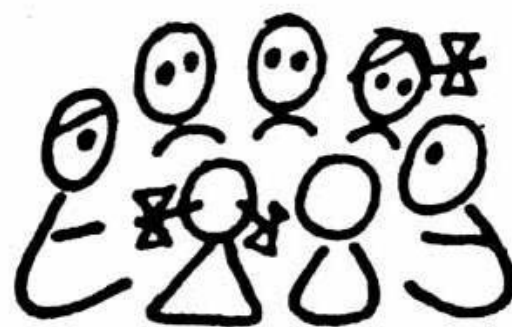
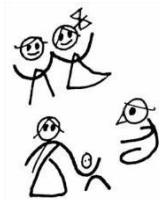
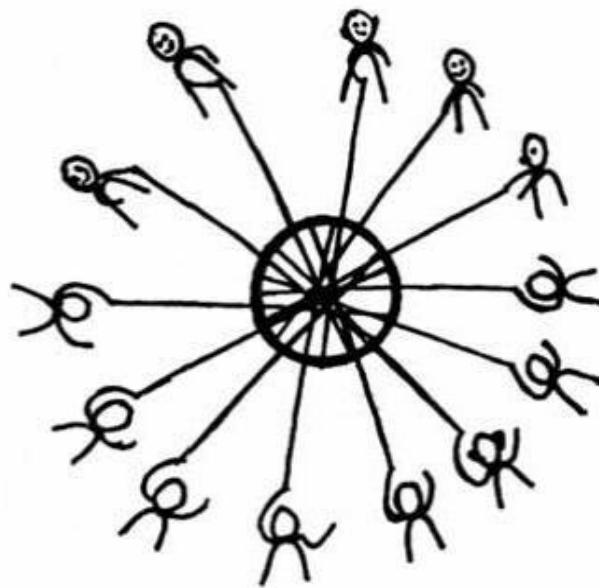


# Community Health Learning Programme

*A Report on the Community Health Learning  
Experience*

Sejal Tambat



School of Public Health Equity and Action  
(SOPHEA)



## *Acknowledgements*

*Thank You SOCHARA for giving me an opportunity to be a part of Community Health Learning Program (CHLP) 2021-2022.*

*A big Thank You to Ravi, Thelma, Dr. Denis, Radhika, Guru, Abu, Karthik and Uma. Without their hard work, conducting online sessions for CHLP twice in a week would have been impossible. My CHLP journey was made memorable by your continued efforts. Thank you for everything.*

*I also want to Thank my colleagues for all the fun and discussions we had during our online session & live meeting at St. John's Medical College, Bangalore in May 2022. Meeting everyone in person never felt like I was meeting everyone for the first time. Thank You once again SOCHARA for giving me a new family.*

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# Summary

My Community Health Learning Program (CHLP) journey is mentioned in the pages below. It has two parts – A & B.

Part A mentions about introduction to CHLP, what made me join the course, study modules, my application of learnings to the community I work in and the benefits or challenges I faced while undergoing the course online.

Part B mentions about the Project I got an opportunity to do under the guidance of SOCHARA and CHLP team along with my Mentor who guided me in the right way. Hope you have a wonderful experience reading the project report.

## **PART- A**

### **1. Introduction**

I am Dr. Sejal Tambat. I have completed MBBS, MD Physiology, Masters Family Medicine & Diploma Tropical Medicine & Hygiene along with a Fellowship in Diabetes. Currently I am working with Doctors Without Borders aka MSF (Médecins Sans Frontiers') in the Drug Resistant Tuberculosis Project at Mumbai, Maharashtra.

### **2. Why did I join the fellowship?**

I always wanted to work with the community. Since 2013, I have been working with various NGO in Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh & Meghalaya. I wanted to know ways to approach the community which I have known adequately after attending the Community Health Learning Program by SOCHARA.

### **3. What were my learning objectives and were they met?**

Learning Objectives: 1. Methods to approach the community

2. need to approach the community

3. Work on maternal and child health in North East (NE) of India

4. Train medical doctors in NE on Family Medicine and capacitate them to strengthen the Primary Health Care Centres in the remote villages in NE India.

5. Spread network of YuMetta and youth camps in NE and other parts of India for empowering the youth.

Some of my learning objectives were met and some will be met after I start living and working in NE India which will happen soon. We at YuMetta have started the process of youth camps in NE India.

