



The Yuva Ekta Foundation Annual Report (2017-18)



THE  
YUVA  
EKTA  
FOUNDATION

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The Yuva Ekta Foundation is a **not-for-profit** trust, working at the intersection of **Youth and Governance**, spanning a canvas that integrates young people from different socio economic and geographic backgrounds. Through workshops, conferences, street plays and youth festivals we create platforms using **Theatre and the Arts**, enabling them to become sensitised, pro-active and empowered citizens.

The Vision is one of **Social Equity**. With the core intent as Empowerment, the projects impart a sense of Dignity and Self Respect to each participant, be they juveniles in conflict with law, runaway street children or jaded, well-heeled youth. Each is seen as an equal partner with the potential to become an **agent of positive social change**.

While Threads of Humanity and Theatre for Change have been the longest running programs of the Foundation, this year we added three new endeavours to our repertoire.

**The following report presents our work from April 2017 to March 2018**

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**Threads of Humanity** is one of the longest running programs of the Foundation. It is centred on the belief that each individual has worth, dignity and the capacity to reach their full potential. It views '**Children in Conflict with Law**' as young people who have not been able to access opportunities that their privileged counterparts enjoy. Battling poverty, malnutrition, lack of education, these young people lack role models and the motivation to consider changing their lives.

The year 2017 saw us working deeply with young offenders, alongside connecting with other stakeholders and strengthen our resolve to work towards rehabilitation of offenders living in Observation Homes.



Taken just before a cricket match at the Adharshila Observation Home for Boys, Kingsway Camp, New Delhi in November 2017. The match was played between inmates at the Home and employees from *Denave*.



### **Stakeholder Sensitisation sessions at Delhi Judicial Academy**

In May and August 2017 we were invited by the Delhi Judicial Academy to address the participants attending conference(s) on “**Capacity Building for Other Stakeholders – Members of Child Welfare Committees & Juvenile Justice Boards**”. We were given 2-hour time slots for our sessions to explore the theme, ‘**Understanding Childhood: Dreams, Delinquency and Destitution**’.

***Our audience members for these sessions were members of Juvenile Justice Boards (JJB), Child Welfare Committees (CWC) and other Civil Society members working with young offenders***



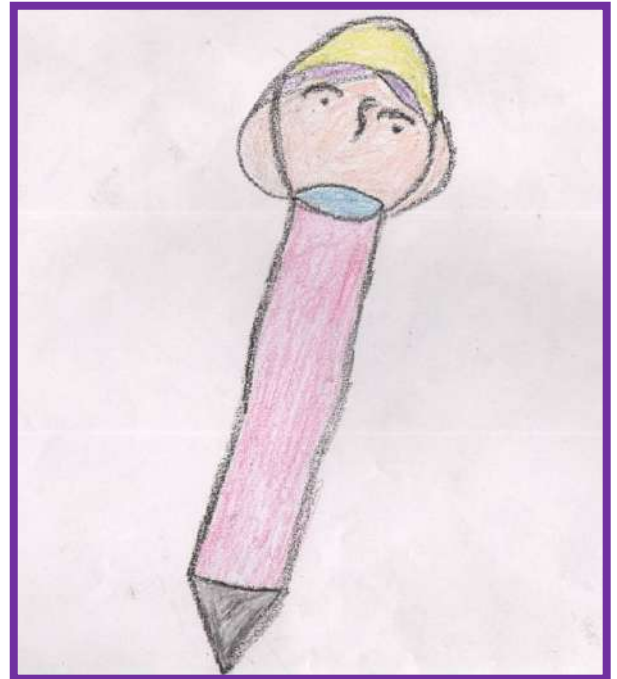
We decided to provide a compassionate gaze on the much-heated legal issue of Juvenile Law. We engaged with inmates at the Adharshila Observation Home for Boys, Kingsway Camp, Delhi, and prepared interactive theatre performances that were taken to the Delhi Judicial Academy. The resultant performances titled ‘Adharshila Mein Ek Din: A Day in Adharshila’ and ‘Khwaabon ke par: Wings of Dreams’ were performed at the Academy in May and August respectively

