

# Activities Report | 2017

**DIL SE**





Hand stitched brooches made with recycled cloth.

Wear a heart and spread the love.

## Tejus home

It has now been 5 years since Tejus Home opened, and we have welcomed a total of 33 girls since then, of whom seven were cared for this year. Two girls had Medical Terminations of Pregnancy (MTP), two girls went back to their homes before the delivery (one of whom was from out of state), and three girls gave birth naturally. All the girls left Tejus Home in good health, and the three babies born with us were relinquished for adoption.

This year we faced one of our most difficult challenges: taking care, not of a teenager, but of a 12-year-old. This young girl came to us at five months of pregnancy; she had been abused by her elder brother and was in a very delicate situation emotionally. Surprisingly, within one week, A\* seemed like a different girl, feeling safe from further harm and free from judgment. The situation for her mother, however, was terribly difficult: at home alone, a pregnant 12-year-old daughter placed in Tejus Home, and a 14-year-old son in custody at a boys' remand home.

The news somehow got out to the media and an article was written in a local newspaper. Following this, an advocate from the Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), with whom we had previously worked at the Child Advocacy Centre (CAC), decided to approach the High Court to ask for permission to abort the baby. Amazingly, she had not discussed the case with us beforehand and knew nothing about the girl or her sit-



uation other than what she had read in the papers. Obviously, when the young girl had arrived in Tejus Home, we had had a meeting with her and her mother and had asked whether we should go ahead and request an abortion from the court, knowing that she was already past the legal time limit for an MTP.

The child's mother, however, was unable even to consider this option at the time because she was already in so much distress that she could not handle anything else. She just wanted her daughter to be safe, healthy and in peace. The young girl was seen by a medical panel, and it was found that allowing an MTP would in no way have been safer than taking the pregnancy to term. The girl was, in fact, the healthiest of all the girls that we had had at Tejus Home, and the midwives from Birthvillage, who provide all the medical care to the Tejus Home girls, were confident that she could give birth naturally, regardless of all the comments given by random doctors in the journalists' interviews.

A\* gave birth at Birthvillage to a healthy little boy weighing in at 2.6 kg. Yes, she was exhausted, but she was also proud, empowered and was surrounded by women who cared for her and believed in her.

She left us two months later to continue her studies in a girls' home, and her baby was relinquished for adoption.

## Arts-based therapy

Over the course of a few months, the girls at Tejus Home were given sessions of Arts-based Therapy (ABT). Cristelle Hart Singh, our Managing Director, enrolled on a 9-month course to become an ABT Practitioner, and so during this period, the girls benefitted from painting, drawing, playing percussion, clay modelling, etc. Now that Cristelle has been certified, the girls will receive ABT on a weekly basis along with their regular counselling from Dr Janaki Sankaran, our in-house psychiatrist/therapist.



A\*'s vision of herself next to the birthing pool.



B\* having given birth

## Child Advocacy Centre (CAC)

The Child Advocacy Centre for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) has now been operating for two years.



A\*'s self portrait



## Workshops

One of our main focuses has been on prevention work in schools, but there have also been many hurdles.

Although the heads of many schools accept that CSA is a problem that needs to be addressed, they preferred to have one-off sessions with the students, rather than sessions for teachers and parents (who would then themselves have had to take on the responsibility of educating their young children). The CAC staff had to spend time explaining the rationale of the approach adopted by the CAC.

A few school heads felt that such a programme was not necessary—"our children come from good families and are not abused sexually"; "we have very young children in our school, so they are not going to be abused". When these arguments were countered with the facts, the heads would say that they would nevertheless not be able to fit the programme into their schedules.

A useful suggestion that came from one of the more understanding heads was that the CAC should get official permission from the Education Department, which would

give us the authority to approach schools more easily. This involved meeting people in the state capital (Thiruvananthapuram) and also officials at different levels in Ernakulam. Setting up the meetings with the officials took time, but once the official permission to go ahead with the programme came through, it did indeed become easier to organise the sessions in the schools.

The sessions have to be fitted into the school schedule of examinations, cultural programmes and training programmes for the school staff, and this is not easy.

However, the feedback after programmes have taken place has been uniformly positive: the parents and teachers have realised the need for educating children about CSA. One school head said he had been hoping a session like this would be conducted in his school. He had been wondering who to approach when the CAC had approached him! Another teacher went back to her class and spoke to her children about CSA, resulting in one of her students reporting ongoing abuse and the abuser getting arrested the following day.



*In 2017 we conducted 32 workshops attended by a total of 2,925 people.*



*We organised a four-day workshop for 17 teenagers, from different schools and different backgrounds.*

In April, we organised a four-day workshop for 17 teenagers, aged between 11 and 17, from different schools and different backgrounds. The aim was to get their input on the design of our workshops for teenagers in schools. There are quite a few subjects that need to be addressed with adolescents and which we feel could help bring down the prevalence of CSA. We are currently developing six themes to introduce in our 2 to 3-hour workshops:

CSA, Online Abuse, Puberty, Sex and Sexuality, LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual), and Depression and Anxiety.

