

# CONNECTED THROUGH QUARANTINE: WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Compiled by Maya Sen

ms.maya.sen@gmail.com

## **OVERVIEW.**

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown was imposed in India on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2020. This created unique challenges for people supporting vulnerable young people. This document highlights some of the ways in which people were able to respond to these challenges.

The following consultations were conducted with 17 individuals who are involved with vulnerable young people in various capacities in West Bengal, India. It includes social workers, various kinds of mental health professionals, managers, parents, family members, community members etc. These interviews represent diverse child protection contexts (for example CCI's, community based organizations, organizations working on public health, etc). It also includes consultations with some young people.

The consultation intended to

- Understand how the pandemic, is affecting vulnerable young people
- To understand the situation of young people in contexts of violence
- To understand the kind of responses that has been useful in these contexts.
- To create possibilities to share skills and knowledges

The questions asked during the interview were

- What are some of the key concerns facing the young people you are associated in terms of safety?
- How would you usually respond to these situations?
- Are there particular ways in which the lockdown/ pandemic has impacted your response?
- Can you think of a situation or a story, where you were able to respond in spite of the current limitations? How did you go about doing it (were there particular steps you took, particular skills and knowledge you used? particular supports you accessed?)
- Why was doing this important to you? Did it speak to particular hopes/ values/ commitments?
- What do you think this meant for the people that you work with?

- If you were to keep this (hope/ value/ ethic) close to you, what else do you think would be possible?
- Is this something that has always been there in your work, or has it just shown up?  
When did you first realize this was important to you?
- Are there ways in which you plan to bring this into future consultations
- Are there ways in which you can extend this initiative?
- What has this conversation been like for you?

The results of the process are presented below.<sup>i</sup>

*Table 1: Division of topics*

<b>PART</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
1	CHALLENGES DUE TO THE PANDEMIC AND LOCKDOWN
2	
3	RESPONDING TO THE SITUATION
4	WHAT IS SUSTAINING THESE RESPONSES?
5	WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE?
6	EFFECT OF THE CONVERSATION

## **PART ONE AND TWO: CHALLENGES DUE TO THE PANDEMIC AND LOCKDOWN**

### **1. GENERAL PROBLEMS.**

#### ***1.2 CURIOSITY / ACCESS TO INFORMATION***

- They have many questions regarding the situation that they are unable to find answers for. They are wondering why, if the big people are going out, they can't? Many of them don't understand what's going on and are still out on the streets. The young people are confused as different people are saying different things. They don't know what the truth is.

#### ***1.3 LACK OF ENGAGEMENT***

- Many young people are finding it hard to stay locked inside their homes. They don't like staying indoors for long periods and require involvement. Their houses are very small. They stay outside most of the time, they play, attend various sessions, go to our drop in centers and day care settings, go to school etc. Many of our services would contribute to keeping them engaged. Now these services are not running and there are many restrictions, the police are monitoring everything. This is inviting restlessness into their lives.
- In rural areas there is limited access to recreation and entertainment. The parents themselves often find little time for leisure.
- Often parents are struggling to find ways to engage young people. In urban settings, parents are reluctant to let their children explore. Many children are not allowed to help out in domestic chores. Often creativity is expressed in many ways; some children find creativity in everyday activities, however keeping them out of these realms limit their engagement.
- Some young people cannot access materials like toys; craft materials etc. in their own homes and have limited options to keep themselves occupied.
- A few with access to smart phones are spending a lot of time on it.

#### ***1.4 MENTAL HEALTH***

- As a result of these factors they are very “emotionally broken down”. Staying in confinement impacts mental health. This invites frustration, aggressiveness and stress. Some children express this through “quietness “and by withdrawing from their surroundings.
- Many adolescents between the age of 12- 15 are involved in romantic relationships and are very sad and worried about that.
- If there’s trouble (Oshanti)<sup>ii</sup> and a lack of food in the homes “suicidal” thoughts are also visiting the community.

### **1.5 LOSS OF FREEDOM**

- The young people do not like this loss of freedom. Staying 24/7 in these conditions is like torture to them. They can’t be free.

### **1.6 YOUNG PEOPLE IN QUARANTINE.**

- Even in quarantine settings young people are isolated. They don’t know why they have been quarantined. Many fear they will die. Their parents and protection workers aren’t allowed in these settings. As a result they become severely distressed.

### **1.7 EDUCATION**

- The lockdown has affected their education. They are unable to keep up with their studies. As of now schools are closed till June. In one small house, it is difficult for them to get the space to study properly. A lot of education has shifted online, which makes it difficult for those who can’t access technology to keep up. For example many teachers are sharing resources on whatsapp and email. However one particular young person I was working with was given an exam but did not have internet on her phone. It was difficult to reach out to educational institutions for support.

### **1.8 COVID SAFETY IN THE CONTEXT OF MARGINALISATION**

- We keep getting a lot of messages on how to protect ourselves from the virus, but many communities do not have the resources to comply.
- Most of these communities live in very small houses, where many people are sharing one or two rooms. Many of these young people live in joint families. It is very difficult to maintain social distance in these spaces. Often being at home is like being a part of a gathering.
- Even in child protection settings, child care institutions (CCI’S) are often overcrowded. Some CCI’s have 80 to 100 children. With a lack of resources it is difficult to keep up

with social distancing norms. Sometimes these settings cannot provide children with masks, sanitizers, soaps etc.

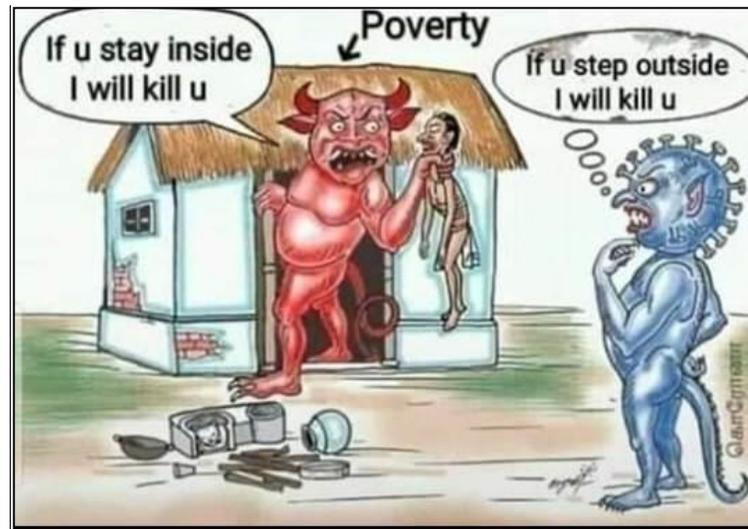
- It's difficult to keep washing your hands as in some communities water is not available throughout the day. Not all families can afford soaps, sanitizers or masks.
- In many contexts healthcare settings are also not accessible. For those of us who are living in small towns, we wonder what will happen if one of these children falls sick. The hospitals are not good here, where will we take them?