### **4. Learning from modules and how I applied the learning in my work.**

**Reflections on use of the LMS, videos and participation in live online sessions.**

**How was a balance between work, life and the CHLP maintained?**

The online learning modules uploaded on Learning Management System (LMS) was very useful. Most of my time used to go travelling to work, so it was easy to log into the Moodle app and watch videos there. There was reading material uploaded too. But I could not find much time to go through the reading material in one week due to the existing job that I was doing. Understanding the Social Determinants of Health and applying the SEPCE analysis at my workplace was the very useful video for me. Another interesting video was Globalization & Health which made a lot of concepts clear in my head.

I was able to attend most of the online session on Saturday, but it was difficult to attend sessions on Monday. With work, YuMetta and CHLP, it was difficult to give my 100% concentration to the sessions. But I am glad that I was able to connect with so many people who are like minded and strive for the society.

I remember the cartoon where the doctor is shown very big and he looks back to the minute community and he had to take a magnifying lens to look at the problems of the community. Ravi's words of striving to be a tap turner and not a floor mopper are still fresh in my mind and will always be.

### **5. Mentorship process and reflections**

Mentorship is a good way to have guidance in the journey. But I felt that I would have been able to connect more to my mentor if I would have been allocated my mentor at the start of the CHLP program itself. The Mentors are amazing people with a lot of experience and expertise in their fields and I am happy that I have a connection because of CHLP and can ask for guidance as and when needed in life.

## **6. Project learning experience**

My project in CHLP is based on the youth camps in Chhattisgarh. It is a good learning experience and to get ample to guidance from experts in research field was amazing. Special thanks to Dr. Denis for keeping the motivation on to do the project.

It would have been great if we could start the project also early in the CHLP course as time was short for me to work on the project along with daily routine job. But overall I got a good experience of report writing due to the project.

## **7. Take away from CHLP and Looking Ahead -Where do I go from here?**

1. To strive to become a tap turner
2. Apply learnings in YuMetta youth camps
3. Expand YuMetta network like SOCHARA
4. Involve myself more into research and analysis
5. Move to North east India to work for the community by providing primary health care along with the needs of the community.

## **Part B**

### **Documentation of the experiences of young adults after attending “Go To The People” youth camp in Chhattisgarh based on “Journey Inwards”**

“Go To The People” (GTP) is a thought process built by likeminded individuals who are socially aware & sensitive about the issues or challenges in the environment they live in. These individuals wish to create awareness in the young minds who are the future of our nation. For bringing about this change in the thinking process of our youth, we have organized a series of structured camps in the state of Chhattisgarh. The goal of the GTP youth camp is to make young adults capable of searching meaning of their life by journey inwards exploring and understanding themselves & journey outwards to understand the society, surrounding environment and the challenges present along with it. GTP camp aims to bring together a group of socially aware & sensitive individuals in Chhattisgarh through a series of three camps structured to provide platform for understanding self, society and learn about various approaches for social contribution.

#### **Why there is need for this camp?**

There are a substantial proportion of young adults who want to live life with meaning & purpose. They want to contribute their small bit to bring about a positive change in the society. There are innumerable problems & challenges in the society which needs to be addressed. The energy and dedication of youths can indeed bring good changes in the society if they focus on finding the correct challenge which appeal to them.

Youth of this generation are restless and confused, but at the same time they are smart and well informed. They wish to live life with freedom & want to meaningfully contribute to the society. They long to pursue their dreams by being sensitive to the problems of the people around them. They are not only techno-savvy, but also, they have not lost touch towards humanity. These individuals like to lead a purposeful life by engaging in deep conversations & giving back to the society. Some of them would want to contribute to the society very often, while some others would choose a cause and work passionately for it.

Even though they have the energy, information, multiple skill sets and desire to change any existing systems for its betterment, they are pushed towards a market-driven rat race due to the discouraging education system. The youths are not given enough inputs and favorable environment to nurture their dreams. They are afraid to think about life beyond the expected norms of peers and society. Today’s youth do not often get platform to talk about these issues, to meet people like them, to learn from experts about various problems in the society and to develop skills to understand these problems and ways to deal with it. Thus, keeping this need of the community in mind, GTP camp was conducted for the youths aged 18-30 years in Chhattisgarh in the month of August 2021.

