SEVA NEWSLETTER

2015-16

HIGHLIGHTS

- Seva celebrates its **21st anniversary**
- **2,500** students reached during Suicide Prevention Week
- Fresh batch of volunteers trained conducted with **in-house faculty**
- **New website** being launched to help youth deal with mental health issues



Swami Bodhamayananda at Seva's 21st anniversary function

Dear friends and well-wishers,

With Seva celebrating 21 years of service in February 2015, we continue our work in the field of mental health and counselling. So far, we have been mainly confined to providing counselling services at our centres, with some outreach activities. However, the year 2015 has marked a perceptible shift in our scale of reach.

As part of Suicide Prevention Week, Seva managed to reach out to more than 2,500 students by visiting different educational institutions. Continuing with this effort, we have also initiated major efforts in creating an additional online portal called ReachOutIndia. Our aim is to spark conversations among youth – online and offline - on issues of suicide, depression and mental well-being.

Our 21st anniversary function was graced by Swami Bodhamayananda, Director, Vivekananda Institute of Human Excellence. We are grateful to him for sharing his insights with the Seva community.

Seva continued its presence at the annual Seva Mela this year as well, with many visitors expressing interest in our work. Further proof of our visibility could be seen in the fact that a group of social work students from Karve Institute of Social Service chose to spend time with Seva for a study tour. We are proud to be able to work together with educational institutions in this manner, and we hope this is the start of an interesting collaboration with the academic community.

Our fresh batch of volunteers was inducted with our annual training workshop. This time, we were able to conduct the training with in-house expertise instead of depending on external faculty. We will continue to build on our internal knowledge base and have more successful training workshops in the future.

Seva has had a fruitful year, and with the support of our board, our donors, and our volunteers, we are optimistic about the future.

- **Team Seva**

SEVA'S 21ST ANNIVERSARY

1 Feb 2015



Seva celebrated 21 years of growth and service on 1st February 2015, at Kamakoti Kalyana Mandapam, Padmaraonagar.

The chief guest of the evening, Swami Bodhamayananda, Director, Vivekananda Institute of Human Excellence, spoke on the topic "Achieving Control Over the Fickleness of the Human Mind and Bringing in Meaning to Living".

The function invocation by Ms. Saika mesmerized the audience. Ms. Hema Gandikota compered the function. In the welcome address, Mr. Thiagarajan, Director of Seva, recounted the significant milestones during the past year with continued support of generous donors, well-wishers and Seva volunteers.

Swami Bodhamayananda started with a prayer, and shared real-life examples of Swami Vivekananda and his teachings.



We felt that his emphasis on service above self and achieving simple living devoid of stress is what everyone should aim for.

In his concluding remarks, our beloved Chairman, Mr. K. L. Manohar, conveyed the meaning of Seva and its relationship to the Chief Guest's talk.

After the main function, a short music program by Guruprasad and party with soulful music was a feast to the audience's ears, and this was followed by dinner.

The Vote of thanks was extended by Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru.

TRAINING NEW VOLUNTEERS

7-9 Aug 2015

This year again, Seva conducted a 3-day training workshop on Basic Counselling Skills to a batch of fresh volunteers. Once again, Seva was able to conduct the program through its own members as faculty - a departure from its earlier dependence on external faculty. The program was conducted in the library hall adjacent to the Seva office, on 7-9 August, 2015.





The workshop included both theory and practical sessions, ensuring that every single participant understands the core principles of counselling. The intense workshop included practice sessions on Perception, Communication, Listening Skills, Empathy, and One-On-One Counselling.

The program was attended by 18 participants, and was very well appreciated.

SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY - STUDENT OUTREACH

10 Sep 2015

Till this year, SEVA had been conducting awareness walks either independently or in association with like-minded social groups. While this has been highly appreciated and acknowledged by several worldwide groups, we at SEVA felt that we should try and reach out to a larger number than what has been possible by awareness walks all these years.

