

# **Khula Aasman Trust**

## **Creative Community Centre**

### **Lallubhai compound**

(A review of work for the period April, May and June 2018)

#### **Introduction:**

Khula Aasman Trust has been working for the past four years with community children in Lallubhai Compound, Mankhurd. This is an intervention that primarily looks at working with the R & R affected (SRA) Community kids in the area. The purpose and focus of the intervention is on promoting wellbeing and creating positive thoughts and safe space to identify, understand and express their feelings, explore choices and build dreams. We work from a rights-based perspective looking to uphold children's right to play, and thereby working to co-create, with communities, safe spaces for kids to play. There are different kinds of activities conducted by the trust, like Play for Peace® sessions, skill development training, personality development, academic support, body-based work, including DMT session for community women.

We are always open to hosting students from different colleges to share their knowledge and support to the community children and their parents, while they themselves understand ground realities of working with marginalised communities in the context of work with Urban poor.

#### **ACTIVITIES: DETAILS AND IMPACT**

##### **➤ Dance Movement Therapy**

In April, DMT sessions were organised by Netra Kadam and Divesha Jain, students of DMT (Diploma Course in Dance Movement Therapy, Centre for Life Long Learning TISS with Kolkata Sanved), through Khula Aasman Trust with the women in the community. The need for working with the women, is a need that has come up from the women itself, after seeing the work and its impact on their own children. This is the second such batch of women undergoing this process. The women were very excited to have a space to engage with something so different with their time.

The intervention lasted over 8 sessions, the goals of which included – creating a space to get out of their robotic lives and experience a different life outside their house, to have some fun without being judged and be themselves.

The intervention helped improve their awareness of their physical selves, world and movement as well as social relationships, to form a new awareness about their bodies and movement, and build new relationships, albeit in a manner limited by the short duration of the intervention. Even so, across the sessions the team could observe visible dropping of inhibitions and building confidence, more conscious exploration of the space around.

The participants shared that they never thought that they would ever have this kind of an opportunity because their lives usually revolved around taking up family responsibilities and caring for their family members. They never had the time / space to pursue their own interests.

One of the participants said that *“this is my great opportunity in my life, because many time I have felt to dance but never happened in my life, I am thankful to Khula Aasman because they gave me this opportunity”*<sup>1</sup>

Another participant said *“I was not ok with talking new people and I had fear about talking to anyone, now I am feeling comfortable. Now I felt that somehow I got confidence to communicate with any new people.”*

Still yet another participant said that *“during the whole DMT session I enjoyed lot, the session took me to my past life experience and I felt it. I was a dancer from my childhood and I was enjoyed from my childhood till marriage. After my marriage I forgot myself I am as a dancer, I never got the opportunity to do a dance. Here I did lot of dance and movement now I understood that what my strength is, so thanks to Khula Aasman.”*



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<sup>1</sup> All Italicised feedback translated from local language

### ➤ Personality Development workshop

There was a five day summer vacation workshop held in the Khula Aasman office between April 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. This workshop was put in place for children aged between 12 – 16 years in Lallubhai Compound. The primary focus was on the students from Shivam VidhyaMandir a semi-aided



school from the same area within which we have been working. Our goal for working with this school has been to strengthen the existing institutions in the space, as well as to be able to have more continuity with participation with the youth group.

Over the five days, there were specific topics assigned to each day and workshops were organised accordingly. A total of 12 students participated in the workshops from start to finish.

Through drumming, drama, storytelling, play and clay work, they were taken across a range of topics including :

- Understanding 'I': Who am I? What are my dreams? How can I be leader?
- Effective Communication skills
- Photography
- Re-establishing a relationship with the other
- Re-establishing a relationship with the earth



### ➤ Play for Peace®:

Play for Peace (PFP) is a global community of people using non-competitive games to create spaces to play and experience peace in conflict situations. PFP has always been a part of the Khula Aasman method of intervention at all levels of the age spectrum, be it with kids, youth, adults or the elderly. The principles of PFP are at the core of all interventions, and we aim to create safe spaces for people to be everywhere we take our work. The KA programme has adapted this programme to work with the urban poor and SRA affected youth in Lallubhai compound.