**May 2017 was the first time inmates from an Observation Home were allowed to step out for such an activity.**

### **Adharshila Mein Ek Din: A Day in Adharshila, May 2017**

Our play '**Aadharshila Mein Ek Din: A Day in Aadharshila**' was performed at the Delhi Judicial Academy for an audience of judges, magistrates and members of the JJB and CWC. At the cusp of adulthood, the story is about the life of these boys who in the process of fulfilling their dreams, find a '**Magical Pencil**' inside the home and get caught in a vicious cycle of ownership and power. The pencil is only a tool for empowerment, but who uses it and how?

***This performance was followed by a Playback Theatre session at the seminar. We invited members empanelled under different branches of the state to talk about their dreams and aspirations, as actors brought their stories to life.***



### **Khwaabon Ke Paar: Wings of Dreams, August, 2017**

Our session this time was close to the Independence Day, so the operative theme of the interactive session was freedom to dream. Our play, titled '**Khwaabon Ke Par**' (Wings of Dreams) is about three boys who have to decide the difference between right and wrong. They have to chose between fulfilling their wishes by any means possible, or biding their time and rely on th emselves to sail through difficult circumstances. What path would they chose?



## Collaborations that matter



*Organised a cricket match between the boys at Adharshila Observation Home and employees of Denave. The match was rather one-sided and tilted in favour of the boys, but it that still wasn't the highlight of the evening*

*The match was followed by an art based interactive group exercise where participants were asked to share their dreams with each other on a paper and think of ways in which they can achieve their dreams together*



*Performed 'Khwaabon ke Par' at Adharshila Observation Home, Kingsway Camp for an event organized by the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in September, 2017. The audience had honourable members of the Judiciary like Justice Madan B. Lokur and other members from the department of Women and Child Development.*

***Such collaborations and platforms for the boys go a long way in opening avenues for self-exploration and expression, an important component of a child's well being and emotional growth***





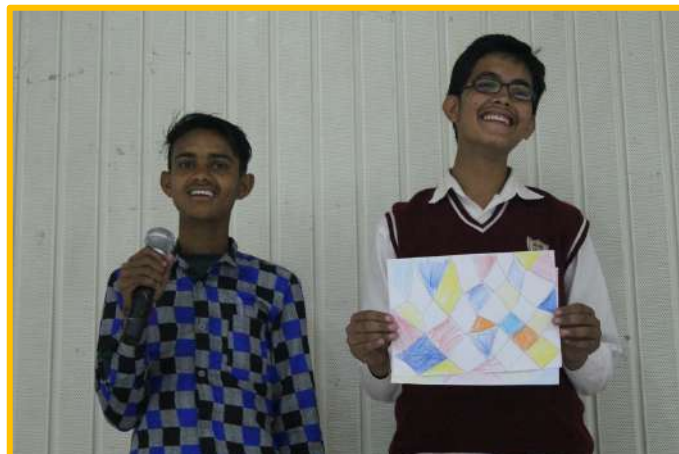
Our program **'Theatre for Change'** has been using Theatre as a tool for sensitization and advocacy for well over a decade. One of the most striking examples of this is our work at the Zee Jaipur Literature Festival Youth Outreach Program.

For the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, The Yuva Ekta Foundation partnered with the Zee Jaipur Literature Festival to facilitate and conduct the Youth Outreach Program in 2018.

**Our theme this year was 'Breakthrough: Harnessing Emotional Intelligence to Lead Change'.**

**55 participants from 13 institutions** across the country came together a week before the Jaipur Literature Festival for this program.

Through the course of the 7 days, different facets of Emotional Intelligence were explored, and each participant was encouraged to ideate and express. The entire experience culminated in an interactive theatre performance titled **'Bhavnao Ki Nagri: World of Emotions'**.