> *Q: Do people who commit suicide really want to die?*
>
> *A: No. Like everyone else, they too want to live, but they attempt suicide because they feel they have absolutely no other choice. Suicide is a cry for help.*

We chose the target group of youngsters in educational institutions. In our continuing effort to spread mental health awareness and prevent suicide, a batch of volunteers organized themselves and conducted several sessions through a whole week and addressed over 2,500 students (boys and girls). The sessions were interactive and the students were asked questions like:

- How often has the thought of suicide crossed your mind?
- How often have you experienced a sense of desperation, loneliness and isolation, often concluding that life is not worth living?
- Do you know of anyone close to you who has committed suicide?
- Do people who commit suicide really want to die?

We conveyed to the youngsters that the tragic permanent solution that many seek to a temporary problem is suicide. And that alarmingly, the trend is reaching crisis proportions. We also discussed how people who commit suicide don't really want to die but attempt to kill



themselves because they feel they have absolutely no choice.



Further closing interactions and deliberations included the following questions, leaving students to ponder and see if they can identify anyone among them who feels isolated, and if they can reach out with some timely help.

- What, according to you, are the different reasons which drive people to suicide?
- At your level, what are the precautions that you can take to prevent your fellow students from committing suicide?
- What drives these people to the edge?

The sessions were highly appreciated by students and college authorities, and we at Seva plan to conduct these sessions regularly hereon.

SEVA MELA

3-4 Oct 2015

Seva Mela, an annual 2-day event taking place at Hyderabad, connects people and organisations, to non-profit organisations (NPOs) working on social causes. This year, it was organized under the auspices of Daan Utsav. The format of Seva Mela is designed to enable fruitful interactions between volunteers/donors and NPOs, so that it may inspire many to volunteer and support the social causes pursued by the NPOs.

Seva Mela 2015 was held on the 3rd and 4th of October, and covered a wide range of social causes - Education, Health, Environment, Old Age, Disabled, Shelter less, Women and Child Welfare.





The event was jointly organised by United Care Development Services (UC) (www.yousee.in) and United Way of Hyderabad (UWH) (www.unitedwayhyderabad.org).

Seva had a prominent stall at the mela, and was visited by a number of enthusiasts, with whom our volunteers shared information about our services.

A STUDY TOUR FROM KARVE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SERVICE

5 Dec 2015



On 5 December 2015, 11 students (9 girls and 2 boys) and one faculty member, from Karve Institute of Social Service (affiliated to Savitribai Phule, Pune University) from the MSW post-graduate degree course, visited us to interact with us and understand our organisation and our services, and real-life issues on counselling. These students were from the Medical and Psychiatric Social Work department, and visited us as part of their study tour.

The interaction lasted for upto 3 hours, and the following were discussed:

- The field of counselling, and the issues involved
- Efforts taken to deal with and minimize the issues of individuals and families through the counselling
- Challenges in delivering these services

Equipped with a good theoretical framework, these students asked a number of questions to our senior volunteers to understand the practical aspects of individual and family counselling.



MONTHLY MEETINGS

Seva conducts meetings at the end of every month, and invariably, a detailed lecture or interactive session is held on some specific topics. A few meetings such this year deserve special mention.

March 2015	This meeting had a lecture on a healing technique called Ho'oponopono, by our volunteer, Dr. Radha Vasudevan. Ho,oponopono, an ancient Hawaiian healing practice based on reconciliation and forgiveness, is basically a mental cleansing process, to clear the error memories in our subconscious that are experienced as problems/stress /fear/conflict and which, if unresolved, cause imbalance and disease. It is a simple but incredibly powerful tool for life that helps us to get from that place of anger and blame to compassion and love quickly, taking us from hate to Heart.
October 2015	This monthly meeting featured a session by our volunteer, Ms. Madhu Sharma, who shared her learning and experience from a workshop which she attended on World Mental Health Day (October 10th).
November 2015	In this meeting, our volunteer Ms. Vandana shared her insights on how to counsel a child who has been sexually abused based on her attending a workshop conducted by the social group 'Break The Silence' that works exclusively on CSA.
December 2015	The recent monthly meeting featured a talk by Dr. Radha Vasudevan on another therapeutic process namely - Prayer, Blessings and The Law of Attraction. The process involves the following principle: "You attract into your life whatever you give your focus and attention to-whether positive or negative. Invite the power of Prayer and Blessings into your life and understand the law of attraction to rewrite your mental habits and manifest your goals and desires. Make the law of attraction work for you and not against you."

