

THOUGHTSHOP  
**FOUNDATION**  
ANNUAL REPORT

1617



Sadly Mr VN Varma passed away in June 2017. He was an important advisor and well wisher of Thoughtshop Foundation. We will always remember with deep gratitude his enormous contribution in setting up and streamlining the governance, financial and statutory processes for the organisation. He was instrumental in locating the TF property, negotiating its transaction, getting the organization's FCRA clearance and managing investments. He worked in a voluntary capacity for over 17 years with his characteristic meticulousness. We will miss him.

Thoughtshop Foundation was registered under the Societies Act on March 17, 1993. The organisation comprises of professionals dedicated to creating new and effective ways of dealing with social issues, with the aim to educate, motivate and empower for social change. Over the last 23 years, our work has evolved; it has given us an opportunity to examine diverse, developmental issues.

## Social Communications

### Research, Development, Design and Training

On our own initiative, as well as in partnership with other organisations, we develop behaviour change communication strategies, community friendly tools and training software. Field research involving users and audiences is integral to the development process. Development is both innovation and improvement. Each tool is field tested before dissemination. We keep track of feedback, and improve our products with each new edition. Finally we train field workers on how to best use the tools to ensure that the total communication is clear, convincing and enjoyable.

## Outreach: Youth Development

### Action Research, Community Building, Workshops and Trainings

We believe in the potential of young people to become agents of social change. Holistic development of young people has been a sustained theme in all our work. For the past 9 years we have been creating youth leaders who build value based youth organisations as models for sustainable youth and community development.

# 1617

2016 -17 was a year of consolidation. Our partnerships with American Jewish World Service, DK-Austria, Oxfam GB and Azad Foundation continued. These enabled us to strengthen our work on ensuring child rights and building gender equal communities.

The Youth Micro Social Enterprise (YMSE) project, which represents our vision to build Youth Resource Cells (YRCs) as social businesses, took a significant step forward. We identified four entrepreneurship models that we intend implement over the next few years. We were grateful to PCMC Trust for giving us much needed and timely support to pilot YMSE prototypes for two YRCs.

Our three year project on Building Youth Action Groups for facilitating Right To Education Act 2009, with IndienHilfe (IH, 2014-17) came to a close. IH and their district partners took ownership of the 8 Youth Action Groups created by us across remote areas.

Six Youth Leaders got opportunities to work as Social Investigators in Trafficking Rescue operations, one youth leader got selected to participate in a long-term Feminist Leadership Training. Another youth leader was selected as one of the fifteen finalists in the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Program.

In the Social Communications wing, we continued to work with Oxfam GB on promoting diversity and women's economic leadership using games and new media for community groups in other developing countries.

There were also changes in the TF team, Revathi Banerjee moved on after 11 years of service. Paramita Banerjee joined the team as Project Coordinator.



## Women's Economic Leadership (WEL) Toolkit

### In collaboration with Oxfam GB

TF partnered with Oxfam GB to introduce key concepts related to Women's Economic Leadership using interactive games. The WEL Toolkit was designed for use by staff, partners and community members associated with income generation or livelihood projects, at workshops and training sessions.

Images and narratives have been selected so that it can be used internationally across several countries. The kit comprises several components that can be used independently, or with the others, depending on the training needs.

Over the year, the tool kit was produced and shipped for use to developing countries across Asia.

The process of developing a series of new components to extend the capability of the WEL toolkit was also initiated through workshops and discussion meetings.



Above: WEL Game being tested, and shared with teams from Phillipines, Thailand, Tajikistan, Zimbabwe.

