

**“I realized after this workshop that my body is a jewel”**

Kolkata Sanved organized a 5-day residential Regional Workshop on Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) from 07.03.08 to 11.03.08 at the CINI ASHA Children’s Park in Monobitan on the periphery of Kolkata. With the support from Groupe Developpement and UNIFEM, Kolkata Sanved was able to conduct the first Regional Workshop in Asia on DMT.

**Objectives and necessity for a regional workshop with Bangladesh, Nepal, and India**

As we are trying to promote Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) in South Asia, we started to work in Bangladesh and Nepal with our own resources. It is very important for the participants from these three countries to meet and to observe how one another is working on the learning the process in their respective countries. Some of them have already started implementing DMT, so it was indispensable to see what their challenges and successes were. They were also able to meet the six trainers of Kolkata Sanved who are successfully running this process. In addition, all of the participants need specific skills on dance and movement to build their vocabulary. For the 12 new trainees, it was very important to see the other trainers and how they have developed and learnt DMT. Therefore this was an open opportunity to work together to promote DMT in South Asia.

**The TOT Process**

Since we are calling it Training of Trainers (TOT), we will need two more phases for them to become full fledged trainers. Among the whole group, four of the Bangladesh participants and one from Nepal are undergoing the long process and have already started to work within their own institutions. They also need to expand to other organizations. They are capable of implementing DMT in small groups. The psychologists/counselors from Nepal are also applying this process in their sessions but they need to build more movement vocabulary.

**Participants’ Information: (Please also see attached detailed Participants Table)**

The 28 participants came from diverse backgrounds, ranging from new trainees of Kolkata Sanved, to young social workers and psychologists. The 4 youths from Bangladesh, accompanied by two project coordinators representing the ACD Bangladesh organization, have already completed two phases of the DMT workshop. The 8 participants from Nepal represented CWISS, The Daywalka Foundation, APC Nepal, Saathi, Shakti Samuha and Antarang-Nepal. These participants are social workers and psychologists. As for India, the 12 participants are trainees of Kolkata Sanved who are currently undergoing the process. The workshop therefore aimed to foster the interaction between survivors and counselors / psychologists.

**Link with what they have already learned**

The participants from Bangladesh and Nilufor from Nepal have already completed the process (including the theories behind the activities, warm-up exercises body awareness, group coordination, improvisation etc.) For them, the workshop was a review of the

basic principles and activities necessary for dance movement trainers. The participants also learned some new exercises that they can incorporate in their sessions (i.e. Breton/Celtic community dances, contact/improvisation exercises) which will help them to work in different fields. The participants who have completed the first phase of the process were able to expand upon the basic principles learned during the first phase and apply that knowledge gained into practice. The workshop, however, was not repetitive for any of the participants, as new facilitators conducted some workshops, providing the participants with a different approach to DMT that they can use in their sessions

**Specific content of this workshop, which is a progression**

We can divide the learning method into 3 categories:

- 1) Those who are undergoing the process for the last 4 years in Bangladesh & 3 years in Nepal. These 5 participants are ready to apply this process with intense intervention from Kolkata Sanved. They have already started working within the organizational field such as in drop-in centers and shelter homes. They need more practice in different fields.
- 2) A group of psychologists and youth from Nepal are undergoing this process since last August 2007. They are able to incorporate this method in their process but not as full fledged DMT Trainers, as most of them do not have enough vocabulary on dance and movement. However, some of them have already started to learn dance so that they can build their own movement bank.
- 3) 12 young trainees from Kolkata are also undergoing this process for last six months. 3 of them are ready to start their work as assistants to existing core DMT trainers of Kolkata Sanved. They will be under supervision of Sohini for six months and then they will start conducting classes. For the others, it will take another year to be ready.

The workshop facilitators also focused on the following basic principles of DMT during the 5 day workshop:

1. *Body Awareness*: This principle promotes flexibility of the body from head to toe through warm-up exercises, balance, concentration, body-mind coordination, flexibility, control of body-mind coordination, flowing positive energy, self-esteem and self love and relaxation. Workshop facilitators expressed this principle through a simple Body connection activity incorporating Grounding (lower body), Centering (torso), and Connecting (head).
2. *Beginning of the Vocabulary (Basic/Simple Movement)*: Movements are divided into three different stages: upper, middle and lower. Participants experienced the basic movement vocabulary by taking classes on classical Indian dance, ballet and modern dance.

