

# ANNUAL REPORT



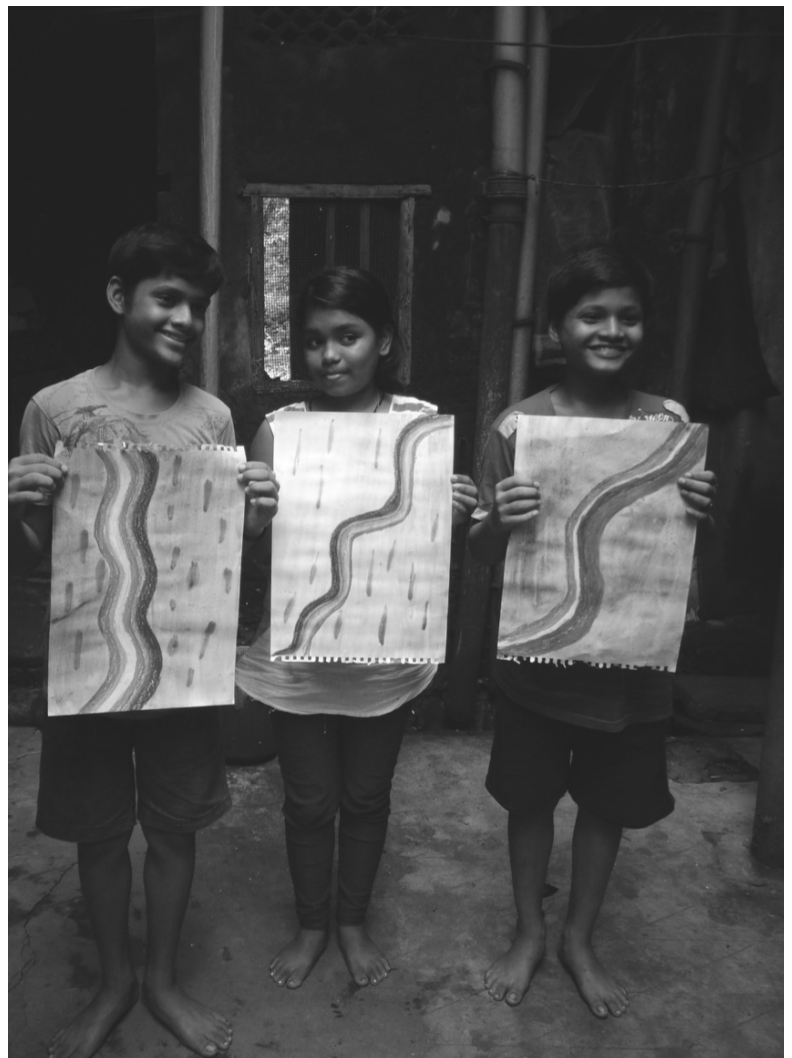
# SKHM

2017-2018

# THANK YOU

“When it comes to SKHM students I am confident and proud in equal measures of how they conduct themselves—even while away from the safety of the centres and from the supervision of teachers and caregivers. This year my favourite group of people gave me so many moments to be proud—yet again—of them and be grateful as I could be a part of their worlds. The way they reacted, thought and spoke and evaluated adversities, made me realise that I have as lessons to learn from them.

I savoured the moment when a student not only fought familial and societal pressures to stay single but fought her inner demons to pursue a life of education and skill development. I could scarcely contain my pride when non-SKHM teachers praised our pupils for their hunger for perfection on the cricket field.





# THANK YOU

I got a kick from my students' football successes, their steely determination to do better in school despite battling early-life malnutrition and for nunchaku skills (for which they have been practising from 5am), their dancing, painting skills, and for their mischief.



All this they managed despite living in one of the most violence-prone & at-risk areas; in 2017, too, there were deaths in the neighbourhood. The mortality crisis was not merely a medical care issue. The causes were due to substance-abuse, alcohol, suicide, liver disease (again alcohol); and then, of course, violence. There are pressures in and around our loci of operations that will only get worse for the children and the SKHM team. As co-guardians, my team and I can provide students with safe shelter, food, clothing and education coupled with sports: and keep our fingers crossed.



