



**Antargoonj:  
Discovering Your  
Inner Voice**

*Martha Farrell Foundation  
New Delhi :22nd to 24th April 2018*





*“Antargoonj: Discovering your inner voice”* is a National Leadership Workshop under Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC), Martha Farrell Foundation’s flagship program in partnership with adolescents leaders across India, with a common agenda to build leadership capacity and skills to collectivise and collaboratively counter sexual and gender-based violence in their communities, cities and country.

This year Antargoonj took place on April 22 - 24, and drew participation from 32 KBC Fellows from 10 locations across 8 states— Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Sonapat and Panipat (Haryana), Japla (Jharkhand), Wardha and Ahmadnagar (Maharashtra), Najafgarh (Delhi), Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Siliguri (West Bengal) and Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh). Participants were nominated and selected on the basis of the inspirational work that they have been doing to stop Violence against Women and Girls (VAGW) in their communities under the KBC program.

The key objectives of Antargoonj were:

- ✚ To reflect on their experience of being a part of KBC, and how they would carry forward this important work in the future.
- ✚ To learn how to communicate using arts-based methods and engage using new ways of advocacy, and communication skills.

KBC Fellows travelled to Delhi for the event, and this was a novel experience for most participants. The experience of travelling as a group, and without parental supervision was different— it also developed independence, and responsible decision making skills among participants.

*Antargoonj* began with a relationship building session, where the Fellows interacted with each other over dinner and the facilitators ensured that Fellows from different locations speak to each other and to stray away from their comfort zones.

### **“My New Normal: Reflections on my changed self”**

The first session on the 22nd of April was ***“My New Normal: Reflections on my changed self”***. In this session, MFF facilitators invited 3 young artists who conducted the session by teaching other adolescent participants to use paint, and painting brushes to bring out different textures with colour. This art-based session was helpful for participants who were able to explore themselves in creative and colourful ways. Students were also able to engage with an unfamiliar activity as their schools did not offer art lessons.



After the fellows were familiarised with colours and art tools, they further understood the deeper meaning of each colour. For example, they used the colour red to express anger, white was used for demonstrating peace and calm.

Following this, Fellows were divided into 3 groups and all were invited to create a work of art on a large canvas. Each work of art thus created was vivid and expressive of the lived realities of women and girls in India.

The first work of art, entitled **“The Colourful Truth”** expresses strongly, the violence faced by women in their daily lives as a result of patriarchy. The hands represent sexual abuse and the other forms of violence that women face. The painting also depicts a long line of women holding hands together, supporting and showing solidarity with each other. At the bottom of the painting, a just and free society is showcased by a girl and a boy holding hands and feeling safe.



The second painting is called **“The Changing World of Colours”** and depicts the lack of freedom for women and girls the country. Fellows used different shapes to define places that are unsafe and where they experienced harassment.



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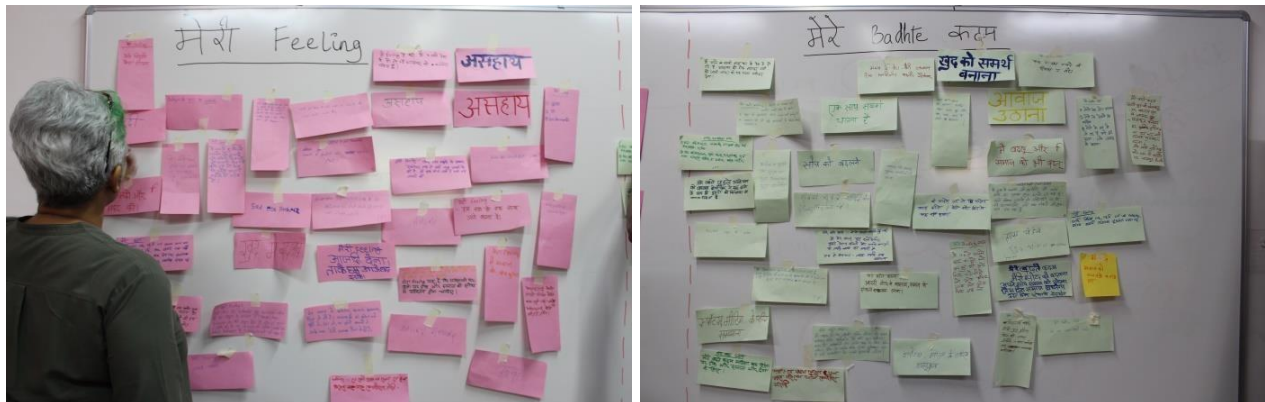
For instance, the yellow coloured box represents a sports ground where only boys are allowed. The fellows also painted a transition from the white triangle-square structure (the natal house) where the girl is happy to the deep blue house (the marital house) where she is upset and hurt. The pink circle represents a running track where girls can't go. And there is a star at the top where a girl wishes to be.