3. *Hand gestures:* The knowledge of using one/both hands gestures helps to non-verbally communicate the feelings of the individual, building concentration, and helping mind-body coordination. Participants benefited from this knowledge on how to use hand gestures for storytelling and creative expression to reach out and express to the other participants.
4. *Rhythm:* Rhythm is knowingly or unknowingly present in every human body. Through dance we help a person analyze the rhythm that already exists. Participants experienced the use of rhythm throughout the whole workshop, in particular through improvisation exercises, community dance and the creation of short dance/musical sequences using tambourines, sticks, and drums.
5. *Memory and sequence:* All dance forms are structured with rhythm, movement, expression, space and boundary. Through the rhythm activities, community dances, and repetition of the dance combinations, participants were able to learn about building memory and sequence.
6. *Body-Mind Coordination:* Each dance form works in a totality of mind and body as every movement has a meaning or a thought behind it. The training helped participants to think, relate, and communicate through movements which are coordinated and not isolated. The participants learned from all of the exercises, in particular from the life graph.
7. *Spatial Awareness:* Exploring the body in space, levels, time and flow through different kind of dance and movements increases awareness of the body in space and in relation to space. The participants practiced a running activity which fostered awareness of their surroundings and the group to illustrate this theme. A “frame” activity was also used in this exercise.
8. *Expression/Emotions/Communication:* Expression and emotions are natural and spontaneous reactions in human beings, but the stereotyped socialization process forbids man to express his natural feelings that he suppresses most of the time. Through the “precarious balance” and the 7 human emotions exercises, the participants learned how dance can help people regain their normal mode of expression of emotions, especially those suffering from stress/trauma, victims of sexual and social violence and the mentally ill.
9. *Group Coordination:* One of the most important aspects of the dance form is that as we are always in contact with society and hence individuals, it has the ability to make an individual comfortable while relating with the society through movements. The participants learned to work together during the group contact/improvisation session as well as through community dances (Breton/Celtic, Indian).
10. *Creativity:* This is an important part which incorporates not only body-mind connections but also an individual’s own thoughts which he/she can give shape

through the acquired vocabulary. Participants used the basic movement vocabulary and other knowledge gained throughout the workshop to create movement on their own, providing them with the feeling of achievement and security which is a positive motivation for the life of the individual.

11. *Social skills:* All dance forms have a disciplined style of training which brings out the confidence, expression, communication and presentation skills. The participants learned how to work and communicate with each other in all of the workshop activities, despite cultural and age differences. Moreover, they learned that a person who is comfortable with dance has better self esteem and is able to communicate verbally and non-verbally.

### **Specific trainer skills learned**

Idea of dance, its history and use, use of contemporary dance, capability to dance, knowledge about DMT, being able to create dance and movement according to the need, orientation of therapy; its need and use, orientation of Human Rights issues and counseling, adaptability, to think positively, handling a small group as well as a big group, report writing and documentation

### **Theoretical Inputs**

Theory: About DMT, Laban Movement Analysis, Improvisation, Authentic movement, Body-Mind coordination.

In addition to the explanation of the theories listed above through concrete examples and practice as mentioned, the facilitators of the workshop demonstrated theories of how others use dance movement therapy to work with specific populations. For example, participants watched a documentary on Bill T. Jones and the choreographic process of his piece *Still Here*. Jones used dance to work with terminally ill and HIV positive patients and then choreographed a piece using their movements during the session. Participants were able to watch the process from the beginning of Jones' sessions with these patients, to the final phase of the choreographic process.

Participants also watched a film on the works of Martha Graham and her role as a pioneer in modern dance. This allowed many participants to discover a new dance form and how Graham used dance as a tool for communication. In addition, on International Women's Day, participants watched Chandralekha's Approach to Dance, entitled *THE BODY*. Through this film, participants learned the importance of exploring the body, the use of simple but powerful movements, as well as the realization of where the body begins and ends.

