ki meri chhoti behen padhey, kaabil banney, ki khud lad sakkey, naa ki apney bhai ya pita par nirbhar rahey."*

*(I want that my younger sister goes to school and become self-reliant, so that she can face the world herself, without having to depend on her father and brother for the same.)*

*The words of a boy participating in the CEQUIN programme. Shared by Rahat, a staff member at CEQUIN*

# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2021

The 'Mardo Wali Baat' project engages with adolescent boys to reach the goal of creating gender equitable communities. These boys become a cadre of sensitised individuals that build their own leadership skills as they challenge stereotypes, facilitate a positive environment for women's and girls' empowerment, and raise their voices to advocate for gender equality. The project was implemented across schools and intended to run over 1.5 years, ending in September 2020. It was extended to March 2021 due to the global pandemic in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Project outcomes include:

- Creation of a new generation of gender sensitised boys (Agents of Change - AoC).
- Creation of a gender sensitive local environment.
- Creation of a new narrative for sensitised men.
- Men are recognised as 'partners' rather than 'obstacles' for gender equity.

## PARTNERS

Colleges, research Institutions, funding agencies and gender domain experts from The Centre of Health and Social Justice, UN Women and UNESCO

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Participants of the Mardo Wali Baat programme (adolescent boys)

Families of the boys (to a greater extent during the pandemic)

College Interns/co-facilitators

## TESTIMONIAL

*"An alternative narrative has to be created where manhood is not synonymous with violence and aggression."*

*From a CEQUIN report*



<sup>1</sup>This document captures the progress of the RNP project until September 2020. The pandemic related lockdown and conditions following it have significantly altered the programme – in terms of the timelines as well as the manner in which the programme was subsequently implemented. Since schools have been shut, sessions with the boys can no longer happen as was intended within school premises and hours. Children had to be reached through contact with their families, either via the internet/phones or through small group sessions in their homes or outdoors.



# HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS

## BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

International organisations and forums in the past four decades have moved forward in their discourse on women's empowerment and gender equity from viewing men and boys as obstacles to them being indispensable in preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) and for development and well-being of girls and women. In CEQUIN's understanding, efforts to build capacities of women for empowerment will not be sustainable unless men and boys as engaged as partners. It believes that engaging with men and boys, specifically adolescent boys, is especially relevant in India, where caste, class and linguistic ethnicity have a tremendous influence on how they construct their sense of masculinity, imbibe what is meant by an asli mard (a real man), and what is expected of them. These stereotypes, very often, cage young boys, de-sensitise them, and restrict their ability to adapt, create and innovate, even while according them certain privileges within a patriarchal system.

Gender sensitisation empowers boys to break the shackles of stereotypes, and find their true potential. By learning and sharing, boys build the ability to shift from the dominant norms around gender and masculinity, challenging the existing beliefs and practices that drive inequality between men and women. They become advocates for women and girls, transforming themselves into active agents or stakeholders of change in this cause.

The process of working with men and boys needs to be very carefully crafted as per CEQUIN. While one may face the dilemma of investing in a group that is already privileged in a patriarchal context, there is also the concern of how to transform boys without them feeling stigmatised as 'perpetrators' of violence and inequalities. CEQUIN takes the following approach to create a new generation of gender sensitive men:

- Any efforts towards gender equity must include both women and men – building capacities of girls and sensitising boys. The discourse must not be patronising towards men and boys.
- The efforts have to be targeted at three levels - individual, their immediate communities, as well as supported by the larger narrative of breaking gender stereotypes.
- The men and boys engaged in the project must have a clear understanding of their own growth as leaders through the project, as well as the real benefits of a gender equitable society, including positive, personal and social outcomes for themselves.
- Some assumptions made by CEQUIN for this project include:
- Schools will allow CEQUIN to conduct the programme activities and allow the participants (AoCs) to meet and conduct their campaigns.
- Trainers have a standardised understanding of the objectives and methods of the programme and are able to convey this in a consistent way.
- Consistency in group composition is necessary to develop leadership skills and gender sensitivity. Participants shall value these capacities enough to keep attending peer-group meetings.
- AoCs have sufficient opportunities and motivation to internalise and practice key learning on skills and leadership among diverse stakeholders.
- Local stakeholders are receptive to AoC campaigns because they are hearing the message from and about boys for the first time.
- Most youth have access to mobile phones, interest in social media is high amongst youth and they are able to use these platforms with ease.

THE TRAINING SESSIONS UNDERTAKEN BY CEQUIN ARE INTERACTIVE AND ACTIVITY BASED.

*"The trainees (college interns) enjoyed the workshop and gained many insights on gender related issues which they were keen to practise at the individual level and also involve their peers in this project."*

*A CEQUIN report on the TOT workshop*



## CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

### For the AoCs

Boys, primarily in Grade Eight, that come from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds and attending government, government aided or private schools.

The boys should be willing and enthusiastic about being part of a leadership and gender sensitisation workshop as well as be willing to take initiative in activities at their schools so as to become role models for their peers.

### For the Interns/Co-facilitators

Male or female undergraduate or graduate level students who are keen learners and already sensitive towards gender issues. They should have the ability to conduct gender sensitisation workshops, be creative, be able to engage with adolescent boys and form strong bonds with them.

## PROJECT APPROACH

### Prepare and Design Phase

In the preparation stage of the project, the Theory of Change and associated Logical Framework was created, as part of a two-day knowledge building workshop. Expected outcomes, the research questions to measure impact and the implementation plan were created. Various assumptions of the project were discussed and taken note of. An external research agency, ASK, was brought on board, to undertake the baseline and end line studies. To further refine project interventions, a technical advisory group was convened for a workshop that provided valuable inputs for the training modules and the research design. The advisory group comprised individuals from UNESCO, Ambedkar University, Centre for Health and Social Justice, UN Women, ASK and Children First.



*"During focus group discussions in Mewat we learnt that girls followed the set roles that were pre- defined - staying in the kitchen and doing household chores. Boys were involved in more outdoor activities such as going to the market for grocery. Boys and girls do not communicate freely with one another and the interaction is mostly need based. Social, cultural restraints are very evident in their conversations."*

*A CEQUIN Staff member*

## Selection of Schools and AoCs

A critical element of the project design is to conduct workshops and follow up sessions with adolescent boys in the schools that they attend. This requires an interface with authorities for the requisite permissions to conduct sessions in schools. Selection of schools also involved various aspects including engaging with school authorities on the project, awareness sessions and conversations on gender sensitisation, discussing project requirements including the selection of boys that become direct participants of the project, and allocation of school time for the workshop and follow up sessions.

## Selection and Training of Interns

Apart from sensitising adolescent boys, CEQUIN wanted to create an additional layer of gender sensitive leadership that comprises young adults. This cohort of college interns assists the CEQUIN staff in conducting the trainings and mentoring of adolescent boys. They also become the pool of potential trainers for future engagements at CEQUIN. These interns co-facilitate (with the master trainer from CEQUIN) the leadership and gender sensitisation workshops and follow up

sessions of AoCs in schools, mentor and support them in their endeavour to become advocates for change. Interns are selected based on their availability for the year, interest in gender issues, and willingness to learn and use of creative media such as poetry, theatre, photography in order to engage with the AoCs. They are given space to discuss freely and develop understanding on gender issues. Interns are given training through a two-day 'Training of Trainer' workshop.

## Gender and Leadership Training

Based on the learning from CEQUIN's past experiences of working with men and boys as well as keeping in mind the constraints of time, infrastructure, school permissions and socio-economic constraints of the target group, this module was developed to be suitable for boys in the age group 13-16 years that are enrolled in government/lower income private schools. It has been created to be replicable and scalable. This module is used in a two-day intensive training workshop with the identified AoCs at the school itself. It builds conceptual understanding and includes various group activities which create a space for interactions for the boys. The module is mostly in Hindi, suited for urban and rural settings.

## Follow-up Sessions and Community Engagement

These continuous engagement sessions are intended to occur through the rest of the year with the various AoCs in the form of monthly sessions so that they build their capacities, become peer mentors and take ownership in their immediate circle of influence. This is done through creative means, such as theatre, art, sports, film making, public speaking, etc. AoCs are expected to lead and organise, with the support and guidance of CEQUIN, various initiatives in their schools, families and local community, to raise awareness on gender related issues. These can be street plays, music and dance performances, poster and slogan competitions, etc. They are encouraged to use social media to capture their activities and share their thoughts. Local stakeholders such as educational institutions, police, panchayat, Resident Welfare Associations, etc. are identified for engagement and to influence.

