



Commutiny - The Youth Collective

Annual Report 2010-2011

Goal

Every young person realizes her/his full potential as well as that of the society's through active citizenship.

Mission

Building leadership in youth for effective participation in decision making at all levels and creating youth platforms for social change

Objectives

- To promote a common platform for youth development.
- To develop a bridge between youth and those who influence the destinies of youth (corporate, government, civil society institutions, etc.) through effective use of media, a body of knowledge and research.
- To strengthen youth programming in the sector through offering information, designs, knowledge and think-tank services.

Key Activities in the period April 2010 to March 2011

- Facilitating the growth of young Change-Leaders through LLJ (Communitiny Learning & Leadership Journey)
- Facilitating campaign, network, workshops and learning spaces for youth and youth development through CMPG (Communitiny Media and Policy Group)
- Facilitating growth of the Collective

Dear Friend,

Community - The Youth Collective, formally launched in 2007, works with the belief that for building a more peaceful, equal, inclusive and just society, youth need to be at the helm of change. To make this happen, more legitimate spaces need to be created for youth to engage with their own selves and the social context. Investments need to be made to provide youth with opportunities to engage effectively with their neighborhoods and communities and different stakeholders need to be active in this process. This is what drives the Collective to roll out diverse interventions to engage with different stakeholders in different ways, and work to strengthen the ecosystem for youth development and citizenship in India. The key work of CYC is focused to bring youth development to the fore of development action.

It is within this context that CYC's work has emerged over the past three years. What has also strengthened and crystallized very clearly over this time is the organization's collective belief and intent, which we are sharing below:

- The young person is not a problem that has to be addressed or a passive recipient of services. S/he is a partner in addressing development problems and working for social change. Hence, through its programs, CYC seeks to nurture young people's potentials as change leaders, and prepare them for citizenship roles.
- To influence real change in society, the first mutiny must be within one self. This is all the more important and relevant with youth since many development issues are also youth issues, and because youthhood presents itself as a site for change. Hence, through its program designs, CYC seeks to link personal and social transformations.
- Young people carry great potential for change when they walk together. Through its programs, CYC supports young people to come together, understand each other, and transform – themselves and their societies.
- Youth is not a homogeneous group in India. In its programs therefore, CYC seeks to accommodate the needs of youth as individuals with unique identities and a desire to fulfill their own potential as active citizens. As a result, CYC invests energy on designing non-standardized programs that allow the young people the space and opportunity to customize it to their own and/or to their communities' needs. This translates as CYC investing energy to design interventions that rest on sound processes and frameworks, with effective scope for being decentralized and youth led.
- The Indian society, of which youth is a part, is extremely complex and different stakeholders here influence how youth are perceived and treated. Many stakeholders engage/target/work with young people, especially in an age where the demographic is in favor of youth, and each of them approach youth from a different perspective. CYC's programs therefore seek to reach out and work intensively with some of these stakeholders, especially organisations and institutions that share a vision for youth development and active citizenship. At the same time, CYC seeks to provide them with a space to share experiences and learn together since there are certain needs and experiences that are common to all of them. It also work to reach other individuals, organizations and stakeholder groups through knowledge sharing, resource sharing and perspective building around youth development and active citizenship.

Having traversed a journey over the past three years, today we are happy to share with you our annual report for the period 2009-10. We hope, dear Reader, that as you go through

the report, you get an insight into how we are contributing to the sector youth development and citizenship in the country.

In faith and goodwill,

Ashraf Patel, Convenor

REPORT OF CYC'S ACTIVITIES

Communitiny Learning and Leadership Journey

Commutineer Led Learning Events



In FY 2009-10, as a step to make the Learning and Leadership Journey more self led, the CYC hub supported the organizing of a number of Commutineer-led learning events. Taking the shape of workshops, exposure visits or action event or trainings, the learning events addressed three broad areas, i.e. Self Development, Project Management and Perspective Building. Managed by a core group of Commutineers, it was mandated that the events emerge from a need felt by the Commutineers and with a minimum participation of at least 10 Commutineers and possibly some other youth.

The core group took on this responsibility and through a consultative process in the larger group, narrowed down on two key areas in which the group desired to deepen their learning : Project Sustainability in the Long Term and Identity. A small group took the responsibility to anchor the event on identity. 19 youth from two batches of the LLJ participated in the workshop on project sustainability in Dehradun and 16 youth, including some from outside the Commutineer group participated in the workshop on identity in Ghati village.

The learning events not only gave all Commutineers a space to build their own desired learning into the journey space but also became a very valuable opportunity for experiencing leadership and group work. While a core group took primary responsibility of the content, design and organizational aspects of the events, other Commutineers also pitched in to support specific functions and sessions. The reflection process also allowed the organizing groups to assess their own roles within the group and discuss some finer aspects of leadership and relationship building and group work.

Completion of Graduation Processes

The yearlong Phase 1 of the Learning and Leadership journey closed in June 2010. The team and the facilitators were extremely mindful of creating a suitable and meaningful graduation process for each Commutineer. Facilitator backed personal dialogue initiated with each Commutineer about three months prior to closure. 'What have been the key takeaways from the journey personally and in the context of the social change experiment' formed the key area for discussion. Together the facilitator, Commutineer and the team discussed the desired and possible future tracks of engagement for the Commutineers,

suitable options to strengthen the initiative, take forward a skill and understanding acquired, move on to further perspective building etc.

