

8-13 OCT'19

# AAINA DEKHO 2.0

Kullu, Himachal Pradesh



मेरा गाँव मेरी दुनिया

PROGRAM  
REPORT



## With Gratitude

Welcome to celebration of 1 year of self awareness and value-based leadership training!

It has been a journey of nurturing alternative social capitals through focused youth dialogue on self development and community belonging.

Firstly, we are grateful to the participants who believed in us and showed the trust in the program. Without the fresh perspectives they carry, along with an open acceptance of what they were being offered, the program had not been possible.

We would like to extend abundant wishes and gratitude to Mrs. Lalita Kanwar, Director, *La Montessori School, Kelheli*, to lend us space to conduct the program. Her unconditional support could make a program like this taste a culture of grassroots of Himalayas. We would offer arm hugs to the staff at LMS, Kelheli namely, Mr. Meetu and Mr. Bar Chand whose cooperation had been crucial to weave in different cultural aspects of the program together. Also, we cannot thank Murari ji less for the delicious local food he fed us with throughout the program.

We would love to extend our gratitude the natives of the villages Reri, Kelheli, and Mashgaon who opened their heart and house for us. If it wouldn't have been for them, we would had never been able to attain the depth of the experiences that may last a lifetime.

We feel elated to thank *Youth Alliance*. Our heart-felt gratitude goes to our guest leader, *Mr Abhishek Jhawar* who took out time to contribute to the atmosphere we were striving to build. Furthermore, the unconditional surrender on the part of the program team could keep the things going. Special thanks to our individual donors and fundraisers who believed in the idea of Aaina Dekho and could make the ends meet.

In the end, we all were the medium, miraculously coinciding in our distinct journeys to meet a purpose. Our heart goes out to all those who could add up their bit to build a place where everyone could grow and learn, together.

# WHAT IS AAINA DEKHO?

Aaina Dekho is a 6-day residential program for youth empowerment and leadership training.

The program has been designed to nurture the leadership quality of the individuals by sailing through a journey of self awareness through rural immersion.

We look at community understanding through immersion as a tool to be able to adopt and practice the values of empathy, acceptance, listening and compassion. It is 'value-based living' the idea rests upon.

The program has a comprehensively planned 6-day structure which takes the participants on an experiential journey of exploring self and creating an appropriate environment to be able to nurture the leader in every individual. The residential nature of the program is planned to be conducive enough to create an environment for living the values, planned enough to experience the impact and long enough to see rudimentary level of shift.



# OUR PROCESS

The core of *Aaina Dekho* lies in the process, taking a moment at a time. This makes giving attention to the details an intricate part of the program. The 6-day residential program structure is carefully designed around the adoption and practice of the core values of empathy, compassion, listening, trust and gratitude.

*Aaina Dekho* is all about co-creation of an environment that nurtures the leader in you. The program structure revolves around self-development and awareness.

The initial phase of the program is marked by a series of sessions based on experiential learning which tends to create an atmosphere which helps the participants to access and, eventually, consolidate their deeper selves. The second phase is rural immersion- which creates a flow of activities designed in a way of extending one's self to the society. We consider rural immersion an important medium to understand self by building connection with the unknown.

## OUR PARTICIPANTS

We marked the commencement of the program on the eighth day of this October '19 and opened our hearts to individuals from different parts of the country- Maharashtra, Bihar, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh at a small village named Kelheli in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh.

SHAHBAZ SHEIKH, ABHISHEK, PREETI, JYOTI NANDA, SHIVANI, CHHAVI, KOMAL, ANUP, MADAN, GHANSHYAM, VINAY, NITESH, VAIBHAV, RAGHAV, PRASHANT

*MGMD is honored to include new members in the family.*

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a green sweater, is looking down at a woven basket. A man with dark hair is looking up at the boy. They are outdoors in a hilly, mountainous area with green vegetation and a clear sky. The basket is made of light-colored woven material.

## OUR LOCATION

*Aaina Dekho 2.0* was held in the villages *Kelheli*, *Reri* and *Mashgaon* located at approximately at a distance of 10 kilometers from Kullu in Himachal Pradesh. Being in the laps of the Himalayas, the hilly terrain along with river Beas flowing nearby is distinct to the place. The village *Kelheli* and *Reri* are well connected to the nearby town *Bhuntar*, whereas *Mashgaon* has to be trekked for half-an-hour through pomegranate plantations. Apart from the scenic beauty and the chilly weather due to strong winds, the place is inhabited by a community dependent on fruit cultivation. A few members also reported to have acquired government jobs.

