



## ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

The Yuva Ekta Foundation is a registered not-for-profit Trust based in New Delhi India. We work at the intersection of Youth and Governance, spanning a canvas that integrates young people from different socio-economic and geographic backgrounds. Using the Social Arts we create platforms and opportunities that enable our youth to become **sensitized, pro-active and empowered citizens.**

We engage with Social issues using Expressive Arts. All our projects embody the idea that Arts based tools like Theatre, Dance, Creative Writing, Music etc can connect an individual with the 'self', the 'other' and the world around.

Our Vision is to create a society where every individual has Dignity and Self-worth, and where every citizen is empowered to express, irrespective of any barriers and stereotypes.

All our programs symbolize this vision. Participants from diverse backgrounds come together, sharing their lives and experiences with each other. A diversity of realities often leads to empathy, sensitivity and mutual respect.

**Here's a glimpse into our world in the last year. This file entails details of our work from April 2018 till March 2019**



**'Threads of Humanity'** program focuses specifically on young people who are the most ostracized by society - 'Children in Conflict with Law' and 'Youth at Risk'. This project views 'Children in Conflict with Law' as young people who have not been able to access the opportunities that their privileged counterparts enjoy. Using Theatre and Expressive Arts Therapy, we create 'Safe Spaces' where our participants can reflect, ideate, connect and empower themselves.



Taking forward our 10 years of work in this field, the Yuva Ekta Foundation launched a Research Project titled **'Building Emotional Intelligence using Expressive Arts and Psychodrama Therapy with Children in Conflict with Law (CICL)'** in May 2018. The very first of its kind in India, this study pioneers the efficacy of the Arts in the social sector, particularly within Juvenile Prison settings.

We have tied up with leading psychologists, Psychodramatists and several other Master Practitioners to create an intensive program, that works on building competencies among young adults living in Adharshila Special Home for Boys and Place of Safety, Majnu ka Tila, New Delhi.

**51 Expressive Arts and 10 Psychodrama Therapy workshops** spanning a period of 10 months, were carefully planned to affect desired indicators of **Self-esteem** and **Emotional Intelligence** like compassion, empathy, self-awareness, conflict management and other psychological variables mentioned by experts in the field.



*"I will always remember Magdalene ma'am. On the last day of her workshop with us I told her that I will miss her, and she had tears in her eyes. No stranger has ever cried for me before"*

- Rahul (name changed), CICL at Adharshila Special Home and Place of Safety, Majnu ka Tila)

*"At first I used to listen to nobody. I was full of anger and resentment at their concern. Now whenever someone asks me how I am, I look up to them and tell them what's inside me. I have learnt to express myself better."*

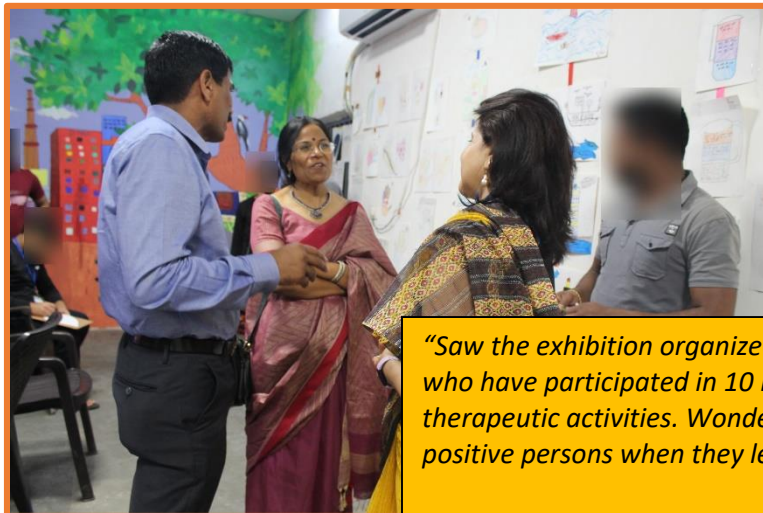
- Suraj (name changed) told us about what he feels has changed inside him through our workshops.



*"The way you all speak to each other and to me has taught me the importance of Respect. When I get released, I want to do something that I deserve the same kind of respect. "*

- Arun (name changed), CICL at Adharshila Special Home and Place of Safety, Majnu ka Tila)

Through the course of these workshops, our participants have undergone their own significant journeys. They have developed a number of art-pieces that reflect their dreams, aspirations, emotions and inner turmoil. All their art work was displayed at our **Open Day celebrations**, where we invited their families, judges, magistrates, policy makers and all stakeholders concerned with CICLs.



