

DANCE4LIFE INDIA



Key facts about India



India: One of the largest emerging powers in the Global South and a country of huge dimensions and diversity. It's also one of the 'youngest' countries in the world: half of India's population of 1.3 billion is under the age of 25. Although India has experienced significant economic growth, education and access to basic health services are still unavailable to most people. Sadly, young people are the most vulnerable group. Because of India's poor schooling system, conservative gender norms, deficient health services and the stigma that surrounds sexuality, the health of millions of teenagers is at serious risk:

- **No sexuality education:** only 20% of young women and 36% of young men have accurate knowledge of HIV. 50% of young people in India are not familiar with contraceptive methods
- **Young people remain vulnerable:** 31% of all new HIV infections in India occur among young people ages 15 to 29
- **Gender inequality and violence:** 55% of girls aged 15-19 disagreed with four out of five reasons offered for why a husband would be justified in hitting his wife.
- **Child marriage:** 47% of all married women in India entered the marriage as minors
- **Unsafe sex:** of all young people who engage in premarital sex, only 7% of women and 27% of men reported using protection



Our program

The dance4life India program has started in 2010 and so far has reached 170,000 young people and built a community of 38,000 agents4change. The program is being implemented in 120 schools and community centers in four Indian states: Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand.

Our India program reaches young people in high schools as well as out-of-school youth ages 12 to 18. We mainly work in rural areas, reaching the most disadvantaged groups. In addition to HIV, teenage pregnancies and sexual violence, our India program specifically addresses gender discrimination and child marriage. By openly discussing these culturally sensitive issues, dance4lives offer young people a different perspective and support them in making their decisions of their own.

By engaging parents and family members – so-called gatekeepers – we also involve young people's environment. With our agents4change, we stimulate adults to reflect on the life decisions they make for their children and how can create a more enabling and youth-friendly society.

Where we work



A 2015 study measuring the impact of dance4life India, demonstrated a number of significant improvements in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of young people.

- **Knowledge:** The number of young people that indicated unprotected sex as a risky behavior for contracting HIV increased from 46% to 78%.
- **Self-efficacy:** The number of young people who indicated they did not want to get married before the age of 22 increased from 31% to 44%
- **Misconceptions:** 65% of participants indicated that a person who looks healthy might still be HIV positive, versus 17% prior to joining the program
- **Contraception:** accurate knowledge on how to prevent pregnancies increased from 49% to 66% halfway through the program





Our partners

In India, we work with various partners. At the moment we are collaborating with:

1. Restless Development India, a youth-led development agency that promotes young leadership in three key areas: civic participation, sexual health and livelihoods. Since 1985 Restless Development India is among the leading organizations in the country that work on youth sexuality. Because of their existing life skills programs, dance4life was able to engage schools throughout the country with the highest urgency.
2. MAMTA Health Institute for Mother and Child (MAMTA-HIMC), focuses on Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights, Maternal and Child Health, HIV & AIDS and rights and Non-communicable diseases. Since 1990, MAMTA has grown into an established institute for program implementation, advocacy, training and research; and acts as a think tank at various national and international levels.

“As a peer educator, I have discovered new ways to motivate people and play a positive role in my community. I feel much more confident about myself and my future.”

Pragati (21), Peer Educator dance4life India



Our ambassadors

dance4life works with ambassadors to spread our message and truly involve young people with our work. A major celebrity in India, Bollywood dancer and choreographer Terence Lewis has supported dance4life since 2014. His media presence and community of fans – over 2 million followers on Facebook – are crucial for our efforts to reach as many young people as possible. Terence: “It was really inspiring for me to experience a dance4life session for the first time. Like myself, dance4life connects with young people by using the positive energy of dance. My philosophy is ‘ABCD’: ‘AnyBody Can Dance’. That is why I support dance4life: it’s a great way to protect teenagers from HIV, sexual violence and gender discrimination”





Case study: “Knot So Young”

An important problem that contributes to the vulnerability of young people, and girls in particular, is the widespread practice of child marriage. In India, almost 50% of teenage girls are forced to marry before the age of 18, and the country accounts for over 40% of all child marriages globally. Robbed of their childhood, child brides are physically and emotionally not ready for marriage, and at extremely high risk of contracting HIV and STDs, complications related to unplanned teenage pregnancies, and sexual violence.

In September 2014, dance4life embarked on a new youth-led campaign, ‘The Knot So Young’ Campaign, to end child marriage in India. The Knot So Young Campaign actively engages the general public in India’s large cities to create more awareness around the devastating consequences of this harmful practice.

The campaign is spearheaded by Terence Lewis, he has called on the general public in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai and other cities to take the pledge and speak out for the rights of millions of girls who are victimized each year. Through our joint online presence and Terence’s public persona, we reached out to 180,000 people in the first half of 2015 alone.



Personal story of a 15-year old girl

Anita is a 15 year old girl from Pakur district of Jharkhand. She lost her father when she was 12 years old. Her family is supported by her brother, who works as a daily wager. In the earlier days of our involvement in Anita’s school, Anita came across as a shy girl. “I had very low self-confidence. I was never able to express my problems or concerns to anybody including my own family members. I even hesitated in sharing the problems related to menstruation at my home”. While interacting with one of our volunteers, Madhumati, who hailed from the same village as Anita, Anita thought it would be a good experience to join a youth club.

Though the youth club, Anita was able to attend sensitisation sessions on Puberty, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Gender and Child marriage.

“When one fine day, a relative came to my mother for a marriage proposal, I knew that it was not the right thing to succumb. Due to tight financial situation, my mother was very keen on getting me married, but I persisted, and tried to explain to my mother the harms and consequences of a child marriage.”

Later a dance4life volunteer met Anita’s mother & explained to her the legal consequences of a child marriage along with the health & personal consequences a girl can face due to child marriage. Anita’s mother finally understood the issue & allowed her to study further. The marriage proposal was turned down.



Growth vision

dance4life India aims to expand its partnership in India and therefore its reach. We plan to include more youth-led and youth focused organisations who are interested to embed the dance4life model in their youth programs with an added value in either their expertise or their geographical reach. With all partnerships dance4life aims to have a long term strategy in order to make the program sustainable and impactful.

In addition to the states of Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand, dance4life India is looking to expand into other states of the country such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and other areas where the health issues of young people are most pressing.

	Direct reach	agents4change	Estimated budget
2016	81,000	21,000	€ 210,000
2017	101,000	26,500	€ 262,000
2018	126,500	33,000	€ 328,000 +
Total	308,500	80,500	€ 800,000



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