During the April workshop, we had a group of foreign volunteers helping us too. We were in the middle of giving a talk on child sexual abuse to the teens, when two of these volunteers, two girls from different countries and of different ages and backgrounds became silent and introverted...



Write-up by one of the **volunteers**

I remember that day well. All it took was a few words. A few words and then all of a sudden, the part of my mind I'd been locking away for almost 20 years had been opened.

I was lucky enough to have been asked to volunteer at Dil Se for a week. As part of that week, the kids were shown a presentation to raise awareness about child sexual abuse. It was during this presentation that a memory from my childhood was triggered, and in a matter of seconds I realised that I had been a victim of child abuse (it's still extremely difficult to admit that in those words).

For me, it was more a realisation that what I had gone through was categorised as abuse, and that's not something that had registered me before. For years, I'd done a good job at quashing that memory and categorising it as just a 'weird point' in my childhood. Now that I've started accepting it for what it was, I realise how much it had an impact my life—my view of men or male friends from a young age, my idea of what is acceptable and what isn't.

I wish that I'd dealt with it when I was younger, so I could make sense of it all and understand it and move forward. I'm fortunate though, that this happened to me now and not in another 20 years' time. I'm forever grateful that I had the support of some amazing women during the rest of my time in India, but not everyone has that luxury. Raising awareness about CSA is more important than many people realise, not least to prevent it from happening but also to help those it may have already happened to. Ignorance is not bliss in this case.





## Workshop for professionals

In November we were lucky enough to welcome Dr Lois Engelbrecht, from the Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse (CPTCSA) in the Philippines, who helped us to conduct a two-day workshop for professionals. This workshop, entitled “Working Together to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse”, was aimed at social workers, counsellors, teachers and anyone already working, or wanting to work, in the field of child sexual abuse.

### The topics covered were:

- sexual development of children, to handle sexual misbehaviour and understanding the sexual abuser (adolescent and adult)
- theory-based prevention to develop programmes at all levels: in the community, schools, faith communities and at home

The hall in which the workshop was conducted was kindly lent to us by the Rotary Club Cochin East. Members of several local organisations participated and the workshop was very much appreciated by all.

## Global giving & impact guru

We were introduced to the crowd-funding organisation, Global Giving, and were encouraged to join their platform and start a campaign. Please check out the link below and see what we did.

*<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/stop-child-sexual-abuse-in-india-through-education/>*

Global Giving (UK-based) partnered with Impact Guru (India-based) so that Indians could participate and get tax relief on any donations. Since joining Global Giving, in November, we have raised just over USD 3,000 from 43 donations, and on Impact Guru we have raised INR 44,000 from 19 donations. This money covered our costs for the creation of a short animated video on CSA which we hope to get screened in cinemas soon. The money will also go towards printing our CSA workbooks for students.

We are still on this crowd-funding platform and have moved up to Superstar Status thanks to our efforts and collaboration with this organisation. Please visit our page and share it with your friends and colleagues. Donors who live in USA or UK can get tax relief on their donations.



Pre-natal yoga class



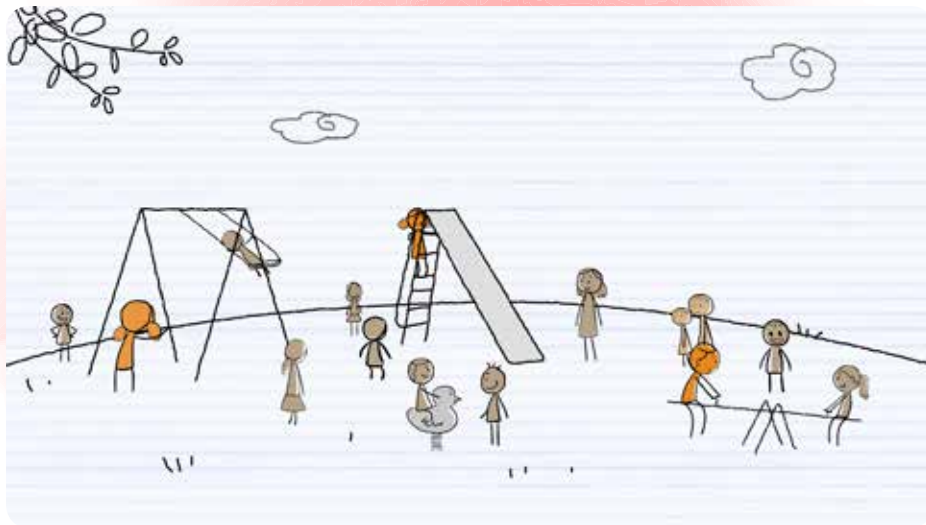
## CSA animated video

Imagined by Dr Janaki Sankaran, ex-staff member Pretty Koshy, and Cristelle Hart Singh, created by Curious Cabin, voice-over by Supriya Menon and music by Rahul Raj. This short animated video tells us what a happy childhood should be like but reminds us that not all childhoods are in fact happy. It tells us the sad statistic that 1 in 5 children, both boys and girls, from all walks of life, will be sexually abused before the age of eighteen. It tells us that most of the abusers are known, trusted

and well-liked by the children they abuse. It tells us why children usually do not disclose the abuse, and it tells us what we can do to stop it. We must report child sexual abuse.