### ***1.9 COMPOUNDING OF PRE-EXISTING VULNERABILITIES***

The virus and the lockdown have also compounded vulnerabilities for many young people.

- For girls who are staying at home, they are often expected to help with household chores while the boys are not. This often becomes a major burden for them. They lose out on time for leisure and education.
- In some communities there are people living with HIV. Therefore this virus puts them at great risk. Their immunity becomes a major concern.
- The children of sex workers are also at risk. Due to the lockdown most of the community has lost their means of livelihood. As they are already stigmatized it becomes harder for them to access services.
- Many young people and their families are associated with begging. Now that there is no one on the streets, they are unable to support themselves.
- For many communities the current scenario has become a choice between fighting hunger and fighting COVID 19. Many families survive on daily wage earnings. Their income is already very low. Many parents are unable to go to work. They are struggling to provide their families with basic needs. Food insecurity has become a major issue. These communities are getting rations and cooked food from the state but it is not enough. Sometimes these services have only the bare essentials. These are often being distributed through welfare schemes and the public distribution systems (ration shops). However not everyone is included within these schemes. Distribution is often inconsistent. Often while accessing these services families are subject to shame. This makes them reluctant to reach out for help. Many parents have no other choice but to go to work to make ends meet. Many young people are worried about the financial situations of their family in times to come. During the crisis there is still relief available,

many are wondering what happens once the crisis is over. These effects will take a long time to subside; will the relief services still be available?



### **1.10 DIFFICULTIES REACHING EVERYONE**

- There are many restrictions on mobility and workers cannot reach their communities. This has led to a closure in most direct services. Meeting with the families and talking to them was an essential part of the service however this is no longer possible.
- Relief measures are not reaching everyone. It's a challenge to reach young people in remote areas.
- With the shift of all activities online, many young people find themselves excluded due to the digital divide. In some communities not everyone has access to phones. Those who do not have the resources to fill balance<sup>iii</sup> to meet the current needs. Also sometimes phones are not within network coverage areas. Therefore all young people cannot be reached via the phone.
- Many organizations and individuals trying to help do not have the financial resources to reach everyone in need.

## **2. CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN 'HOME OF VIOLENCE'**

### **2.1 LACK OF PRIVACY**

- In such situations, young people have little or no privacy. Sometimes they even have to change their clothes in exposed settings that can put them at risk of harm.

### **2.2 EXPOSURE TO ABUSE ONLINE**

- Many young people are spending a lot of time on their phones. This could result in using the phone in ways that are not safe, bad things could happen; things could go out of control.

### **2.3 INCREASED SURVEILLANCE SCRUTINITY**

- In terms of violence earlier when the parents would go out young people had some time on their own to be as they wanted. They would watch TV. Relax. Now everyone is always around. For a child who is staying in such a situation, there's no space to be free. Parents are spending their time on increasing surveillance around kids and disciplining them.
- In many families fathers are recruited into patriarchal ways of relating to young people. They become increasingly controlling. However as they are migrant workers they are mostly away from home. However due to the closure of work spaces, many of them are coming back home. They are subjecting young people to increased surveillance and control. The children can feel the pressure of this they don't know what they will do.
- In some rural settings cultures of discipline and authoritative relations between young people and their elders make it difficult for them to understand one another. This leads to frequent clashes and conflict.
- This increased suffocation and pressure leads to increased harm, especially in terms of violent ways of discipline and physical harm.
- In situations where abuse is perpetuated by someone from the outside, being around one's guardians has improved the situation; however this does not take into account cases where abuse is happening within the family.

## **2.4 INCREASED FRUSTRATION AND IRRITATION**

- Being in close proximity all the time along with the pressures of the current situation is leading to a situation of volatility. Sometimes people are communicating in ways that invite aggression. Added to this the restlessness of young people creates a situation in which violence thrives.
- The mothers of the young people are finding the situation challenging as patriarchal attitudes in society, have resulted in the burden of housework and childcare being primarily attended to by them.
- Due to these factors in families where there never has been violence before, there is suddenly violence.

## **2.5 WITNESSING VIOLENCE**

- With the lockdown in some situations there is an increased chance of domestic violence. As they are home all the time, children are increasingly witness to this. For example in a particular case domestic violence has resulted in the father throwing the mother and the child out on the streets.
- Addiction in communities often leads to an escalation of violence. During the lockdown many people are unable to get their sources of addiction, which is resulting in withdrawal that also leads to an escalation of violence.
- In situations of domestic violence often the parents are vulnerable as well, and this makes it difficult for them to take immediate action on the situation for their children.
- Sometimes violence is perpetuated by other family members and is not just between parents.

## **2.6 DENIAL OF BASIC RIGHTS**

- Not getting food and being denied of essential needs is also a form of violence.

## **2.7 RUNAWAY / HIDE THINGS**

- These pressures are leading to young people having to hide things from their parents. A fear is that this might cause many of them to run away from their homes.

## **2.8 INCREASED EXPOSURE TO ABUSE.**

- In many cases young people are in homes with perpetrators of harm present. Now they are in the context of risk 24/7, they are suffering 24/7. Earlier there would be specific periods when they would be scared, now they are living in fear.

## ***2.9 HUMAN TRAFFICKING/ COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION***

- In some communities human trafficking is prevalent. Those engaged in trafficking have found novel ways to adapt to the situation. There have been cases where in the midst of the lockdown they have convinced young girls to marry them. They can't leave with the girls or sell them now, so they are marrying them behind closed doors in hopes they can sell them later. They are taking advantage of the poverty of their families by promising the families money to marry their daughters. They are taking advantage of the social distancing laws.

## ***2.10 PROBLEMS WITH REPORTING VIOLENCE***

- Many of the children who are stuck in houses with those who perpetuate harm are finding it difficult to report or reach out for help as they are always being watched.
- There are already certain factors present that prevent reporting. In poor families, they don't have the resources required to keep up with the legal proceedings after reporting. Services that are available free of cost cannot always be guaranteed; as one's social location often determines experience within these spaces. Not everyone has access to effective services. Reporting is also linked to experiences of shame within the community.
- Many children do not know how they will report abuse.
- In some situations when they are moving around the community. They see posters about child line as well as other safe spaces for children. Now they are not hearing so much about all this.
- Many don't know what to expect when they reach out for an emergency response. An emergency response requires the coordination of multiple actors across different settings. A fear is that emergency responses can sometimes increase harm as well. This is something that remains a dilemma during normal times as well. As young people are harder to reach with social distancing norms it's also difficult to reach agreements on what sort of emergency responses are needed and are helpful. Many young people are afraid of the consequences of reporting. A worry is that will emergency responses take into consideration the particularities of the situation?
- There is an assumption that services within the sector are exempt from risk and harm. However this is not always the case. Often various forms of violence are perpetuated

within settings that are supposed to keep us safe. Therefore many people often wonder, what are safe spaces to reach out to, can I be guaranteed of their safety? Many young people have had negative experiences within these spaces and therefore are reluctant to reach out for help.

