

THOUGHTSHOP
FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT

1718

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 24 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 10 years we have been creating youth leaders who build value-based youth organisations as models for sustainable youth and community development.

1718

In 2017-18 we got a chance to review our work with *Youth Resource Cells* and outline the next phase of evolution. 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, child protection 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 with support from Human Capability Foundation. Pilot initiatives with the crèche, home stay cum camp at Sunderbans, and computer and adolescent centre took shape.

Our partnership with SUAS Ireland developed and we had a meaningful exchange with Suas Volunteers who spent 6 weeks with YRCs in building the English Language initiative.

Cover Photo: *Peer leader in Chandanpiri Cluster of YRC Swapno (Sunderbans) discuss POCSO using the child friendly poster designed for this kind of engagement.*

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 work- shops 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 a series of new components to extend the capability of the WEL toolkit were created and tested with women farmers in Bihar.



Above: Women Group Leaders playing Quality of life game, a part of the WEL Toolkit. Patna 2017. Below: Prototype of the High Value Crops tool ready for testing.



Safal Fasal Toolkit

In collaboration with Central India Initiatives

TF partnered with Central India Initiatives (CnI) in Jharkhand, to help women farmers upgrade their farming skills. TF worked on a toolkit to help women's groups revise newly learnt techniques of farming high value crops such as fruits and vegetables.

Disability & Sexuality Toolkit

In collaboration with CREA

TF partnered with Disability Activist Jeeja Ghosh and CREA to develop pictorial tools on talking about sexuality with people with intellectually disability and their caregiver/ facilitators.

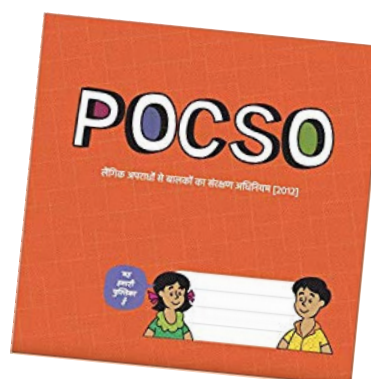


Above: testing the Disability & Sexuality toolkit with students at the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP) Kolkata. Below: POCSO kit, booklet version

POCSO Awareness Kit

In Collaboration with The West Bengal State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBSCPCR)

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) 2012 was formulated in order to effectively address sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children. TF created a child friendly pictorial awareness kit in 3 languages to raise awareness on the contents of the POCSO Act as well as the *Child Labour* and *Prevention of Child Marriage* act.





Above: ASG at YRC Youth Voice discussing how to spot warning signs amongst peers, and what to do about them. Below: ASG at the SWAPNO YRC playing the Child Rights game.



Above: members of YRC Nabadisha tie Rakhi at the local police station to show gratitude for their help in a recent POCSO case. Below: ASG members of YRC Roshni discuss life skills using a toolkit.



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 2017-18 partnerships with American Jewish World Service (AJWS), DKA, Azad Foundation and Human Capability Foundation continue to support TF and the YRCs get closer to the vision of Youth Resource Cells and their impact in communities.

Key Activities

Capacity Building of YRC Core Teams through training workshops

- to ensure child protection in YRCs
- to function as a Social Entrepreneurs
- to function better as teams (TOT on communication and leadership)

Capacity Building of next rung of leaders through Youth Mentor Training

- monthly workshops to handhold to run Adolescent Leadership Program
- special camps to create video stories on gender/sexuality related issues

Adolescent Support Groups & Workshops

- Supporting YRCs to run Adolescent Support Groups and training workshops for vulnerable adolescents in community
- Holding Community Events in the YRCs

Development of Curriculum, Updating of Tools

- Development of Youth Mentor Training Curriculum
- Assessment of Child Protection Program by external evaluator

Key Outcomes

Adolescent Support Groups (ASGs)

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 by identifying *warning signs* and take appropriate actions like informing the YRC members, parents, and talking to their peers.

In 2017-18, 10 YRCs worked through about 50 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, Sex Education & Rights
- Environment, Rights & Duties

ASGs work to ensure *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.



