

ANNUAL REPORT

2016-17

KHULA AASMAN TRUST

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Art is the symbol of the
two noblest human
efforts: to construct and to
refrain from destruction

Simone Weil

The Founder's Desk

Experience is a great teacher. And there are so many, all adding to our perspective, our practices and shaping our knowledge. Each session we undertake is like a fire that purifies us every day and helps us move up the pathway of our goal.

"Using art for transformation" sounds alluring as a term but in reality, getting acceptance for making this as a methodology to affect change is a constant challenge. Using art for transformation is a much-unexplored territory and we have taken this plunge willingly.

In our third year, we do not claim to be anywhere close to changing systems at large through our art intervention. But we are definitely able to make a difference in the lives of the individuals and groups we interact with. The ones we have continued to work this year are the most marginalized - women in rescue homes, under-trials in prisons, children in observation homes, or living in vertical slums of Mumbai. We leave them with moments of cheer and a ray of hope for themselves. Khula Aasman Trust is happy to create those moments of non-filtered joy and happiness in the world where the numbers of people under depression are scarily on increase.

Society is made up of so many little dots and we hope that a chain of positive dots reaches a tipping point eventually. At that time in future, people will be less violent, greedy and suffocated.

Sometimes in my dreams, I imagine rich corporate magnets doing dance movements or painting their emotions in free space.... It is probably my wish to make them see that there is so much fun in life that they are missing. I wish more people sing, dance, move, paint, and explore their own 'non-money' fun times. Maybe this will reduce greed of all kinds pervading our world.

When we meet children in the Observation Homes their anger towards the tilted balance of money, power, justice, is so transparent and palpable. Our resolve gets solidified. Yes, an individual needs to change but the social structures and systems also need to change.

We are a small dot on the big canvas of social change. We are trying our level best to spread our ideas to youth, and the change agents so that many more join the path of art for social change.

Sarita Ganesh
Founder,
Khula Aasman Trust,
Crafting Art for Social Change.



"To the extent that I managed to translate the emotions into images— that is to say, to find the images which were concealed in the emotions— I was inwardly calmed and reassured.

Had I left those images hidden in the emotions, I might have been torn to pieces by them."

Carl Jung

The Khula Aasman Approach

Expressive Art Based Therapy

Khula Aasman (KA) is driven by the need to bring about healing and transformation of the self, and society. KA facilitators use a combination of art, craft, yoga, meditation, play, dance, music, and rhythm, in its Expressive Art Based Therapy (EABT) sessions to make individuals, groups and communities reflect and rejuvenate themselves and become more positive in their outlook.

The KA sessions provide a safe and non-judgmental space for participants to express themselves freely either verbally or through various art forms. We invite people to new forms of arts for expressing and transforming.

Group work

"Social group work methodology and its principles exert extraordinary effectiveness in contradicting feelings of powerlessness and internalized self-hatred, and improving social functioning." (Kris Drumm).

Group Work helps in various ways such as inculcating the values inclusion and respect, mutual aid, management of conflict breaking taboos, value of activity, co-creation, problem-solving and development of the self.



KA has been working with children (boys in the age group of 14-17), in observation homes in and around Mumbai for more than three years now. It has also initiated a project with children in a slum community in M-East ward, Mankhurd, Mumbai.

Project Hansi Khushi



This Hansi Khushi Project was an intervention in Bhivandi Observation Home, from June 2016 to March 2017. It was divided into two phases each with its own set of goals; Phase-1 comprising of 16 EABT sessions and Phase-2 of 24 Yoga and EABT sessions. The KA sessions were conducted regularly once a week. As a result of this close interaction between the children and KA facilitator, P. Stalin, many of them expressed their emotional issues and the painful journey culminating at the Observation Home.

The inclusion of Yoga sessions in a systematic way became a unique feature of this project. The boys spoke about pains, weakness, lethargy, insomnia, mental distress, and anxieties. In response to these complaints, the facilitator devised a week-long Yoga Workshop for the boys, with these goals in mind:

1. To build willpower, bodily strength and work towards the reduction of physical complaints and insomnia.

2. To create a system/group of boys and selected staff members with the knowledge and practice of Yoga techniques to continue the practice even when the KA trainer is not present.