### ***2.11 GAUGING RISK.***

- Due to the lockdown it's increasingly difficult to understand the level of risk. This is because conversations are often on the phone and privacy isn't always accessible. Therefore young people cannot share openly. Talking telephonically limits the possibility for observation. When we were able to go to the field we would have noticed many things we could have explored further but telephonically this is not always possible.
- In cases of child marriage, sometimes observation would be essential but now this is not possible. Now responses are restricted to cases where the participants directly tell us what's wrong.

### ***2.12 REACH***

- Young people who are beneficiaries of N.G.O's and civil society organizations are receiving some degree of support through their programs and services. However one wonders about young people outside the purview of services as well as those who cannot be reached via phone.

### ***2.13 LOCAL CHANNELS OF SUPPORT***

- Often community based responses are the first line of defense against violence, however due to social distancing norms; these are getting harder to access.

## **2.14 DILLEMAS WHILE RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

Situations of violence are already complex. There are some pre existing complexities that are further complicated because of the lockdown.

- In responding to young people what is the balance between being de-centered and centeredness? At what point does a response become paternalistic? However if a response is not taken will it increase harm? At the same time not taking into consideration the young person's wishes might also increase harm. What do we do if we are in a situation where there isn't enough time to navigate this dilemma with the young person.
- How am I defining a situation that needs an urgent response? Is my own social location affecting this definition? How does this fit with the young person I am working with. What if I think of the situation as violence but the person I am consulting with doesn't? Often it is assumed young people do not have enough knowledge and awareness and therefore it is the job of the adult to convince them of the presence of violence. However is there more to this than that?
- Situations of abuse are not always black and white, what about situations where love and violence exist together and the young person does not want to be separated from the person concerned or take any action.

## **2.2 CHALLENGES WITHIN CHILD PROTECTION SETTINGS**

### **2.21 DISCOURSES THAT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN 'DESERVING' AND 'UNDESERVING' BENEFICIARIES**

- Often within these settings, certain discourses give rise to ideas that some young people are beyond help. As a result they are often excluded from services as it is thought that they will not improve. Sometimes these young people are viewed as risks to other young people. These young people have already been excluded from services; the advent of the pandemic makes them more vulnerable. My friend was kicked out of the home because of bad behavior, now she is too afraid to reach out. I sometimes wonder if she is safe. She was with us because she needed protection.

### **2.22 CLOSURE OF SAFE SPACES.**

- Not all homes are for stay throughout the day. It is considered that children in these homes are less vulnerable. In the early days of the lockdown many of these settings were shut. However this doesn't take into consideration that vulnerability is something

that doesn't remain fixed but changes. Many of the children within these homes are in extremely vulnerable situations from time to time. It is important to remember that most people are accessing these spaces because they are facing risk in their own settings.

- The sudden closure of these spaces adversely affected young people. Many of them had to be sent home in a hurry. In these situations when guardians could not be reached it caused many problems for young people. Many had to return to less than ideal settings. Many settings were advised to reintegrate the young people as soon as possible.
- Along with this community centers , drop in centers , schools , were all public spaces they could turn to minimize exposure to abuse . However all these spaces have shut down?

### ***2.23 EMERGENCY RESPONSE***

- Though emergency responses are active, emergency response teams are not at their full capacity. Official departments looking into this are also scattered. These responses require collaboration. While the nodal agencies are functional, the collaborative units are often closed. Transportation is also a challenge. This results in delays and a lack of coordination.

### ***2.24 CHALLENGES WITHIN CCI'S***

Within CCI's there are already some existing issues.

- Though legally there are 6 types of homes which cater to young people with diverse needs, in reality it's not always possible to maintain. Therefore young people often don't get specialized needs met.
- Often these settings are under many bureaucratic norms and restrictions that don't take into consideration local experiences. This puts pressure on both the staff and the young people and affects relationships within the CCI.
- Many child protection settings have instances of violence and maltreatment within them.

Due to the lockdown this has resulted in new complications.

- Rescue and Release has stopped during the lockdown. Those who were just on the verge of being reintegrated have gotten stuck. This has made them very hurt and upset. Often others are making fun of them because of this.

- Though rescue has stopped there is talk on having to start the process sometime in the future. However whoever enters will have to be kept in quarantine. The first few days are a big deal for a new child coming in, they get to know other people, the children ask them questions like 'where did you come from?' If children get to know they are from the same locality, bonding takes place. This will be impeded.
- Because of the lockdown there are many changes to their routine for example on Sunday's they usually go out and do various activities but because of the lockdown they can't go. They like to be free; not being able to go out has become critical. They feel like they are caged (Nijeder Bondi Bondi Mone Kore). Even while playing indoor games, they have to maintain social distancing laws. For example while playing Ludo<sup>iv</sup> and Karam they usually have 4 to 6 players but now there are only 2 players.
- These children live far away from their families; they have become very worried about their loved ones. In some contexts families would come to visit, however now this has stopped.
- This is inviting worry, concern and restlessness into their lives. Sometimes these contexts are leading to aggression as well.
- The CCI also has limited supplies. Many are worried about if they will have enough resources to meet the needs of all the young people. In rural and semi urban contexts, many authorities are worried about what will happen if someone gets sick as there are no major hospitals there.
- The CCI has to constantly think of ways to involve young people.
- 

This also creates new challenges for the staff of the CCI's.

- Staff capacity is not always very large in these settings. Often staff is on duty 24/7, which takes a toll on their mental health. They also become restless but they have to keep going. Working in a CCI often means no rest. Sometimes it becomes difficult for the staff to keep an eye on a large number of young people. Earlier staff would come on a rotation basis but due to the situation movement in and out of the CCI is restricted and staff is having longer shifts.
- Like the young people the staff are also facing the lockdown they are worried about their own families and having some of the same concerns. Sometimes depression visits them and they are afraid they might have a break down. The staff is also scared.
- Sometimes enforcing the restrictions on the young people leads to conflict.
- In some situations these frustrations are impacting the way staff interact with children and are increasing maltreatment.

The current situation also creates challenges for those working and reaching out in other children protection settings

- Sometimes I worry about the health workers and how they are keeping.
- I worry about our youth leaders, they are in the same situation as the young people themselves, and they are not getting food either. They might also get arrested if they are unable to maintain the restrictions.