Due to the terrain, the houses are scattered in the village but this does not disturb the collective culture of the place. Apart from routinely social exchanges, occasions like marriage and death involves community in the entire process. The place, hence, makes the *Aaina Dekho* journey enriching and more immersive.

# OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

The impact of an initiative such as this is challenging to measure and document as it focuses on deep self awareness of individuals and their extension to the society. Participants' self-ratings along with narratives involving shift are attempted to be summed up here.



## AT THE LEVEL OF SELF

Throughout the program, 54 percent of the candidates reported a moderate to huge shift in the way they perceive their capabilities now. However, 62 percent reported huge shift in self awareness of different aspects of their identity.

In place of working on their weaknesses, more than half of the participants documented a huge shift in the acceptance of different aspects of self that they earlier had been denying or wishing to work upon. Most participants reported that now, they could successfully identify and express multiple emotions they have experienced and could move ahead of either being 'happy' or 'sad'.

As far as expression of ones thoughts and feels is concerned, 77 percent of the participants experienced considerable amount of shift in authentic and responsible expression. We, as a platform, also work on problem solving abilities of individual by focusing on perspective shift. 62 percent of our participants reported a considerable shift in using a systems perspective to approach complex situations.

**85 PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS COULD IDENTIFY AND BEGIN ACCEPTING A SPECTRUM OF EMOTIONS THEY EXPERIENCED.**

# IMPACT AT A GLANCE



**AT AN INTERPERSONAL LEVEL**

**"I COULD START SEEING ANOTHER PERSON'S NEEDS IN A SITUATION OF CONFLICT INSTEAD OF JUST MINE."**

Prashant, Participant, Aaina Dekho 2.0

Individuals are made as much, if not more, from the relationships they form with their environment as from their own attitudes, beliefs and values. Through *Aaina Dekho*, we tend to work with individuals to empower them develop fulfilling relationships. Interestingly, 76 percent of our participants reported a huge shift in the ability of broaden their perspectives through listening in the time of conflict with others and an acceptance of people. Around 70 percent of the people also reported that they, now, were more conscious about the needs of others in the situation of conflict. Also, 77 percent of our participants expressed a huge shift in expressing gratitude to others which can lead to improving relationships.

# IMPACT AT A GLANCE

At Aaina Dekho, we believe that society is an extension of self and to enrich one's self, it is essential to develop a connection with the society.

More than 60 percent of the participants reported a strong shift in developing a connection with the unknown. Also, 70 percent expressed a remarkable growth in the acceptance of the others around them.

Most experienced instances of growth to give service. Almost 65 percent participants could feel a huge shift in terms of taking responsible social action.

**AT THE JUNCTION OF SELF AND SOCIETY**



**MORE THAN 65 PERCENT  
REPORTED A HUGE SHIFT  
IN TAKING RESPONSIBLE  
SOCIAL ACTION.**

# TESTIMONIALS

*After the program, my focus could shift to 'how to become the best for the society' instead of 'being the best in the society'.*

-Vinay, Noida

*I could see that I could feel very different from what the whole society feel about a particiular social identity.*

-Preeti, Haryana

*The program has helped me to see the beauty within me and out in the world.*

– Anup, Maharashtra

*Through a simple game, I could see that it is more beneficial to work for the collective achievement. I could trust the people around as they, too, trusted me.*

– Madan, Madhya Pradesh



# TESTIMONIALS

*Now, I always feel more aware to frame my questions in the correct way as, I know, they have a great impact.*  
– Nitesh, Dharamshala



*It has been very powerful for me when we started the circle with silence. I enjoyed being listened to and listening to others without judgment and realized I had never listened so much. I could then see my capabilities and even weaknesses clearly.*  
– Ghanshyam, Madhya Pradesh



*Generally, we tend to give solutions when somebody shares a problem with us. This time, our focus was on making him find his own solutions, which seemed a way more powerful.*  
-Abhishek, Maharashtra