Below: Screenshot of I am Many App for Android

## Diversity in Society

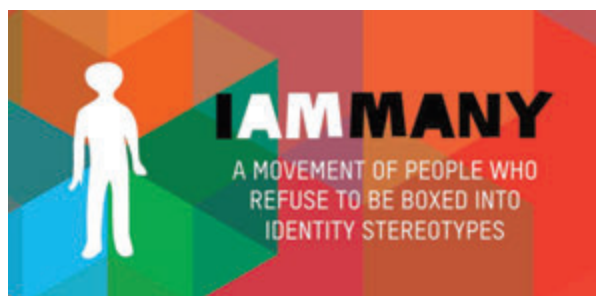
### In collaboration with Oxfam GB

I am One, I am Many : Diversity In Society (DIS) tool kit, helps practitioners have nuanced and structured conversations with communities on Multiple Identities.

The kit has developed an approach which has made it possible to address sensitive social issues such as religious intolerance even in communities where there has been conflict and significant levels of polarisation exist among different groups.

This approach includes an uncompromising insistence on the equality and dignity of all human beings and that all violence is unacceptable. Rather than being directive about what is 'right' and what is 'wrong', it enables the individual to recognize the range of options for acting positively and their responsibility to act.

The kit allows engagement with very large numbers of individuals and communities to challenge their own entrenched negative social attitudes.



The tool kit has gone through several editions since it was first developed in 2009, and tested with a wide range of audiences in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar, Indonesia.

In 2016 a community version was created catering to the needs of the Aawaz Project being implemented across districts in Pakistan.

In 2016-17, the kit was adapted as an App to be used widely by individuals users across geographical boundaries. The App is currently being tested with users in Bangladesh and Indonesia as part of Project Sahabat.



Left, from top : I am Many Community Toolkit adapted for Pakistan, I am Many TOT in Dubai with teams from Pakistan, I am Many Workshop in Pakistan, I am Many Workshop in Pakistan

Above, from top : I am Many Workshop at Bangkok with Bangladesh and Indonesia teams, Workshop in Indonesia, App testing in Bangladesh



## Developing Youth Resource Cells

Youth Resource Cells (YRCs) developed by TF have been working towards supporting vulnerable young people, especially girls, in the peri-urban, urban slums and remote rural locations of West Bengal. Girls in these communities are valued less and particularly vulnerable; they are victims of gender discrimination and violence; their Rights to survival, protection, development and participation, are violated.

The YRC model attempts to evolve a sustainable and community based approach to address gender inequality and reach out to the most vulnerable adolescents in the community enabling them to grow up as active citizens.

Over 2016-17 partnerships with American Jewish World Service (AJWS), DKA and Azad Foundation continue to support TF and the YRCs get closer to the vision of Youth Resource Cells and their impact in communities.

### Capacity Building of YRC Core Teams

The partnership with AJWS focussed on strengthening capacities of YRC core teams to address gender issues and challenge root causes of child marriage and gender inequality. Over the year a special set of audio visual training workshops were held enabling young people to tell stories around gender and sexuality using the audio and video medium. Capacity Building sessions focussed on gender and sexuality training for YRC core teams. TF also worked with external consultants to initiate trainings on Social Entrepreneurship with mature YRCs. 4 Social Entrepreneurship Models were honed in upon - Creche, Homestay/ Camp, Adolescent Centre, Computer Centre, five YRCs showed readiness to initiate these businesses in their communities.

### ARSHR: Champa and Shankar Kits TF Initiative

The flagship toolkits on Adolescent Reproductive Health developed by TF in 1996 and 2000 were upgraded to include issues on Sexual Health and Rights. The kits were thoroughly reviewed and issues and updates were made to include a wider range of rights issues such as right of persons with disability, third gender issues.



## Building Youth Action Groups

Through the partnership with Indienenhilfe e.V. Germany, TF built capacities of 8 Youth Action Groups (YAGs) spread across different districts in West Bengal. In 2016-17 the YAGs were now connected with IH local district partners and TFs role came to a close.

Facing page, from top: Youth Micro Social Enterprise (YMSE) development workshops, Youth Fellowship training stage 1, and stage 2.

This page, from top: Training of Youth Fellows, ASG Members from Alor Sandhan celebrating a community event, Support group in progress at Namkhana, Life Skill Game being played at a Support Group.



