

Progress Report

September - December 2020



SHANTHI MAARGAM
FOR A PEACEFUL TOMORROW
சாந்தி மார்க்கம்
வாழி உள்

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Introduction

September to December has been yet another challenging period for Shanthi Maargam because we had face new challenges as we started to get back to normal and start work in the centre and we had to face a second wave of COVID -19 and go into a second lockdown. When work at the centre finally resumed and intime clients were able to start coming into the centre and we were able to organise an event outside just before the second lockdown was implemented in the country. Once again the team had to resume working online by providing therapy to old and new clients through online portals.

Once the schools re opened the team spoke to the children of the community and informed them that they could come back into the centre. But just as that was about to happen the centre had to close again for the second wave of COVID-19 that spread around the island.

The team continued to work online and continued to help people through online therapy and through our social media platforms by creating helpful posts. The team members were also able to facilitate many trainings and participate in panel discussions conducted online to help create awareness on mental health.

We were fortunate that a leading child and adolescent psychiatry specialist, Dr Miyuru Chandradasa joined the Board of Directors in this quarter.

The internship is still on hold due the ongoing pandemic and we hope to look into this based on the situation of the country. We also had to bid farewell to a team member and recruit a new member.

The last quarter of the year has been quite an active month for everyone by normalising the online working culture as well as facing new challenges. Following are detailed accounts of all the activities that were carried out in the last quarter.

Activities

1) Working during the pandemic

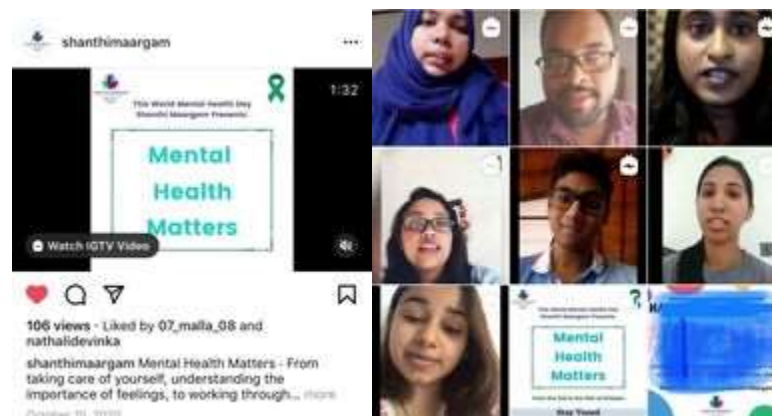
The team started to get back to work at the centre and were able to start allowing clients to come back into the centre for therapy. As schools started to reopen the centre was able to take off the notices that prohibited the children from coming into the centre and start to allow kids back at the centre too. But unfortunately, there was a second wave of the COVID -19 pandemic that spread quite rapidly around the country and a second lockdown and curfew was implemented. With this the team went to work back online.

2) Social Media platform management

The volunteer recruited to manage our social media platform continued to create more awareness on mental health in a more structured manner. A calendar of the Important days relating to the work carried out by Shanthi Maargam and mental health was created and the posts were created accordingly. This made it easy and also helped many people with the posts that were created and shared tri linguually. Apart from the important days, other posts on mental health and also the work carried out by the centre were shared so the audience would be updated on the work that we do.

World mental health day 2020

This time for the above mentioned a new approach was taken and the volunteers created many videos talking about different mental health issues that people may face. A series of videos was shared tri linguually and then on a final video to commemorate world mental health day was created. These videos helped many realise different mental health issues and also reach out to us for more help.



3) Counselling services and the hotline

During the last quarter of the year the team of counsellors have provided 205 online therapy sessions and our hotline received 408 phone calls from people who needed immediate help and referrals. The time change of the hotline by making it 14 hours due to the pandemic from 8am-10pm still continues. People have reached out more due to the pandemic situation and also parents have reached out seeking help for their teenagers. The referrals from past clients also continues due to the reliable service provided. Our service provision trilingually continues to help more people. The steady reach out by younger people also continues.