# Way Forward

## JYOTI BRINGS HER PROGRAM TAKEAWAYS TO HER CLASSROOM



Jyoti is pursuing B.Ed and undergoing her final phase of teacher training. Jyoti often shares that being a good teacher is something she is really passionate about and have set high ambitions for her students' achievements through classroom learning. After Aaina Dekho, she states that it has been a journey of substantial transformation in the way she perceives herself and others. Jyoti shared that earlier, she easily labelled a few children in a class as 'intelligent' on a very subconsciously chosen basis of how well they responded. A report that she had to submit, had to consist of the names of 5 'intelligent', 5 'average' and 5 'weak' students. After the program, she realized that these were mere labels she had given to her students. This made her execute 3-phases of pre-test to really know how her students have been doing. In the first phase, she took a pre-test of 20 questions; in the second, she made the student make a working model of something that they had learnt and finally in the third phase she took to graphical chart-based representation of their knowledge using pictures and stories. This exercise made her see a lot of students performing well, whom she had earlier labelled as average or low. Now, she feels, even these children feel more connected to her and seek her out often.

## VINAY GOT RID OF ONE-TIME-USE PLASTIC CUPS FROM 11 CORPORATE OFFICES

Vinay works at a corporate firm as a Marketing head. A corporate work culture like his with over 60 employees in the office often comes with innumerable facilities for the workforce to be at ease while work. Vinay, as he had his glass of water in the pantry, crushed the plastic disposable item and was about to throw it in the dustbin as when he noticed a pile of used glasses and reminded of the workshop of system thinking he participated in at Aaina Dekho 2.0.

Vinay thought of doing something about it, and chose to write to the head of the HR department regarding his concern of excessive use of one-time-use plastic. The executive soon responded with affirmation and notified him that all the branches of his office in Uttar Pradesh will get rid of this disposable plastic cutlery. Through his single 'conscious' action, Vinay could reduce a big amount of plastic waste which by the end of only a month would have piled up to around 38,400 plastic cups, otherwise.



# Way Forward

## KOMAL TAKES A STEP FORWARD TO IMPROVE HER RELATIONSHIPS AT HOME

Komal is a young woman from Pune who is a freelance writer. Even after her remarkable performance at UPSC, She has taken a brave decision of choosing writing as a career. However, her parents believe that she can do better things with her life.

Komal has often shared at the platform that she has never enjoyed listening to others much. The importance of listening has always been a question until she practiced this at Aaina Dekho platform. Komal, with her dreamy eyes and in a stance of intense reflection says, "After coming to AD I could realize how important it is to listen to others at a personal level." Post-program, going back to home, she could sense that she is not avoiding lengthy conversations with her mother. Earlier, she used to think it to be not much useful but now she could experience more acceptance and patience in reception of feelings and thoughts of her own mother. She also documents that earlier, she used to listen to respond or react to her father but now, often, she chooses to reflect. She feels relieved not to be carrying a burden (or a label) to be a 'know-it-all' anymore.



## ABOUT US

# MERA GAON MERI DUNIA

Mera Gaon Meri Dunia is an alliance of young minds based on the core values of collaboration, decentralization and value-based youth leadership. We work on rural transformation through community empowerment. Here, we believe that community mobilization is crucial to bring a sustainable change.

Currently, we are working with

i) Youth to handhold them on the path of self awareness and value-based leadership through program Aaina Dekho (organised bi-yearly)

2) Youth who want to transform their own communities through education interventions through project Navodaya.

In this, youth are trained to take after-school educational endeavours to prepare rural children for Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya admissions

3) Youth entrepreneurial capacity building through *GRAM UDHYAMI* in Indore, Ujjain, Dewas and Ratlam districts of Madhya Pradesh

4) Whole School Transformation Project, *KADAM*: It is a rigorous program lasting a year to build capacity of school leders and teachers to deliver quality education to children. Through this, we envision a shift of school from marks to values. The stakeholders' capacity is built to bring about and sustain cultural and pedagogical transformations at grassroot level.



KAMLESH

NAGESHWAR  
PANCHALVASUDHA  
KAPOORPAWAN  
PANCHAL

LALIT PANDYA



DEEPTI



MANJARI



मेरा गाँव मेरी दुनिया

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