## Gender Audits and Youth Summit

AoCs in select schools are trained and supported to conduct gender audits in the vicinity of their schools/local community. The gender audit uses a survey tool to map local infrastructure in terms of gender equity and safe, unmediated access for women and girls. The reports and the recommendations from the same are presented by the youth leaders to identified stakeholders,

thereby helping them be more aware of gender related concerns in their community. Based on this, these local stakeholders are encouraged to take certain corrective measures to make public spaces more secure for girls and women. A year-end youth summit is organised. AOCs from many schools converge to share knowledge and experiences of the past year.

## Communication & Advocacy Tools & Documentation

A major thrust in the project is to also create high quality and effective short films and digital tools for sensitising men and boys more widely. This is done through strategic creative partnerships. Information and Communication Technology materials on themes such as 'questioning patriarchy', 'celebration of the sensitive man', and 'turning the tables on gender discrimination' are developed to be interactive, engaging and in formats easy to disseminate at large scale through multiple media and various media partners. A strong evidence base for advocating for men's engagement in gender equality efforts is created through the Baseline and End Line evaluation of the project, including formulating recommendations and qualitative case studies to present to various external stakeholders.



THE TRAINING SESSIONS UNDERTAKEN BY CEQUIN ARE INTERACTIVE AND ACTIVITY BASED.



## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

## Qualitative & Quantitative

Outcomes are determined by the objectives of the project.

For the first objective of 'gender sensitisation and leadership building of adolescent boys in schools', the outcome is that the boys become advocates for gender equity. Measures for these include:

- Schools engaged in the project
- Number of introductory gender sensitisation sessions conducted to increase awareness on gender inequity in schools (among staff)
- AoCs identified for the project
- Workshops on gender sensitisation and leadership conducted for the AoCs to increase awareness of gender inequity among AoCs. This include two-day training workshops and continuous engagement sessions
- Enhanced leadership skills of AoCs\*.
- Emergence of AoCs as social influencers among their peers\*.
- Quality/scale/effectiveness of activities undertaken by AoCs\*.
- Number of students and other people influenced by the AoCs
- Students introduced to various forms of communication and expression\*.
- Network of gender sensitised student leaders created \*
- Quality of student engagement at the summit\*.

For the second objective of 'Youth leaders to engage and advocate on gender equity with local stakeholders', the outcome is that local institutions become gender sensitised.

Measures for these include:

- Number of stakeholders involved. These include sarpanch of villages, local leaders, principals, teachers, school management committees and NGOs\*
- Level of engagement and interest of stakeholders\*
- Number of AoCs trained to conduct gender audit
- Gender audit reports from four locations\*
- Quality of gender audit reports and recommendations\*
- Level of increase in gender sensitisation of stakeholders\*
- Level of support and ownership of the stakeholders\*
- Level of increase in confidence, leadership skills and effectiveness of gender related advocacy by AoCs\*

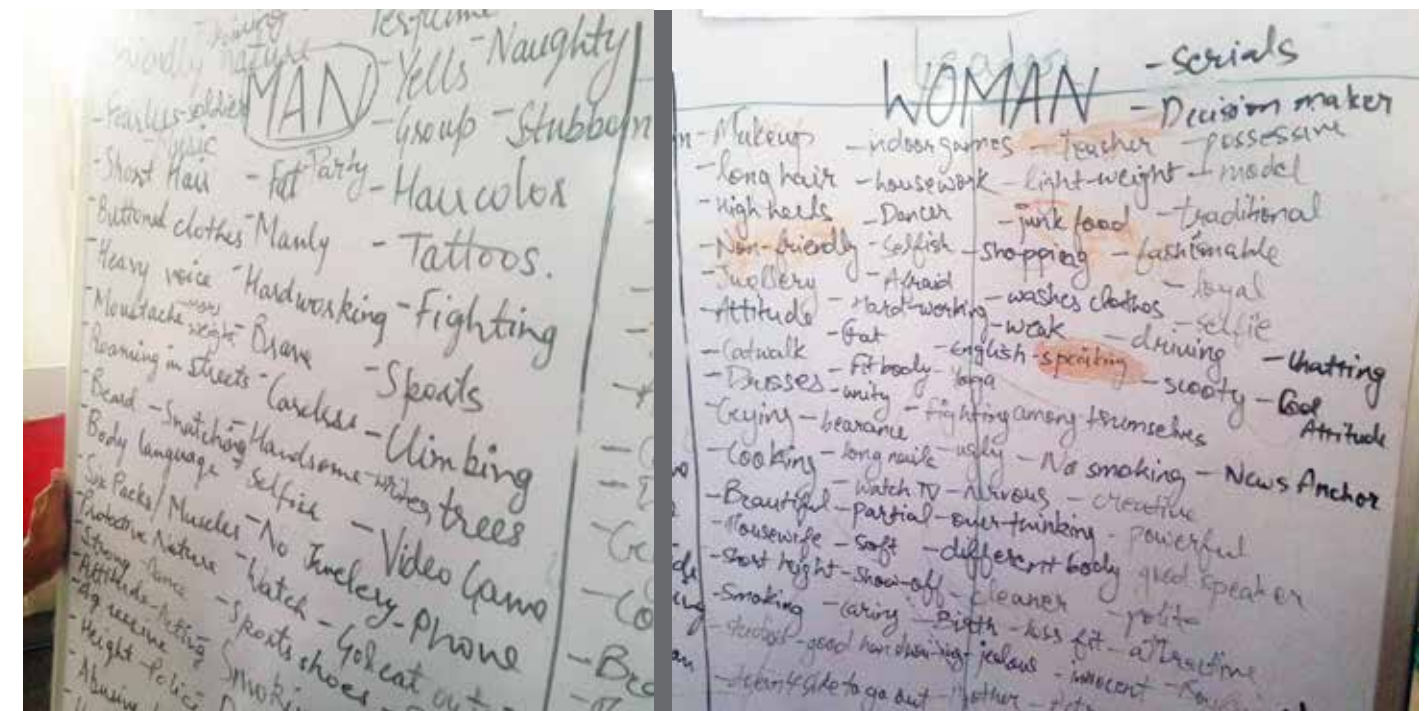
## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

## Demographics & Cultural highlights

All of the four states covered by the school-based programme – Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan – have adverse gender related indices and entrenched patriarchy. CEQUIN has been working in Jamia Nagar in Delhi and in Mewat in Haryana for a long time, whereas its engagement with schools in Old Delhi, Rajasthan (Alwar) and Uttar Pradesh (Noida) is its first for this project.

## Delhi

Two government-aided schools in Old Delhi and one private school in Jamia Nagar are part of the project in Delhi. Jamia Nagar is a minority dominated area with a population that has migrated from UP, Bihar, Assam and Bengal, primarily in search for opportunities for employment, education and a better quality of life. Culturally, this is a traditional, patriarchal society where women and girls are generally perceived as inferior to men and boys, with restricted mobility and a limited access to resources and opportunities including in public and civic spaces, education, employment and access to credit. Education facilities are generally lacking for this densely populated space and a large section of the



AN ACTIVITY CEQUIN UNDERTAKES WITH THE BOYS DURING THE FIRST GENDER TRAINING INVOLVES THE BOYS LISTING OUT ATTRIBUTES OF A MAN (LEFT) AND OF A WOMAN (RIGHT).

THE TRAINER THEN SWAPS THE TITLES OF MAN AND WOMAN IN THIS LISTING (RIGHT), AND REVISITS THE LIST WITH THE BOYS TO HIGHLIGHT THAT MOST ATTRIBUTES ARE ASSIGNED BY SOCIETY, RATHER THAN BIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES.