The Yoga sessions were of two hours and were conducted twice a day. The first session began at 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m., while the evening session slot was between 6.00 – 8.00 p.m. and was followed by dinner for the boys. Care was taken to choose optimum timings for the boys that budgeted for the schedule followed at the Home.

The Yoga workshop gave us the opportunity to conduct a pre and post survey to record the outcomes of Yoga. The post-Yoga workshop survey showed outcomes of positive changes like:

- A large majority reported a reduction in pain and better flexibility, better sleep patterns, as well as a marked increase in positive thoughts as compared to their responses pre-intervention.
- Most said they were able to listen to another person better, focus attention and concentrate on tasks assigned for much longer periods of time.
- A good majority reported shifts from emotions like anger and stress and sadness to happiness. There were others who reported shifts, but mostly from anger and stress to sadness. While this may not be a 'positive' shift exactly, but an extremely important fact to note shifts away from volatile emotions like anger and stress.

Even after the KA facilitator moved out of his temporary 7-day stay at the Home the children continued the practice of Yoga with the help of the staff. This we feel is a very significant achievement.

Feedback

- *...in the beginning I felt that Yoga is time-pass...nothing will happen for me, but in the end, I could realize that "so many things are happening within me really I am thankful to you."*
- *... We felt it was difficult at first - breathing in and out, then we learned the technique, now it is easy.*
- *... "the first day I felt I will not come again for the Yoga class, but the next day I felt my body was feeling better, so I felt, I should not miss the class."*
- *... "every day I felt very bad, a lot of anger was within me, but, now I am feeling better, after Yoga practice, my way thinking, and feeling are very positive."*
- *... "why I did, what I did (crime) I don't know. I should not have done that I am very sorry for that, now I am feeling very sad about it. Thanks to the Yoga class now I am feeling that I want to support to others."*
- *... "I was disturbed by bad dreams and fear, now I could sleep well not much dream now feeling relaxed - thank you for Yoga."*

Feedback from staff and authorities -

- *...We can see the difference in the behaviour of the children after the sessions.*
- *... We wish this work continues.*

Project Creative Community Centre

Learnings from Hansi Khushi project:

- To get support from authorities on a continuous basis is essential for any programme to succeed.
- There is a need for providing yoga activities regularly with EABT sessions to adolescent boys in OH as it can have a lasting impact.

KA has been involved in the community, Lallubhai Compound for some time now. One of the most poignant and disturbing issues that residents have mentioned to us is that there is no safe space for the children to play. Women from the community said that they have to travel to Chembur (a neighbouring, upscale locality about 4-5 km away) to bring the experience of a park to their children.

So, Khula Aasman brought in its CCC's agenda, a safe space for children to play and create happy positive creative experiences. KA team does it through meaningful and constructive activities for children, parents, and the community as a whole.

The CCC intervention began with very young children (aged 6-14 years), undertaken once a week. The initial sessions began with 10-15 children coming in as they wish. Now we have a group of 20-25 children participating regularly. KA team conducts an average of 10 sessions per month .

KA started working on some common issues in the community:

- *Some of the children were extremely shy.*
- *There were gender-related issues, girls, and boys not mixing together.*
- *The children used foul language and aggressive gestures and phrases.*
- *They had a lower attention span and said they were not interested in studies.*

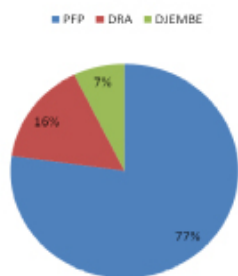
Children's participation at Lallubhai Compound Sessions in 2016-17

Time Period May 2016- March 2017	Total	Percent- age	Average
Sessions conducted	110	-	10 (per month)
Total Male Children	1299	54.5	11 (per session)
Total Female Children	1088	45.5	9 (per session)
Total Children Participating	2387	100	22 (per session)

KA Sessions at Lallubhai Compound

In the beginning, the children were provided sessions focusing on Play for Peace (PFP) that was later on combined with other art and craft activities. The sessions in January-March had two main activities Drama (DRA) and exploring rhythm through DJEMBEY. The children were also taught to use their artistic talents and create products out of waste.

**DIVISION OF ACTIVITIES
AT CCC**



The major component PFP incorporates the principles of non-competitive play, i.e., inclusion, cooperation and non-competition, safety, and role modelling. The PFP facilitator/s also leave back some poignant messages on cleanliness, respecting each other, respecting boundaries, showing empathy, addressing addiction, relationships, and recycling.