# THANK YOU

Talking of teams, this year too they sailed beyond expectations. Please join me to greet new team members: Madhusudan Basu (teacher), Mahek Khatoon (teacher), Noel Dutta (teacher), Victor Chakraborty (Youth Leader & outreach officer) & Rangana Sengupta (finance & programme).

More good news, Project Dignity—SKHM's Mother's Group Programme—started its pilot social entrepreneurship project with Muskan's Mukhorochhok. The all-women led team is a first-of-its-kind project run by women of the red light area. As I must have mentioned in the previous year's Annual Report, we were about to embark on this project with a tea-and-snacks kiosk at Prem Chand Boral Street. The project began on April 19, 2017. In six month's time the business had expanded. Today Project Dignity's Muskan's Mukhorochhok is successfully running. The women have also catered for some meetings of the West Bengal Child Protection & Child Rights team and the food has been highly praised. When the women started we expected great things from them, however, they have managed to surprise us as well. Read more about them in the report.

Finally, thank you once more for your patience, kindness, and wholehearted support. We could not have done it without you. ----- Srabani Sarkar Neogi

**“VIOLENCE IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN BOYS AGED 10-19 YEARS, WITH A GLOBAL HOMICIDE RATE FOR THAT AGE GROUP OF 7 PER 100 000 POPULATION. ACROSS THEIR LIVES, MORE THAN 1 IN 5 CHILDREN HAVE EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL ABUSE, WHILE MORE THAN 1 IN 3 CHILDREN HAVE EXPERIENCED EMOTIONAL ABUSE. AROUND 18% OF GIRLS AND 8% OF BOYS HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ABUSE...”**

**([HTTP://WWW.SUNSTAR.COM.PH/DAVAO/OPINION/2018/02/12/EDITORIAL-TACKLING-VIOLENCE-AGAINST-CHILDREN-588578](http://www.sunstar.com.ph/daao/opinion/2018/02/12/editorial-tackling-violence-against-children-588578))**



# HUGE STEP FORWARD: MUSKAN'S MUKHOROCHHOK



Muskan's Mukhorochhok is the name of a pilot project under SKHM's Project Dignity.

It is a first-of-its-kind, social entrepreneurship project run by 7 women from the Bowbazaar red light area.

These women underwent SKHM's Cooking & Canteen Management Course under Project Dignity for six months. After completion of a taste test they qualified for MM. MM started with a team of 14, today there are nine people in the team.

MM started on April 19, 2017. MM began with 14 women. Two shifted to their ancestral villages after a few months. The third was forced to quit the programme because of health issues. One decided to concentrate on her college studies and come back to the programme at a later date.

# HUGE STEP FORWARD: MUSKAN'S MUKHORCHHOK



- MM starts from 11am in the morning.
- It runs on a shift system enabling all women who are mothers to fulfil their familial obligations.
- The kiosks start from 4pm and go on till 10pm.
- MM runs from Monday to Friday
- The menu, accounts, chief decisions regarding the kiosks are all planned by the women who run it
- Saturday is the day for shopping, accounts keeping and planning.
- Menu is changed weekly depending upon response to a particular product



# DREAM TEAM



**KALYANI**



**SUNITA**



**RAKHI**



**JHARNA**



**MAYNA**



**SOMNATH**



**CHANDANA**



**RANGANA**

**The dream team. The above were intrinsically involved in setting up of the two shops that currently operate in the Bowbazaar red light area.**





# HIGHLIGHTS 2017-2018

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MARCH 2018

# NEW CENTRES

**APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018**

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**RENOVATION OF GAUR MEMORIAL  
(BOWBAZAAR CENTRE II) & SONAGACHHI  
CENTRE II:**

**THANKS TO THE PERSISTENT AND  
GENEROUS HELP OF HER FUTURE  
COALITION LED BY SARAH SYMONS &  
TEAM, SKHM COULD RENOVATE NOT ONE  
BUT TWO OF ITS CLASSROOM SPACES.**

