

The Prajnya Trust Annual Report 2017-18



LETTER FROM THE MANAGING TRUSTEE

Why does it always feel like a tumultuous year? As it opened, we were trying to decide how to celebrate turning ten against all odds—what were we celebrating and what was the most authentic way for us to celebrate? We gathered all our photos and memories and wrote up our story over and over, and as we thanked the many, many people, partners and patrons who have made our journey possible, we were stunned by the journey itself.

From the high of the birthday, we crash-landed into what is becoming habitual Campaign penury. To me, in my seventh Prajnya 16 Days Campaign against Gender Violence, everything seemed to have become harder. Would we do this again? We ask this question every year but as the world picks up this issue as a programme pivot, it seems that maybe finally we can step away.

More exciting, however tentative, were the two significant revivals in the last year. The Women's History Roundtable Series returned in its fourth season and the Education for Peace Initiative got a new lease of life with Chintan Girish Modi coming aboard on a consultant basis.

We made 'deepening and widening' our birthday promise: to deepen our engagement in areas where we have been working, for instance, gender violence awareness, to tackle issues more substantially every year, and to widen our outreach circle. We also promised ourselves that we would do more network-building around causes we care about. Our new project, Namathu Nagaram Namathu Urimai, keeps this promise, combining rights education with gender sensitization and civic engagement. We have also engaged more this year with other civil society organisations and their projects than ever before. Our Gender Equality Election Watch has persisted, despite lapses.

We were able to establish our Gender Violence Research and Information Taskforce Research Fellowship into a named award—the R. Rajaram GRIT Research Fellowship. A nationwide search got us our first Fellow, a lawyer, scholar and teacher, Jhuma Sen.

It has been a year of new beginnings and revivals. There is still so much to do. Sometimes we feel like an established institution and sometimes we feel as fragile, flimsy, flaky and fake as a passing idea.

Every year, I finish this letter by talking about our persistent financial struggles. Nothing has changed in this year and as things stand in the world outside, things are only going to get harder. On the good days, what I said at our birthday celebration holds true.

"The high road is the only one worth taking, and it can only be traversed one day at a time. Or even one step at a time.

This hard road is the price of our independence and it is also the price of staying below the radar in an age where governments, all governments, are looking only to have an antagonistic view of the social sector or civil society."

Let's not talk about the bad days here, shall we?

I will close instead, getting a little ahead of ourselves in this report, by saying that we have set up a payment gateway on our website. That is, you can click and donate very easily now. You can access the gateway at prajnya.in/payment. I hope you will. I can promise we will put the money to good use.

Swarna Rajagopalan

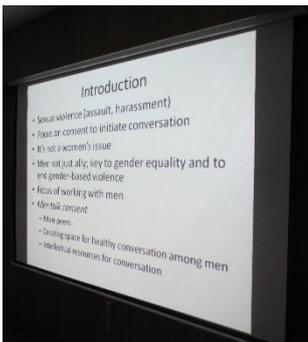
Managing Trustee, Prajnya

April 2017

Having decided we would celebrate our tenth birthday through a 'deepening and widening' of our work, we launched Namathu Nagaram Namathu Urimai (Our City