The key graduations avenues emerged as :

- Application for enrollment into LLJ phase 2.
- Autonomous continuation of the learning journey.
- Taking up jobs in the social sector in sync with the area of engagement.
- Parallel engagement with the Commutiny Media Network.
- Formalization of the social change initiative with support from other sources.

Based on the above,

- 8 Commutineers came into the phase 2 of the LLJ journey in 2010-2011 for taking forward their experiments on the ground.
- 8 Commutineers strengthened their social change engagement by setting up organizations and committing long term to sustain the work they initiated under LLJ.
- 10 Commutineers took up leadership roles in re-energising existing/ latent social sector groups they set up earlier/ they were part of earlier and through this, committed to continue their work to impact society positively.
- 10 Commutineers continued largely in the development sector ... pursuing jobs or pursuing some other change initiative, with or without external support.
- 8 Commutineers took the experiences of leading social change experiments and their commitment to their chosen issue for change forward through engaging in the social sector in various capacities like journalists, documentators, facilitators, etc.
- Over 3 Commutineers continued with their commitment through going on to study further and choosing subjects related to development.

Recruitment of LLJ Batch 3

Starting from May 2010 the selection of a new batch for the LLJ took place for a period of three months. Post a rigorous process of application, telephonic and face to face interview, 19 young men and women were taken in as LLJ Batch 3 (12 men and 7 women). The LLJ Batch 3 Commutineers are working on a diverse range of issues including health, education, youth active citizenship, communalism, gender, livelihoods, child rights and conflict. 6 of the Commutineers work in urban areas, 5 in metros and 8 in rural areas.

Learning Event to Mark Initiation of LLJ Batch 3 Journey

The orientation for the Learning and Leadership Journey program was held from March 9 to 14 2011 at Jaipur. It was the first opportunity for the batch to come together and get introduced to each other and to the program. Consolidating the experience of the past few years, it was designed to facilitate a lot of interaction and personal sharing, build leadership skills and share social change ideas.



The event was designed around four focus areas: Chai, Charcha, Change and Commutiny, structured to provide a mix of free interaction and specific inputs on community based interventions with an understanding of larger socio-political processes. The event brought together the batch to foster possibilities for cross learning, collaborations and bringing the individual fellows and journeys into a collective.

Creative Media & Policy Group (CMPG)

Consolidation of Commutiny Media Network (CMN)

In FY 2009-10, Commutiny Media Network (CMN) was launched as a shared values network that uses media for mainstreaming youth development in India. In the reporting period, CMN supported 16 youth and youth facilitators to work towards mainstreaming youth development and leadership through creating and disseminating grassroots media resources that highlight youth voices and perspectives. A workshop for all associates was held in September 2010, during the course of which, the Associates worked on developing multimedia campaign material on gender based violence. In March 2011, CMN facilitated a new phase of training, which helped in bringing all associates together and relooking at the themes and values of the network. It also created space for the Associates to share and gain different perspectives and develop new skills.

Overall, the period witnessed a growth in the levels of ownership from CMN Associates and saw the Associates reaching greater focus and understanding on bringing out media resources regularly. A number of CMN associates were also able to reach out to an audience through their newsletters and stories and initiate conversations and dialogue at the local levels. Despite the celebrations, however, the work of a few Associate could not develop as well as expected, resulting in a number of CMN partnerships being closed through mutual consent.

During the reporting period, CMN was also further consolidated through a consultation in New Delhi where the path forward for the network and its partners was forged. The Consultation was attended by over 40 people, including 30 representatives from 13 CMN Partner Organizations (including CMN Associates and the heads of CMN Partner organizations), 4 Commutineers and 6 media consultants.

Launch and Strengthening of Must Bol! – A Social Media Campaign on Gender Based Violence

With the vision to promote as well as visibilize youth action through using social media platforms, in the reporting period, CYC launched a youth led campaign against Gender Based Violence in Delhi campuses and in social media spaces. This campaign is aimed to leverage social networking platforms to create spaces for large numbers of young people for dialogue and action. Through this campaign, CYC sought to meet the goals of promoting

youth engagement in social change and to visibilize youth leadership, besides generating awareness and dialog on an issue that is of cross-cutting significance in society.

After the preparatory phase in the second half of 2010, Must Bol! started to be anchored

Case Study: Must Bol Action Around Holi

AIM: To dialog with young people about violence that takes place around Holi and broadcast the message of safe holi.

STRATEGY: To engage people in personal conversations and bring out real experiences while sharing the key messaging of playing 'Consensual Holi'.

ACTION: Six daily discussions on Facebook through the six days leading to Holi building up audience interest. We started with a discussion on Violence around Holi, moving to why it happens & then talk on remedying it.