Picnic at Shewale Garden

In KA sessions, the facilitator is an active participant, serving as a role-model. Through KA session, we have seen our participants transform; their fears and inhibitions melting away, and they are more ready to form positive connections through activities, laughter, and shared learning. All this is empowering to them as well as the KA facilitators.

The KA team was able to identify positive shifts not only in the perception and attitude of individual participants, but also in the multilingual, multi-religious community.

Feedback from children

...we like to attend the sessions as this is an opportunity to laugh, play.

...we can make new friends

...my mom does not allow me to go anywhere else but she allows me to come for these sessions. I feel happy.

... We can do so many things, dance, playing djembey, etc. it is lot of fun.

Feedback from KA team members

"We have seen the Hindu and Muslim boys and girls as well as children from different castes coming together to play".



Exploring Rhythm with DJEMBEY



Craft session - Origami - From Waste to Best



Project Inner Light

Working with Incarcerated Population

KA decided to work with the incarcerated population to see if the intense engagement of hands-heart-head can make a shift in the behaviours of the participants and in redirecting the energies in a more positive direction.

Rationale

"Excessive pre-trial detention violates Under-trial prisoners' rights to liberty and fair trial, and adversely impacts their life and livelihood," -Divya Iyer, Research Manager at Amnesty International India. Two of every three persons incarcerated in India have not yet been convicted of any crime and Muslims are over-represented among such Undertrials...Men make up to 96 per cent of all prison inmates.

Despite having norms and standards set by the Constitution of India, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Standard Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners, violence, torture, physical manhandling, lack of basic amenities like toilets, water, health care facilities, is known to be rampant in most Indian prisons.

Moreover, there are also cases of mentally ill persons and hardened criminals and drug addicts living alongside fresh first time prisoners. This also increases the danger of fresh prisoners, Undertrials, being inducted into drug abuse. Lack of effective management of information relating to prisoners, the absence of functional and effective Undertrials review committees, lack of adequate legal aid, and delays in court productions of Undertrials makes them more emotionally charged. The male barracks have very high emotional levels and disturbances in the barracks are also very intense.

KA thus initiated a project with women Undertrials in 2015-16 in collaboration with Prayas, a project of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. This project was received with great enthusiasm by the inmates and the authorities.

In 2016-17, KA planned to work with the male Undertrials as a pilot intervention to see how EABT can be equally helpful to them.

Expressive arts within the four walls of prison -

The intervention was conducted in the form of sessions that lasted between 60-90 minutes. A total of 19 visits were made to the jails of which 3 introductory sessions were conducted in all 3 jails to encourage inmates to volunteer for the sessions as we could only have a maximum of 20 participants. Finally we had around 50-60 participants in all 3 prisons.

We conducted 10 sessions successfully; 6 in Aadharwadi Prison, Kalyan, with 19 participants and 4 sessions in Thane District Prison with 16 participants. Also three relaxation sessions were conducted in Thane District Prison (2) and Aadharwadi Prison (1).

The sessions were focused on:

1. Needs Assessment
2. Exploring own movements, fun activities and Dance Therapy Movements
3. Creation of safe and non-judgemental spaces inside the prison.
4. Enhancement of the environment in terms of mood and aesthetics and better group bonding.
5. De-stressing and reduction in stress levels.
6. Forgiveness towards self and others and Positive self-image required for future life.

Challenges in working with prison inmates

Due to various reasons there is no continuity in the prison work and we were unable to document any major change in the participants. However, KA is very happy that a process for mental health support for the Undertrials is

working well. The participants experienced something very different and positive during relaxation which they never had experienced in their life.

Some of the participants became quiet in a positive way. For the prison system too, this is an innovative approach to well being and they too need to be oriented a few times to align with the vision of KA.

Feedback from Undertrials

"When are you coming back? Please come daily because we are feeling alone here."

"This session is making us feel free and to relax.."

"Your session give a hope to live life again..."

PROJECTS WITH RESCUED WOMEN AND GIRLS

Project Ehsaas - Navjeevan

For the past four years, KA has been working with Navjeevan - a home for women who are victims of trafficking and rescued through various government or non-government initiatives. The home has seen certain positive changes under the new leadership of Ms. Ovhal. The home was also undergoing structural repairs in 2016-17 and that affected our regularity of sessions.