*"Saw the exhibition organized by Yuva Ekta Foundation along with the boys, who have participated in 10 month long workshop on drama and other therapeutic activities. Wonderful experience. I am sure the boys will go out as positive persons when they leave the institution. Keep up this good work."*

- Ms. Nisha Agarwal, Deputy Director, Women and Child Development Department



Launched in 2017, the **'Homecoming Program'** began with an idea to find mutual support systems. 'Home' is where we find solace and comfort, and 'Homecoming' does just that by bringing together Senior Citizens with 'At-Risk' children. For all our participants, it is a chance to connect and form everlasting bonds of friendship.



*"It is so lovely to celebrate Diwali with you all. There is a new energy to this place. Each time you leave from here, I just keep wondering when I'll see you next."*

- Sushma Ji, resident, Aradhana Home for Senior Citizens

*"Today I felt like I was a child again. I don't remember the last time I created a story!"*

- Usha ji, resident, Aradhana home for Senior Citizens.



As part of 'Homecoming Program' two projects have been running successfully for almost two years now. Senior citizens from Sahara Home wait excitedly to meet girls from Arushi Home (a unit of Salaam Baalak Trust). Boys from Bal Sahyog (a home for 'At-risk' boys in New Delhi) can't wait to meet their 'daadis' from Aradhana Home, a home for elderly women in Connaught Place. No matter what our age, we all long to feel loved and connected. 'Homecoming' impacts both Senior Citizens and Children living in shelter homes by fulfilling a mutual need.

*"You all are like oxygen for me. You have given me a will to live, and I have learnt the importance of staying active and being happy"*

- Rita ji, Resident, Sahara Home for Senior Citizens



*Rita Ji has been one of our most active participants. When we met her for the first time, she was going through depression. It took time for her to recover and reach where she is today. She credits a lot of her improvement to the children who spent time with her. Now, she is ready to take charge of her happiness and single-handedly inspires other members of the Sahara Senior Citizens Home to participate in our workshops.*

In the last year, we have conducted many workshops with our participants, ranging from Storytelling, Up-cycling, Dance, Music, Creative writing, Tambola, to even baking a cake together! Art becomes a medium for everyone to open up and share stories with each other, creating an environment of togetherness.





**'Theatre for Change'** uses Theatre and Arts to integrate young adults from diverse socio-economic and geographic backgrounds, empowering them to explore socially relevant issues.

Theatre allows one to overcome inhibitions, ideate freely, form opinions and be open to others' viewpoints. These personal stories shared through the process find a common voice through an interactive theatre performance, opening up avenues for larger discussions.

### ZEE JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM-2019

As the largest free literary festival on Earth, the ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival brings together some of the greatest thinkers and writers from across South Asia and the world. From Nobel laureates to Indian language writers, Man Booker prize winners to debut novelists, every January, the most witty, sensitive and incisive collection of authors come together for five days of readings, debates and discussions at the spacious Diggi Palace in Jaipur.

Keeping this in focus and hugely aware of their intent to give back to the city that plays host to them, Teamwork Arts - the organizers of JLF, run a Youth Outreach program every year, parallel to the Festival.

**For the 12th consecutive year**, The Yuva Ekta Foundation took forward its program on Social Justice and Equity, integrating rural youth in Rajasthan with their more privileged urban counter parts. Through Theatre and Arts, we took our participants through a journey that delved deeper into the human psyche to explore and understand personal boundaries and create safe spaces for themselves and others, with its theme- **'BOUNDARIES: Understanding and Redefining Safe Spaces'**.



In the light of the current “Me Too” movement, we felt the need and importance to create platforms for such conversations to happen openly amongst youth, setting the foundation of Dignity & Respect as the base line for every interaction, every relationship.

51 young adults from five schools in Jaipur shared this platform with 6 NGOs which came from rural areas of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Whether from an urban or rural background, the aim was to get the young people to become aware of their boundaries, and have the courage and confidence to articulate them. In the workshop, they explore what to do if someone crosses them, how not to feel guilty or embarrassed for doing so, and not to blame themselves for inviting or deserving unwanted behavior.



*“Now I am in University 1<sup>st</sup> year, and am finally breaking the boundaries that have shackled me all these years.”*

- Roshni (name changed) from Doosra Dashak, an NGO working in Rajasthan, shares her journey of smashing boundaries of patriarchy.

*“I have finally found a safe space with my friends and family, who do not judge me and do not slut-shame me.”*

- Radhika (name changed), our school participant from Jaipur, spoke up about slut shaming, cyber bullying and importance of making our classrooms a safe space for everyone.