A PARTNER SCHOOL OF CEQUIN IN RURAL MEWAT, ITS ENTRANCE, COMPOUND AND CLASSROOM DURING A CEQUIN SESSION WITH BOYS. THE ENTRANCE HAS THE STATE SPONSORED MESSAGE "TO SAVE THE GIRL CHILD, TO TEACH THE GIRL CHILD" PLASTERED ON ITS WALLS.

population has low skilled and low paying jobs in the unorganised sector. Most of the population, having migrated, are also disconnected from their native homes and kinship ties, and are struggling to survive in the big city. This takes a toll on the communities, becoming visible in the form of violence, alcoholism and atrocities, often towards women.

## Mewat, Haryana

Two government-run schools, in partnership with Sri Ram Foundation (SRF) and one private school are part of the project. Mewat is one of the most backward districts of India, in terms of socio-economic indicators, despite its close proximity to the national capital. As per the 2011 Census, 37.6% of females are literate as against 73% of males. It is a minority dominated area with conservative thinking in people. Girls are not allowed to leave their villages to access middle or higher secondary level of education. Girls and women face stark inequities across various parameters - inside their homes and in public spaces. A majority of the district's population (88%) resides in rural areas with the main occupation being agriculture and allied activities. However, poor soil conditions and inadequate and poor quality of water for irrigation has impeded the agricultural economy here. Limited industrialisation, lack of adequate infrastructure in health, education and railways, and apathy by the state government has hampered overall economic growth in the region.

## Alwar, Rajasthan

Seven government schools, supported by the Alwar Shakti Cell of the district administration and one by SRF, are part of the project here. Bhiwadi is a region adjacent to Mewat, Haryana. It is rural, with conditions similar to Mewat.

## Noida, Uttar Pradesh

CEQUIN is partnering with two government schools, also supported by SRF, that cater to low income families in Noida. This is an urban/peri urban region. Despite its rapid urbanisation and proximity to the national capital, the society continues to be patriarchal, although with greater mobility and access to opportunities and resources for women and girls, in than rural Mewat.

# MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

CEQUIN built an MIS system for this project to track the various schools covered across the four states and the students reached within each school. The formal training programme as well as the subsequent informal sessions with the students was tracked. CEQUIN also records the feedback of students post their sessions. Through the help of an external agency, CEQUIN undertook the baseline and the end line studies of the project to assess the understanding of boys on gender and leadership reflected by their attitude, behaviour and practices in their daily lives and the impact of the programme on the AoCs, the other boys in school, families and the larger community.

The M&E approach altered significantly during the pandemic period. Staff members are tracking AoCs, across schools and states that are continuing to engage with the programme remotely. All activities being undertaken and the impact of these are being stored in "evidence" folders online that are being captured in text, audio and video form – by student, by session, by school and state.

# RESEARCH PLAN

In partnership with an external agency, CEQUIN designed the research tools for the baseline and end line studies. These were further refined by a workshop with the technical advisory group. Once the research tools were developed, a pilot was undertaken with adolescent boys and based on the feedback received, certain questions were modified to make it simpler for the boys to comprehend and fill the questionnaire. The key objectives for research were:

- To assess the existing knowledge, attitude and practices of adolescent boys and girls with regard to gender equity/ equality.
- To assess the leadership, knowledge and skills of the AoCs.
- To study the impact of the one-year long engagement on the boys.

# TRAINING

The adolescent boys selected to be Agents of Change (AoCs) are engaged with through the year via a two-day formal training workshop, followed by various informal sessions.

Objectives:

- Increase understanding of gender, masculinity and patriarchy.
- Encourage open communication about gender, biases, stereotypes, discrimination.
- Enable them to engage in peer discussions and generate onward awareness.
- Enhance leadership skills to influence peers and community.
- Strengthen their social networks.
- Build an inherent sense of responsibility among boys to become advocates for gender equality and women's empowerment

The formal training for the AoCs is held over two days during school timings, for a total of 10 hours. The trainer uses various creative media such as movie clips, flash cards, interactive storytelling sessions, group activity etc.

## Mardo Waali Baat

### DAY 1 SESSIONS

### DAY 2 SESSIONS

#### SESSION 1

#### GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

#### SESSION 2

#### LET US BUILD OUR PERPECTIVES

#### SESSION 3

#### LEADERSHIP

Concept of Leadership  
Who's My Leader  
Good Leader and Bad Leader  
(Difference, values, skills,attitudes)  
Test my Skills  
Self Development (SWOT Analysis, Case Study)

#### SESSION 4

#### IDENTITY

#### SESSION 5

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

Meaning, fundamental rights, our rights in our classrom

#### SESSION 6

#### SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY

Meaning, positive discrimination, equality of women

#### RECAP

#### GENDER SENSITISATION

Differences between Man and Woman  
Addressing Gender Stereotypes

#### MASCULINITY

What is Masculinity  
Notions of Masculinity  
Bullying  
Gendered Division of Labour  
(Seema and Salim ki Diary)  
What is Patriarchy

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Types of Violence and prevalent statistics  
Identifying violence  
Life Cycle of Violence against Women

#### IMPORTANCE OF GENDER EQUITABLE SOCIETY

#### WAY FORWARD

Leadership Club and year long engagement

The follow up sessions that are undertaken with the AoCs through the rest of the year are intended to reiterate the same lessons and themes discussed in the two-day training programme. With the pandemic and closing of schools, the face to face interaction with the boys was no longer feasible, or was intermittent. The same content has thus been modified to suit online sessions, texts and messaging platforms using a textbook-based pedagogy such as 'match the words', 'fill in the blanks', etc.

During the pandemic period, CEQUIN conducted a basic course in gender for over 100 college students across seven universities in order to create a sizeable cadre of gender sensitised youth. Some from this group now support various CEQUIN initiatives being undertaken with the AoCs online.

## IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

### RISKS

#### SCHOOLS RELATED

CEQUIN had envisaged that schools may not be receptive to their programmes, and hence obtaining permission would be difficult.

School and college calendars and exam schedules can make it challenging for training to happen as per schedule. Teachers and principals may be more interested in completing the syllabus than in leadership programmes. There may be apathy or resistance from institutions for gender sensitisation. There could also be a lack of support in weekly engagement sessions during school hours or in allowing students to undertake activities outside school premises. There may be apathy and insensitivity of other community level stakeholders to engage with the AoCs.

#### AOCS RELATED

The AoCs may not have adequate capacity to undertake the various tasks and activities envisioned in the project.

It could also be challenging to sustain the interest of the AoC groups over a year and ensure that they engage in all the activities.

Given the short time of the project, to achieve substantial behavioural change is a challenge.

### MITIGATION PLANS

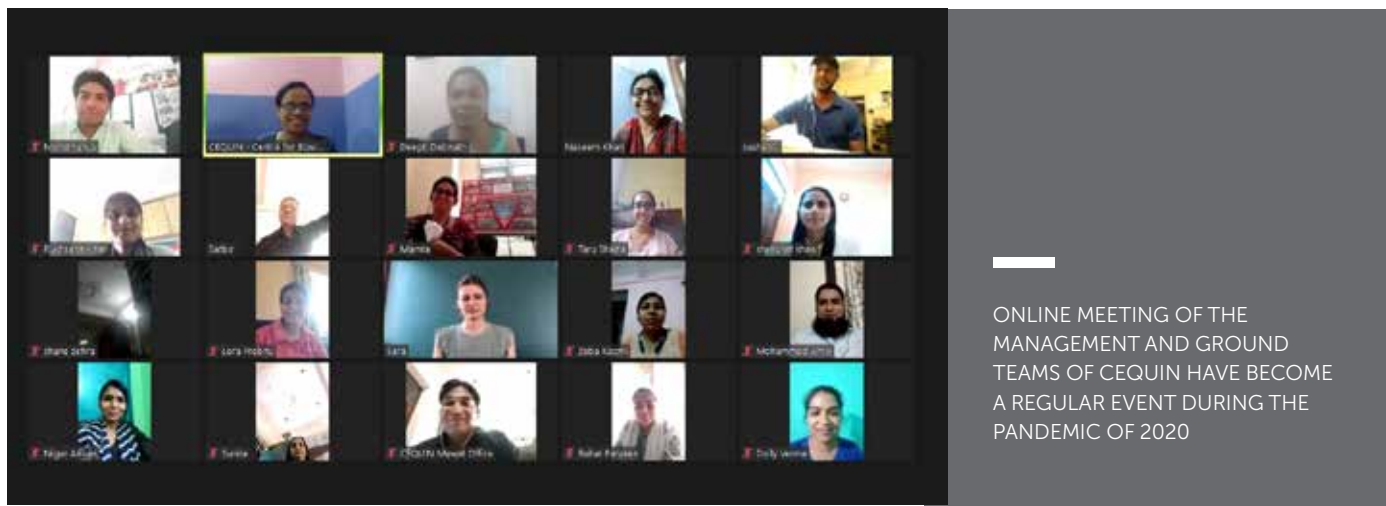
CEQUIN was hopeful that permission will be obtained due to established relationships with the Department of Education in the Delhi Government, the District Collector's office in Mewat, Nuh, as well as the links with educational institutions in the NCR region.