**IN GAUR, THE CLASSROOM WAS  
RENOVATED TO ACCOMMODATE SEVERAL  
SORTS OF CLASSES FOR ADULTS AND  
CHILDREN ALIKE: C&CMC, CJMC AND THE  
REGULAR CHILDREN'S CLASSROOM. A  
KITCHENETTE FOR THE C&CMC AND  
CABINETS FOR STORAGE WITH  
ADDITIONAL LIGHTS WAS ADDED TO TWO  
CORNERS OF THE CLASSROOM. THE REST  
HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO CABINETRY  
FOR THE CHILDREN. USUALLY AT GAUR  
MEMORIAL THE DAY STARTS AT 11AM  
WITH THE C&CMC AND CJMC CLASSES.  
THE RIGHT HAND CORNER IS RESERVED  
AS A COOKING SPACE FOR THE WOMEN  
IN SKHM'S PILOT PROJECT MUSKAN'S  
MUKHOROCHHOK.**

**FROM 3PM CHILDREN START COMING IN  
TO GAUR. FOR A HOUR, CLASSES ARE  
HELD IN A SPACE INSIDE. FROM 4PM  
ONWARD, THE CLASSES MOVE INDOORS,  
WHILE THE MOTHERS – FOOD READY  
FOR THE CART – START WITH THE FOOD  
CART.**



# NEWS CENTRES

**APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018**

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IN SONAGACHHI, SKHM WAS GIVEN A TERRACE SPACE WHICH IT CONVERTED INTO A OPEN CLASSROOM WITH AN ATTACHED WATER CLOSET ALONG WITH A KITCHENETTE. CURRENTLY, THERE ARE 40 STUDENTS ON THE SKHM SONAGACHHI ROSTER.

THE MOTHER'S GROUP WAS STARTED WITHIN THE SPACE WHERE THE WOMEN HAVE STARTED INFORMALLY BY FORMING A PEER GROUP THAT SITS DOWN FOR A CHAT AND ACTIVITIES SUCH AS MAINTAINING A VISUAL JOURNAL OF HOPES AND DREAMS WITH COUNSELLOR SUPARNA RUDRA. THE MOTHERS' GROUP ALSO MEETS ONCE A WEEK TO DISCUSS ISSUES SUCH AS DISCIPLINE AND STRUCTURE, WITHIN THE FAMILY AND HOW TO POSITIVELY REINFORCE BOTH WITHOUT BRINGING IN FACTORS OF SHAME AND PUNISHMENT. DISCUSSIONS ARE ALSO ON HOW TO MITIGATE (AT A PERSONAL LEVEL) THE STRESS AND VIOLENCE AND THE ASSOCIATED TRAUMA AND DISTRESS WHILE LEADING RESILIENT LIVES. CLASSES, LESSONS & SESSIONS ARE A PART OF WHAT WE DO EVERY DAY: THE FOLLOWING ARE SKHM HIGHLIGHTS: DAYS WE TOOK A BREAK FROM THE ROUTINE AND REGIME TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW, CONDUCT A WORKSHOP, SIT AND TALK TO PEOPLE & GENERALLY REINFORCE OUR BELIEF IN WHAT WE DO.





# A DIWALI STORY



Before Diwali, SKHM team decided to paint the town red—and blue and yellow, literally colours of the rainbow—taking a cue from a very-popular Durga Puja celebration that we saw. Students and staff unanimously decided that it would be a brilliant idea to paint along one (or more) footpaths of Bowbazaar and Sonagachhi. A generous man with a similar vision supplied some diya, rangoli sieves and rangoli powder which were needed. Rest, was bought by SKHM.

On the day itself—staff were nervous. We were to paint on a footpath in front of Neel Kamal and Prem Kamal buildings in Sonagachhi. The buildings enjoy a degree of notoriety as two places where inter-generational prostitution is conducted. Usually, the footpath and the building are out of bounds for NGOs. SKHM has a centre running within a social club, right opposite and next to them. With vague permission, students and staff started the process; first in front of the club (a little in front of the Prem Kamal Building) and then crossing the road in front of Neel Kamal Building.

When we started, passers-by, and women standing around, stopped and stared. There were cameras recording the event which made several people wary. Students (obviously) paid no heed; they were having fun as were the staffs. After a while when it was clear to all that the cameras were to record the joys of the event and the designs, as if a switch was flipped. Ghomtas and ghunghats were pulled back, covered faces were unveiled; and ladies offered to help: "Didi amrao kori?" (Didi, may we join). Soon, there was a crowd gathered around SKHM "junior artists". Right under the noses of the local powers that be, SKHM staff, students and strangers began a joint painting session on two of the footpaths.