## Youth Fellowship

40 Peer Leaders in the 16-21-year age group from Adolescent Groups were selected for a year-long Youth Fellowship. 25 participants (19 girls) completed 27 sessions that were spread across a year. These Youth Fellows have already started strengthening their groups by conducting sessions with adolescents using their newly acquired facilitation skills and attitudinal changes. In the last quarter, Fellows explored ideas around identities, gender and sexuality. The Fellowship concluded with a formal event tracing the journey; where each Fellow was felicitated before external stakeholders, parents and well-wishers. Fellows shared their own experiences during the Fellowship and their vision for their communities.

## Adolescent Support Groups

The partnership with DK Austria focusses on our work with adolescents; ensuring Child Rights, especially the right to protection, development and participation of vulnerable adolescents through community based YRCs. Over the year all 10 YRCs consolidated their work with adolescents, forming Adolescent Support Groups (ASG) in the YRC communities.

Support Groups provide emotional, information, esteem and network support to the adolescents who are in search of their role in the society, while coping with the adversities of their life. Participation in ASGs empowers adolescents, keeping them and peers safe from abuse and Rights violations. Adolescents provide support to each other – identify warning signs and take appropriate actions like informing the YRC members, parents, and talking to their peers.

In 2016-17, 10 YRCs worked through 53 ASGs, reaching 2411 adolescents. Over the year, a detailed graded ASG curriculum was developed to be implemented over the next 3 -5 years. The curriculum aims to build self-esteem, self-discipline and self-compassion, and these broad goals are explored through 12 themes; Self Awareness & Values, Aptitude & Goals, Life skills, Empathy & Support, Teamwork & Leadership, Identity & Stereotypes, Community & Culture, Happiness & Mindfulness, Child Rights, Gender and Sex Education & Rights, Environment, Rights & Duties.