## **What is exactly GTP intending to do?**

“Go To The People” (GTP) camp aims to provide platform for young adults who want to understand WHY, WHAT and HOW about themselves, the society and the challenges surrounding them. GTP is about individuals who want to meet other resourceful people who love to follow their heart using their brain. It is about getting a chance to meet fellow travelers on the same path and learn from their experiences. It also includes developing skills to understand any problem and find various ways to deal with it, both individually and collectively. It strives to build a family of socially sensitive individuals from various fields across India, tied together with deep bonds of friendship and who would be a support system for each other. Finally, through the medium of GTP camps, individuals can develop the ability to find oneself & explore the ways to live life with goal and meaning. Young people can transform themselves into socially aware and sensitive individuals that act concretely towards the wellbeing of the society. So, through a series of structured camps, GTP aims at facilitating such spirited young individuals realize their potential to contribute towards social good by encouraging sensitivity, awareness, value-based life and understanding challenges while searching their goal.

## **Method of selection of participants:**

The first GTP camp was conducted in the month of August 2021. An online form was made in which the participants had to fill in details like basic demographic details, educational or work background, hobbies, and many questions which made the individual to think about themselves. The online form was published on YuMetta website and we also visited various colleges and institutions of Chhattisgarh to give information about GTP camp for enrollments.

The age group of 18 to 30 years was chosen as a criterion to participate in the camp. We included people from various educational and non-educational backgrounds like agriculture, mining, engineering, medical, physiotherapy, teaching etc. A nominal fee of 1000rs was kept as a token of confirmation of participation. Those who would not afford to pay the fees were waived off and those who needed travel support were provided with it. The list of final participants arriving at the 6 days residential camp was confirmed by our state coordinator who was also one of the participants of the camp and we began the journey of self-retrospection at the Tilda Ashram campus.

## **Observations:**

The camp started with introduction in a novel way without telling your name. People will remember you by your likings and disliking's. The game of treasure hunt made the participants aware of the campus and developed a sense of belonging to the team. The day was tiring as everyone travelled from various places to reach the campus, so after the orientation of the GTP camp, we called it off early for the day.





**Day 1:** The first day started with discussions, group activities, debates and role plays over the topics of self-awareness of one's body, mind and surrounding environment. The morning pre-test was conducted every day before we introduced any topic. The day 1 pretest questions were based on the physiology of the body, specifically the reproductive system, the menstrual cycle, myths and taboos related to menstruation, masturbation, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy etc. Participants were divided into 4 groups and they were asked to discuss among themselves the changes taking place in adolescents exploring their thoughts physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. They were given sheets and color pens to note down points for presentation. 15 mins were given to all groups for this activity.

We observed that participants could note down and explain the physical changes that take place in the body, but they were not able to link the changes in adolescents to the emotions, behavior, intellect and the society. Different groups came up with various points about their own experiences as adolescents. We had discussions on how girls & boys are brought up differently by the same parents in the family, the societal reasons for this difference in upbringing, the mental health of that female child and many more social issues around adolescence. The discussions on masturbation and sexually transmitted infections started very slowly and participants were very shy to talk about it initially. The beauty of GTP camp is to make people understand that such issues are considered as taboo because the society does not accept people talking openly about it. The reasons for not accepting could be very irrational and we need to understand those. Bringing about such changes in the thought process takes time. So we first observed if the participant considered the topic as taboo themselves and then slowly tried to make them understand why it is taboo in their head and finally when thought process is clear, we asked them to bring about changes in thought process on these taboos in their family as we strongly believe that "Change begins at home".

The evening debate swirled around a scenario given based on real life situations in relationships between the father, daughter and her lover. We observed that the participants were quick to jump to conclusions about who is right and wrong. But what we made them understand is that judgmental decisions are easy to give in a case

scenario, but if this happens in real life, you should be neutral in thinking and support the weakest link in the society after listening and understanding both sides of the story. After dinner we had a casual chat on the topic of “What do you understand by Relationship? “And what steps to take so that there are no “Break-ups” in that Relationship?” The main agenda moved around on “Editing Relationships rather than Deleting them”. As it was the first day of the camp, it was a bit difficult for participants to understand why we give importance to relationships. No university/school/college even talks about such an important part of life. The beauty of GTP camp is to start and maintain lifelong healthy relationship with these young minds and their families. We called off for the day to see each other again for modern exercise at 6.30am.