CEQUIN intended to undertake intensive rapport building with the various institutions involved, including schools, the Resident Welfare Associations, the police, panchayats and so on. School authorities were to be kept informed and their buy-in sought.

CEQUIN worked to address this through the intensive training and follow up support and handholding of the students.

CEQUIN saw the initial leadership training as a way to effectively build interest of the students that shall help retain their interest and engagement and make them want to build on their skills further.

CEQUIN has designed the project for high impact through the scope and depth of the different activities within the project.



ONLINE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT AND GROUND TEAMS OF CEQUIN HAVE BECOME A REGULAR EVENT DURING THE PANDEMIC OF 2020

# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## Overview

STEPS	DETAILS
<b>STEP 1</b> Preparation and Design of Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Learning workshop to formulate Theory of Change, detailed Log Frame, critical assumptions, research questions to measure impact.</li><li>» Formulation of the in-house training module.</li><li>» Hiring of external research agency ASK to undertake baseline and end line evaluation.</li><li>» Workshop with Technical Advisory Group to refine project interventions, training module and the research plan.</li><li>» Building linkages with NGOs and District administrations that work with schools</li></ul>
<b>STEP 2</b> Selection of Schools and AoCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Identification of schools across different states.</li><li>» Obtaining appropriate permissions for conducting sessions in schools.</li><li>» Orientation of school principal and teachers to the project.</li><li>» Identifying participating students or AoCs for the leadership training and allocation of time for the two-day formal training and the sessions through the year.</li></ul>
<b>STEP 3</b> Selection and Training of Interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Advertisements about the year-long internship programme through placements cells of Delhi University colleges and internship portals such as Internshala.</li><li>» Selection of college interns based on their availability, interest in working on gender issues and their willingness to engage as co-facilitators,</li><li>» Training of College Interns (TOTs).</li><li>» Finalisation of the training modules for the project based on inputs of new interns and the demographics of the AoCs selected.</li></ul>

**STEP 4**  
Gender and Leadership Training

- » Conducting the two-day Training workshop for the AoCs in each of the participating schools – by CEQUIN trainers assisted by college interns.
- » Undertake Baseline study for the AoCs and Non-AoC students in each of the schools.

**STEP 5**  
Follow up Sessions and Community Engagement

- » Continuous year-long engagement sessions on gender sensitisation and leadership undertaken with AoCs in all participating schools to build their capacity so they start becoming influencers among their peers.
- » Community level campaigns led by AoCs are encouraged and supported.
- » Local stakeholders are engaged with by CEQUIN and AoCs – RWAs, Panchayat, local police, etc.

**STEP 6**  
Gender Audits and Youth Summit

- » CEQUIN builds capacity of the AoCs to take on gender audits in their communities.
- » AoCs present their findings of the audit to local stakeholders.
- » Organization of a year-end Youth Summit to bring together all AoCs on a larger platform and create a youth network.

**STEP 7**  
Development of Communication and Advocacy Tools & Documentation (Ongoing through the project)

- » CEQUIN creates various tools – audio, video and written - for wider dissemination through collaboration with the research agency, a filmmaker, and other media partnerships to influence the narrative on gender as well as for policy advocacy.

The boys in a Delhi school post the two-day training spoke of liking the activities and the workshop. They expressed how this was the first time they were exposed to such a workshop on leadership or concepts such as SWOT. They especially liked the activity on “alag alag nazariyey” (different perceptions).



CEQUIN'S SESSIONS WITH THE BOYS ENCOURAGE THEM TO LIST OUT AND EXAMINE THEIR CONCEPT OF THE ASLI MARD, THE REAL MAN. THESE EXPRESSIONS BY GROUPS OF BOYS DEPICT THE PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS BOYS CARRY WITHIN THEM ABOUT THE SAME



## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

### Training Material

The training module developed by CEQUIN is founded on the experience and learning from programmes that CEQUIN has implemented in the past with young men and boys, in consultation with various experts. It has been further adapted to cater to adolescent boys of the four states where the project was implemented. It incorporates various group activities for the boys that are age appropriate, innovative, thought provoking and interactive, while dwelling on complex and serious topics such as masculinity, violence against women, and equality vs. equity. The training material is designed to introduce a few themes in the formal two-day training in the beginning, followed by the year-long sessions that revisit and reinforce those concepts.

### Impact Across Different Age Groups

The cadre of college interns that CEQUIN works with creates a pool of future trainers for CEQUIN, as well as another group of gender sensitised youth within society. CEQUIN is sensitive to the differences in contexts and degree and nature of the entrenched patriarchy in different regions, and adapts their programmes accordingly, also viewing their success in social change in the context within which it is happening.

### Communication & Documentation

CEQUIN has engaged a young film maker for audio-visual documentation, a tool that would help to record impact. She has trained both CEQUIN staff and various AoCs on basics of making films, using meeting platforms. The college interns are also encouraged to lead the communication on various social media sites – documenting stories of impact.

## CHALLENGES

### Related to Schools

While CEQUIN had envisaged a possible risk in obtaining permissions to engage with adolescent boys in government schools in Delhi and Haryana, in Delhi, it became a major roadblock causing substantial delay. CEQUIN had to re-strategise some of the project design elements and revisit time lines, geographies and the age group they wanted to work with. They began working with some private schools in Delhi and Haryana instead and included boys from grades other than grade eight. They approached SRF Foundation to partner with and work in some of the government schools in Uttar Pradesh. Schools in Alwar district of Rajasthan were also identified and the District Collector gave permission for work there. Interface with the administration and school authorities thus became a more significant ongoing activity, than had been anticipated at the planning stage.

Schools, especially in rural areas of Mewat, often have intermittent electricity supply, not allowing for showing of films through a projector, for example. During the pandemic, it became essential for ground staff teams in the various zonal offices to have an inverter backup and tablets in order to run the project, as well as monitor and document in a timely manner.

*"As a trainer, it is challenging to engage with boys. Boys tend to giggle, laugh or get embarrassed when discussing topics on gender or issues like rape. They have to be guided to look at things with seriousness."*

*Megha, College Intern*

### Mindsets and Regulations

Boys and institutions often have a mental barrier in engaging with concepts of patriarchy. AOCs in Haryana and Rajasthan did not recognise patriarchy as a challenge and a threat to society. In those areas it was considered an established and acceptable norm. The trainer had to come up with various innovative sessions through role plays to make them understand how a patriarchal mindset is a hindrance and has adverse effects on masculinity.

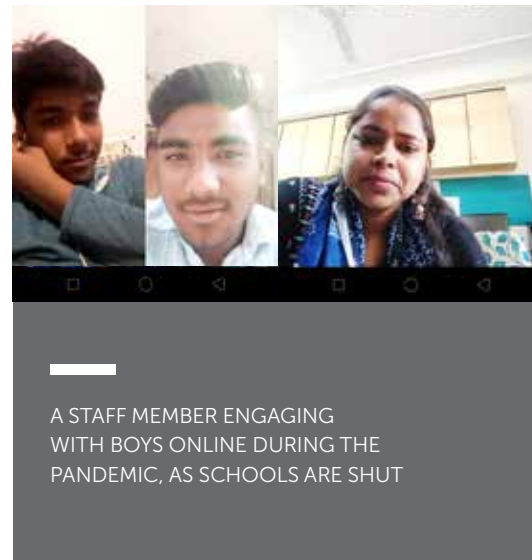
Socio-cultural constraints of the regions that CEQUIN works in, make it challenging to conduct gender sensitisation training sessions in the schools based there. The trainers have to adapt and avoid making any controversial statements that may cause conflict with the staff members. The rules and regulations of individual schools as well as the attitude of the principal and the teachers involved influence the manner in which the project can be initiated as well as carried on through the rest of the year.