### **PART THREE: RESPONDING TO THE SITUATION**

#### **3. RESPONSES TO THE CURRENT SITUATION.**

##### **3.1 GENERAL RESPONSES.**

###### ***3.11 HEALTH AND HYGEINE***

- During this situation we are trying to make health based safety measures more accessible to the young people. Within our CCI were giving the children soap, sanitizer and masks. In situations where masks are not available we are trying to work on creating home-made masks.
- We are trying to ensure that along with ration young people get hygiene kits.
- As most of the young people we work with are HIV positive, we are trying to make sure that their ration packs contain items that will help boost their immunity.
- We are keeping an eye on their health and hygiene. This includes things like hand washing maintaining social distance etc.
- While telling young people how to keep safe during this time. It is important to test how realistic these solutions are. I have advised all people working on this to try all these solutions out themselves and only propagate things which we are able to keep to ourselves. Often we tell young people to do things that we ourselves find difficult.
- It's important to take health and hygiene into consideration contextually. Some of the young girls that we worked with said everyone was giving them food; however they did not have access to sanitary napkins. Therefore within the lockdown it was extremely difficult for them to maintain menstrual hygiene. We reached out to Malda Childline and ensured they got sanitary napkins. This helped us understand the specific needs of these children and be mindful of them.

### **3.12 TAKING INITIATIVE**

- I have been keeping in touch with the young people and checking in on them. The office hasn't told me to do this but I am doing this on my own accord for a broader purpose.
- I have been looking for spaces in which I can contribute my services and be useful. Due to the lockdown many work spaces are not functioning as intensely. However this is an opportunity to take on invitations to contribute and stand with the community.

### **3.13 KEEPING IN TOUCH**

During this period, it's important to stay connected with the young people. There are multiple ways we are trying to do so.

- Keeping in touch, through video call, phone calls, whatsapp, facebook etc.
- In my community when I go to the market, I check in with all the kids of my community. I call them up occasionally to check in. I try and stay connected. They need someone they can open up and talk to; I try to give them that space. I sometimes offer those suggestions and advice from my own experience but I leave it up to them if they want to take it. One girl was really sad about something, she was on her phone all the time and distant from her family. After talking to her she and her mother are communicating better.
- Keeping in touch makes a wide variety of things possible. Sometimes just having a space for sharing is significant. We met a lady the other day, her husband is a migrant laborer, who is stuck in Chennai, she has not been able to get him back, just talking about it gave her relief as there was no one there to listen to her concerns.
- Sometimes keeping in touch enables us to find ways to help one another. One family was facing trouble with their rent, after talking about it we could find many new solutions.
- When I spoke to the young people, they let me know that they felt relief. They said they could breathe better after having a chat.

### **3.14 KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED**

- We try to offer activities to the young people through our phone based conversations. We share interesting videos and activities they can do at home.

- In my community we are five to six houses that live near each other. There are some young people in these houses. We live in an open area. I take them out to the field every day. Amidst the greenery they are refreshed. We have fun; we play games and play music. The time spent together helps the body and mind relax and tiredness leave. They gain energy and sleep better. In the field when no one else is there, we feel safe with nature. No one thinks about these kids so it's important that I keep them in mind. I can't do this for everyone but at least I can do it within my own community. I am also sharing videos on social media of Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) exercises. Many people have reached out saying this is helpful to them.
- Within the CCI, it's important to keep the young people engaged. We try to offer them activities that are interesting. We try to engage them through various creative mediums like art, dance, craft etc. We watch TV and movies with them. During this time our involvement with them has become a lot more. They are also engaging with the CCI chores. Many of them did not like cooking earlier, but they have developed an interest in experimenting with cooking and finding ways to manage food wastage. It's becoming easier to engage young people in sessions within the CCI, earlier they could not attend regularly as they were busy with other things, but now they are enjoying being a part of the sessions. These sessions are important as they help with the development of young people.
- At home I'm trying to keep my daughter engaged by giving her interesting work and letting her help me with my office assignments on creating dance based video's.
- Involving young people in household work and activities, according to their interest and capacity has helped me work with my own family.
- In our CCI I have found that out of 100, 60% of the young people will respond to activities. For the rest we need to give them individual attention. Out of these 60, 40% will respond to this. For the rest I have found it is helpful to ask them to help with our tasks. When they do so they are able to empathize with us and understand where we are coming from.
- Sometimes young people also have innovative ways of keeping themselves engaged. In our area, young people often play with their friends from the neighborhood, unable to do so; they are playing with one another from their balconies.
- In community settings young people do not have access to resources for recreation. We see many places advising young people to do craft with waste material etc. These young people live in such low resource settings, sometimes finding material to do these activities with is also a challenge. When we give them activities, we worry if they will go out in search for these resources. Therefore we are trying to provide them with 'psycho social support kits' along with rations. These have materials like board games (ludo), craft material etc.

- In our CCI, the schools are having online classes for the children. We make sure they can access these.
- We are trying to reach out the schools of the young people to find out if there are ways in which their education can continue online.
- As a result of these efforts young people learn how to manage restlessness and prevent it from taking over.

### **3.15 AWARENESS AND INFORMATION**

- We are engaging various mediums in teaching young people about the situation.
- In the CCI, We have tried sharing information with them through indoor games on the COVID -19 situations. The young people enjoyed this very much. Just the other day I saw some of the older children teaching the younger ones about this.
- We have daily assemblies in our home where we give them updates on what is happening.
- I take time out to talk to the young people in my community and explain the situation to them. If I am talking to a few young people others come in and join. Sometimes people want financial help as well , but it's not within my capacity to help them, but I can help them by talking to them and spreading awareness
- However we make sure they do not hear too much about COVID-19 or else they will get sucked into the panic. We try and verify the source of the information. We teach them that it is not so deadly however it will have an impact on our health facilities. We try and find out what they know and how they are feeling about it. This is essential and we want to understand how the young people are experiencing the situation. We tell them how this situation is making us feel as well.
- For the young people who are HIV positive, we try and provide them information on how to take care of their health needs. We keep talking to them about ART and how to work on their nutrition levels.
- Within the CCI, we take time out to talk to them about why we need to have so many new rules and restrictions in place.
- As a result of these activities their knowledge of the pandemic has increased. They are talking about Corona through drawings and writings. They are writing poems. They are asking about the situation of doctors and nurses.

### **3.16 LEVERAGING CONNECTIONS**

- It's also important for us to leverage our connections and make sure our services reach the people. We have been networking with the DWCD (Department of Women and

Child Development) to ensure that our mental health sessions become accessible within CCI settings.

- I am in the same boat as most of the young people. Therefore if I say too much I am at risk as well, however I try to talk about their concerns in places that I think can help, I share their concerns with volunteers. I name the problems wherever I can. Due to the closure of services many of my friends had no food, I made sure to name them in settings where they were discussing relief services, so that the resources could reach them. I made sure that we got a hold of all their numbers so at least we could check in with them.
- We are trying to reach out for funds in various ways to sustain these activities. We are starting fundraisers and reaching out to local sources.

### ***3.17 CONNECTING TO A WIDER WORLD***

- Within our home newspaper reading is an important activity. In this period of lockdown where the young people feel disconnected from the wider world, this activity has taken on a new meaning. They are stuck on the inside but these newspapers help them connect to the external world. They are reading about the plight of the migrant workers, as well as the various ways in which the virus is affecting the world. This has developed within them a sense of solidarity and they are eager to reach out and help.