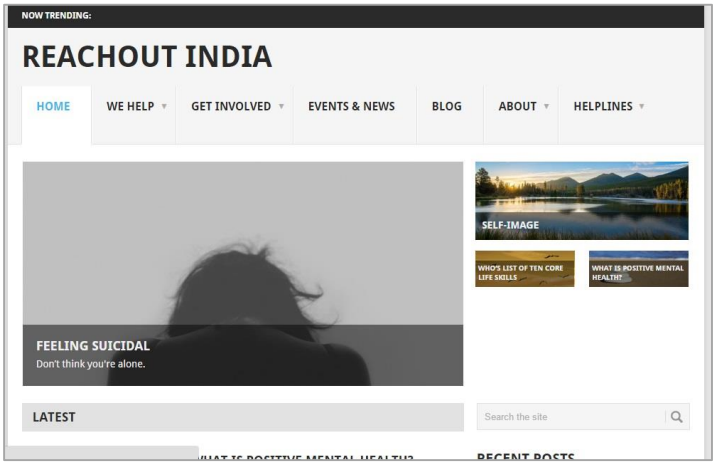
NEW INITIATIVE

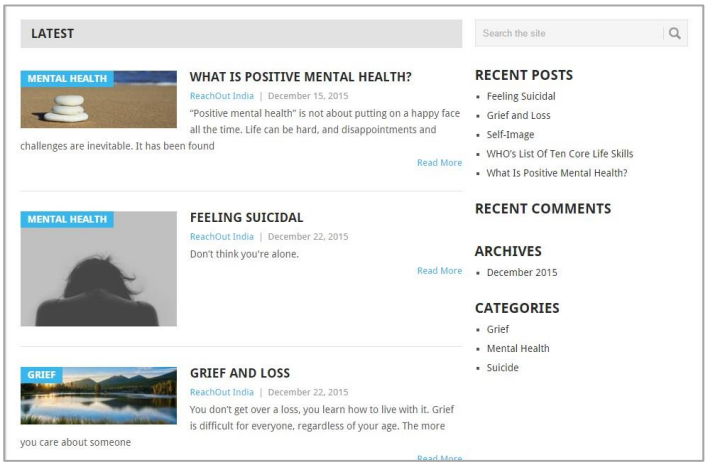
The year 2015 brought in a major turn in the way Seva has been functioning, namely, reaching out in multiple ways.

Until this year, we have been mainly confined to providing counselling services at our centres, with some outreach activities. However, we have started to aim at a much wider expansion of our outreach. As part of Suicide Prevention Week, Seva managed to reach out to more than 2,500 students by visiting different educational institutions.

Continuing on this effort, we have initiated major efforts in creating an additional online portal called ReachOutIndia (reachout.ind.in) inspired by reachout.com in Australia, USA and Ireland.

This website is under construction by a dedicated team of Seva volunteers, with the additional help of two young enthusiasts, Anurag and Deepa. A few snapshots of the website are included here.





SEVA

Free and Confidential Counselling Centre

Kowtha Swarajya Vihar
10, Padmaraonagar Secunderabad - 500 025
http://www.sevacounselingcentre.org/



Main Centre

Kowtha Swarajya Vihar, 10, Padmaraonagar, Secunderabad - 500025
Ph: (40) 27504682, 9441778290
Timings:
Monday to Saturday: 4 PM - 7 PM
Sunday: 11 AM - 1 PM

Balkampet

Veer Hanuman & Shirdi Sai Mandir, Balkampet, SR Nagar, Hyderabad
Timings:
Wednesday to Friday: 5 PM - 7 PM

Ext. Centre I

Shirdi Sai Baba Temple Complex, Dwarkapuri Colony, Panjagutta, Hyderabad
Mobile: 09441778290
Timings:
Monday to Friday: 6 PM - 8 PM

Ext. Centre II

Gandhi Hospital, Psychiatry Ward, Secunderabad
Timings:
Monday to Friday: 10:30 AM - 1 PM