In Mewat, schools had an expectation of receiving monetary support for other infrastructure projects, or the possibility of jobs and employment, and it took time and effort to convince them of the goals and intentions of the project and CEQUIN as an organisation.

## The Impact of the Pandemic

CEQUIN has observed that boys who are shy or introverts are especially hard to engage with through the online format, the only channel of communication during the pandemic. Many boys have been unable to be part of the programme due to lack of access to phones or the internet or the lack of support from their parents for the same. CEQUIN is cognisant of the fact that a face to face engagement cannot be completely replaced by the use of technology.

The pandemic has forced CEQUIN staff members as well as the boys in the programme to develop the skills needed for online communication - communication between senior management and ground staff, as well as between staff and the AoCs. CEQUIN undertook concerted efforts to train and handhold staff members and boys in the process - through trainings on the working of online meeting platforms, computer-based documentation, photography and videography, etc.



A STAFF MEMBER ENGAGING WITH BOYS ONLINE DURING THE PANDEMIC, AS SCHOOLS ARE SHUT

## Funding Space

CEQUIN also perceives funding of their programmes and organisation more challenging in the future with the new Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) rules as well as India-based funders being less inclined to a human rights approach. They are working to leverage their existing financial and human resources in the most efficient and beneficial way.

# UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

### Anti-Citizenship Amendment Act Unrest

In Delhi, CEQUIN works in communities with a high Muslim population. These regions were greatly impacted during the Anti-CAA unrest that took place from November 2019, until the Delhi Riots in February 2020. One of schools in this programme is based at Shaheen Bagh that was the epicenter of the protests. Schools were closed for long periods during this time and engagement with the boys was disrupted.

### Global Pandemic

The initial months of the pandemic were spent in relief efforts, in trying to ensure that basic rations, sanitisers and masks were

available to the most affected people within the marginalised communities that CEQUIN works with. Efforts were made to reach out to the various AoCs in all of the schools, through phone calls and online communication. These are young boys that do not have access to personal phones and have to rely on their parents. Even among parents, many do not have any access to smart phones or the internet. CEQUIN, however, managed to connect with 67% of the total AoCs by June/July 2020 either through calls/texts on standard phones, through messaging apps (chat or video) on smart phones or in a few instances, in face to face meetings. CEQUIN also realised that engaging with parents was essential with children at home during the pandemic and also started to engage with mothers and fathers.

CEQUIN then resumed its programmatic activities with the AoCs, although in an altered form. The mode of engagement between the trainers and the AoCs, among the AoCs, and between the AoCs and the larger community became largely remote and online. Some in-person smaller group meetings (with necessary precautions in place) in the homes of the AoCs, open spaces and school premises have also been undertaken by the CEQUIN staff across locations - especially in rural Mewat and in Noida.

### Schools Closed

Due to schools being shut for an extended period, children have had very little academic guidance and learning. This was seen as a need by the parents, greater than sessions purely based on building leadership and gender equity skills. CEQUIN has thus been undertaking academic support classes (especially in English and Maths) with children across locations. This is being led by the various college interns that have been inducted into this project. Exercises were developed, like in school text books, such as 'Fill up the blanks', 'Match the words' etc., for easy comprehension by children.

Given the pandemic situation, CEQUIN's programme is undergoing revisions in its methodology and planned outcomes.

*"The pandemic has thrown up various challenges and we are facing them head on. Our ground staff was trained to become fluent with online communication and documentation. We are seeing how isolated and vulnerable children are at this time when schools are shut. We are learning of higher dropouts from school, overall, and more so among girls. Women are managing even greater workloads at home due to schools, angan waadis and hospitals not operating or operating in reduced capacity. This work of engaging with men and boys, so as to get them to participate more and in support of women and girls takes on even greater significance."*

*Lora Prabhu, Executive Director, CEQUIN.*



DURING THE PANDEMIC, STAFF MEMBERS HAD TO ARRANGE SESSIONS WITH BOYS OUTDOORS OR IN SMALLER GROUPS IN THEIR HOMES.



# RESULTS

CEQUIN has engaged with around 600 adolescent boys (as AoCs) across 16 schools in four states of North India, as per its baseline report. The formal two-day training was undertaken for all the AoCs across the states and follow up sessions with each school had begun. However, the CEQUIN project has been affected by various external events over the course of the year 2019-2020 (described in the section above). While CEQUIN has managed to reach out to a large number of children during this period (when schools have been shut), it has decided to focus its energies on deeper qualitative impacts, rather than on reaching the numbers. Children greatly look forward to the engagement by CEQUIN during the pandemic as their schools are shut and other forms of social engagement have been curtailed. CEQUIN staff has spent significant time in engaging with parents and bringing them on board to allow their boys to continue to participate in this programme remotely during the pandemic. There have been differences observed across regions. The engagement by principals plays a big role in ensuring the smooth and consistent running of the various sessions and a strong partnership with the principals is needed to be built upfront and through the course of the programme. During the pandemic, it was observed that children were more home-bound in urban, peri-urban settings, whereas those in rural areas of Mewat and Alwar started to venture out and be outdoors sooner. However, lack of internet facilities in rural settings have made online sessions and learning for children there much more challenging than those in urban areas. Physical interaction with children is taking place in rural and peri-urban areas. Some small group sessions are being held with safety precautions in the homes of some students as well.

CEQUIN intends to undertake the gender social audits and organise the youth festival as a culmination to the project in the coming few months. There is a documentation of the project in audio and video, in short and long form, being undertaken as well.

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*“While conducting the gender sensitisation workshops, the boys spoke about the ecosystem of Mewat discouraging girls to study after grade eight. Many of the boys wanted to design action plans to combat this issue. The boys also found the perspective building exercise as both interesting and helpful as a medium to understand the notions of masculinity from their day to day life. They were seen to be the most responsive during this activity.”*

*A staff member from the Mewat team*

## STAKEHOLDER

## VIEWS ON IMPACT/EXPERIENCE OF THE PROGRAMME

**A 13-year-old boy in a Delhi School**

*“As boys, we can’t show emotion, we are made fun of, if we do. So we have to hide and cry.”*

**A boy in rural Mewat during the pandemic lockdown**

*“We are having to study through phones because schools are shut. I spoke to my female cousin sometime back and realised that my uncle, her father was not giving her his phone for her lessons. I felt that it was not correct that my father allows me to use the phone but not hers. So I spoke to my uncle and convinced him to give his phone to his daughter so she could also study like me.”*

**Imran, a boy in rural Mewat**

*“I was visiting my aunt in a neighboring village and I saw some young boys teasing and making fun of girls walking on the road. I did not think this was right and went and spoke to them I said that these are someone’s sister too, would you like it if someone acted like this with your sister? The young boys initially resisted and asked me what I care. I said that to improve conditions in Mewat we have to begin ourselves.”*

**Shubhangi, College Intern**

*“The aim of the Mardo Wali Baat is to sensitise boys to change mindsets in society on how men and women are perceived. Adolescent boys are still mouldable, later they become fixed in their views. There are things happening in their homes, with their mothers and sisters, they don’t see or notice. I hope to influence boys to be different through such a project.”*

**Naseem, Program Manager**

*“Even during the pandemic, we were not willing to give up. We trained ourselves to be adept virtually. We realize this work with the boys is so important. It will take decades for changing the social system and patriarchal mindsets but we want to do this.”*



*Qualitative outcome measures have been captured in greater detail in CEQUIN's end line report.*

A STAFF MEMBER ENGAGING WITH BOYS OUTDOORS ON A VILLAGE STREET DURING THE PANDEMIC IN RURAL MEWAT



## Quantitative Outcomes

- Schools engaged in the project - **16**
- Number of introductory gender sensitisation sessions conducted to increase awareness on gender inequity in schools (among staff) - **16**
- AoCs in the project - **600**
- Workshops on gender sensitisation and leadership conducted for the AoCs to increase awareness of gender inequity among AoCs - **256**. This includes 16 two-day training workshops and 240 continuous engagement sessions
- Number of students and other people influenced by the AoCs - **13664**
- Number of stakeholders involved - **65**
- Number of AoCs trained to conduct gender audit - **25**

## REPLICABILITY OF PROJECT

CEQUIN views this project as a learning opportunity to solidify a programme that is adapted and scaled up in different schools and regions going forward. The project is designed to create ripple effects - through peer exchange among boys, through gender sensitised community-based collectives and institutions - beyond the period of the project. The cadre of college interns is also intended to create a second line of gender sensitised leaders and help scale the programme further in the future for CEQUIN. The audio, visual and virtual tools created during the project and the impact study provide valuable learning and robust evidence for policy advocacy as well as to refine the programme further, to leverage funding to scale this intervention and take it to other geographies.