## **Observations**

- The participants showed eagerness to learn from the facilitators as well as from each other during the workshop. The participants who were more timid in the beginning eventually were able to open up by the end of the workshop, a sign that the DMT process was able to reach out to them. Despite the various dance experience in the group, most of the participants responded well to the different forms of dance such as Indian, ballet, modern, and improvisation, while listening to their bodies and implementing the new movement vocabulary learned during the sessions. One participant noted that he was able to “move without boundaries” during the improvisation session. Repetition was needed, however, to allow full comprehension of the movements.
- The creativity of the group was particularly apparent in the story telling and improvisation sessions. As for regional coordination and communication, the participants were able to communicate through movement and demonstration despite language barriers while working in groups, thus the power of non verbal communication was evident. Although some translation was necessary to explain the theories behind the activities, expression through movement was the primary means of communication, in particular in the group work.
- Due to the intense workshop schedule, the concentration level slowly withered towards the end of the workshop, especially among the younger participants. Although tired, most of the participants expressed a desire to continue with the activities.
- The highlights of the workshop were the grounding, centering, connecting as well as the body-mind coordination, followed by “being together, moving together, and working together.”
- Group coordination was the most difficult challenge, as participants came from such diverse backgrounds with various levels of movement experiences. This was particularly present in the emotional exercise and the group contact improvisation. Although some participants were easily able to express the 7 human emotions individually, this became more difficult when asked to illustrate emotions as a group. However, towards the end of the workshop, after 4 days of working and sharing, a common thread between participants was visible, creating collective and unified group energy.

## **Plan of application of what they have learned, challenges, SANVED's plan to support the application of DMT**

### *Application Plan:*

- The psychologists from Nepal will be using some of these techniques at their clinics, hospitals and NGOs in addition to their counseling process.
- We are planning to open a Sanved Nepal and Sanved Bangladesh under the guidance of Sohini Chakraborty- In Sanved Nepal, the network will be set up under the leadership of Nilufor with Roshan and Bhagawati . In Bangladesh, it will be set up in association with ACD Bangladesh under the leadership of Salma, Dilara, Mala and Rojufa.
- They will send their class reports after every month.
- Nilufor is coordinating the network meeting of the participants of Nepal and will accordingly let us know how the process is going.
- The whole process will be Monitoring by Kolkata Sanved.
- Promotion of DMT in Bangladesh and Nepal to launch Sanved Nepal and Sanved Bangladesh.

The participants will have continuous contact with Kolkata Sanved. If they write or correspond over the phone about their challenges, Kolkata Sanved will help them to find the solutions as we have done earlier. All participants who are undergoing the process, especially from Nepal and Bangladesh, can at any time come to Kolkata for their own practice under our supervision.

### *Main challenges*

Some of the psychologists from Nepal are not accustomed to learning together with survivors who also want to be DMT Trainers.

Another challenge is that both the participants and Sohini do not have sufficient funds to constantly travel to both places for implementation and follow-up which is essential for the coming year.

## **Completion of TOT course**

Kolkata Sanved is in the process of planning two more regional TOT courses, one to be held in Bangladesh and the other in Nepal. This, however, is dependent on the acquisition of funding. All of the participants will receive a certificate accompanied by an assessment report after the completion of the final two phases. Kolkata Sanved is also in the process of preparing a Diploma DMT course, which is also dependent on funding.

*Follow up process:*

If funding becomes available, Kolkata Sanved will go to Nepal and Bangladesh for developing this process further. There will be communication by email and phone with all participants on how they are progressing. There will also be feedback from the organizations where they are already applying DMT.

**What was learned during the Workshop?**

- The principal lesson learned during the workshop was how the DMT implementation module can be used in different sectors in South Asia for healing, recovery and rehabilitation. It was evident during the workshop that there is an overwhelming need for courses on DMT in Asia, and that the DMT process can be extremely beneficial.
- The participants also realized the pertinence of the exchange and monitoring of reports on how different countries are implementing the DMT process, instead of waiting for workshops to exchange ideas. Likewise, providing case studies would also be helpful.
- In addition, a follow-up is needed in Nepal and Bangladesh where the DMT process has already begun with Kolkata Sanved, with at least three or four more workshops, as well as visits in the field.
- During the interactive session with Kolkata Sanved's current trainers on the last day of the workshop, the participants learned that it is better not to say "dance" when working with participants especially in the community, but to say that a creative process will be used.

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