EABT for Women Inhabitants

Nevertheless, KA conducted sessions for women inhabitants as well as caregiving staff. The sessions with women in Navjeevan are conducted in the context of women having to attend to police, court, health, counselling, and other responsibilities. Thus attendance varies from day to day.

KA Sessions at Navjeevan

Month	Number of session in month	Total number of participants	Average number of participants per session
August 2016	4	30	7.5
October 2016	2	12	6
January 2017	3	35	11.7
February 2017	3	30	10
May 2017	1	11	11
June 2017	2	16	8
Total sessions	15	134	22

Feedback from women participants

"This is the only space for us to laugh and cry."

"We feel much relaxed after the session".

"We sleep well at night".

"We fight less."

Caring for caretakers

Khula Aasman believes that caring for the caretakers is an equally important aspect of the work within the institutions where the staff has to work under lot of pressure and constraints. Thus KA's aim of conducting these sessions was that the sensitivity and experience gained in the session will translate into them sharing the same with women inhabitants. This sensitive and responsive environment would improve the mental health status of women and staff.

Three sessions were completed with the caretakers at Navjeevan. The staff members loved the sessions and the idea that somebody thought about them and cared about their challenges and the need for them to de-stress. They would like these sessions to be conducted once in a month so that they can feel free from their stressful routine and serve the inmates better.

Feedback from caretakers

"It was lot of fun."

"We remembered our childhood."

"Only after you go through the session one realises how important it is for once own self."

Challenges at Navjeevan:

- Due to structural repairs and certain other administrative issues within the home KA could not conduct the activities as planned.
- Inappropriate space for the sessions has been a major hurdle. The trainers despite their enthusiasm had to conduct some of the sessions in the kitchen space, in corridors, outside washrooms and so on.
- Attendance at caregivers' sessions was not as expected due to preoccupation of staff with work. The gap between these sessions is long; planning session dates is difficult due to several events and official duties.

Deonar Special Home for Girls

ABT sessions were initiated by KA in Deonar Special Home for Girls as one of the first formal interventions.

Training to become Trainers

In 2016-17 a series of sessions with the rescued minor girls were conducted by Khula Aasman in collaboration with Kolkata Sanved. Our co-facilitator Snehal, coordinated the sessions aimed at Restoring Smiles through Dance Movement Therapy (DMT).

This was a success as these girls not only went through the programme for their own recovery but they were also trained to do similar kind of work back home in Bangladesh.

The process began with 23 girls. During the year some of them got released, some of them joined the skill development courses at other

places and only six of them remained till the end. These six girls saw a remarkable shift in them, changing from victim to someone who can help others. It reiterated our belief that if a participant undergoes the entire DMT module, the chances of increase in self-respect are very high. These six girls narrated their stories of changes in themselves at the time of certificate distribution ceremony.

Feedback from Participants

"We did not want to be part of this but slowly we understood the value of being part of these sessions."

"We want to teach the way Didi does."

"We are happy that we can say 'no' now."

Challenges at Deonar Special Home for Girls

- The perception of authorities and many other decision makers in Deonar Special Home needs to be changed so that they perceive mental health of rescued girls as an important aspect in their recovery process. They continue to believe that if the skill development of girls is catered to, most problems would be resolved.
- KA has realised that most of the young participants carry huge burden of guilt, shame, fear, which needs to be addressed in a safe open space like KA, so that they imbibe the skills much better.

Project Sukoon

Project Sukoon is a support programme run by Khula Aasman for marginalized women, who are trained in various craft activities such as jewellery-making and furniture-making. Khula Aasman provides a stipend and trains them to conduct similar workshops on their own.

In order to do our bit for Mother Earth, we try making products out of recycled and eco-friendly materials. We have been



displaying products made by our Sukoon participants and these have generated supportive donations.

Training Community Women



Swayav Shikshan Sanstha invited Khula Aasman's team members to train the rural women in skill development. Khula Aasman conducted a training in Quilling Earring from 25th - 27th July 2016, at Kotambi, Gujarat. The KA team



trained 18 village women and girls in making paper quilling earrings. The rural women spent three days for learning a new skill that could emerge as an income generation activity. The KA team, Shabana, Sonali and Trupti started the training by providing a tool- kit and the teaching of seven basic design earrings. The Kotambi women then moved on to learn some more fashionable designs on the second day. On the third day they gave final touches to the 250 earrings they had made. They polished, giving final touches, and packaged the products and kept them ready for sale.