**Day 2:** Modern exercise was a surprise as it just involved playing Bollywood song early in the morning and asking people to dance in whatever way they knew. We saw that good dancers took lead in doing new dance steps and the group followed. It was an exciting time as people laughed looking at each other’s break dance steps. The value of today was “Friendship”. The participants had to make three new friends today and, they had to do friendship with all things surrounding them. The groups for discussion were made such that people who knew each other from past were separated.

The topic of discussion in the camp started with knowing your brain. The mechanism of getting emotions like anger, guilt, love, sadness etc. is all related to the functions of the brain and how we react to these emotions in our day to day life.



The day started with the interesting topic as “Mein Aisa Kyu Hu?” (Why am I like this?). This was the beginning of journey inwards. The structure of the brain, its weight, size, areas of the brain were discussed and functionally the origin of “Thoughts” was discussed in detail by Dr. Rahul, the psychiatrist. He beautifully linked the “Thought process” to our “Emotions” and then changes taking place in our “Behavior” in response to these thoughts and emotions. It was a very intense day where everyone’s brain was fried which gave birth to our next session on “Bheja Fry”. Here we saw the very important “Role of Parenting” shaping our behavior and emotions

since childhood. This concept was easily understood by the role play on types of parenting played during the session. This role play was very important to understand the basic cause of behavior we have during our growing period. The parenting role play made people understand that our parents are also human beings and mistakes can happen by them too.

The afternoon heat was increased by the topic of “Albert Pinto ko Ghussa kyu ata hai?” (Why is Albert Pinto Angry?). The physiology of anger, the thoughts provoking anger and our understanding of reaction to those thoughts was very well explained. The observation of our own self talks and emotions leading to anger was the exercise for our brains that day. The ways to respond to our thought that provoke anger and channeling them was explained adequately on the topic of “Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy”. I also learned many new things along with everyone about behavioral therapy. The day ended with the deep thoughts on biases around us and our role in forming and supporting many biases. This day sowed the seed deep into our minds to “Listen, Understand and then Reflect before Reacting” to any stimulus.

**Day 3:** The value of this day was Equality and discussions were on the topic of Understanding the difference between Gender and sex, Gender Sensitization and Equality.



Dr. Ranjan, was our speaker for the day and she started by asking the participants to view themselves through the “Gender Lens” and write on charts papers their thoughts on “If I am a girl so...and If I am a boy so...”. Here the interesting thing was the discussions took place in groups but while presenting the boys would speak about the girls points and vice a versa. Participants came up with all relevant points about the gender-based discriminations taking place in the society. But the question was what can we do for it? The discussions moved forward noting down the physical and psychological difference between the male and the female body.

Another very interesting theme was to do a role play on gender discrimination. A group of participants acted excellently where the dialogue between the couples showed the patriarchal norms followed in the society. One couple played the role of very shy Indian couple following the traditional norms and the other couple played

the modern brave couple where the woman considered herself equal to the male. The gist of the role play was to understand how we are taught to consider women at secondary positions in the society right from childhood.

The second act was about the story of Cinderella. As we know that Cinderella was the most beautiful women, she was poor, but she waited for her prince to bring about changes in her life. Here the participants were asked to rewrite the story of Cinderella. The participants came out with wonderful ideas where the timid Cinderella turned into a successful businesswoman without the help of the prince charming. It was time for great laughter as people came out with very bright business ideas that Cinderella could do and she no longer needed her prince to become independent in her life. They came up with brilliant ideas to empower Cinderella and with this the learning was that each one of us has the capability to empower ourselves to be independent.

The whole days sessions gist was that everyone understood that there were gender discriminations in our society and in our homes, but ways to mitigate these discriminations was not known. The aim of this day's topic was to identify the biases in gender that take place starting from our own homes. The only output expected was to make our own family members identify these biases and start to have open talk about it in the family. Once the dialogue starts in the family, then we could reach out to the community. First our perspective needs to be changed before reaching the community. The day ended with Power Walk or Privilege Walk which made things crystal clear in each one's mind. The walk starts at a baseline where people hold hands and stand together. Then as the speaker talks about the privileges or under-privileges, the participants are expected to move forward or backward respectively. This activity generated a deep emotional bond for each other after observing the people standing far away during the privilege walk. It made people very brave to accept their underprivileges and walk backwards in front of everyone. This day was very successful in building strong lifelong relationships between YuMetta and its participants.

