



## Kolkata Sanved

is groundbreaking in its development of a program which helps survivors of trafficking and violence -- often stigmatized in their own communities -- release trauma, develop confidence and identify their own potential as human beings rather than as victims.

### Our approach

As women and children are rescued from exploitation, little attention is paid to the quality of their rehabilitation and reintegration into Indian society. Throughout South Asia, government institutions serve as holding tanks for “exploited” women while NGOs focus on vocational training and basic education. However, successful psycho-social rehabilitation demands a more multifaceted approach.

Since 2004, Kolkata Sanved has conducted **3434 Dance Movement Therapy sessions** and reached **7814 survivors** of human trafficking and violence. Many of these participants will be nurtured to become future DMT trainers through the Training of Trainers (TOT) program.



**The TOT program** presents opportunities for survivors to become DMT trainers and employees of Kolkata Sanved, able to create positive social change, earn a livelihood for their families and escape the cycle of vulnerability.

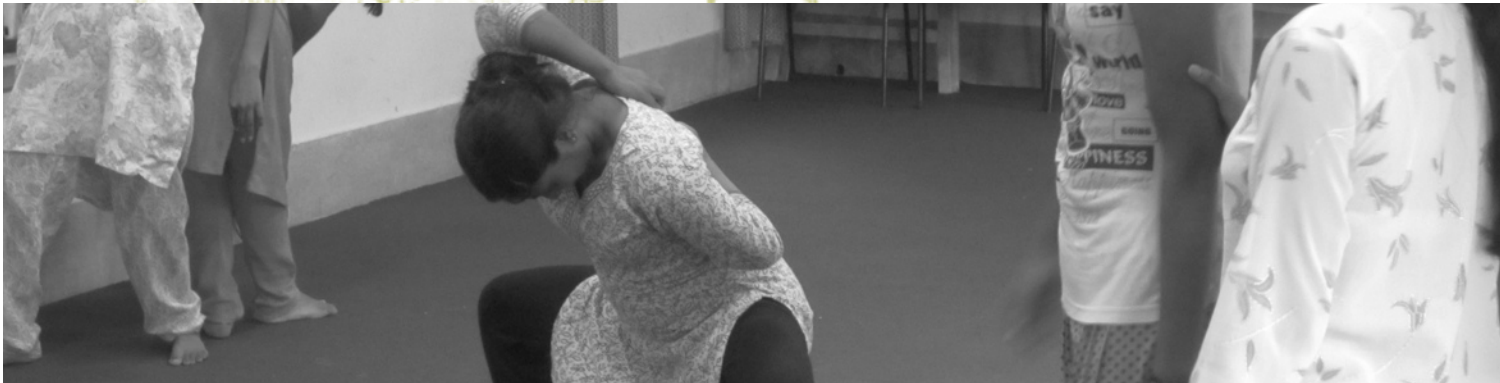
To learn more, please visit <http://kolkatasanved.org/Success.htm>

Watch a video of our work:

<http://kolkatasanved.org/Performances.htm>

# Inspired through dance...

## Lopa, 24



**“ Now I lead a healthy and productive life fueled by a new identity that I constructed myself.”**

I was born in Kalighat, an area of Kolkata, India. My mother was working in the red light district as a prostitute. Because the neighborhood I lived in was so dangerous and unhealthy for me, I moved into a shelter home. I worked, lived and studied at the shelter home, but I missed home and my mother. On the surface, I was okay but I didn't really feel at home there. I cried a lot and was very angry. As a result, I was self destructive.

At the home, I was doing all sorts of handiwork: block printing, batik, embroidery, cooking and dancing. I

was particularly interested in dance. The physical nature of dancing always helped to release my anger. At the shelter home, there used to be Dance and Movement Therapy classes given by Kolkata Sanved. I would observe them and I eventually realized that they might help. So I started Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) and shared my problems with my group. I saw myself changing and I knew I needed to keep dancing. I left everything else; I earned a little bit of money with my block printing and I danced for release. Then I taught my first class at the Baruipur railway platform which, along with

various shows I performed in, gave me a great amount of self confidence.