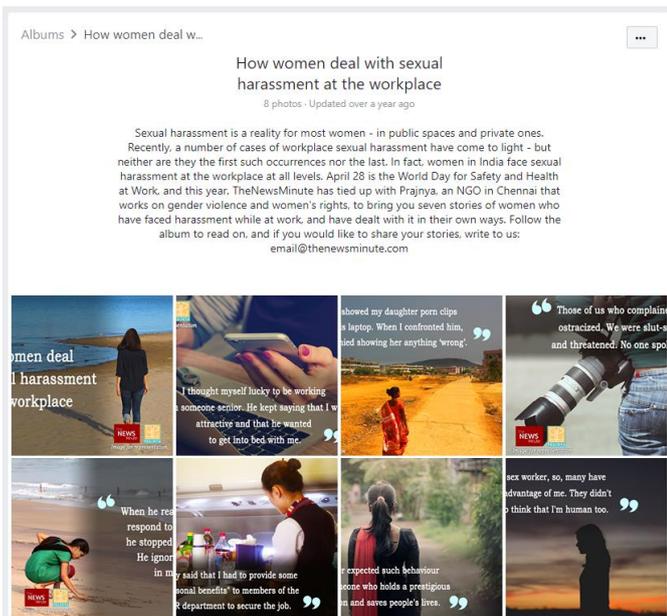


Our Rights). This is a multi-phase programme that combines training, research exercises, report-writing and advocacy by the women themselves across five areas pertinent to their civic (municipal) rights: safety, water, sanitation, leisure and representation. We worked with two of our partners, Roshni and the Centre for Women's Development and Research (CWDR), engaging with women and adolescent girls, respectively. Over the months to come, participants conducted safety audits in Triplicane, Royapettah and Velachery. The project was launched with a training at a Roshni member's home on June 7, 2017. The first phase was completed in November 2017 with safety audit reports that are online at prajnya.in/nnu.



From January-March 2017, in partnership with Dr. Sharada Srinivasan of the University of Guelph, Prajnya facilitated informal conversations with men, women and mixed groups in Chennai colleges on consent, gender and violence. In April, we organised a training session for male facilitators who might take such conversations forward. This project, 'Men Talk Consent,' is now a part of Prajnya's core agenda.

On April 28, which was World Day for Safety and Health at Work, we organised a Facebook Live with Sujata Mody of the Penn Thozhilalargal Sangam. In partnership with The NewsMinute, we compiled seven profiles of workplace sexual harassment survivors that were compiled into a Facebook Album.



May 2017

On May 2, 2017, we organized 'Prajnya Kondattam' at the Shree Ayurvedic Multispecialty Hospital to celebrate three years of having our office there. Fun quizzes, a short gender sensitization session in Tamil and of course, sweets, made up the celebration.

We launched an update of our first-ever directory, Women Taking Action. University of Madras intern Srilekha went back to all the organisations initially listed and updated their information through the summer. This third edition was finally edited by Archanaa Seker and published in December as part of the 2017 Prajnya 16 Days Campaign against Gender Violence.

June 2017

In June, we connected with another Chennai-based movement for social change, AWARE India, doing a gender sensitization workshop for their volunteers.



July 2017

Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Women's Christian College in Chennai, we initiated a substantial institutional partnership. This is a milestone for us. WCC and Prajnya will work together to promote gender equality, through a student Gender Equality Club, through creating special activities for WCC and through several student internships. Prajnya was part of the launch of the club in WCC

in August. In October, we organized a creative writing session, "Conflict, Peace, Women and Poetry." Almost a dozen WCC students interned during the 2017 Prajnya 16 Days Campaign against Gender Violence.



August 2017

Prajnya was part of the 2017 Madras Week celebrations. Saakshi Fellow Archana Venkatesh created and led two heritage walks which highlighted the role that women have played in Madras history, especially those who have founded and built important city institutions. The 'Women who made Madras' walks focused on two separate areas, Adyar and Egmore.



We visited the Chennai Mathematical Institute on August 23, 2017, with our gender sensitization training module, Gender Matters. We returned in November with a more substantive, marathon session on gender violence and workplace sexual harassment, that culminated in a workshop to create a code of conduct for the campus. What contributes to a gender-equal workplace, was the point of departure for students and faculty to sit together and create a code of behaviours and practices that they would like to see on campus.

The Prajnya team bookended a conference on gender violence at Vels University at the end of the month. Sudaroli Ramasamy led a session on 'Introduction and Categories of Gender-based Violence' and Swarna Rajagopalan did the closing keynote address on 'Equality, Violence and You.' Swarna also spoke at the Inner Wheel Club of Madras Cosmos and a seminar on human rights organized by the University Women's Association of Madras.

September 2017

In September, we celebrated our tenth birthday, and in our own style!

On September 8, we held a tea-time function where we thanked those who had stood by us as partners and

resource persons over the years. We gave out citations to our partners that mentioned our shared work and our Rockstar resource persons got poems especially written for each of them. We also thanked those whose professional presence enabled our work. At Meera Rajagopalan's insistence and with Bharati Ramachandran's help, we put a souvenir together. We gave an account of our first ten years to those who were gathered through a presentation and Swarna Rajagopalan, who founded Prajnya, spoke about the road ahead.

On September 9, the extended Prajnya team got together for a celebration lunch. Games were played, and we watched a film that Nandhini Shanmugham put together with our personal high points and landmarks in Prajnya, and of course, our dreams. There was delicious cake too!