## Games & Tools for Adolescents & Youth

Developed by Thoughtshop Foundation, 1995-2017



Self Awareness Values & Goals



Empathy Support



Life Skills



Community & Culture



Teamwork & Leadership



Child Rights



Identity & Stereotypes



Gender & Rights



Sex Education & Rights



Happiness & Mindfulness



Environment Rights & Duties



Stories & Films



Group Games



Peer Counsellor, Investigator, Facilitator Workbooks

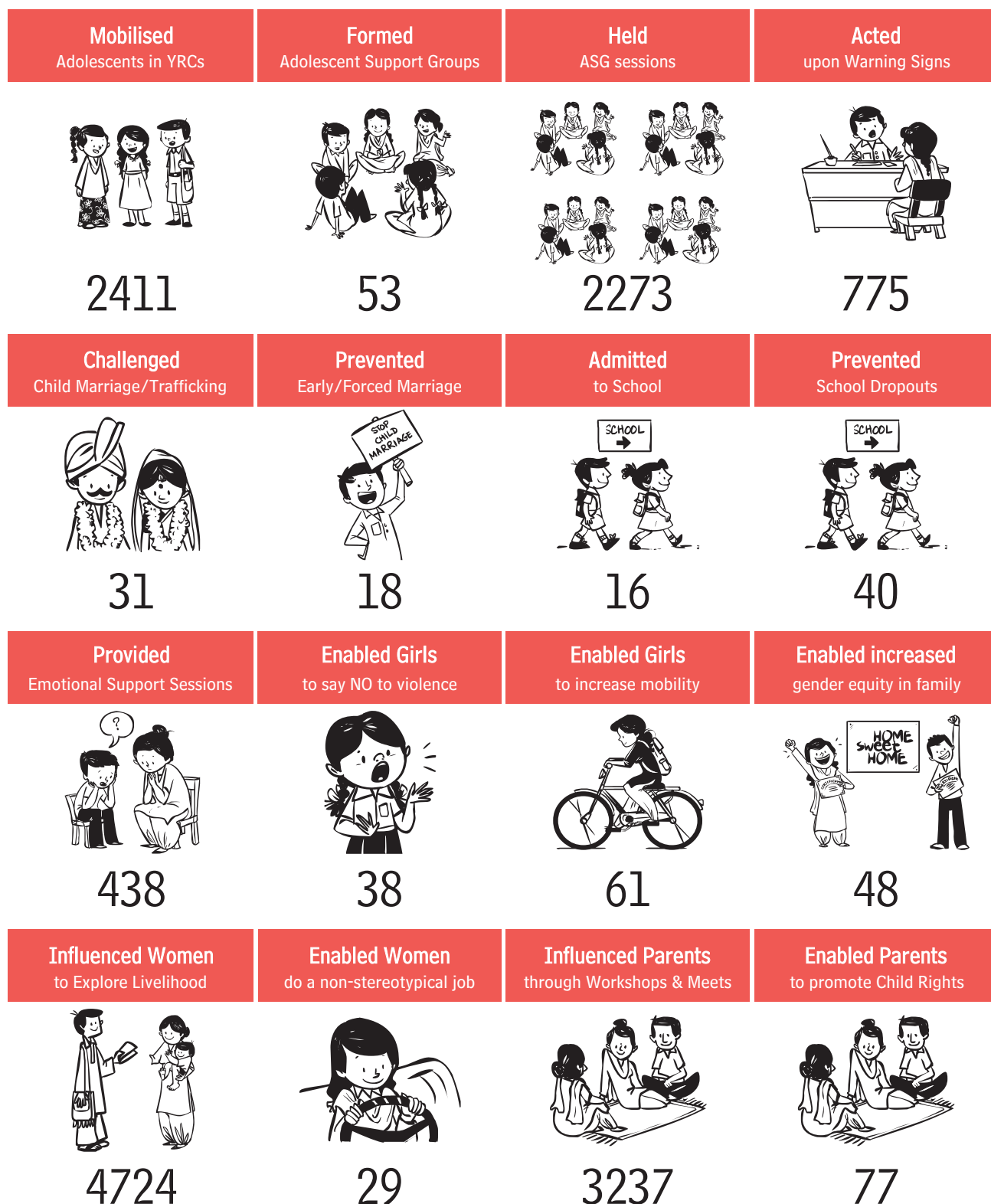




## Impact of Youth Resource Cells

2016 -17

Youth Mentors conduct weekly ASG sessions. They are trained to recognize warning signs, and protocols for responding to them. YRC teams follow up on their actions and document progress during the week. Narratives are maintained in cluster journals for monthly review, while key datapoints are stored in a database maintained by Youth Trainers.



## Building Gender Equal Communities

### Women on Wheels

TF partnered with Azad Foundation to bring Women on Wheels (WOW) to Kolkata. The programme trains resource-poor women to become professional drivers. Specialised YRC teams canvassed over 4000 women & girls to enrol 29 for the programme. YRC peer counselors supported the trainees for months thereafter to help them overcome the many barriers; violence and inequalities at their homes and community.

### [onlineyrc.blogspot.in](http://onlineyrc.blogspot.in)

Ten new posts were added this this year. YRC members also made short films exploring relationships, gender and sexuality issues. These stories are part of an ongoing process to address issues of self awareness, ability to reflect, analyse and express; of the need to build a digital bridge to a world that exist beyond the lanes of the neighbourhood. excerpt ►

### Girls' Sports

Most YRCs have taken their own initiative to use Sports for Girls as a way of pushing Gender boundaries in their communities. These visible, often news-worthy, events not only have obvious benefits for girls, but they also enable YRCs to continually negotiate gender boundaries with parents and community elders.



Lakhan Singh, 17  
Youth Fellow  
YRC Youth Voice

"... I found the sessions on Empathy, and the "Exploring My World" book useful. When I first saw a film on the life of sex-workers at a Gender & Sexuality session, I laughed with my friends. But later, when I met the children of sex workers, I felt a shift within; I found many similarities with them ...