SUCCESES:

- 160 comments including sharing of personal experiences.
- Perspectives from male and female participants exchanged and volunteer led sharing of articles & links around the issue.
- Ideas generated for safer Holi practices. Commitments from discussion participants to play safe and consensual Holi.
- Indirect messaging to non-participating page members.
- Due to extensive marketing, over 10,000 views of Holi Discussions.

by a Core Group of 22 young volunteers who underwent intensive training in gender issues, campaigning, filmmaking & social media with CYC. With and through the core group, the campaign facilitated young people across a spectrum to look within and explore and examine their experiences of receiving, witnessing and perpetrating violence. It touched on aspects guiding young people's lives in large measures - notions of masculinity and femininity, control and abuse in intimate relationships and violence emerging from popular ideas of body image.

January 2011 began with the Stakeholders Consultation at the Delhi College of Arts & Commerce where 70 participants representing youth, youth facilitators, gender experts and social media consultants came together to talk about the campaign and its possibilities. In February, the campaign started using Facebook as a key space for discussion about gender and sexuality amongst young people at the "Let's Talk" page www.facebook.com/delhiyouth). Simultaneously the campaign Core Group also worked on creating short films on issues of gender based violence that they face. In March, the campaign website (www.mustbol.in) was launched featuring ten short films, a team blog and a sister website (www.fearlessbol.in) to collect youth perspectives on gender control anonymously.

One of the key focus areas of the campaign has remained to directly reach out to the young people in college campus to dialog with them and to connect them to the campaign. As part of this thrust, Must Bol has in the reporting period participated in two campus events in Kirorimal College (February) and Indraprastha College (March) where has been able to interface with over 300 young people.

Development of Creative Resources to advocate for youth development and participation

In the reporting period, CYC worked on enhancing the scope of the website www.commutiny.in through redesigning it to highlight CYC's current structure and endeavors. The new website now has over 30 pages and chart out the history, organizational structure, partners and initiatives of CYC in detail.

In the period, CYC developed a film on active citizenship to bring forward youth the issue of youth participation in society. Titled 'Mind Your Own Business', the film was developed in partnership with Sudhir Aggarwal.

In the period, a four-day 'Learning with Kabir' workshop was organized from January 6-9, 2010 by Commutiny - The Youth Collective and the Kabir Project of Srishti School of Art and Design at the School of Ancient Wisdom, Devanahalli on the outskirts of Bangalore. Facilitated by Ravi Gulati, a member of CYC and Shabnam Virmani, the four days were designed to create a deep immersion in the poetry, music and ideas of Kabir as well as brainstorm ways of carrying the ideas of this mystic poet into different life spaces in Indian society, including that of active citizenship. A very diverse group of 25 participants consisting teachers, educators, social workers, folk singers and artists from all over India participated in the process. The gathering created great synergy and bonding and there was a sense of diverse social actors coming together around a common inspiration. Many action ideas were developed by the participants.

Institutional Growth of CYC

Governance and Organizational Capacity Building

Organizationally, CYC experienced a greater stability with the board meetings happening regularly (5 Board meetings were held during the period) and programmes picking up. A significant development in the period has been the discussions towards strengthening the advocacy agenda of CYC, for which a degree of consolidation of CYC's activities may be required. While preliminary discussions have been undertaken in the Board, it is only with time that further clarity on this is expected to emerge.

In the reporting period, an exhaustive performance review process was conducted for all CYC personnel, supporting them to reflect on their strengths, areas of improvement and for better planning for the future. It was an exhaustive process with members feedbacking each other and giving and receiving feedback to and from their supervisors. The process ended with appraisals and increments.

In the reporting period there was active engagement of Arjun Shekhar, Ashraf Patel and Ravi Gulati in the CMPG processes, while Amrita Patwardhan and Ashraf Patel developed and anchored the process review and appraisal of the CYC personnel. Ravi Gulati and Rustam Vania also championed the design and development of the website. Other than that, members participated in the recruitment process of the new batch of Commutineers, and in events. They also continued to mentor the Batch 1 Commutineers until graduation. A Resource Generation Champions' Group comprising Meenu Venkateshwaran and Vartika Jaini invested energy to strengthen CYC's efforts raising and managing resources.

Resource Management, Partnerships, Finance

In the reporting period, while CYC continued to receive renewed support from Sir Ratan Tata Trust and India Development Service, USA and continued support from DKA (Austria), a significant support came with CYC becoming UNIFEM's Indian partners for the UNIFEM-anchored P4P campaign that seeks to engage young people, especially men, to use social media for fighting gender based violence against women. In parallel, CYC in the period also continued to avail non-financial support in terms of CYC members investing significant time in playing executive roles within CYC.

A challenge faced by CYC in the period lay in non-timely receipt of grant installments, which had to be overcome through stringent planning, managing funds as well as curtailing planned activities at CYC. For this purpose, CYC decided to merge the resource generation portfolio with finance and converted it into the Resource Management portfolio, which would plan manage both income and expenditure.

During the period, CYC received the registration under Section 12A and 80G with the IT Department and Prior Permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs to receive DKA and IDS grants.

Board CYC

Executive Team CYC

Ashraf Patel

Durba Ghose

Kanika Sinha

Kuber Sharma

Manak Matiyani

Md. Khateeb

Rama Rao Vedula