*"I never knew about the value of space until I started painting with Dharmendra. Him and I think so differently, but when we started painting, it just felt like we had a connect"*

*- Karan, Workshop Participant on his experience of 'Response Art'*

**Staged at 12 schools in Jaipur, our performance is an interactive piece inspired by real life experiences of our participants makes the play an instant hit, connecting with teachers and students alike. After the presentation of the play, the floor is opened for discussion with the audience members.**



*"I have been slut-shamed by my classmates and teachers because I have male friends. I have a lot of anger and resentment towards them. I hope I can deal with my emotions better."*

*- Audience member after watching our performance*

*On 26<sup>th</sup> January, the performance is taken to the Government Sr. Sec. School, Devgaon, Bassi Village. It is an enriching experience for the school participants to perform in this environment as it gives them a sense of grounding and makes them grateful for the privileges they usually take for granted.*



**This year's performance is even more special as for the first time the performance is part of the Festival's programming. The performance is staged at *Samvad*, one of the venues at the Festival. The standing ovation at *Samvad* is testimony to the deep connect that our young performers have made with the audience.**

***The Jaipur Literature Festival's Youth Outreach program 2018 reached out to 4500 students, teachers, community members and JLF visitors.***



## Exploring 'The Other'

We did a short sensitization and awareness program with students from IIT Delhi. Our facilitators introduced participants to various techniques of theatre through an intensive workshop module.



Participants from IIT Delhi performing the 'Mirror Activity' as part of their orientation workshops



Role-Playing and Physical Theatre exercises as part of the orientation workshops.

Following our sessions, students from IIT Delhi were placed in Adharshila Observation Home for Boys, Kingsway Camp and Salaam Balak Trust Childrens Home, Tis Hazari. They worked closely with the inmates in these Homes to develop modules that can be implemented in these spaces.



*"I never thought I could use my learnings as an engineer to inspire other students. I think I have taken back something from this experience that I will always cherish."*

- IIT Delhi participant sharing his thoughts with us in the follow-up session.

**We believe that theatre, with its core as expression and creation, can bring people together onto one platform and reduce the divide between the privileged and the marginalized.**

**Homecoming** is a project about bridging the gap between generations by bringing together senior citizens with young people. We pair up a senior citizen's home and a children's home in an area, conduct positive interventions through Expressive Arts to facilitate an interaction. Within the chosen populace, there is a genuine need for connection to fill a void created by loss and lack of support.



Launched: June 2017

Senior citizens, with their years of experience would become guides and mentors for our young ones. Conversely, we feel that the vibrancy and the youthfulness of the children is a way to bring in joy and cheer into the lives of senior citizens.





***Currently the partnerships include The Sahara Old Age Home in Chattarpur and Arushi Centre (Salaam Balak Trust) in Gurgaon and the Aradhna Senior Citizens Home in Bhagwaan Dass Road and Bal Sahyog, a children's Home in Connaught Place.***



*"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*

*"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*







**Launched: May, 2017**

**Mirror Image** is our Corporate Training module wherein we use arts-based tools for team building and communication, workspace boundaries and 'safe spaces', as we focus on emotional well-being and mental health. Our team of Trustees have been using their experience in theatre and arts to work in corporate setups through activities like role-playing with employees.

*We invited International Playback Theatre Practitioner, Gerry Orkin from the Wollongong Playback Theatre Company, Australia to train us in the technique of Playback Theatre, a technique used effectively in workplace training, therapy, schools, prisons and many other collectives. We have previously trained with another international Playbaker, Mr. Brian Tasker (United Kingdom) as well.*



In May 2017, following our performance of 'Adharshila Mein Ek Din: A Day in Adharshila' at the Delhi Judicial Academy, actors and facilitators from The Yuva Ekta Foundation conducted a Playback Theatre session with audience members. Participants who included members from Juvenile Justice Board, Child Welfare Committee and Civil Society Organisations, spoke about their dreams and aspirations borrowing from the theme: **Understanding Childhood: Dreams, Delinquency and Destitution'**



**Launched: January, 2018**

Youthscapes is a platform that offers a voice to young People from across the world to share their dreams, aspirations, fears and anxieties about their space, their future, without taking away the joy of exploring themselves.