Above and Below: Training Workshops for YRC members are often designed and facilitated by more experienced members of the same groups. This is a key feature of the design of the YRC model



Above and Below: Training sessions at Sunderan retreats are hosted by the local Swapno YRC





Above: Youth Trainer Punam holds a session using the Champa kit at YRC Protibha. Below: new youth leaders after a sexuality training.



Below: Potential driving trainee trying her hand at the driving simulation game at TF.



Gender & Sexuality

The most common human rights discriminations including child right violations in our communities' stem from a lack of understanding of issues related to Gender and Sexuality; Taboo subjects, that are not addressed in schools, families or communities.

Following the trend of years past, this year 22 new youth leaders (17 girls, 5 boys) from vulnerable background applied their learning around rights and choices in the context of gender and sexuality.

This helped increase the quality and impact of the child protection and gender sensitization work at the community. It also helped the YRCs to strengthen an identity as agents of social change in the community.

102 adolescent girls from different communities were trained with the help of the updated TF tool *Champa* in sexual and reproductive health and rights training.

These girls were seen influencing their peers in schools and communities to develop positive attitudes around these issues.

There was a deepening of conversations around gender and sexuality including child sexual abuse at all levels – adolescents, youth and TF teams.

Women on Wheels

TF partnered with *Azad Foundation* to mobilise resource-poor women to become professional drivers.

Specialised YRC teams canvassed over 2256 women & girls to enrol 11 for the programme.

YRCs supported the trainees for months thereafter to help them overcome the many barriers; violence and inequalities at their homes and community.

Youth Micro Social Enterprises

During the year four different pilot social entrepreneurship initiatives were initiated.

Creche

The Crèche service piloted at Youth Voice started taking care of kids in June 2017. TF helped them set up their space, initial infrastructure and child friendly nursery gear. The service takes care of 5 kids now. Of these, two are paying, and the remaining are sponsored. The idea is for the Youth team to learn on the job for a few months, create systems and work out human resource issues, and also allow parents (mothers) a free trial period to build trust for the caregivers.

Camp

The Camp & Homestay service piloted at YRC Swapno in the Sunderbans was launched in December 2017. YMSE team hosted 5 more teams over this 4th quarter and a total of 197 visitors travelled to the Swapno Camp Stay. 32 community members (12 boat men, 10 local dancers, 2 cooks, 8 transport providers) were involved in service provision and earning through the enterprise.

Computer Centres

Computer Centres were initiated at multiple YRCs both rural and urban. In collaboration with Brainware –Youth Mentors were taken through a 3-month training to enable them to run a computer course in their communities. During the year Centres were set up with furniture, computers and pilot courses were initiated.

Adolescent Centres

YRCs also experimented with paid Dance lessons for adolescents involving a professional Dance trainer.

English learning

Using games and songs, conversational English lessons were held. Irish volunteers from SUAS engaged intensively with YRC communities over 6 weeks.



Above: YRC Youth Voice Core team member Anjana at engaging her young clients at the Creche. Below: YRC members at the Swapno Camp.



Above: Brainware graduates ready to take on training at their respective computer centres: Below: Computer centre at YRC KYP, Magrahat.



Facing page: Data gathered by youth leaders from all the YRCs are collated by a senior YRC team specialising in data collection and analysis. Annual summaries such as this are shared back with the YRC teams.



Impact of Youth Resource Cells

Apr 2017- Mar 2018

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Mobilised Adolescents to join YRCs | Formed Adolescent Support Groups | Held Support Group Sessions | Acted upon Warning Signs |
| | | | |
| 1410 | 48 | 2284 | 584 |
| Challenged Child Marriage/ Trafficking | Prevented Early/Forced Child Marriage | Admitted to School | Prevented school dropouts |
| | | | |
| 36 | 13 | 17 | 47 |
| Provided Emotional Support Sessions | Enabled Girls to say NO to violence | Enabled Girls to increase mobility | Trained Girls in Sexuality Education |
| | | | |
| 427 | 37 | 66 | 103 |
| Enabled increased gender equity in family | Influenced Women to Explore Livelihood | Enabled Women join non-stereotypical livelihood | Enabled Parents to promote Child Rights |
| | | | |
| 32 | 2256 | 11 | 1171 |



Case Study

How a group of adolescent girls schooled their community about Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

March 2018

As part of the YRC curriculum, all YRCs were given the same assignment; identify a local problem and work find a solution.