That day, SKHM made friends. Thanks to that day's interactions, we live in a slightly more shared world. Our world is a finite one with limited resources, hours, funds to deal with what seems to be infinite amount of neglect, abuse, poverty and rights violation around us. The point is not to have exclusive fun but an inclusive world. In such a space, sorrows, problems, poverty, do not go away, but become more bearable and easier to handle.

# SKHM HIGHLIGHTS

**APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018**

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HERE ARE THE BRIEF HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR YEAR! CLASSES, LESSONS & SESSIONS ARE A PART OF WHAT WE DO EVERYDAY: THE FOLLOWING ARE SKHM HIGHLIGHTS - DAYS WE TOOK A BREAK FROM THE REGIME TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW, CONDUCT A WORKSHOP, SIT AND TALK TO PEOPLE & GENERALLY REINFORCE OUR BELIEF IN WHAT WE DO AND WHERE WE STAND...

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## **MAY 2017**

Rabindra Jayanti celebrations

## **JUNE 2017**

SKHM teachers' meeting

SKHM staff workshop on personal time and stress management

Mental health workshop for staff and students

## **JULY 2017**

Mothers' Meeting

Nicco Park Visit (sponsored by

Titagarh Wagons Private Limited

## **AUGUST 2017**

Travelling Book Fair (Sponsored by Mudar Patherya and friends)

Indian Guitar Federation

Project Dignity Mothers' Meeting

## **SEPTEMBER 2017**

A Thank You Programme for the SKHM volunteers & a Fine Arts Exhibition by SKHM tiny tots

A Drama performance by SKHM students

A daylong festival of books and clothes organised by Reach Out and attended by SKHM children



# SKHM HIGHLIGHTS

**APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018**

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## **OCTOBER 2017**

Diwali celebrations  
Durga puja celebrations  
Gaur Memorial Club renovations completed  
Second Muskan's Mukhorochhok Food Cart launched  
Project Dignity Women's Meet & Celebrations

## **NOVEMBER 2017**

Attending seminar held by Apne Aap (Women) Initiative addressed by activist, feminist & lawyer Catherine Mckinon  
Staff Bi-Annual Meeting  
Teachers' Day Celebrations  
Food delivery to West Bengal Child Protection & Child Rights

## **DECEMBER 2017**

Christmas party sponsored by Titagarh Wagons Private Limited  
Musical concert held by Indian Guitar Federation  
Mothers' Meeting (General)

## **JANUARY 2018**

SKHM student, Ankita Ghosh, awarded the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and WBSCPCR's scholarship for merit  
SKHM student starts Beauty & Wellness course under NSHM (funded by Arohan & Titagarh Wagons Private Limited)  
La Marteniere boys organise an inter-NGO football meet where 5 boys participate  
Visit to Indian Institute of Social Work and Business Management to participate in Women of Muskan's Mukhorochhok participate in Annual Fair  
Sarah Symons of Her Future Coalition and volunteers visit the Sonagachhi Centre II which HFC funded  
SKHM Annual Sports Day  
SKHM Annual Sweater Distribution Day