At the shelter home there was a rule: you only get out during the day if you work. Otherwise, you have to stay in your room. I hated staying in, so I worked for two years in a canteen. When I was working I could not dance. I needed the independence of being able to leave the shelter home. Kolkata Sanved was not yet a registered organization. After working, I moved out of the

home and contacted Kolkata Sanved. I told Sohini di that I wanted to work there and was given a position thanks to my history with the program. I was given the responsibility of teaching classes on my own, which increased my confidence and self esteem.

I used to mutilate myself and I refused to eat food. All this negative energy was channeled into dance. Now I lead a healthy and productive life fueled by a new identity that I constructed myself.

## Mahasweta, 19

**Mahasweta** had completed eight years of schooling when problems began at home and she was forced to quit. She was full of anger, shame and fear. Irritable, she found she could not communicate her needs in a healthy way. She could not share feelings with anyone. Instead of going to school, she would remain at home, sewing and doing chores. One day, a girl who lived in her neighborhood took her to an organization called Apne Aap Worldwide, an organization working to end sex trafficking, where Mahasweta took part in dance and movement therapy



sessions every Friday. Mahasweta had been interested in dancing since she was a little girl but she never thought that dance was something that could change her life. Through dance and movement therapy, she began to explore her own identity and deal with some of her problems. Mahasweta had dreamed of being a dance teacher but her conservative family did not support her choice. In addition, Mahasweta faced opposition from people in her neighborhood. She boldly attended dance and movement therapy classes in the face of all this opposition. As the sessions progressed, her transformation was obvious;

the veil she hid behind vanished. Neighbors disapproved of her love for dancing, telling her family that she should stop, that she would never get married. They would jeer at Mahasweta, but she continued dancing. Finally, Mahasweta took her mother to see a performance. Her mother saw that what Mahasweta was doing was special. Neighbors continue to look down on her despite her family's support but the self confidence Mahasweta finds through dance gives her the strength to continue.

Mahasweta went on to finish her studies at Loreto House, a school based in Kolkata, and joined Kolkata Sanved as an Assistant Dance and Movement Therapy Trainer. Some girls in Mahasweta's neighborhood have expressed an interest in dancing and Mahasweta encourages them. She realizes what she is capable of achieving on her own, and she wants every girl she encounters to experience the same empowerment.

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## Renuka, 21



**Around** the age of three, both Renuka's mother and father passed away and her grandmother sent her to live in a shelter home. As a child, Renuka was physically aggressive and verbally abusive. She fought with her peers and harbored suicidal tendencies. Counseling sessions at the shelter home were ineffective. In 2002, Renuka was selected to attend Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) sessions with Kolkata Sanved.

Before DMT, Renuka did not like to interact with other girls in the shelter home and she had no dreams for the future, envisioning herself becoming

a domestic worker as her mother had been. The participatory process of Kolkata Sanved's DMT sessions encourages participants to come up with their own movements which correspond to their feelings. Through these exercises, Renuka began to understand how her actions harmed others. Her ability to empathize grew and now, her anger is gone. She realizes the value of gaining her peers' respect. Thanks to the emphasis Kolkata Sanved places on group work, Renuka now values trust and works well with others, often taking the lead in coordinating group activities. She is well groomed and

presents herself with confidence. Through DMT sessions and observing the professionalism with which Kolkata Sanved's dance trainers conducted themselves, Renuka learned how to carry herself in diverse social situations and how to speak articulately. She now has many dreams for her future.

Based on her creativity and positive attitude, Renuka was selected to join Kolkata Sanved's Training of Trainers (TOT) program which

grooms future dance therapy trainers. Since 2008, she has worked as an assistant DMT trainer at Kolkata Sanved. Renuka wishes to continue working in the field of DMT and dreams of becoming a full-fledged dance therapy trainer.

**“These days I am able to anticipate the consequences of my actions. As a result, I think before I act or speak – these are things I never did before.”**