While their peers took up relatively safe topics, a group of adolescent girls from YRC Ujaan worked together without hesitation, and decided the community must confront the problem of CSA.

The most articulate of the team, a girl of 11, is a survivor of extreme sexual abuse; but only a few YRC mentors know that. Over the years, these young YRC members have found their passion, their voice, and the words to talk about Child Sexual Abuse.

The team of young girls planned the event for 8th of March, International Women's Day.

Over 2 hours, they presented their case with such disarming candour, that all the parents observing were awe struck. Nothing was sugar coated, nothing was left ambiguous. They spoke not with anger, but with a deeper understanding of the injustice.

After the program, mothers of adolescents approached the Ujaan leaders and asked questions; how would they know if a child was at risk, how and what kind of support could they provide if their children been sexually abused?

All their questions were addressed by a capable and sensitive team of senior youth leaders.

Credit goes to the youth mentors who guided the team of young girls, and the youth leaders who counselled and supported them for years before this event. YRC Lake Gardens Ujaan is doing something wonderful.



Youngest member of the audience were given gender puzzles while older kids and parents heard the presentation with rapt attention.

Happenings



From Top left

- 📺 Youth Awards 2017, new peer mentors
- ➔ Winning team - YRC ALS Girls football
- ⬇ YRC NBD members community survey on Children's Day
- ⬅ Members of the SUAS 2017 at YRC YVC
- ➔ Initiating work with boys and men with Deep Purakaystha,
- ⬇ One of the first camps at Sunderbans
- ⬅ Happiness workshop with Dhrupad Hazra
- ⬇ Brainware trainees at work
- ➔ testing a new Wants & Rights tool
- ⬇ YRC teams exposure visit for Daan Utsav 2018

GOVERNING BODY

Mira Kakkar : **PRESIDENT**
Dr. Satadal Saha : **SECRETARY**
Manav Raychaudhuri : **TREASURER**
Veena Lakhumalani : **MEMBER**
Ashok Chatterjee : **MEMBER**
Jeeja Ghosh : **MEMBER**
Lipi Roychowdhury : **MEMBER**
Tridibesh Sanyal : **MEMBER**
Ashok Chatterjee : **ADVISOR**
Sonali Ojha : **ADVISOR**

TEAM

Sahana Nag : **COUNSELLOR**
Ashalata Das Thankappan : **COORDINATOR**
Santayan Sengupta, Himalini Varma : **DIRECTORS**
Dilip Chakraborty : **STORE & OFFICE MANAGER**
Acc-Tax Services : **ACCOUNTS**
Agarwal DK & Company : **AUDITOR**

PROJECT TEAM

Uma Singh, Anjana Paul, Shampa Halder, Tehsina Bano, Suman Shaw, Punam Sadhukha, Shahina Javed Bandana Makhal, Sangita Das : **MIS**

SUPPORT

Gobindo Halder **MAINTENANCE**
Kakali Patra **KITCHEN**

ORGANISATIONAL PARTNERS

Oxfam GB, American Jewish World Service, DK-Austria, Azad Foundation, Human Capability Foundation, Azad Foundation, PCMC Trust, Collectives for Integrated Livelihoods Initiative (CInI)

OUTREACH PARTNERS

Youth Resource Cells (YRC): YRC Ujaan, YRC Nabadisha, YRC Youth Voice, YRC Roshni, YRC Swapno, YRC Pratibha, YRC KYP, YRC Hashi Kushi Hoi Choi, YRC Drishtikon, YRC Alor Sandhan



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