The third artwork, called **“Our Society”** portrays the darkness that envelops a woman and girl's life. At the left side of the painting there is temple which signifies Asifa's case where an 8 year old Muslim girl in Kathua District was raped inside the temple by a group of men (including a police officer) for hours and held captive for 4 days before killing her. At the centre of the artwork, there is a woman who is crying and feeling helpless. But she dreams of a world where boys and girls can be together without societal judgement. The Fellows also wrote the terms 'equal rights' and 'freedom' and then repainted it with a darker shade to show the ongoing struggle between choice and patriarchy.

The entire exercise of expression of art on a big canvas was a reinvigorating experience for all involved. The unique use of such an art based method that may also be used to generate awareness regarding VAWG, was surprising for many of the participants. The Fellows also found this method to be more engaging, participatory, and interesting.

### Reflection Circle

The next session during the workshop was a conversation wherein participants reflected upon their experiences as fellows in the KBC programme. They focused on 2 important aspects— ***'my feelings'*** and ***'my step forward'***.



The thoughts and feelings expressed by the participants were then visualised as artwork on terracotta tiles. All were invited to paint the pershift in their perspectives on gender and VAWG after being a part of KBC.





### Reflections with Dr. Rajesh Tandon

The second day started with a recap of the learnings from the previous day, including the use of arts based methods for generating awareness regarding VAWG. Founder-President of PRIA, Dr. Rajesh Tandon, remarked after viewing the artwork that the Fellows had created during the previous day— “You are saying what you are experiencing. Maybe there are different dialects and languages that we speak, but there is no set language of Art.” Dr. Tandon also likened the artwork to the biography of MF Hussain and how his art talks about daily lives, and the normality accredited to it by society.



### Journalism of Courage

A session was delivered by 2017 Martha Farrell Award (MFA) winner, Ms. Nadiya Shafi, a video journalist from Kashmir, who brings out hidden stories of Kashmiri women. Entitled “Journalism of Courage”, the session was designed to teach Fellows about the multiple uses of a mobile phone, which can help them in documenting and spreading awareness about stories of change to the larger public.

Nadiya began the session by giving each participant a newspaper (Hindi/English) and asked them to count the number of reports on politics, business, sports, among other topics. It was found out that Indian Politics gets the maximum

amount of media attention, followed by health and education, and women's safety garners the least amount of priority. This exercise was helpful in evidencing the fact that women's safety is not an important topic of concern in mainstream media, as this is not considered a 'popular' issue.

Following this, Nadiya facilitated a session on video making and editing for the participants. The adolescents took photos and videos from within Martha Farrell Foundation's office space to share their experiences and stories of being a part of *Antargoonj*.



The Fellows also learnt how to document stories which can be made using smartphones and shared on social media and other forms of media, to generate wider awareness.



## Writing for Change

On 24<sup>th</sup> April —the last day of the national level workshop— the fellows participated in a workshop on writing stories and poems. In this session, all were invited to create a story about each other.

The photographs and videos prepared using the previous session on “Journalism of Courage” were used for this exercise to build stories. Some of the important aspects that needed to be defined within the story were about the main character, the change that has taken place in the main character’s life, the most inspiring part of the character’s journey, etc



## Asha-Tamasha

The final session of *Antargoonj* involved learning using theatre for advocacy. In the session called, ‘Asha-Tamasha’, a situation was recounted to the participants, where a girl called *Khushi* is being forced into child marriage. The participants had to play the roles of her family members, community, friends, panchayat, media and police and show what happens in the real world when a girl child is forced into a child marriage. The objective was to role-play the various kinds of responses and attitudes that important stakeholders may hold. This was done to understand the kind of dynamics that are present in a society and how adolescents can negotiate with them.

All the participants role-played in the same way each of these stakeholders would have in a real life situation. *Khushi*’s friends were creating pressure on the family and the police, and the media also took on the role of advocating against child marriage and influencing the police and panchayat to take action. The police however took bribes from the panchayat to ignore the situation, to save itself from public shaming and embarrassment. Within the skit, the media played an important role and conducted a sting operation to capture the culprits.

## Interaction with Mr. Rizwan Adatia

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, the Fellows had a chance to interact with Mr. Rizwan Adatia, the founder of a multi-billion business conglomerate COGEF and founder of Rizwan Adatia Foundation. Mr. Rizwan shared his own experiences of growing up, which was motivating for the participants as they could relate their own struggles with that of his. One of the female participants, Khushi, from Japla shared that her parents did not allow her to go to a good school or take extra classes like her elder brother. But she was determined to make a difference and worked hard. In her 10<sup>th</sup> grade, she scored 81.1% whereas her brother just passed the exams. This result made her parents realise the value of daughters.

## Key Learnings

The participants shared that they had learned various methods of advocacy and communication, including those that included art, music, mobile journalism, poetry, story-telling or roleplay.

Each session was found to be participatory and engaging.

Participants also expressed that they would use the learnings to plan advocacy events on days such as Menstrual Hygiene Day.