### ***3.18 POSITIVE OF LOCKDOWN***

- In some situations the lockdown has meant more time with one's children and one's family. This has been extremely helpful to some people.

### ***3.19 UNDERSTANDING YOUNG PEOPLE.***

In situations of aggression and restlessness.

- We try to empathize with the young people because we are feeling the same way. We know that there's worry and anxiety behind all this. We often blame children for their behavior but forget to keep note of the situations we create for them. We try to engage their families in conversations around this as well.

### ***3.20 MOVING BEYOND STIPULATED RESPONSIBILITIES***

- We work primarily in mental health services, and our organizational activities are restricted to that. However in this situation especially, some needs are beyond the therapeutic context. We do not give direct relief but we felt that in this situation it is important. We tried to reach out as per our capacity. It's important to understand that mental health is not just about emotions.

- In this situation it's important to think beyond arbitrary definitions of personal and professional boundaries as well as legal and moral obligations. If there is some way in which we can help, we should without taking all of this into consideration. These are some things that we should consider redefining and a situation like this bring it to notice. The idea of 'boundaries' should not limit solidarity.

### ***3.21 SUPPORTING FRONTLINE WORKERS AND STAFF***

In order to keep these services going we must create contexts that sustain our frontline workers and staff.

- It's important to divide work and share responsibility so that the entire burden does not fall on a few people. It is important to support one another in this space.
- In our CCI, what we have come up with is that staff members take one hour off for themselves. To manage the stress and to prevent break downs. This is one hour of complete relaxation. Everyone is informed about this hour off so that, no one expects our presence during this time. They can do whatever they want during this hour.
- We have staff on rotation at our CCI, however due the lockdown there were some glitches in maintaining this. Now we are thinking about keeping staff on 7 days of duty at a time. Continuous work from one person is not possible. There is a room outside that is separate from the rest of the CCI, so they can come and change their clothes and take a bath before entering the CCI, to ensure that rules are followed.
- Most of our practitioners are from the grassroots. They are the sole breadwinners in many of their families. We cannot afford to cut their salaries or stop paying them. There are so many people dependant on them. We cannot let this happen for any of our staff members. Many of them are trying to earn extra by selling vegetables, however it is essential that we support them as well. We are trying our best to advocate and negotiate with our funders to make this possible.

## **3.2 RESPONSES THAT HELP IN TACKLING RISK AND VIOLENCE**

### ***3.21 IDENTIFYING RISK***

- The lockdown has also made it easier for us to identify those engaged in trafficking and make the communities aware of them. Trafficking usually has local channels that enable the transfer of the young girls to take place. However due to the lockdown they are also stuck and after a while their activities start becoming visible to the community members.

- Due to challenges of phone based conversations in gauging risk, we are thinking of ways in which we can use stories to get out various forms of information. Currently our interactions are at a basic level. However we are planning on expanding on this and developing codes. For example we could ask them what's the weather like, if they say stormy, it could give us insight into how they are feeling. This is still at an early stage but we are thinking around it.
- Before we start discussions with young people on these topics it's important to check in and see if they are in a place where they can talk. Using yes or no questions as well as coded answers have proven to be helpful.

### ***3.22 UTILIZING EMERGENCY RESPONSES***

- Though professional services are under capacitated they are still functional. They are getting better at reaching out within these circumstances. These responses are delayed but they are still happening.
- Childline is still functional. They are also in the process of getting permission to visit young people in quarantine.
- In emergency situations if a child is brought to a CCI, they have to accept.
- Child Welfare Committees (CWC) is meeting on video call.
- When we are getting to know about trafficking incidents, we are reaching out to the police and CWC. We were able to successfully intervene in one case

### ***3.23 MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT***

- We are trying to ensure that mental health services are available via phone/ videocall or zoom. Through this we try to give them energy, strength and boost their spirit.
- Currently there are many such services operating online, in settings that do not have inbuilt mental health services we try to link young people to these set ups.
- We work primarily with Dance Movement Therapy services. We have been working on adapting our processes through various mediums. We give zoom services wherever zoom is accessible, otherwise we use whatsapp call or telephonic set ups. There are a lot of things that young people cannot share verbally, this gives them an opportunity to articulate and explore their feelings through the body.

### ***3.24 KEEPING IN TOUCH DURING RISK:***

- Staying connected helps we assure them that if there is trouble they can talk to us. Staying connected helps they reach out in the face of difficulty. It helps us ensure that they don't get alienated. It's important that they know that in the event of a crisis we will reach them.

- Even if we cannot give DMT based support its important to keep in touch with our communities. We received an emergency case a couple of days back from one of our therapeutic groups. After that we have decided it's important that this group gets sustained support. We have started a whatsapp group with them so at least if we keep talking to them we can notice when something is up and give them a space for release. In this group they share various activities that they are doing throughout the day. Sometimes we give them suggestions on what to do. For example if they have trouble sleeping at night we might suggest some breathing exercises.
- It's important to keep connected with young people during this time. Especially if we know they might be in situations of risk. I tried to be there for a child I knew who was at risk. We live apart, but I tried to stay in touch through phone. So that I can give her ideas on how to stay safe, and reach out if things escalate. However this keeping in touch is very risky. It needs to be done sneakily (Lukiye Chure). This sometimes makes me worried. I wonder whether we talking will put her at risk. She is also reaching out to me at immense risk; she also has to stay hidden. But it is important that I support her or she might get further sucked into the situation. There are some ways I am trying to ensure this is done carefully. When she reaches out I try to make sure the messages are from her. I notice how they are phrased. I understand her way of talking and I can tell when it is her. Sometimes we talk on video call. I let her initiate these conversations. I do not reach out unless she does, as I can't be sure when it is safe to talk. It's important that we are able to communicate with a limited exchange of words.
- Often when sending across documents of skills and knowledges in these situations we must check to see who is viewing them. Using symbols/ drawings in the place of writing things out has been helpful.
- If I know someone is in trouble and they are not talking or reaching out, then I can just call them normally and talk to them about things that interest them. Once I catch their interest I can keep them engaged in talking to me, then in the midst of that I can check in and ask how they were.
- By keeping in touch with people from the community they know that I am there if they need support. They can reach out if there is trouble and I can try to help. We reaching out become a space to share issues and difficulties. This makes them feel like they are not alone they have many supports.

### ***3.25 EXTENDING REACH***

We are only able to keep in touch with those who are available on phone. However we have found some ways to extend our reach. It's not always visible when people are in trouble. Therefore it's important to constantly innovate new ways of reaching out in the lockdown as well as normal times.