... My parents worry about my sister. They never allow her to go out alone. I explain to them that a girl could be just as unsafe within four walls, so we can't keep holding her back always imagining risks. I do my own housework now, I don't order my sister around to do my chores ...

... I used to be violent and beat people up. But I have changed through this training process. I'm more thoughtful now, more supportive to my friends. I have come to realise that I can influence my friends to change some of their habits ..."



Left, from top: Enabling women to break stereotypes - WOW; Communities First Ever Girls Cricket! organised by YRC KYP

Right, from top: Girls' football teams from all YRCs, ready for a tournament; one of many news articles featuring YRC Roshni Girls Football initiative



# Happenings



from top:

- **June 2016:** Happiness Workshop with Dhrupad Hazra
- **September 2016:** Inter YRC Football Tournament organised by YRC Ujaan.
- **September 2016:** Happiness Workshop with Professor Raj Raghunathan
- **October 2016:** I am One, I am Many Workshop facilitated by TF at Dubai 2016
- **December 2016:** Digital Storytelling Workshop at TF





## Governing Body

Mira Kakkar **President**  
Dr. Satadal Saha **Secretary**  
Manav Raychaudhuri **Treasurer**  
Veena Lakhumalani **Member**  
Ashok Chatterjee **Member**  
Jeeja Ghosh **Member**  
Lipi Roychowdhury **Member**  
Virendra Nath Varma **Advisor**  
Sonali Ojha **Advisor**

## Team

Kakali Patra **Kitchen**  
Gobindo Halder **Maintenance**  
Dilip Chakraborty **Store & Office Manager**  
Paramita Banerjee **Programme Coordinator**  
Tishya Mukhopadhyay **MIS**  
Sahana Nag **Counsellor**  
Revathi Banerjee **Coordinator**  
Santayan Sengupta, Himalini Varma **Directors**

## Accounts & Audit

Acc-Tax Services **Accounts**  
Agarwal DK & Company **Auditor**

## YRC Core Teams & Facilitators

Anjana, Uma, Shahina,  
Bandana, Punam, Shampa,  
Suman, Tahsina, Sangita

## Resource Persons

Gautum Chattopadhyay **Illustration**  
Urbi Bhaduri **Translation**  
Dhrupad Hazra **Happiness & Motivation**  
Prachi Jain **Research**

## Volunteers

Suchismita Chatterjee, Kolkata; SUAS Volunteers,  
Ireland

## Print and Production

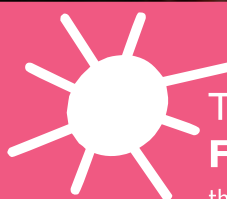
Pulock Gupta, Partha Mitra

## Organisational Partners

Oxfam GB, Oxfam India, Indien Hilfe, American Jewish  
World Service, DK- Austria, Azad Foundation, PCMC  
Trust

## Outreach Partners

**Youth Resource Cells (YRC) and Youth Action Groups (YAG):** West Bengal ▶ Kolkata ▶ Lake Gardens ▶ YRC Ujaan, YRC Nabadisha, YAG Prodorshak | VIP Nagar ▶ YRC Youth Voice | Rajabazar ▶ YRC Roshni | South 24 Parganas ▶ Namkhana ▶ YRC Swapno, YRC Pratibha | Mograhat ▶ YRC KYP | Mandirbazar ▶ YRC Hashi Kushi Hoi Choi | North 24 Parganas ▶ Dumdum ▶ YRC Drishtikon, YRC Alor Sandhan | Swarupnagar ▶ YAG Nabajagaran | Sunderbans ▶ YAG Yubojagaran | Chatra ▶ YAG Chatra | Birbhum ▶ YAG Nutan Bhor | Midnapore ▶ YAG Nabadiganto, YAG Youth Unity | Bankura ▶ YAG Nabodoy



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