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Mardo Wali Baat Training Module  
Seema aur Salim ki Diary  
Baseline Qualitative Tool  
Baseline Quantitative Tool  
Framework of Baseline Study  
Baseline Study Report  
Theory of Change



THE PLAYGROUND  
IS THE  
CLASSROOM

10



PROJECT **KHEL**  
WE SPEAK PLAY!

# ORGANISATION PROFILE

## SINCE 2012

Project KHEL's programmes are focused on creating joyful learning experiences for children and adolescents to promote gender sensitivity and inclusion, pluralism and a secure sense of self.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS

Learning and Fun are dual components of any activity undertaken with children.

Interventions are designed to allow for gradual changes in children to avoid strong, adverse reactions by parents or teachers towards children as they evolve.

Focus on engaging with children via weekly sessions through the year (in school or outside), making interventions impactful despite being of limited duration per session.

## KEY NUMBERS

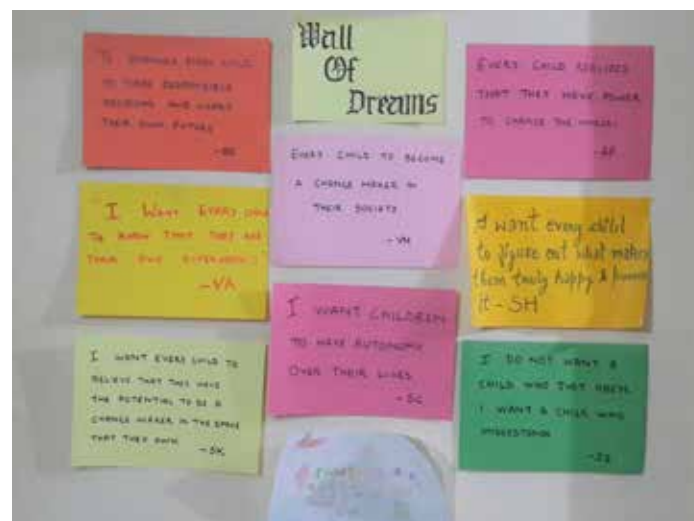
**550+** children added and **1079** retained in Project KHEL's main programmes – Made in Maidan and FrisB(arabar)

**650** boys attended the Red Spot and Teen Talks workshops

## GEOGRAPHY

### MEN AND BOYS PROGRAMME

Lucknow, the capital city of the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh



*"Main Bheed nahin hoon – yeh ehsaas honey lagta hai bacchon ko. (A child starts to believe that 'I am not just someone in a crowd'). Project KHEL enables the process where children start to feel valued."*

*Safwan, a Play Educator at Project KHEL*

A WALL CREATED BY THE PROJECT KHEL TEAM ,  
ON THEIR ASPIRATIONS FOR CHILDREN

## CONTACT DETAILS

Website - [www.projectkhel.org](http://www.projectkhel.org)

Facebook - [www.facebook.com/projectkhel/](https://www.facebook.com/projectkhel/)

CONTACT PERSON  
[contact@projectkhel.org](mailto:contact@projectkhel.org)  
0522-4950280

# PROJECT OBJECTIVE & KEY MILESTONES

## APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

The project aims to scale and add at least 1000 additional children to the regular programmes of Made in Maidan (MIM) and FrisB(arabar) while sustaining the current outreach of 1500 and to take the Red Spot and Teen Talks workshops to an additional 500 boys. MIM aims to use a play-based curriculum to impart essential life skills around gender, pluralism and a sense of self. FrisB(arabar) is a coaching programme that uses the sport of Ultimate Frisbee among mixed gender teams.

Red Spot is an interactive workshop format that uses humour, storytelling, action songs and more, to boost the self-esteem of young girls that plummet during puberty, while also informing girls about their biology, and menstrual management. These workshops are also directed towards boys to develop empathy on the issue and influence the women in their lives to make better choices in thought and practice.

Teen Talks are free flowing, interactive, no-agenda workshops that centre on issues concerning teenagers such as puberty, relationships and sex. Held separately for girls and boys, these are spaces for adolescents to better understand themselves and those around them.

## PARTNERS

The programmes are run by staff members and a large group of youth leaders and coaches. The latter are trained to become facilitators for the various programmes and hired on a part time basis. These are youth that have emerged from amongst the children in these programmes and have shown special interest and calibre, imbibing the values that Project KHEL espouses.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Children and adolescents are the primary stakeholders for Project KHEL. A majority of these are engaged with in their schools, and a few in shelter homes and slums. They have built the capacities of the facilitators with the programmatic intention to create a safe space for children. Project KHEL has, thus been deliberate, in its limited engagement with parents and staff members in institutions (principals, teachers or superintendents), though they are important stakeholders.



## HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON WHICH THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED

- Sports and play-based interventions are appropriate tools to build life skills, including those around gender equity.
- Empowerment of women and girls cannot happen exclusively, without engagement with men and boys; such segregation can, in fact, create further rifts in society.



INTERMINGLING OF GIRLS AND BOYS DURING MIM

### CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION PROFILE

Project KHEL runs programmes with children and adolescents of the ages of 8 to 18, mostly from underserved communities. The intended gender ratio of the programmes is 50:50. Teen Talks and Red Spot workshops are undertaken at different schools, irrespective of background.

## PROJECT APPROACH

Project KHEL works with girls and boys in the same play spaces, thereby creating a visual and cognitive impact from the very beginning that they are amongst equals, regardless of gender. For example, children are asked to stand in circles in a mixed manner (alternating boys and girls) which challenges the norms that they usually see usually around them -- segregation while sitting in class or standing in assembly. The facilitators are trained to apply a gender lens to all activities undertaken with the children, irrespective of the particular life skill an activity is intended to develop.

**Whether in a competitive game or an activity, children are encouraged to reflect individually and as a group, both during a session and after.**



CHILDREN AT PLAY WITH A PLAY EDUCATOR (A PROJECT KHEL STAFF MEMBER) FACILITATING THE GAME. CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO ENGAGE WITH THE FACILITATORS OPENLY AND WITHOUT FEAR OF JUDGMENT OR RIDICULE

Project KHEL customises their curriculum for each of these programmes/workshops, not just by each centre or location but within centres too, catering to the different ages and needs of the children. Their curriculum design is dynamic, with facilitators trained to undertake activities that are most relevant to the group of children they are working with. Children also have a say in deciding the course of the curriculum in a manner that they perceive as useful to them. Project KHEL's programmes share common goals and resources while adopting an interconnected strategy.

Made in Maidan implements holistic, interactive and experiential learning methods through sports, story-telling, theatre, crafts, dance and games. These are typically hour-long sessions that happen twice a week, conducted with a school class during school hours or as an after-school programme in participating shelters/slums. Each session ends with time for reflection on the activity wherein a safe space is created for children to express themselves on a variety of topics.

FrisB(arabar) is a programme where children and adolescents are coached in the sport of Ultimate Frisbee. It is perhaps the only true mixed gender sport that has boys and girls, and now increasingly LGBTQ players, play together on the same team, against other mixed gender teams. It allows for boys and girls to learn how to engage with, respect and work with each other in a safe and meaningful manner. Ultimate Frisbee is also self-officiated, encouraging players to be honest, play fair, know the rules, apply them, resolve conflicts and communicate effectively. This helps imbibe sportsmanship, fair play, critical thinking, effective communication and respect – all of which are crucial life skills. FrisB(arabar) runs every day of the week, with some variation depending on the calendar of tournaments. It is organised in public parks or open grounds/fields, primarily with children of low and middle income families. Youth coaches are mentored by Akshai, the Founder-Director of Project KHEL and also Head Coach of Lucknow Ultimate. Youth coaches simultaneously run their own classes with children. They are given the freedom to develop their own drills and coaching styles to bring diversity to the manner in which the various teams play and compete.