- Our field workers live near the young people. When they go for their daily chores to the market, they try and check in and see how they are doing.
- Some of our youth leaders have been cooking ration and taking them to the communities. In the period when we were struggling with funds, they raised contributions and reached the houses themselves. Some of them are associated with our programs while others are community volunteers. They are taking this on, on their own. Where we can't reach the youth leaders are able to. This gives me a sense of hope.
- Within our CCI, we have noticed sometimes the children find it more meaningful to engage with one another. So we have asked the older children to take charge of 4 to 5 younger children and help us with their care during this time.
- In our community, we only know what's happening to the children who are communicating with us. However, we have devised a system where we are working with children to keep in touch with the community. The young people have become our eyes and ears in the community. In a community if something happens everyone gets to know, therefore we have told them to keep an eye on their friends and let us know if they need our help. It's not just the young people but also their parents. It's really important to engage the community in these initiatives and create an alternate ecosystem. We are trying to engage those who are showing interest in these initiatives.
- Our healthworkers live near the communities and they can reach out through their cycles. We have them positioned in case there is an emergency. To deliver essential goods and services our health workers are working with the community, they take the rations and give it to key persons in each neighborhood who then delivers it to the families.

### ***3.26 SHARING RESOURCES / ACCESSING LOCAL RESOURCES.***

- If I have things like story books and balloons in my house, I try and share it with young people in the community. I am also trying to feed five to six families in my community. I give them cooked food whenever I can. I know this is not much, but I am trying to do as much as I can.
- Sometimes I share my experiences and how I am navigating the lockdown. I share knowledge from previous difficult experiences. I often see people in the community telling others what I have told them.
- In this period of crisis, often needs are intersectoral, therefore it has been helpful to know of services available and connect people to them. A major activity for most organizations has been ensuring that people are getting their daily needs met and connecting them with various schemes and services .I have been a part of a voluntary group that is compiling services available during the lockdown . Sometimes we try to

keep a lookout for local resources as well. For example some of the young people who had nowhere to go due to the closure of homes, we tried to see if we knew of people who would be happy to house them. One young person was especially vulnerable; we were able to find shelter for her. There was a service that was transferring money directly to families in need; I was able to connect some people to this. .

- When I was caught in an unsafe situation for my child. I was lucky; I had the option of an alternate space of stay, and however I made the decision of making use of it. I had people I could reach out to for help. They helped me move there in spite of the restrictions. There are many resources available now to address such situations it's important to know how to make use of it.
- We were able to determine that some young girls were specifically targeted by the traffickers; we made an arrangement to have them shifted to alternate homes. We reached out to local channels like their extended families friends, etc; this would ensure that the traffickers could not take advantage of the lockdown to get to them.

### ***3.27 STICKING TO DECISIONS AND MOVING AWAY FROM UNSAFE SITUATIONS.***

- My daughter and I were caught in the lockdown in a situation that was not particularly safe. We were locked in with someone who wasn't particularly safe for us. I made a decision to move out of there. I talked it out with her and we made a decision that we had to leave. I made a decision to reach out for help with moving out, but I decided that if nothing else works I will walk there. I had kept money aside for this. I decided that there was no looking back I had to leave. They tried to stop me but I wasn't having it. Staying here is much more relaxed, there are not too many people here, and she can be free. I can spend more time with her and involve her in day to day activities. Over there I was in a vulnerable situation myself.

### ***3.28 LISTENING TO WHAT CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAYING***

- I think it's important to listen to your children and hear what they are saying. It's really important to take into consideration when they tell you they are feeling uncomfortable. If a young person is saying they don't like someone we must think have 'why' and keep that person away.
- When responding to violence it's important to work in collaboration with young people and respect their skills and knowledge's. We must keep in mind that they have an insider understating of what will increase harm for them and what wont. As adults we must assume that we know more than them about their own situations.

### ***3.29 DEALING WITH COMPLEXITY***

- It's important to know that violence on young people can happen in many ways and sexual abuse is not the only thing that requires an immediate response. Often other forms of violence get normalized in our culture.
- We must understand that our definitions of violence and safety are deeply influenced by where we are situated socially. These ideas may mean very different things to the young people that we are working with; therefore it is important to keep space for them to define their own experiences.

### **3.30 STAFF AND CHILDREN BONDING**

- An outcome of this situation within the CCI has been that the staff and young people have truly bonded. Seeing us persist with our services in spite of the challenges, the young people feel that we truly care for them. Earlier they thought that we did it as it was our duty and we were getting a salary for it. On many occasions we have seen the children go to the aunties and say, it's your off day let me take over for you. They are also trying to support us in this situation. We thought this situation would result in a chaos, but this has not happened. The staff is also looking at the young people as more than a job and as more than 'things they need to tackle'. We are often responsible for implementing many rules that are not fair to them. For example the authorities demand that the young people cannot stay with us beyond the age of 18. This is something they are very resentful about. One of our girls told the officers "Do you throw your own children out when they turn 18?" However now they are realizing we do not do these things because we want to but our hands are tied as well. One young person, who stays in our home, could never tell us about her family. Suddenly we see that she sent us a note saying that she misses her mother. When we spoke to her about it, she said that she wanted to see who would respond. So the young people keep an eye on us, they take note of who is responding to them. They keep track of who is making an effort to keep in touch. This is something that will help us even after the lockdown.

### **3.31 BUILDING ON THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.**

- Many of the young people that we work with are showing immense resistance as well. One girl was going to be forcefully married off, but she protested and convinced her family against it.
- Reaching out to me in a situation of imminent risk was an act of great resistance; it made me aware of her skills and knowledges.
- The youth leaders are always finding ways to reach out to the communities, it's in their blood, and I just need to fan the flames sometimes. I try and tell them to take this work on safely.

- We are thinking of studying the resilience of young people during these times and the factors that are keeping them going. This will be a participative study. We are also thinking of using storytelling to get understand the ‘sparks’ of young people.
- Having a multi storied view of the world, where I am able to notice more than the problem story helped open up a whole variety of possibilities in doing this work in spite of the restraints.
- Young people are able to see their own empowerment. When we check in and ask what’s wrong when they say “everything is fine”, they start to reflect on why this is so and what are the things that are enabling this. This helps them understand their own growth. This situation can lead to the discovery of new skills and knowledge’s for the future.

### **3.32 NEGOTIATING WITH BUREAUCRACY**

Often bureaucracies and official organizations make norms for these situations. But they are only thinking of procedures. They are not thinking of the welfare of the young people, that’s why we have to think about it deeply.