From consent, gender and caste to mental health and body image issues, the workshops traversed into complex issues faced by young adults today. As we added more and more ideas into the ever-expanding canvas, the workshop space opened up for real stories to emerge.





*“In some ways, it looks like Jaipur and other Indian cities have moved ahead of rural areas, but at the very core, there is still a lot of regressive conditioning, and patriarchy still plays a very big role. Although on the outside they look so different, there is this underlying connection that cuts across urban and rural.”*

- Puneeta Roy, Founder and Managing Trustee, The Yuva Ekta Foundation

The 7-day workshop culminated in an interactive performance titled **‘Meri Seema, Meri Suraksha’** (My Boundary, My Safe Space), which was performed in 10 schools and a community space in *Madhogardh* village (about 40 kms from Jaipur) before being showcased at the **SAMVAD** stage at the prestigious Jaipur Literature Festival Grounds. The performances were well received and at the end audiences were invited to share their personal experiences of rejection/ abuse and of boundaries they were able to/ or not cross.

Through the Zee Jaipur Literature Festival Youth Outreach Program 2019, we connected with over 4000 students, teachers, community members and JLF Visitors.



*“Since my association with Yuva Ekta, I’ve become a better person. A mirror is held up to how children feel, the turmoil they go through, and it’s made me introspect and change my approach.”*

- Ms. Madhu, Principal, Jayshree Periwal High School

## YUVA EKTA PLAYBACK THEATRE GROUP

Playback Theatre is an interactive form of improvisational theatre in which audience members tell stories from their lives and watch them enacted on the spot. Playback Theatre was founded in 1975 by Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas. It has spread around the globe and Playback companies now exist on six continents. Playback Theatre is used in a range of contexts including public performances, community arts, social dialogue, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, education, change management and celebrations.



*We got introduced to the craft of Playback Theatre by Brian Tasker and Gerry Orkin, distinguished Playback trainers from UK and Australia respectively.*

Last year, we set up the **Yuva Ekta Playback Theatre Group** in New Delhi, which meets every week to train and explore the craft further. Through all our programs, we use Expressive arts and Theatre to work towards Social Equity, Empowerment and Justice, and explore socially relevant issues. Playback Theatre not only helps us increase our skill set as facilitators but also gives us a new platform to engage with communities.



*In December, 2018, we conducted Playback performance with the boys at Adharshila Special Home and Place of Safety- a remand home for 'Children in Conflict with Law', who found it easier to share their most vulnerable side with us through this form. We repeated Playback theatre on the Open Day with audience that comprised of Boys, their families, Judges, Magistrates, staff members and various stakeholders, to help them connect with each other.*

*We have also used Playback Theatre in Teamwork Arts Pvt Ltd, an arts management company, to sensitize the employees about Sexual Harassment at workplace. The session was extremely powerful as we explored the emotional landscape of the issue.*



*Senior citizens at Aradhana Home (our partner for Homecoming Program) responded beautifully to Playback Theatre performance, sharing stories from their childhood and in a way re-living those experiences as our actors performed for them.*

Playback Theatre allows audience members to explore sensitive issues with empathy and non-judgement. It encourages people to express themselves and imbibe fresh perspectives by connecting with real-life experiences of others.

## THE WAY FORWARD...

This past year, The Yuva Ekta Foundation has been running a successful arts-based research project at the Adharshila Observation Home and Place of Safety, Majnu Ka Tila. We are in the process of generating empirical data which looks at the impact of 'Expressive Arts and Psychodrama Therapy with Children in Conflict with Law'.

In the coming year, we envision a large-scale policy level impact which can standardize effective Mental Health practices inclusive of an Arts' Therapy Program in all facilities associated with Children in Conflict with Law.

We plan to scale up our work to design and implement a more holistic program that includes domains like 'Mental Health', 'Legal Aid', 'Skill Training', and 'After Release care and interventions'. In the second phase of this program, we will not only continue to expand the scope of work done, but also include more Homes where 'Children in Conflict With Law' and 'Children under Care and Protection' are housed. We plan to include other homes like *Adharshila Observation Home for Boys, Sewa Kutir Complex, Kingsway Camp and Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre, Delhi Gate, Delhi.*



The 'Tree of Gratitude' created by our participants at the Juvenile Remand home at Majnu ka Tila. On the last day we shared the learnings we had received at the workshops and expressed gratitude towards everyone.

**Looking forward to your continuing patronage. THANK YOU!**

**Puneeta, Bhanu and Rijul**  
The Yuva Ekta Foundation team