# SKHM HIGHLIGHTS

**APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018**

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## **FEBRUARY 2018**

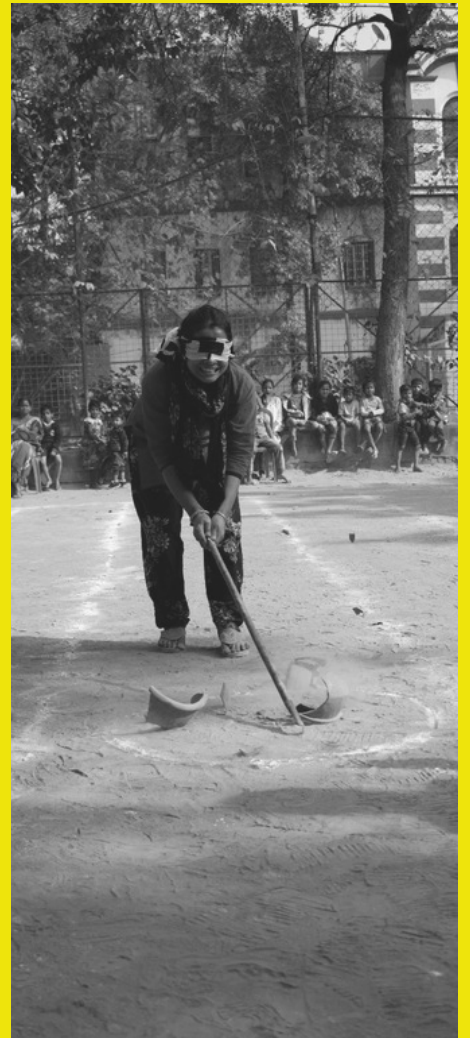
Karate examinations for all SKHM students. All SKHM students passed on to the next level

SKHM took part in Kolkata Gives (an annual fund-raising program)

Start of an SKHM library starting from a few shelves in Sonagachhi. That program will spread over four SKHM centre

Thank you Dianna Bandalament and friends for your kindness and generosity!













# CASE STUDY

Rupa & Pamela were firm friends who played around the locality and rode on tempos together for fun. In 2010 when Pamela brought her baby sister to SKHM, Rupa decided to tag along. Rupa's father was a chauffeur. Her mother was a domestic help occasionally working within the red light area for extra income. Her brother was two years older. The family lived in a rented room and owned another in the same building, which was let out. There was a family which stayed on the same floor with Rupa's. She called the lady of that household Didi. The two families were close.

While her father was alive, life was uncomplicated. He was an attentive and affectionate parent. But the happiness was short-lived. He was diagnosed with a cardiac condition. With the illness, the family began a long struggle with finances. Her mother had left when Rupa was five. She stayed with a man whom she informally married. Siblings would visit the mother in the new household.

After learning about the father's condition worsening, Rupa's mother returned to offer her support. This move was not well-received. Locality members created a stir; threatening to excommunicate the mother. Rupa's father passed away in 2013. She was fifteen years old at that time. Before he passed away, she faced pressure from family & community members (including Didi) to get married. She was resilient and adamant that she would not succumb to any pressure. Rupa took help of South Kolkata Hamari Muskan. The staff intervened & spoke to the ailing father and community members to explain that such a marriage was essentially illegal.

SKHM staff also asserted that they would be forced to call the police. SKHM encouraged Rupa to concentrate on her education. The staff kept a close eye on her. Soon after, Rupa's father passed away. Afterwards, she was dependent on the Didi for her emotional and financial well-being as her father made her the informal guardian. Didi collected the rent on behalf of Rupa and brother as they were minors. After her fathers' death, Rupa started to show signs of depression.

# CASE STUDY

At the end of 2016 she went deeper into depression. She was diagnosed by Dr Somnath Basu (psychiatrist) in 2017. In the beginning of 2017, she went through a series of workshops with Ms Suparna Rudra—SKHM mental health counsellor. Sessions included one-on-one counselling and peer group counselling. After a dialogue it was decided that Rupa would drop out of nine-to-five formal school and be a part of special evening classes under the National Open School Scheme.

Currently, Rupa is concentrating on completing her Class X studies via the NIOS and completed NSHM's Beauty & Wellness Course funded by Arohan under the aegis of the Union Government of India. She sat for her Madhyamik examinations in June 2017. Though mentally in a more fortified state, Rupa struggles financially. Her mother is irregular in sending money. Her brother is showing signs of alcohol dependency. Her Didi is refusing to pay the rent she has been collecting on their behalf for years now. Any other person in her situation would have succumbed to the constant pressure of being safe and get married.

Rupa has been resilient. Despite her state; she has shown quiet dignity & strength and worked up the courage to mitigate her monetary situation despite fear of facing unpleasantness. She has completed a month of internship at a beauty parlour vetted by NSHM and SKHM and earned her first income. SKHM is proud and grateful to be associated with her. She has now moved on from being a Project Nurture member to being a participant in Project Breakthrough (for youths). She is one of the girls who are being groomed as "youth leader", who would-it is hoped-lead Bowbazaar's community-based projects as a peer specialist.