- When the lockdown was just announced we were told to restore the children by some authorities. We were not prepared to restore them so quickly. They are here with us because they are vulnerable. They wanted us to return them to their guardians. This was impossible. I spoke to most of their guardians, they said that the children are better of here; at least they will be able to eat. This was something that really struck me. It was rather gut wrenching to hear a guardian say “If you send her back, how do I feed her?” We made a decision that we have to arrange for them to stay here. We had to arrange for their food. We have a problem with funds. In the committee meeting we decided that we will have less food but we will make sure everyone gets to eat. We met with the authorities and told them we have to keep the home running because it is essential for their security. We told the them that it is impossible for us to reintegrate children in the middle of the lockdown and it is also illegal. We were very clear that we would not send the children back. If we sent them, we wouldn’t be able to know how they are keeping. Staying with us their security is ensured. They are getting food as well as sanitizers and masks.
- Shutting down didn’t cross my mind, these kids have no place to go , how can I keep the CCI shut, many of them we can’t restore, where will they go? if they go somewhere else they will become traumatized, we need to support them to stay well

- When we were reaching out to the communities, the police, at first told us to go home, now they know us know, they know we are working for the community, so they are letting us do our work.
- To make this possible we are trying to advocate and negotiate with funders and donors. We are telling them we can't take on additional work but we have to adjust our activities to meet the needs of the current situation.

### **3.33 COMPLEXITY**

- We must be open to navigating complexity and understanding that there are no neat solutions to these problems. The solution will change from case to case. Sometimes we can't guarantee complete safety and can think about degrees of safety. We must support one another in these efforts.
- Sometimes responding to these situations can invite stress and anxiety, in these situations it's important that we don't shoulder these responsibilities on our own but find avenues to reach out.

### **3.34 BALANCE**

- It's important to find a middle path between being paternalistic and being indifferent. So that we can stand with young people even if their responses do not fit within dominant ideas of how one should be in these situations

### **3.35 TAKING ON RISK**

- All work is risky does that mean we do not do it. Each of our actions has positive and negative consequences. We have to take on work to keep our young people safe even if it is risky .However we must step into risky spaces with careful consideration. We should not take impulsive decisions (Hut hat kore). We must always consider the consequences of our action and take the path that is least likely to increase harm.

## **PART FOUR: WHAT IS SUSTAINING THESE RESPONSES**

### **4. 1 HOPES AND VALUES**

- Being connected is important to me, it is something that has always been important to me, and I have always tried to stay connected to my locality.
- It's important for me to find ways to remain useful to my community at this time of crisis.
- My hope is that my child stays safe, that there is no trouble created and that she doesn't go towards a bad path
- The safety of young people is important to me; I want a world free of violence.
- With kids it's important to give them joy and support. Keeping sadness away from the lives of others is important to me.
- What keeps me going is a sense of satisfaction at knowing I have been able to impact someone else's life.
- The health and safety of our community is important to us. We want to stop the spread of HIV, it is still happening, even if we can protect everyone, even if there is a 10 % reduction it is significant.
- To capture what's important to me in one word the phrase (sapner Dana) comes to mind. I want to be able to give the young people choice and capacity, so that they can live out their dreams. It's like giving them wings to achieve what they want in life and to live life as per their own choice.
- I value the lives of others and I feel that these activities are essential to have a meaningful existence.
- The reason we persist in spite of the difficulty is because their wellbeing is our responsibility. It is our work, it is our lookout. We are responsible for these children; it is our duty and liability.
- It's important to help young people no matter who it is, it doesn't have to be a relative but we should help in whatever capacity possible. If I support one person, others might learn from me, those I support might in turn be able to support 5 other people.
- When I came home and the lockdown started me I was in a terrible state. I had to stay home with people, I have lots of issues with due to years of withstanding abuse and gender based violence. I went into a state of panic and depression. I felt a sense of

breathlessness. It almost became a police case, I was going to leave and come to Calcutta. However I was stopped and I moved to my sister's house. I was at a low point during that time. When my coworker called me I would reject it. But then I thought I must move forward, if they are looking at me and getting hope I can't break down, I felt rejecting their calls was not right. I felt I have had opportunities that many others haven't, I have many things that they don't have, I need to be there for them. If I get stuck in my own problems, then I'm caught up there, if I can come out and see beyond myself, I am able to notice others are more vulnerable, if I can come out and stand with others in difficulty my difficulties fade away with the wind. I need to use my privilege and resources for others. I thought I was a victim for a long time now I am a survivor. I have become established. I had to overcome a lot of sadness, but I dealt with it from a young age, earlier perhaps my resistance was not so well articulated but it was there. I had a lot of support from friends, work and many other platforms. The fight has not been my own. Now I am at a place, where I am able to see that the people who had wronged me are no longer villains, they may not be heroes but they are definitely not villains anymore. They actually had a role to play in my manifestation and development a lot of people thought because I came from a place of privilege I did not have difficulties once I started sharing my story they started connecting to me. My fight was with rights within the family which is something that you can't say directly or talk about openly in our society. The fact that parents can also be wrong is something that wasn't accepted. However over the years I have found a lot of people in similar situations and we are supporting one another.

- There are so many groups that we have oppressed throughout the years. We have forced our women to stay indoors for so long. If they can do it, why can't we? Now the community is able to understand their situation.
- Now is the time to roll up our sleeves and work (hat gutiye kaj kora) our communities need us, now is not the time to withdraw. We cannot step back at this time.
- Often there is no one to support these young people. Therefore it's important for me to find ways to support them. I have got help from so many places, I was in the same situation as them but I got help. They pushed me, stood behind me, helped me build myself, now is time for me to do the same for others. It's important to help those who have fallen behind.
- We as an organization believe that if I can eat I should be able to feed 4 to 5 others.

## **4.2 SKILLS, KNOWLEDGES, SUPPORTS**

### **4.21 WITNESSING SOLIDARITY**

- It's nice to see everyone doing their bit, common people is stepping up in places where official's services are unavailable. Many people on their own initiative are giving food to others. I think this is a culture of sharing and caring that is there in our community. It adds more value and save more lives. This inspires me to do my bit.

### **4.22 SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT FROM CHILDREN**

- What has really moved them and made them come together is witnessing the sadness in their communities; this is especially the plight of the tea plantation workers and migrant laborers. Many of them are not getting their wages, the plantation owners are getting compensation and help but they are not getting anything. They asked if we could cook and give our extra food to them. Their care for others has really struck me they haven't had trust and love from their own parents, therefore it's hard to imagine them being able to give out so much love and care, I am touched that they are thinking about the plantation workers. This is something that is sustaining me. They have decided that after the lockdown is over, they will take their cycles and give elderly people food. They have decided to start a family planning campaign called "If you give birth to them, take care of them" (janma dao jotna nao)
- Witnessing the youth leaders reach out to their communities has instilled a motivation to keep going in me. I always try to be there for them and they always reach out to me for support. They are always helping their communities.
- It's good to see young people stepping up in the crisis, many of them are trying to reach out to their communities in spaces where authorities are unable to reach.

### **4.23 STRENGTH**

- As CCI workers we have to be mentally strong, we learn this through our years of responding to emergency cases. We have to be physically strong as well.

### **4.24 KEEPING AT IT**

Keeping at it enabled this (legethaka), this is not just something that came about during the Covid pandemic but the community trusts us, they like our style, they know we allow them to participate,

#### **4.25 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

When working with the community it's important to build relationships. This helps us stay connected even during hard times.