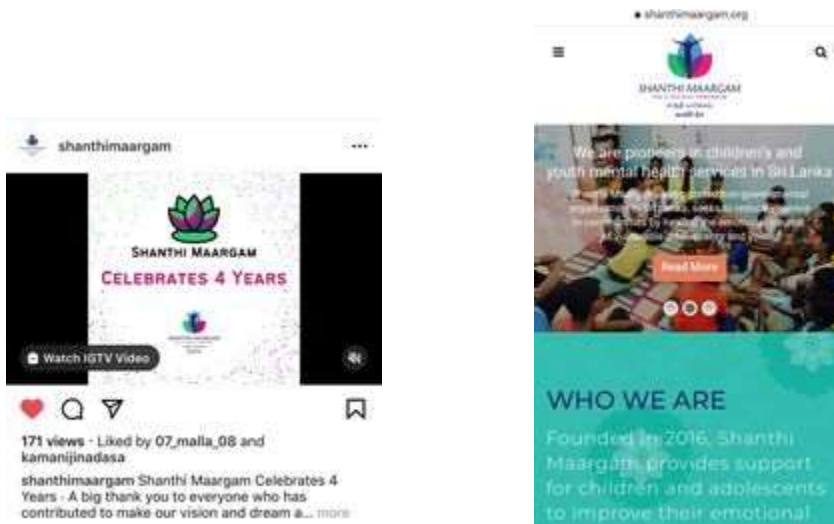
It was decided that since we are a youth orientated centre that we would start to structure our services to focus more on children, youth and adolescents, as adults have accessed our counselling services in the past. There for the hotline volunteers now follow a system created to streamline the calls and take on appointments for youth and adolescents. However, they do respond to anyone that reaches out for immediate help through the hotline. The streamlining is more towards those who want to set up appointments with our in-house counsellors. We also hope to asses and accumulate data on how many youth or adolescents we help so we can use this information to get a better understating of the population that reach out to us for help.

The two volunteer counsellors that came on board to help with the client load, continue to help out whenever the counsellors are over burdened with clients and are managing the hotline quite efficiently.

4) 4 Year anniversary celebrations

As Shanthi Maargam completed its 4th year, celebrations this year-round had to be carried out virtually due to the pandemic situation in the country. A video compiling messages from the executive director, board members, staff, volunteer and past interns was created and shared on this day. Also, a long-awaited project of launching the website for Shanthi Maargam was finally made possible on this day with a lot of hard work and effort. The link is www.shanthimaargam.org. This will be available in Sinhalese and Tamil within the first quarter of 2021.

Even though this year-round we could not have a celebration with children and youth at the centre we were able to celebrate non the less and make the most of it.



5) Recruitment of a new Director to the board and a team member

We had the pleasure of welcoming on board a new director to the board Dr. Miyuru Chandradasa- Consultant Child and adolescents' psychiatrist. He has been an active and helpful new addition to the team and has been actively participating in implementing new processes to help utilise the data of our services to be more useful for research purposes

Also, a new addition was the recruitment of a psychologist Ammarah Ashraf to fill in the place of a team member, Thiviya Kandiah leaving due to following an area of work that she is passionate about. The candidate was recruited after being interviewed by the Executive director, board member and staff member. She was taken through the recruitment process and our protocols and started work in December. She has been assisting the Asst. Centre manager as well as seeing clients online.

6) Events organised

- The 2nd annual "Listening booth" organised for the prevention of suicide.

The volunteers with the guidance of the staff were able to organise the above-mentioned event for the second year at the Good market. It was a successful event as many visitors engaged with the staff and volunteers on the information shared and also were able to share their own experience of attempts and losing family and friends to suicide. The volunteers created posters with information and had activities for the audience, such as role plays on what to do and not to do when someone talks to you about what they are going through, A white board with situation was displayed giving the audience the chance to

respond in the best way they knew how. Also, volunteers walked around the premises wearing an information board and spoke to many visitors and stall holders on the prevention of suicide. It was a day that much awareness was created.