Feedback from Participants

The participants said they had enjoyed this training.

One of the participants, Dharmisthaben expressed what most had felt, "I learnt something new to makeI will continue it in my free time as a side business".



Trainings for Corporate and Other Institutions

1. Larson & Toubro

Khula Aasman got an opportunity to the work with the staff of Larson and Toubro. KA facilitators engaged the company staff in Dance Movement sessions as well as therapeutic sessions with clay for self-reflection. Similarly sessions were conducted with children of the staff. Thus the following sessions were conducted for L&T.

- Dance Movement -7th October , Participated by 25 staff members
- Use of clay as therapy -14th October- Participated by 30 staff members
- Two- hour sessions with children – 12th November- participated by 35 children

2. Amity University

Khula Aasman was invited to take sessions with the students of Amity University. Two sessions were conducted with more than 80 students on stress bursting. The students and the faculty appreciated the workshop and learnt techniques of relaxation. Four sessions were conducted on 2nd March, number of students present were 112.

3. National Institute of Fashion Designing, Khargarh

Khula Aasman got an opportunity to present its work in furniture making out of waste in front of 22 students of the School during a seminar on "Sustainability Sensitizing for Fashion" held on 27th August 2016.

4. Drama Therapy Training organised by KA

An introductory workshop in drama therapy and pscyodrama was conducted by Joel Gluck, USA. Joel is a drama therapist, meditator,

theatre artist, and executive coach who offers individual and couple therapy, workshops, clinical training, and coaching for performers and professionals throughout the world.

Joel offered Khula Aasman Trust to organise a two days workshop on 10 &11 September 2016. This training was attended by 12 participants who were therapist, mental health workers, educators, creative artists.

In this introductory workshop, fundamental techniques in drama therapy and psychodrama, were introduced using our own personal experiences as a basis for the drama. It was a great learning experience for all.



6. Play for Peace Module Workshop

A PFP workshop was conducted on 15 & 16 July, whereby 12 people participated. The workshop was attended by the community workers, teachers and facilitators from various NGOs. The workshop was facilitated by Ms. Archana Magar.

Participation at Events

- **Play for Peace- Khula Aasman Trust, Mumbai, Club**

An online PFP Club Exchange was organised between a Vietnamese Group (New Day Club, Ho Chi Minh), and the Khula Aasman Club, Mumbai, on 17th August 2016 at 12:30 pm.



We had planned the session for an hour, but it was so exciting for all of us that we ended up spending 135 minutes interacting with each other. We shared our ways of greeting people, our geographies, and our distinct and vibrant cultures. Both the clubs had many questions for each other, while they discussed online about their work and how 'Play for Peace' is changing lives of youth and children in their communities even as challenges seem to be mounting. Khula Aasman (KA) Club members Shabana, Sonali, Snehal, Archana, Stalin, and Sarita shared how they use waste and recycled materials to make furniture (like small tables) and utility items like coasters, pen pouches, flower pots.

- A sale of products by Sukoon project women was organised at SIES College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Mumbai.
- An Exhibition cum Activities event Kharghar organised by Karmyo, which is a fast-growing community of socially responsible citizens. People from different walks of life are joining hands to make an impact by either fundraising for social initiatives or initiating social activities within their communities or taking up projects with NGOs. Karmyo invited Khula Aasman Trust to be part of their even at Kharghar, where a display its products was put up. Moreover, we conducted sessions in clay work and Play for Peace for the visitors. The response was very positive and the participants enjoyed the activities thoroughly.



FCRA application

FCRA application was submitted successfully.

Staff training

- P. Stalin - Sexuality and youth organised by MAVA workshop, on 12-15th August, 2016 at Deolali, Nasik. KA works with youth in the Observation Home as well as in the community. Sex and Sexuality are extremely sensitive issues which require responsible person to speak the various questions which are thrown by the youth. Hence it was decided that this training would help KA to take care of these issues
- Snehal Gaikwad - Dance Movement Therapy seminar at Pune.
- Snehal has already completed her Dance Movement Therapy Course and as part of on-going exposure she attended the seminar.
- Sarita Ganesh - Strategic Management of NGOs. A long duration programme with Knowledge Whiteboard, Mumbai and Kshitij, Pune, Supported by Tata Trust. The course is helpful for analysing the programmes of the organisation. The course taught tools for strategic planning of the NGO.