*"My whole life has transformed since I joined Frisbee. I have learnt team work and become more confident. I used to be very shy and not engage with girls. Through Frisbee, I learnt to play with girls. I realise now that there is no difference between girls and boys, even in sports. Girls make mistakes and boys too. Everyone is learning.*

*I now earn through training of teams in Ultimate Frisbee. I have had the opportunity to travel to different cities and compete. I have taken training in English and computers through Project KHEL. What I learnt there in 10 days was more valuable than what I learnt over two years in school."*

*Arun, a 15-year-old Youth Coach of FrisB(arabar)*

Teen Talks, an open discussion forum for teenagers, focuses on various puberty, health and safety related issues. These are topics teens cannot typically engage with, at home or at school. Red Spot comprises workshops that provide the unique opportunity to discuss menstruation. The workshops aim to empower girls by removing the stigma and shame associated with menstruation, revalue it as a natural biological phenomenon and also sensitise boys on the issue. The workshops for Teen Talks and Red Spot involve separate discussions with boys and girls (lasting one to two hours). These are one-off sessions that are undertaken depending on the willingness of schools to provide a space and time for such a workshop.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

### Qualitative & Quantitative

Project KHEL aimed to add at least 1000 additional beneficiaries to MIM and FrisB while sustaining the current outreach of 1500+ children in them and to take the workshops (Red Spot/Teen Talks) to 500 boys. Qualitatively, participants are expected to gain awareness as well as practise learned behaviours in three areas: self-awareness, gender sensitivity, and pluralism, through progressive stages of learning and internalising.

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Key Demographics & Cultural Highlights

Project KHEL operates primarily in low income schools and runs after school/parallel programmes in mainstream schools that cater to economically disadvantaged children from nearby slum areas. They also work directly with children and adolescents in a few shelter homes and slums. All of these locations are situated in urban, peri urban, and in a few cases, rural areas within or around the city of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. Most of these children have had limited access to opportunities and come from backgrounds where traditional gender roles are entrenched.

A SEMI-GOVERNMENT SCHOOL IN LUCKNOW WHERE PROJECT KHEL CONDUCTS ITS MIM PROGRAMME



## MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

The founders of Project KHEL feel that typical evaluation procedures do not capture the full impact of their programmes on children. They feel that the stories of children that emerge from their work better represent the impact their work has had - including the subtle changes in tone, body image, body language, the manner in which children occupy physical spaces or are in mixed gender settings. The team focuses on capturing 'before' and 'after' stories, stories of change and photographs to capture the impact of their work.

For MIM, a baseline was undertaken. In addition, Project KHEL prepared and implemented an evaluation questionnaire for the new children who joined at the beginning of the academic session in April – May 2019. Going forward, Project KHEL plans to capture impact along the parameters of sense of self, gender and pluralism. Assessment of facilitators is undertaken in an informal manner through feedback from children, by the senior leadership as well as from co-facilitators.



## RESEARCH PLAN

A qualitative research was initiated that examines the following questions:

- Do the learning objectives for the planned, activity-based sessions adequately contain and convey teaching on gender sensitivity, self-awareness and pluralism? Are there any gaps?
- What are the major takeaways that children have after going through one year of the programme? In this fun-based approach, are the intended learning objectives being met? Are there some values and behaviours that children grasp more than others?
- What qualities make a facilitator effective? What is the role of the facilitator in conveying the learning objectives?

A baseline study was undertaken by Project KHEL in April 2019, followed by an assessment in September 2019 to assess the questions above. The end line study scheduled for February 2020 could not be undertaken due to the onset of the pandemic related restrictions and closing of schools. Preliminary findings of these assessments have come in and a final report is awaited.

*“Every play educator is encouraged to be their own boss. We are encouraged to push our own boundaries, some can find that tough, but it makes one better over time.”*

A Playducator

CHILDREN REFLECTING ON THE LEARNING FROM THEIR ACTIVITY IN AN MIM SESSION WITH A PLAY EDUCATOR

## TRAINING

The critical influencers are the facilitators or Playducators that run the sessions. In-house capacity building of facilitators is done through trainings, video screenings and on-the-job training in live sessions. Facilitators are encouraged to adopt the vision, mission and the values that Project KHEL as an organisation abides by. New facilitators act as support facilitators, observing how sessions are undertaken by more experienced Playducators. They are motivated to read all the modules prepared in-house and to bring in tweaks based on the location and session to be undertaken. They are exposed to trainings and interactions with other organisations within and outside Lucknow, on topics related to children, gender relations and roles, sexual and reproductive health etc. They are encouraged to share their learning and experiences through online blog posts, photographs, videos and stories. Facilitators rate themselves and their peers post the sessions and this is discussed on a weekly basis to enable growth and learning.



*“Facilitators are trained on energising and de-energising activities of varying time durations so as to better facilitate children depending on their energy levels and mood. They are taught to act on their feet and respond to the verbal and non-verbal cues they receive from children during the sessions.”*

A Playducator

CHILDREN ENGAGING IN MONITORING THEMSELVES THROUGH A GAME

## IDENTIFIED RISKS & MITIGATION PLANS

Recruitment and retention of human resources has been Project KHEL's biggest internal risk. Attracting good talent to Lucknow from other cities is difficult. There also exists the risk of team members wanting to move on to other work opportunities with higher pay and/or in bigger cities. Attrition greatly hinders the running of programmes; and the training process of new recruits has to begin afresh, with significant strain on the senior leadership. Project KHEL plans to alter its work culture and increase its pay packages in order to retain staff.

External risks - A community or school may refuse to let the organisation start or continue a programme due to perceived notions of “spoiling” children with their approach of mixed-gender play or the discussion of sensitive topics openly. Project KHEL has typically tried to gain the support and buy-in of the community/school leadership first. The programmes also reach children from migrant communities based in unregistered slums. In case of evacuation/dislocation of these communities, the programme loses contact with these children. Not only is this emotionally taxing for the staff, it also leads to a strain on achieving the numbers and impact that the programme was planned for. A re-strategising is then needed.

*“In these workshops, if undertaken in segregated gender settings, boys have been seen to take advantage of this space in various ways to better understand themselves, their peers, families or elders or other issues that may be troubling them. This is in contrast to a mixed gender set up, where the focus sometimes goes into looking cool and not on gaining information/clarity.”*

Angana, Executive Director





A PLAY EDUCATOR WITH CHILDREN IN AN MIM SESSION



# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## Made in Maidaan

### STEP 1

Identify partner locations and recruit participants

### STEP 2

Train facilitators

### STEP 3

Facilitators orient teachers/ administrators, manage relationship with schools/ shelter home

### STEP 4

Facilitators conduct activity and reflection based life skill sessions at schools, shelter homes and slums

**STEP 5:** Facilitators conduct gender aware, gender sensitive sessions; equalise group power dynamics in sessions

### STEP 6

Facilitators provide individualised attention in group settings

### STEP 7

Peer leaders are identified and groomed

## FrisB(arabar)

### STEP 1

Identify locations (mostly public parks) and recruit participants

### STEP 2

Identify and train youth coaches through ongoing training sessions with Head Coach, Akshai.

### STEP 3

Youth coaches run their own classes for children in different locations - Thrice a week in off-season time.

### STEP 4

During tournament season, classes are run daily. Teams are formed

### STEP 5

Facilitators provide individualised attention in group settings

### STEP 6

Peer leaders are identified and groomed

## Teen Talks & Red Spot Workshop

### STEP 1

Identify partner locations (schools) and recruit participants

### STEP 2

Facilitators (currently the Executive Director and a support facilitator) orient teachers/administrators on the sessions

### STEP 3

Facilitators conduct activity in same gender settings

*“Sports encourage leadership, strategy building and planning among children. Some children will only get energised through sports.”*

*A Play Educator*

## BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

### CURRICULUM MODULES

Project KHEL has developed a large number (over 120) of modules on life skills, sports and drills that are activity-based, experiential and help in imparting the holistic education that the organisation promotes. These act as frameworks for conducting various sessions, but allow and encourage changes depending on the age of children, their emotional state and what the facilitator feels must be the focus. However, senior leadership realised that their modules had been too open-ended and facilitator-dependent. During the 2019-20 grant cycle, Project KHEL worked to streamline the modules so as to ensure that facilitators implement the modules as intended.