**Day 4:** Dr. Dharav was the star of day 4 and the discussions revolved around Addictions specifically to alcohol.



The value for this day was Wisdom. It was a very intense session where participants were surprised to see the ill-effects of alcohol on our body, mind and ultimately in the society. Dr. Dharav Shah is a psychiatrist with a keen interest in spreading awareness for alcohol de-addiction. The above photo was captured when participants themselves were answering reasons to start drinking alcohol at any age and any quantity. Dr. Dharav said even one glass of alcohol is enough to make you enter in the loop of addiction. Participants could think of 13 common reasons to start consuming alcohol. Among these the reasons which most people had experienced were peer pressure, glorification of alcohol on social media, normalization among peers, role model showing successful Bollywood actor & actress promoting alcohol and to improve work efficiency anytime specially in cold weather. Dr. Dharav intricately explained the physiology of brain and how it gets depressed under the influence of alcohol and can make a person suffer from cold injuries instead of warming the body in cold. Knowing this was a new thing for participants as they have seen that it is very common to offer alcohol to our Indian Army men working in the Himalayan borders to keep themselves warm and increase their work efficiency.

There were role plays on how peer pressure is built up. Participants enjoyed acting drunk. We even had a very interesting act in which the shy timid Cinderella herself gets drunk and behaves without inhibitions. Below is a video of the drunk Cinderella speaking in Chhattisgarhi language.



VID2021082722192  
3.mp4

Eventually, the role plays were enacted on the theme on how to say no to addictions. It was difficult to understand initially, but by enacting it out, things became clear and participants could make up their minds to say no to alcohol or any form of addictions. The rest of the evening was spent dancing on music. This was planned to show the participants that anyone can get high even by dancing and support of alcohol is not needed at all. The take home message of this day was to speak to family members who have been addicted to alcohol at home and try convincing them to quit alcohol. Dr. Dharav also mentioned about the website “Poisons we love” for people to register and make use if anyone needed help in quitting any addictions. This day’s discussions were so successful that 2 of our participants very bravely acknowledged that they are addicted to various kinds of drugs and after listening to Dr. Dharav they have made up their mind to quit addiction and participate in spreading awareness. This was the most important day for us as participants considered us as a safe place to speak about their personal lives and they are confident in extending hands for help quitting addictions. They correctly understood that change begins from within and change begins at home. The day was over with tiredness after dancing for long hours and that too without alcohol!!

**Day 5:** The last day of the camp. The value of the day was “Hope”. Hope to spread friendship in the world, Hope to mitigate sufferings, Hope to understand ourselves better, so that we understand the society and work for our

interest & peace of mind. The topic of discussion was “Screen Saver” which largely focused on social media addictions and how much time we spend in our entire lives in front of the screen, be it mobile/TV/laptop. Thus, the topic chosen was to save ourselves from the screen.



Dr. Priyadarsh, explained with a pie chart on an average how many hours daily we spend sleeping, eating, getting ready for work/college and how much time we spend on our mobile. As shown in the photo, he divided the box into four and labelled them as Important, Urgent, Not Urgent and Not Important. The participants were asked to fill about the work which they think as important, urgent and respectively. After completing the box, participants realized that major time was spent in doing not important and not urgent work. The whole and sole responsible thing for this was the “Mobile”. Very aptly Priyadarsh pointed out how we get disturbed by all the notifications to which we have ticked yes in our mobile and our head. The good and bad effects of these notifications was charted down.

Way ahead was planned and how to put social media to good use was learnt. This was a very useful exercise as it began from myself and my mobile to silent the unwanted notifications. It was beneficial for me personally too as I got more time to read books in hardcopy after doing away with unnecessary notifications. I was happy to have achieved this good habit from the GTP camp. The overall change by the GTP camp by one of the participants is documented in the form of a video attached below.



Media1.mp4

The rest of the day after the evening tea break was free for participants to prepare for the cultural program organized by themselves. They played local music and danced to it wonderfully. The feedback received was very satisfying for us. It is good to see that our small initiative can bring about a big change in anyone’s life. We hope

to continue and expand YuMetta camps to all over the country. The second and third camp for this batch based on “Journey Outwards” have been planned and report will be completed soon. The short and long term outcomes will be analyzed as and when the structured camps planned for this batch are completed.