The children are very enthusiastic about PFP, and always ask us to teach them the non-competitive circle games that are a trademark of this programme. They have shared with us that these circles are perhaps the only spaces that they have ever played together without discriminating against gender, class, caste or age.

Some children have said that *“We like the Play For Peace games because there is no competition - no winner, no loser, also we get an equal opportunity to play & it makes us happy.”*

Many have told us that these sessions hold no violence, physical or verbal rather teach them to protect themselves and those around them.

In April we reached conducted 11 PFP sessions reaching an average of 20 kids per session. In May our facilitators conducted over 10 hours of Play for Peace games with 8 Practice Peace sessions. There was an average attendance of 29 children per session.

Through May, we also had Ms Archana Magar, PFP trainor come in and do an orientation with the children in the community as well as a refresher workshop for the trained staff at KA.

In June, two practice peace sessions were conducted by our facilitators. We introduced newer games this month, and the children had a great time playing these inclusive games! Some of our staff from other projects also participated in these sessions, and learnt a few of these games themselves.



➤ **English speaking classes:**

English speaking classes (ESL classes) were initiated with an aim to equip the children with conversational English skills. Children aged 12 and above attended 8 sessions conducted by **Stephen Raftery** and **Rosanna Rodrigues**. Stephen is a student intern from Ireland, from University College Cork (UCC). A total of 15 children



regularly attended these classes. These classes were designed to bridge the gaps in learning, between what is taught in the schools and their current skills.

### ➤ **Art sessions in the community**

**Tanvi Parab**, a textile designer graduating from JJ School of Art in Mumbai, has been volunteering with our organisation, bringing her creativity and expertise with colours and textiles, into our spaces of everyday engagement. She conducted 2 art sessions in the community, with a total of 68 children attending these sessions. These classes helped the children express themselves through the medium of art, unlock their imagination and creativity, while also providing them with skills and technical expertise in art and art practice.



### ➤ **Meditation sessions**

Other than these sessions, 3 meditation/relaxation sessions were facilitated by our community staff at CCC. These sessions benefitted 38 children, and are aimed towards overall development of the children, to help them unwind, calm down and relax.



### ➤ **Photography classes**

In continuation of our efforts to give creative tools to our children to enable a positive change in their life, and that of the community, photography was introduced as a means of expression and communication. A series of 5 photography workshop were conducted across the month of May and June 2018 by Mr. Ganesh. These sessions were designed around delivering the basics of photography, including handling a camera (hardware) and essentials to make a good photograph including composition and framing, light, and using software like Adobe Photoshop. The sessions were delivered to 15 children from the community, who we have been in active engagement, in the age group of 14 to 17 years, 2 hours per session at the Khula Aasman office. Mr. Ganesh is an ex-campaign director, Greenpeace, environmentalist and photographer. He brought in his experience in all the fields during the workshops, helping the children

locate photography skills in relevant contexts. A certificate distribution ceremony marked the culmination of our photography workshops. For a lot of these children, this was their first brush with the camera, and the art of photography itself. It opened up a new world for them. In their words, “I had never taken pictures or known how to use a mobile phone camera also. Here, we got a hands-on of professional equipment, and various techniques. Now that I know these, and have taken photographs, I can’t stop! Initially, I was not so interested, but now I am so enthused about clicking pictures!” They thanked Mr. Ganesh, who conducted these sessions, for his time and the efforts he put into delivering the workshops, not restricting photography to the art itself but bringing in the applicability of the knowledge of light, composition etc to other aspects of life also.

### ➤ Other

#### **Skill building workshops:**

Facilitated by our volunteer, Ms. Tanvi Parab, 3 art workshops were held at office, for the staff and children at Khula Aasman. These workshops included a Tie-and-Dye workshop, Watercolour painting and Art expression using Music.





### **International Yoga day Celebrations -**

Yoga day was celebrated on 21st June at our Center with much vigour, with our in-house Yoga expert P. Stalin leading 13 children through various exercises for an hour and a half. Basic breathing practices, pranayama, padmaasan, Bhujangasan were taught to the children.



### **Staff training:**

We have been actively training our on-field staff on various aspects of fieldwork and working with children, including reporting and documentation, psychosocial aspects to be considered while working with groups and with individuals. Along with Weekly CCC Review meetings, these sessions have been supplementing skills of our on-field staff at the community.