7) Policies and procedures

- Our volunteer Gayani who came on board to help with our policies and procedures was able to complete our HR policy and also update our sexual harassment policy by making it more effective and easier to be carried out with anyone who joins Shanthi Maargam, be it staff, volunteer or intern. This has helped the organisation take a better and clearer stand on maintaining zero tolerance on sexual harassment and enabled the organisation to be a safer space for anyone that walks into the centre.
- Furthermore, she and the team of staff and volunteers are in the process of creating flow charts for all the areas on the sexual harassment policy to make it easier to understand and also very easily applicable.

8) Events and workshops attended

There were many workshops and training that were facilitated online and the staff and volunteers have been able to be a part of the following.

- A staff member attended an online discussion on Gender based violence organised by the UNFPA
- A staff member attended an online discussion on Realizing Reparations for Women: One Step Closer Towards Accountability', a national dialogue on women and gender-sensitive reparations
- A staff member and volunteers attended a two-day online training organised by Women and Media Collective on mental health service providers on addressing the

issues of domestic and family violence faced by marginalized vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka, especially the LGBTIQ+ community.

9) Trainings and workshops facilitated

The staff facilitated trainings, workshops and awareness programs on line for various groups and organisations. The sessions are as follows.

- Suicide prevention training for the staff of the British High Commission
Two staff members were able to facilitate the above-mentioned training on the request of a staff member for the British High commission who engaged with the team at the Listening booth at the good market. The staff was very pleased with the training and also had the opportunity to know about more the work we do.
- An inhouse training was facilitated by a staff member for the staff and volunteers on Emotional Freedom technique. The was a method of using tapping in order to help deal with negative thoughts and beliefs that one may have.
- A staff member participated in a webinar as a panellist for a session on Gender Based violence organised by Chokolaat magazine and pop singer Ashanthi De Alwis. It was an informative discussion facilitated to create awareness on GBV and help people know how and when to reach out for help.



- Two staff members facilitated a session on Emotional wellbeing for adults and children during COVID-19 for the staff of Search for common ground.

Doctors from the Sri Lanka college of Child and adolescents' psychiatrists.



Breaking the stigma and building awareness surrounding mental health

We'll be talking on:

- Current state of mental health awareness in Sri Lanka
- Current mental health issues faced by children
- Understanding and supporting individuals with mental health issues
- Professional support available for anyone going through mental health issues

27th LIVE WEBINAR
December 27th 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
on Zoom

Register Now | Link in Bio

Our Resource Partner:  Our Resource Partner: 

11) Asia Foundation Project

Shanti Maargam partnered with Asia Foundation, with funding from the Government of Canada to host a project called, 'Empowering Girls to respond to gender-based violence and facilitating supportive and safer environments in under, underprivileged settings in Sri Lanka.' The predicted dates for this project are from June 2020 to April 2021.

Progress on Outputs and Activities (September to December)

During the period we were able to complete all the training curriculums for the Women Youth Leadership program. These modules have been translated into the local language as well. The curriculum is designed for modules such as emotional wellbeing, leadership and community skills development, project management skills, advocacy, child protection, gender, sexual education, gender-based violence, legal framework and field visit.

Several meetings were carried out with the Project Director of Colombo Suburban Railway Project (CSRP) and Child Rights Development Officer of Colombo Divisional Secretariat Office to figure out ways of implementing the project successfully within the community, smooth transition of the project, risks involved while implementing the project, support that the CSRP and Colombo Divisional Secretariat Office could provide to implement and continue the project successfully.