The best part of celebrating our tenth birthday was taking stock and seeing just how much we have done with very few resources. Even more important, we were thrilled to see how large the community of our supporters has grown. The celebration filled us with gratitude for the chance to do this work together and renewed our commitment to it.



October 2017

October opens with Daan Utsav, and we have been a part of it since 2016. We had a presence at the Indian Oil Corporation pump in Mylapore and at the Palazzo multiplex in Vadapalani and raised Rs. 65770/- from the three sites.

The WCC creative writing session used a presentation by Swarna Rajagopalan on the impact of conflict on women's lives as the spring board for a morning of writing, that was shared with the group. Dr. Rajagopalan was invited to speak on women, peace and security at a national conference on the same theme in January 2018.



In October, we revived our Women's History Roundtable Series. The fourth season was opened by Archana Venkatesh, with a presentation based on her ongoing doctoral research, "Private Lives, Public Work: Women Doctors in India." The fourth season saw two other presentations before the challenge of finding venues shut it down again.

- Manasi Karthik, "Gender, Dispossession and Development in South India," November 11, 2017.
- Radhika Bhalariao, "Abuse and Violence in Intimate Relationships," December 9, 2017.



Sudaroli Ramasamy represented Prajnya at the Consultative meeting: Initiative on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, organised in Jaipur by UN Women on October 24, 2017. Having a full-time team member (Sudaroli) has allowed us to participate in several such consultations:

- "Communicate, Engage, Fundraise" workshop by India Cares Foundation, Chennai, April 2017.
- State level Consultation cum Advanced Training on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, by Human Rights Foundation, Chennai, November 4, 2017.
- Capacity building training to gain clarity on the SDG processes at the National and Sub-national level by Ekta and Human Rights Foundation, Chennai, January 2018.
- "Grievance Redressal Mechanisms: Access, Barriers and Challenges facing by Garment Factory workers in Greater Chennai," Symposium by Penn Thozhilalar Sangam, January 2018.

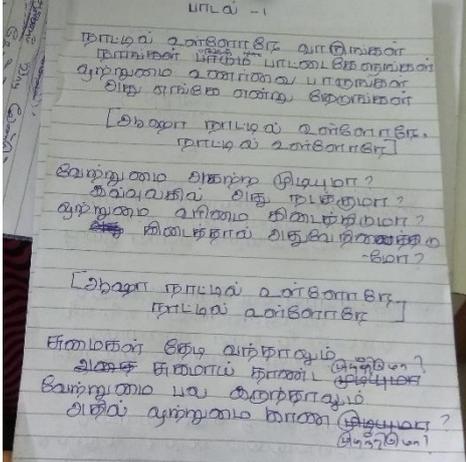
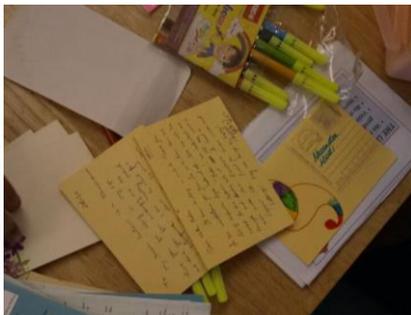
In January 2018, Sudaroli Ramasamy also served on the panel arranged by the Tata Institute for Social Sciences, National Commission for Women and the Tamil Nadu Police, for the selection for social workers for "Special Cells for Women" to be established in five districts of Tamil Nadu.

November 2017

In November, Prajnya was invited to talk about its Education for Peace work at an NCERT conference on Early Childhood Education. Swarna presented a paper that Priyadarshini Rajagopalan and she co-wrote.

2017 Prajnya 16 Days Campaign against Gender Violence

“We started off this year with one agenda in mind: to pull off a flash mob. Somehow we managed it, and a host of other events as well along with. This year we focused around a broad theme of consent and violence, although the theme came together by itself; it was not planned to be so. We even managed to pull off 4 days where we had more than one event per day! We had 4 open events and 17 offline events (13 closed) and thankfully managed to pull off a good number of attendees for each event. This year, even after all the calling and follow ups, and torrential rain right before one of our largest events; we were not short of people, and for this we are thankful to all our partners, resource-people, followers and fellow activists in solidarity.” (Malavika Ravi, Campaign Associate, 2017 Campaign Report)



December 2017

December opened with a half-day trip by Swarna Rajagopalan to make a presentation on women, peace and security to UN Peacekeeping heads from missions around the world as part of the conference, “Contemporary Challenges to IHL Due to Changing Nature of Conflict in

Peacekeeping Operations” organised by the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping and the International Committee of the Red Cross in New Delhi.