At the moment, this video is only in English. We are getting ready to produce it in Malayalam too, with Prithviraj lending his voice. We believe that this video should be screened in all the cinemas all over Kerala. Awareness + education = prevention!

**Awareness + Education = Prevention**



## Silent auction

Friends of Dil Se, Rakesh and Tanya, planned to get married in December 2017. They had no need to receive gifts for their marriage and having been dedicated sponsors of Tejus Home for the past 5 years, they chose to include Dil Se in their wedding plans. We discussed the possibilities and decided upon doing a Silent Auction during their reception. A Silent Auction is similar to a normal auction, but instead of shouting one's bid, one has to write it down on a list. People played the game, and we raised INR 39,500.

A huge thanks to Rakesh, Tanya and the kind prize donors: Food vouchers by LEDHI CAFÉ, CHILLIOUT CAFÉ, FRENCH TOAST, DAVID HALL (CGH EARTH) and COCOA TREE. A voucher for one night's stay at DESHADEN RESORTS, one month of yoga classes at INSTANT YOGI, a gift hamper by NAKEDLY YOURS, a cricket cap donated by AJINKYA RAHANE, personalised items donated by JAMIE VARDY and DULQUER SALMAN, and finally board and card games by AGA ZYLANTROPY LLP.

If you would like to support DIL SE by including us in your wedding, birthday, christening, etc. please do not hesitate to contact Cristelle on 9895031123



## New CSA prevention team

We have been working with a young couple in Madurai since 2005, previously on the issue of HIV, but now that the government is doing a fairly good job in this field, we are training them to be our Tamil Nadu Branch, working on the prevention of CSA in villages surrounding Madurai.

They have visited the CAC twice recently, taking part in awareness-raising classes in a few schools and learning more and more from our staff. We hope to get them to participate in a few workshops given by our friends and CSA experts from the Tulir organisation in Chennai ([www.tulir.org](http://www.tulir.org)).

## Interns

This year we welcomed three young interns at the CAC: two trainee social workers from Vimala College, Trissur, and one third-year law student from Mumbai. It was a very nice experience for all of us. The social workers mainly worked on creating a survey to study adult survivors of child sexual abuse to be able to help us work on prevention. The law student helped us, among other things, by meeting the Sessions Court Judge and putting forward a proposal on behalf of Dil Se to decorate the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) witness waiting room in the court building and make it more child-friendly. The judge gladly accepted.

## Objectives for 2018

- To be fully funded from India itself and not to have to count on foreign donations.
- To reach the 10000 mark of people having participated in our awareness sessions.
- To reach out and give therapy to victims of CSA living in institutions.
- To make the waiting room at the POCSO court child-friendly by installing nice furniture, decorating the walls and providing books and toys.
- To create a lot more public awareness about CSA: bumper stickers, video, classes, posters, etc.
- To strengthen the teams and have a more active committee.
- To put CSA prevention posters and drop-boxes in schools.



## Our teams

### *Tejus Home*

Partner - Priyanka Idicula, Birth For Change  
 Therapist - Dr Janaki Sankaran  
 Social Worker - Mithumol Lalu  
 Day Carer - Mercy Joseph  
 Night Carer - Baby Das

### *Child Advocacy Centre*

Managing Director - Cristelle Hart Singh  
 Therapist - Dr Janaki Sankaran  
 Trainer - Elizabeth Ninu  
 Trainer - Anju Devadas  
 (Pretty Rachel Koshy and Thara Rejeev: these ladies have since left CAC)  
 Caretaker - Flory George

### *Oday Home - CSA Madurai Branch*

Trainer - A. Pothumani  
 Trainer - P. Maheshwari

### *Board of Trustees*

Managing Trustee - Ravinder Singh  
 Financial Trustee - Cristelle Hart Singh  
 Trustee - George Jacob  
 Trustee - Sanjeev Prabhakaran  
 Trustee - Vadivellu "Rajesh" Kannamma

## Dil Se

Cristelle Hart Singh  
 Managing Director  
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## Local donations

ICICI Bank  
 A/C name : DIL SE  
 A/C no. : 001005009735  
 IFSC Code : ICIC0000010

## Foreign donations

Federal Bank  
 A/C name : DIL SE  
 A/C no. : 10040100336449  
 IFSC Code : FDRLO001004

Contributions to DIL SE are exempted u/s 80 G of the Income Tax Act 1961



New 24-HOUR HOTLINE  
8111 9111 78

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