- In my locality they all know me here because I keep speaking to them.
- Some of our children have moved to Mumbai but we still make an effort to keep in touch with them. We have been able to build a relationship with them. When they come to the village they meet us, they stay in touch with us through calls, they keep updating us on their life's progress and want to join us, they take our inputs. It makes us feel like we have been able to reach them, they have realized we are not working for interest or profit or funds, but for them, they treat us like family.
- We don't always talk to them about work sometimes we just interact with them to ask them if they have had chain, we exchange recipes for food. We are like family, we involve them in our work from the beginning. Once we had a program in Kolkata, their parents allowed them to travel with us all the way of Malta. That is a sign that we have been able to earn their trust.
- This is possible through a give and take, if they don't respond trust or cooperate with us and don't keep connected, this can't be done
- I think she reached out to me because she knew I could be trusted. She has seen me for many years. She knows about my thoughts and ideas and how I behave. She knows if she reaches out to me, she will get help.
- These young people are like my own kids, it's me and them together. Without them I can't function and without me it's not right strategically or ethically.

#### **4.26 PLANNING/THINKING ON THE SPOT**

- When I found out I was leaving the field, I sat and thought of what we could do and what we couldn't do. Everyone on the team was informed about the change. We decided we have to keep this going. We didn't plan everything, some of it was thinking on the spot, but when we had an inkling that this was going to be a long term thing we started thinking about what we could do in our fields.
- We are working on making practitioner guidelines. While doing our videos we are being mindful of not to touch hands and face. We have conducted a risk assessment both

programmatic and financial. Then we are making a final wellbeing plan. We are taking decisions on a day to day basis and doing a risk assessment.

#### **4.27 SMALL STEPS**

- We haven't been able to reach everyone but we are trying to reach those who really need help. It's not possible for me to work with everyone, I try and work with whoever I can. Everyone we can reach is significant.

#### **4.28 COLLABORATION**

- Collaboration is essential in our field. Through it this work is ensured. We are sharing the steps that we took to adapt to this crisis. So many people have helped us get to where we are we want to help them as well. It's important to have a collaborative structure and good rapport with others in the field.

## **PART FIVE : WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE?**

### ***5.1 CONSULT YOUNG PEOPLE***

- Once lockdown opens up and we are able to talk more directly to the young people , it's important to consult them and find out their experience of the situation and what more they will need, so we can put things in place for times to come.

### ***5.2 CREATE OPTIONS***

- When I was moving away from violence I was lucky I had many options, it's important as a society to create more options for people in difficult situations so they can reach out like I did as well.

### ***5.3 SAFE HOUSING***

- Safe housing for young people in various forms of care is very important. If a lockdown is suddenly announced and we have to close our services down, we must make sure that children have somewhere safe to go. We could talk to all the young people before hand and find out if they need access to safe housing. Before closing down we could work on finding alternate accommodations for these young people. Maybe we could see if they could be accommodated into a different kind of CCI for a few days.

### ***5.4 ADJUST TO LIFE AFTER LOCKDOWN***

- What I'm thinking about also is after the lockdown is over how we get back to normal life or prepare for another lockdown. This is something that we need to start planning towards. We can start making preparations so that we can deal with another lockdown.

### ***5.5 FRONTLINE WORKERS***

- It's important to give staff avenues to manage their stress. It's important to create systems where staff are able to keep the care of the young person at the center.

### ***5.6 EXTENDING REACH FURTHER***

- This made me think about others out there – I'm thinking about the laborers and if the government schemes are reaching them, its haunting, we need more resources to reach more people and give them essential things, I am also wondering about our health workers and their status and if they are able to keep well.
- We need more support from the authorities and the donors to reach a larger number of people.
- Those within the programs of social services are getting support. I'm wondering about those who are not associated with any N.G.O's, what are the mechanisms for them to reach out for support? Can we extend our services to them as well?

### ***5.7 LOCAL SUPPORTS***

- In a situation like this local supports need to be engaged and strengthened to intervene in spaces that cannot be reached by professional services.

### ***5.8 ENGAGING PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE***

- A lot of our interventions within this sector focus on those at the receiving end of violence. What would be the possibilities created if we had programs that reached perpetrators as well?
- While responding to men's violence as there ways in which we can engage men and boys?

### ***5.9 EMERGENCY RESPONSES***

- It might be helpful to for organizations to have a plan in place regarding what to do if violence is disclosed. These protocols need to be collaboratively planned with young people so that there is some agreement on what would be most helpful in the context of violence.

## **PART 6 : EFFECT OF THE CONVERSATION**

### ***6.1 THINK OF NEW IDEAS AND WAYS TO MOVE FORWARD***

- This interview helped me think of what I need to plan further. These questions helped me reflect on new ideas. Now I am wondering what more can I do? How else can I help them?

### ***6.2 HIGHLIGHTING RESPONSES***

- Initially I felt like I had not been able to do much, however after this process I feel like I have been able to do something.
- I felt unprepared when I started the interview , I felt like I hadn't done much and I wouldn't be able to answer the questions but on completing the process I feel a sense of satisfaction.
- It felt nice to talk about these things, I didn't think much about these things, but on talking about it it's become clearer.
- This process helped me gain insight , I was so caught up with things at home , I was filled with anxiety , I didn't know what was happening at the centre, but on discussing this I feel like things are going well and I don't need to think so negatively. I feel relieved.
- Sharing gave me a chance to express myself and put my thoughts together.
- On going through this process I feel a sense of esteem, I feel a sense of energy.
- These questions made me feel like I haven't completely forgotten everything , I am still able to contribute , even though there are hurdles we are trying , something is happening.

Compiled by

Maya Sen.

---

<sup>i</sup> Please note the data here is not intended to be presented as facts and statistics on the scenario. It presents the unique experiences of the people who were consulted for this.

<sup>ii</sup> There are some Bengali words/ phrases within the document that do not have exact translations. They have been written in the brackets.

<sup>iii</sup> Prepaid internet data fill.

<sup>iv</sup> Ludo and Karam are board games popular here .

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank :

- Mandira Bannerjee from Equiversity Foundation
- Chandrika Ball from Birbhum Titli
- Pritam Garai
- Sabita Debnath , Sreeja Debnath , Durga Madhar and Sohini Chakraborty from Kolkata Sanved.
- Debapriya Sen from Jalpaiguri Mahila Kanyan Sangha. ( JMKS)
- Sobha Pahari from AASHA (Association for acquiring self reliance through handicraft activity)
- Trina Das from *Familia Group Foster Care*
- Afsara Khatun
- Sakira
- Dipti L.
  
- Debstuti Goswami
- Rekha Harijan from SPAN.

and many others for their contributions towards the building of this document . Their efforts in reaching out to their communities during these difficult times have greatly moved me and will provide hopefulness for so many others.