### **Home visits and Follow up**

In June, our field coordinators conducted an extensive follow up of the children who have been a part of the CCC space since the beginning of Khula Aasman's work in the community in 2014, including understanding reasons for absence, as also for participation of some children in our activities.

### **Workshop on 'Mental Health in India'**

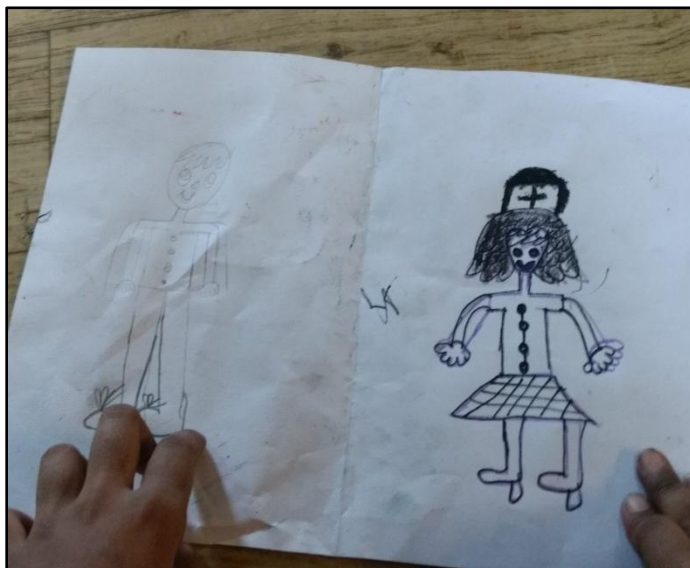
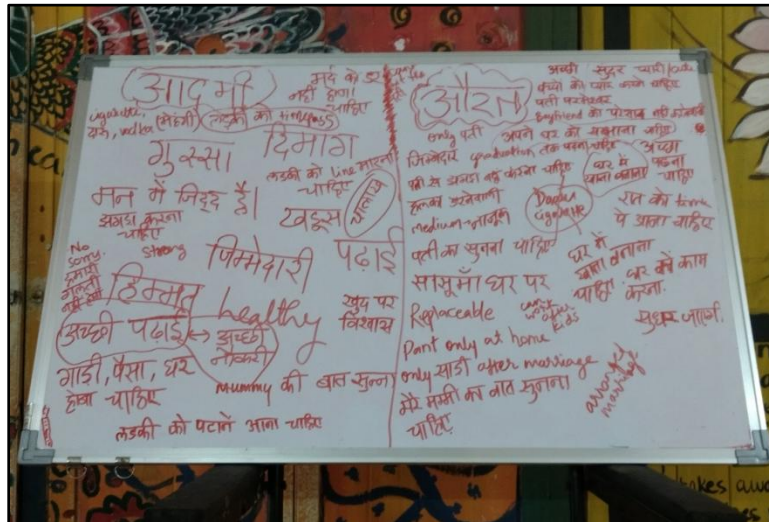
Ms. Rosanna conducted a half-day workshop on 'Mental Health in India' for foreign exchange students from Xavier Institute of Engineering. 12 students with 2 supervisors attended the session.

### **'Gender ki baatein'**

A half day workshop on Gender was held at the Khula Aasman office with children from CCC. The workshop attempted to deconstructed gender through stories and art. With a discussion on gender stereotypes, the accompanying conversations addressed how gender as a social construct can work to limit our choices and shape ideas we have about



ourselves and others. The workshop was facilitated by Ms. Rosanna and Ms. Chetana.



## **Juggling Workshop -**

A workshop on Juggling was conducted by our student intern Stephen Raftery on the 27th of June, 2018. The staff and the children creatively made balls for juggling, and picked up a few tips and tricks for the same! The activity was an exercise in attention, mind-body coordination as well as an exciting outlet for fun!



At Khula Aasman Trust, we are always looking to build capacities and skill, create role models and explore spaces for holistic personality development, all while emphasizing and nurturing children's right to play, and its impact to creating positive mental health outcomes.

We love working with people towards this goal!

In case you would like to volunteer with us, do write in to:

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