Volunteering & Internship

Interns

Meredith Starkman - A student of Michigan University joined in March 2016 for her internship for six months. She has worked with the incarcerated population. During her internship, Meredith worked with the prison inmates as well as with the children from the Creative Community Centre to teach them drama not just as a skill but a tool for problem solving in

real life combined with various other life-skills like effective communication, listening and tolerance.

Shrishti Brahma Boro - Therapeutic music sessions were conducted with women at Lallubhai Compound. The group of 10 women who are undergoing DFY (Doctors For You) training at the MRVC health centre of Lallubhai Compound. Shrishti's 10 sessions with the women was an innovative and exploratory approach of using music, art and play to develop communication skills, verbalize happiness and pain, build group cohesiveness, generate sensitivity towards each other and indulge in self exploration. She explored creating music with one's own body, followed by composing a song of their own. Women took part whole heartedly in exploring their voices to express their emotions.

Students from Centre for Lifelong Learning, TISS

Eight students undergoing course in Dance Movement Therapy at the Centre for Lifelong Learning, TISS, were given the opportunity to work at Bhivandi Observation Home, Creative Community Centre at Lallubhai Compound, M-East ward, Navjeevan, Sukhshnati (a short stay home for destitute women). All the students Prity Pathak, Damini Sahay, Reshma Shriyan, Elizabeth Pandit, Krupa Joshi, Manisha Malakar, Ridhi Doshi, and Gargi completed their internship successfully.

Students From Amity University

Two students from the School of Social work were placed for their year long internship at KA. Ms. Anisa and Ms. Sujitha joined in and got involved in various programmes of KA. Their learning curve showed a steady growth by the end of the year.

Para-professionals from Social Service League College

Six students of Para-professional Course in Social Work were placed with Khula Aasman. The students were trained to do a community survey at Creative Community Center, Lallubhai Compound. Besides this, the workers also conducted a session in healthy food habits with the women in the community. The students Sumedh, Kaiser, Aashad and Pratiksha, were committed and came with the field experience which was an added advantage.

Publicity

Article in Indian Express on 20th June 2016: Narratives from girls from Deonar Special Home who had completed the first round of becoming Trainers in Dance Movement Therapy, and their stories of transformation due to sessions conducted by Khula Aasman Trust and Kolkatta Sanved.

Funding

MSPL Project Funding:	10,00,000
RMML	5,00,000
Ms. Kamal Lodha -	5,00,000
Ms. Aditi Chitre	15,000
Mr. Loonkar -	21,000
Mr. Nilesh Lodha -	24,000
Ms. Rukmini V. -	25,000
Revenue generated through workshops and contributions for Sukoon project	1,32,307
Total	22,17,307

KA Trustees

- Ms. Roopashri Sinha
- Ms. Shaku Kothari
- Mr. Akhil Oswal
- Ms. Sarita Ganesh

KA Advisory Board Members -

- Dr. Vimla Nadkarni, Immediate Past President, IASSW
- Dr. Mohan Deshpande, Artist and Health Educator
- Dr. Uma Shankar, Principal, SIES College, Matunga, Mumbai
- Dr. Rekha Mammen, Professor, TISS
- Ms. Gauri Deshmukh, educationist, and activist for Zero Violence School.
- Mr. Sajeev khandekar, Artist and writer.

Core Team Members -

- P. Stalin, M.A. Social Work, yoga practioner & flute player
- Rosanna Rodrigues, Social Worker, Art Based Therapy practitioner,
- Snehal Gaikwad, M.A. (Non formal education)
- Ragini Baile, Trainer of Games
- Sonali Mhapralkar, Craft practitioner
- Shabana Khan, Craft practitioner
- Sunita Baile, craft practitioner

THANK YOU



*Khula Aasman is registered under
Mumbai charitable Trusts Act-1950.*

Registered office:

3/58, Savitha Building, Lane No. 2,
Cheddanagar, Chembur,
Mumbai - 400 089
India

Office address:

C/O Sukhshanti,
Opp BARC Main Gate, Mankhurd,
Mumbai - 400 088
India

www.khulaaasman.org