Accordingly, as the first step to implementing the project, we organised the community meeting with the parents, children and youth club members who were resettled in Maligawatta with the approval and support of Colombo Suburban Railway Project officers. The discussion was carried out on empowering girls to respond to gender-based violence and how to facilitate supportive and safer environments in their community. Further, we were able to provide them with the opportunity to share their ideas and ways that they could cooperate with the project and the youth club members. The dates to carry out the

community screening interviews were also finalized. Finalized Training Curriculum (Sinhala language) for Women youth Leaders & Community needs Survey Questionnaire

The finalized training module and questionnaire developed for the community needs assessment can be accessed at this link.

*Community need Survey Questionnaire

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1olkHcoPxJTLgVgBwyK0gQZPq31r48mT2?usp=sharing>

*Training Module

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1RoIXKAlvUrKv8S0xfbFPS9TKYm33ghMc?usp=sharing>

Community Meeting

After the meetings we had with Project Director of Colombo Suburban Railway Project (CSR) and Child Rights Development Officer of Colombo Divisional Secretariat Office we were able to get their support and guidance to successfully implement the project in the selected community



TOT – Training of Trainers program

The coaches TOT Program was implemented in collaboration with the Colombo Dasanna Railway Project Officers, Shanthi Margam staff, and volunteers involved in the project at Shanthi Margam. The training curriculum was developed under the theme 'Empowering Girls to Respond to Violence Based on Gender'.



12) Finance

Financial report of the last quarter is provided below,

Shanthi Maargam Youth Centre Expenses report for Sep - Dec 2020

Description		Amount	Comments
Fund Balance as at 01.09.2020		13,551.24	
Funding Sources			
Stretchline	725,600.00		
MAS KREEDA	450,000.00		
Individual Donations	113,000.00		
Asia Foundation	2,100.00		Reimbursement to SM
		1,290,700.00	
Total		1,304,251.24	
Expenses			
Staff Salary – SMYC (inclusive of statutory dues)	842,350.00		
Volunteer Allowance - Counselling	2,000.00		
Volunteer Allowance - Hotline(2 Volunteers)	40,000.00		
Volunteer Allowance - Social Media	8,000.00		

Office Rental	225,000.00		
Furniture Storage	30,000.00		
Office Maintenance	10,790.00		
Travel Expenses- SMYC	17,888.00		
Office Supplies	2,494.00		
Stationeries	1,785.00		
Communication expenses	42,200.00		
Utility / Maintenance	660.00		
Cartridge for Printer	15,800.00		
Computer Maintenance	7,500.00		
Bank Charges	1,123.75		
Photocopy/Printouts	370.00		
Suicide Prevention day expenses	5,975.00		
Total Expenses		1,253,935.75	
Balance		50,315.49	
Petty Cash Advance Paid 22.12.2020		34,000.00	This expenses will be reflected in January 2021 report
Actual Balance as at 31.12.2020		16,315.49	

Description of Financial & Administrative Activities

1. Centre Manager Position is vacant from March onwards
2. Shanthi Maargam team is looking for a new place for Youth Centre and Counselling Centre. Since current office space is not enough for staff. Expected to pay rental Rs. 75,000 per month
3. Shanthi Maargam office is closed due to COVID 19 and currently staff are working from home and doing online Counselling.

Shanthi Maargam Asia Foundation Project Expenses report for Sep - Dec 2020

Description		Amount	Comments
Fund Balance as at 01.09.2020		298,714.77	
Expenses			
Staff Salary - Asia Foundation	173,997.00		
Travel Expenses- Asia Foundation	2,100.00		
Total Expenses		176,097.00	
Balance as at 31.12.2020		122,617.77	
Program Advance Paid on 25.09.2020		88,500.00	
Actual Balance as at 31.12.2020		34,117.77	

Description of Financial & Administrative Activities

1. Due to COVID 19 still SM couldn't start the Community level work for Asia Foundation Project
2. Conducted TOT training for staff on 17th December 2020 and expenses will be reflected in next quarter report.