We realize that issues like Climate Change, Intolerance, Fundamentalism and Social Injustice require our immediate attention. Young people are brimming with ideas that can drive cutting-edge solutions to these global issues.

*We debut this program as part of India By the Bay Festival in Hong Kong, where we partnered with Teamwork Arts. Pvt. Ltd. as Youth Outreach Partners*

*These are snippets from our Physical Theatre and Paper Theatre workshops*







*The Physical Theatre Workshop conducted with participants, aged 14-18 brought together an amalgamation of Physical Theatre techniques from India, with experiences from Hong Kong*



*While the age group of young participants was different for Paper Theatre and Physical Theatre workshops, the intent in both spaces was the same –*

*Through theatre and arts, we wanted to bring the diaspora of immigrants and local Hong Kong residents onto one platform.*



## Way Forward

While The Foundation ventured into a variety of avenues to expand the scope of Expressive Arts, there are more destinations that await us at the horizon. Here are a few things we plan to work on in 2019:



We aim to strengthen our understanding of the impact of Expressive Arts therapy programs on young offenders. **Our plan is to launch a 2-year research study that looks at Building Emotional Intelligence using Expressive Arts Therapies among 'Children in Conflict with Law'.** We have already started connecting with various stakeholders working in this field and accessing literature that covers these practices across the globe.



The Zee Jaipur Literature Festival Youth Outreach Program helped us reach larger audiences this year as we got a chance to perform at the 'Samvad' stage on the JLF grounds. Our plan is to further solidify this association with this festival and keep expanding our base to reach more and more young adults.



Our training in Playback Theatre is reaping positive rewards thus far. We now plan to register the **first active Playback Group in Delhi and spread the word about 'Mirror Image'.** This would also be our way in connecting with corporates and raise funds for other programs.



The members of The Foundation have traveled globally for various projects in the past. We plan to combine our workshop experiences from all these locations and create a catalog of our learning and the narratives that emerged from the participants. We also plan to open an active online discussion forum that brings together young adults from across the world, beyond the barriers of caste, class, religion, gender or creed.



Our initial response for Homecoming has been heartwarming. We now target Homecoming becoming a community run program where we can collaborate with Master Practitioners and volunteers who'd like to dedicate their time to Old Age Homes and Children's Homes.



*In October 2017, Up-cycled products from Art workshops with participants from **Threads of Humanity and Homecoming** were showcase and sold at an exhibition at Denave Office, Greater Noida as part of Diwali Mela. Similar exhibition was done at Teamwork Arts office and at a residential society in Vasant Kunj as part of their Diwali mela. **We managed to raise INR 24000/- by the sale of these items***

Our association with **Denave** helped us combine various projects into a rather engaging fund-raising exercise. It also enabled us to think of future prospects for *Threads of Humanity*. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the staff and employees of *Denave* for their invaluable time and contribution.

In this year, we have also received significant donations from other companies like **Abhinav Outsourcing Pvt. Ltd. and Airborne Holidays**. **Ms. Anjali Datta from Airborne Holidays has become a monthly donor of The Foundation**. We have received **incredible support from Mr. Neeraj Gulati and Mr. Ashok Kumar as well**.

**Teamwork Arts. Pvt. Ltd.** has like always come through for us administratively. The fact that they have accommodated us in their office gives us a lot to thank them for. Our everyday running costs have been met by this collaboration. The total estimate expenditure of the Foundation on various projects in **FY 2017-18 has been INR 4,97,997.47 /-**

We are a not-for-profit trust without any government or institutional backing. We are on the lookout for like-minded individual and partners whose vision and intent resonates with us.

We will continue to work hard towards achieving our vision of Equity and Social Justice.

**Warmly**

**Puneeta, Bhanu and Rijul**