



# Katradi

Empathy Based Social Transformation

REPORT 2019



# Opening Letter

Dear friends,

The last year saw Katradi growing in leaps and bounds as we received several important grants to power our projects across India.

We started off the year with our grassroots project, Adopt-A-School, Change a Community with CSR funding from Dindigul Thalappakatti and in partnership with Arunodhaya Centre for Street and Working Children. We chose Deivasigamani Middle School headed by Mrs. Srilatha, their highly dedicated principal. With over 400 children and inadequate toilet facilities we ensured the building of clean toilets for girls and boys. Another highlight of this project was a profoundly touching workshop for parents and teachers that had parents sharing difficult stories from their childhood and coming together to pledge a safer world for their children. This project truly shows what can happen when different organizations pull together for the betterment of children.

The power of India lies in rural communities that are often woefully neglected. And hence, for the second

project of Adopt-A-School we decided to support the building of a community center in Kalavai Kootroad in rural Tamil Nadu for children from a Dalit community who are all mainly first generation learners.

Our first ever U.S. Consulate grant started off with a bang with a workshop in February 2019 in Kolkata for young leaders across East India on the theme of gender. Using our signature BTG modules, folding in Ultimate Frisbee, dance and theatre, the workshop was described as “life-changing” by almost all the participants. Our fantastic batch of young adults dived deep into this immersion experience, courageously shared stories from their lives never before told, and pulled several all-nighters to design grassroots projects for their hometowns.

We published the first ever Tamil teen superhero comic, VETRI, and to celebrate its completion we received funding from BookASmile to make it into a traveling theater piece for our signature Lorry Lolakku event. The series of 8 performances traveled through economically backwards parts of North

Chennai and Kanchipuram district reaching thousands. These performances with fantastically gifted traditional artists with specially created sets on top of a truck received wide press coverage and real appreciation from the communities.

Another highlight of the year was the performance we created with women of the Nishi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh describing the love of hornbills that mate for life and which are on the verge of extinction through a folk song also on the verge of extinction. This project, blending cultural and nature conservation, was performed to great acclaim at the Pakke Paga Festival (<https://youtu.be/1uMYQjr4sAY>).

Interspersed among these major projects, we facilitated many smaller workshops in India and abroad. We cannot thank our funders enough, for their earnest and enthusiastic support, for helping transformations big and small happen with people in communities that need it the most.

Sincerely,  
Liz & Sangeeta

# BTG: Social Action Lab

U.S. Consulate, Kolkata grant award

In June 2018, we were awarded a grant from the U.S. Consulate Kolkata Public Affairs Section to carry out a gender based program to develop young leaders across East India. This program consists of three phases: opening 5 day workshop, follow-on projects and Lessons Learned capstone event.

In February 2019, the 5 day workshop was held in American Center, Kolkata. Indoor sessions on gender separation, stereotypes, reproductive health and gender-based violence were held in conjunction with outdoor sessions using the mixed gender, non-contact, spirit-based sport of Ultimate Frisbee. Consul General Patti Hoffman joined us for an Ultimate Frisbee session and spoke with participants about the importance of these topics. On the fourth day of the workshop, participants pitched their grassroots gender project ideas to a panel of judges from the U.S. Consulate including the Consul General. Six projects were selected and funded as summarized below, ranging in geographies across East India and across the spectrum of gender based topics.

The workshop was a fantastic success with the participants undergoing deep transformative experiences and huge understandings on how toxic gender stereotypes limit their lives. Sessions on sexual abuse and harassment provoked sharing of experiences never before discussed and inspired participants to create exciting follow-on projects working with child trafficking survivors, women working in red light areas, school children, village youth and more across 6 states in India.

The rest of February and March 2019 have seen these projects begin with workshops held on gender stereotypes with teenagers in Delhi and Patna; storytelling workshops with sex trafficking survivors in multiple shelter homes in Ranchi; movement and healing sessions with women in prostitution in Kolkata, and gender stereotypes sessions with underprivileged youth from Kolkata using rugby.

We carried out an additional workshop on our Gender Stereotypes module at the American Center in Kolkata in March 2019 for Social Action Lab participants who wanted further training. Afterwards we watched a handful of participants facilitate the Gender Stereotypes module on 50+ high school students in Samaritan Help Mission, Howrah, West Bengal.



# BTG: Social Action Lab

“This is the first time I’m playing outside in 10 years” – Male, age 24

“The last few days were filled with lots of love and respect.” – Male, age 30

“This is the first time I’m saying it – I’m a lesbian and I know it’s normal.” – Female, age 21

“I have never shared what happened to me in my youth. This is the first place that has released me from my feelings of shame and fear. I want to do the same for others.” – Female, age 24

## BTG: Social Action Lab Selected Projects

### **BLOOM – Social Change through Therapeutic Processes:**

Targeting approximately 50 women in prostitution between the ages of 30-60 years old in the Kalighat and Khiddipore red light districts of Kolkata, this project aims to provide support and healing through group sessions utilizing therapeutic techniques such as anger & stress relief, group therapy, and dance therapy. A strong communication plan is part of this project which includes podcasts, blog posts and social media to share the experiences of the participants and prevent other women from following this life path.

### **IF WE CAN, YOU CAN TOO! Effective Communication for Breaking Shame:**

Targeting 400 young adults aged 12-21 years old living in semi-urban and rural areas of Bihar and Jharkhand via workshops using drawing, painting, and Nukkad Natak (street theater) to enhance the main message of breaking shame around gender stereotypes and reproductive health.

**KHELO RUGBY:** This project targets 30 youth leaders and 35 low income communities in Kolkata through the rugby NGO, Jungle Crows, which has a wide-reaching sports for development program in Kolkata and fledging programs in Jharkhand and Siliguri. Using a “train the trainers” model where Social Action Lab participants from Jungle Crows will train other Jungle Crows coaches and youth leaders in our Gender Stereotypes module to promote gender equality and equal opportunity, this project is low cost and high impact.

**MERI KATHA APKI KATHA:** Through performative storytelling workshops and performances this project aims to directly reach 125 people including sex trafficking survivors, family members of survivors, stakeholders and community leaders, teachers and drivers (who often act as informants on trafficking) in Jharkhand (Khuti & Kara districts), West Bengal (Darjeeling & Kalimpong) and Bihar (Sasaram). As well, thousands more in these communities will be indirectly

impacted through storytelling performances at the end of each workshop to promote empathy with sexually trafficked survivors and their families.

### **TACKLING GENDER STEREOTYPES**

**AMONGST YOUNG TEENS:** This project will target 50 8th standard students in a Delhi government school as well as 50 8th standard students in a Delhi private school through Gender Stereotypes workshops and focus groups in the hopes of creating a sustainable model to roll out to more schools in the city.

**INCLUSIVE FOOTBALL:** Combining football with Ultimate Frisbee based principles of Spirit of the Game this project aims to train football coaches and young people on 8 different football clubs in the Guwahati and Assam border areas on the spirited principles of Ultimate Frisbee and sensitize them using our Gender Stereotypes module. Local football tournaments will be used to garner interest in the project.