### CONCEPT OF ‘GOOD BACCHA’

At the end of each session of MIM, one or two children are identified as ‘good bacchas’ based on their conduct during the session. That child or children are given a jersey that they get to wear for the next session which begins with a recap discussion among the children on why they received this recognition. This acts as a positive reinforcement in children, encouraging shy and hesitant children to come forward, while aiding other dominant children to demonstrate leadership qualities that are subtle, apart from contributing in a variety of other ways through which children learn what “being good” can mean.



GOOD BACCHAS’ BEING AWARDED A JERSEY TO WEAR DURING CLASS WHILE OTHER CHILDREN CLAP AND REFLECT ON WHY THE STUDENT GOT THIS RECOGNITION

## NON-GENDERED USAGE OF LANGUAGE

Project KHEL team members are conscious not to engage in language that distinguishes behaviour that can be mistakenly/stereotypically attributed to gender. They encourage mixing among children in subtle ways without pointing specifically or calling out of groups as ‘girls’ or ‘boys’.

### FEEDBACK LOOP

Facilitators fill up a debriefing survey online post each session of MIM that records the experience of the session, the key takeaways, the real life examples used, a rating on fun and learning among the children, and the names of the “Good bacchas” for that session. This survey has been built in-house and helps to capture the details of a particular session, tracking learning and growth of that group of children and addressing any challenges/obstacles that arise.

Time is dedicated for reflection post each session, where co-facilitators discuss the positive aspects and improvement areas in the way the sessions were conducted. Weekly meets take place among all the facilitators to discuss the learnings of the week.

## YOUNGER IS BETTER

Project KHEL has started to focus on young children, those in Grades Three to Five, in MIM for greater impact on their gender related constructs and beliefs.

A PLAY EDUCATOR STOPPED THE GAME MIDWAY TO GET THE TEAM TO REFLECT AND RE-STRATEGIZE IN A GAME OF KABADDI.



## CHALLENGES

### RECRUITMENT & ATTRITION

The organisation continues to face instability in the number of facilitators that they have. Almost all of the staff hired at the beginning of the academic year in 2019 did not join the organisation for different reasons. Project KHEL had to re-initiate the hiring process and have continued to face attrition of staff through the grant cycle. The programmes are highly facilitator dependent and the loss of staff has an adverse impact on the programmes over the course of the year.

### UNANTICIPATED REDUCED SCHOOL ENROLMENT

A school that Project KHEL had been working with wanted to reduce the hours dedicated to the MIM programme by half. Not wanting to compromise on the quality of the programme, Project KHEL withdrew from this school. A slum that Project KHEL worked in moved, leading to a drop-out of 400 children. Another school reduced its class strength significantly. All of these factors reduced the number of students that the MIM programme was reaching. In the latter part of the grant cycle, a school prioritised practice for an annual play over the MIM sessions. Facilitators have been mentored on the manner in which to engage with school authorities in such situations, so as to find alternatives acceptable to all parties involved.

### LOGISTICAL ISSUES

Dropouts in FrisB(arabar) are higher at the time of tournaments as they require travel and a firm commitment from the children as well as their parents. (who until then, have either not been involved or have engaged only in a peripheral manner). In addition, there are space constraints when working with larger groups of children on school premises.

### GROUP VS INDIVIDUAL

A play educator spoke of the challenge of assessing change at the level of the individual child in sessions conducted with groups of children in the limited time duration.

### CHANGING POLITICAL CLIMATE

There is a greater segregation being seen among children based on religion, in the present political climate. Project KHEL has been cognisant of this fact and designed activities for children accordingly. This included the celebration and learning about festivals of different faiths, organising an inter-faith namaaz and a Internet-based call with Pakistani school boys.

## UNEXPECTED RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

### ANTI CAA UNREST

During the period of unrest in December 2019, schools were being shut and reopened for short durations. While this did not affect the number of children engaged in the MIM and FrisB programmes, the number of sessions held for MIM during this time came down. Since the target for the workshops had already been achieved, no further workshops for Red Spot or Teen Talks were held since December 2019 and were thus, unaffected.

### GLOBAL PANDEMIC

It was towards the end of the programme in February/March 2020 that the effects of the Corona epidemic in Lucknow started to be evident. Schools were closed by mid-February. Fortunately, the programmes and workshops within the RNP grant cycle had already reached culmination.



AN FGD WITH TEACHERS OF A SCHOOL PROJECT KHEL WORKS WITH

## RESULTS

### MADE IN MAIDAN AND FRISB(ARABAR)

Project KHEL had envisioned maintaining its enrolment numbers in these programmes from the (previous year and taking the intervention to more boys during the RNP grant period. However, they were able to sustain 1079 children from the previous year (down from 1500+) due to unanticipated drop in student enrolment and limited staff. The programmes expanded to new centres and 550+ children were added into these two programmes.

### RED SPOT AND TEEN TALKS

Project KHEL facilitated multiple workshops from the beginning of the grant cycle, reaching a total of 650 boys. The website and Facebook page of Project KHEL has a wealth of information on the experience and nature of activities undertaken with youth and children - these include blog posts, podcasts and videos.



STAKEHOLDER

VIEWS ON IMPACT/  
EXPERIENCE OF THE PROGRAMME

A 15-year-old boy from Vardaan Academy,  
post a Teen Talk Workshop

*"I found it helpful to have such a space,  
where I could speak and openly ask  
questions on sexuality. I have also learnt  
about the importance of explicit consent of  
both partners in case of sexual relation."*

Chaman, A boy during an MIM session

*"Girls and boys are like two wheels of a  
scooter. To get the scooter running, we need  
both tyres, instead of choosing one based  
on our convenience. That is how the society  
needs to function too."*

Niyaaz, A boy in CWS School

*"In the (MIM) sessions, everyone's wellbeing  
and safety is a priority to me now. I have  
learnt to play without hurting or fighting  
with others, unlike in the park where  
everyone acts like a 'gunda'."*

A play educator

*"Since joining Project KHEL, I have become  
more sensitive to the views and needs of  
other people. I try not to impose my views  
on others."*

A Teacher at CWS, a low income  
school on the outskirts of Lucknow

*"We have full attendance of children on the  
days the sessions of Project KHEL happen.  
Children make sure they don't miss those days!"*

Angana, Executive Director

*"Impact is highly dependent on having a  
consistent group of facilitators that work with  
children and deliver at each session with them."*

REPLICABILITY  
OF PROJECT

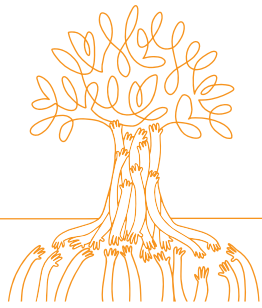
Project KHEL has always worked to mitigate the risk of having to end their programmes due to lack of funding by ensuring that none of the programmes are dependent on a single funding source. Crowd funding has been used over the last six years to build a corpus to ensure sustainability of programmes. Project KHEL is open and keen to collaborate with other organisations; it has been doing so and will continue going forward.

Due to the pandemic, the team envisions their programme to have fewer schools and children engaged in the coming year. When schools do reopen, they are likely to be less inclined to allocate time for 'play sessions' with Project KHEL, due to the many disruptions in the school academic year already. Project KHEL has always been keen to ascertain the feasibility, relevance and the depth of the programmes, rather than focus on reaching large numbers. This has even greater resonance in this current situation. While there has been a greater use of social media and the online medium for engaging with youth on content relevant to Project KHEL's mission at this time, the organisation wishes to adopt technology in a thoughtful and deliberate manner going forward. This is also because the children that Project KHEL engages with come from economically constrained backgrounds, many that do not own smart phones or may have to share them with other members of their family.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS  
AVAILABLE

Two modules of the play activities  
undertaken in the MIM Programme  
Stories from the Ground





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