Although the month was dominated by the 16 Days Campaign, Prajnya continued to deliver workplace sexual harassment awareness training sessions.

January 2018

The new year began with the revival of our Education for Peace programme. Chintan Girish Modi joined the team as peace education consultant. Priyadarshini Rajagopalan and Chintan Modi co-facilitated a teacher training workshop in the first week of the year. The Prajnya Teachers for Peace Training is a two-day course

intended primarily to help in-service teachers learn to integrate the NCERT’s peace education guidelines into everyday classroom practice. It is also open to others with an interest in education. Chintan coming aboard as consultant has given the Education for Peace Initiative a new lease of life, despite its continuing to be resource-starved.



February 2018

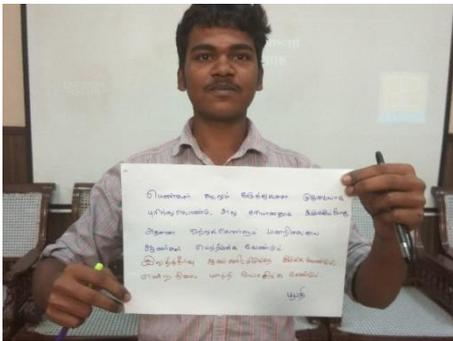
The first R. Rajaram GRIT Research Fellow, Jhuma Sen, joined us in February. During her one year stint as Rajaram Fellow, she will research the legal and social discourses around abuse and misuse of IPC 498A, in addition to being responsible for the compilation of the 2018 Gender Violence in India Report.

February also saw the culmination of a long process that began with a first RTI petition in June 2016 to ask about the establishment of Local Complaints Committees. We then followed up with a second round addressed to District Collectors, followed by several phone calls and letters, in order to compile a complete directory for Tamil Nadu. ‘Culmination’ here simply means that a good percentage of districts have responded. We continue to follow up and update the information which is accessible here: <https://goo.gl/LyMqQr>.

March 2018

March was an important month for us. One promise we made to ourselves for our tenth birthday was to step into more advocacy work and more proactive network-building.

On March 3, in partnership with Roshni, we organized a roundtable on minority rights and gender justice, focused on Muslim women's rights. Our objective was to create a platform for women community leaders to speak their views in all their diversity.



On March 7, we organized a Men Talk Consent session at the University of Madras Department of Journalism in conjunction with Ippodhu.com and the department. Dr. Sharada Srinivasan briefed Sandhiyan Thilagavathy who facilitated the all-male session.

Yein Udaan's Women's Day programme for women from the Dhobikana community.



On March 10, Swarna Rajagopalan addressed Roshni's Women's Day programme, even as Sudaroli took a gender sensitization programme to

On March 14, we invited senior activists from leading women's organisations in Tamil Nadu to come spend a day with us, sharing their concerns and their experiences with network-building and advocacy. It was a day of catching up for some and for bonding with others. For us, it was a beginning to our renewed commitment to network-building and advocacy. The March 14 gathering connected us to new people, identified information gaps that we will try to fill in the coming year and was the beginning of new work partnerships.



PeaceVerse, a call for poetry on peace, was published on World Poetry Day, March 21. We published all the poems received, and a jury of poets chose three winners and a special mention: Rajashree Gandhi, Vasanthi Swetha, Bina Sarkar Elias and Haneen Khalid. All the entries can be read at <https://prajnyaforpeace.wordpress.com/category/writing-for-peace/peaceverse/>.

It's been a wonderful year of milestone celebrations and many new beginnings—from Namathu Nagaram Namathu Urimai to setting up a named research fellowship for gender violence research to new partnerships—and some surprising revivals, including the Gender Violence Report and peace education teachers' training. Many of our volunteers have moved on, but in this year, two of our longest standing volunteers joined the Board as Trustees, and that's a landmark in our growth too. There's no looking back; just many more things to do... and as Robert Frost wrote, "...miles to go before we sleep."

WHAT WE RECEIVED IN 2017-18

Endowment Donation	-
General Donation	551750.69
IT Refund	1790.00
Gender Violence Research and Information Taskforce	
• Prajnya 16 Days Campaign Against Gender Violence	131001.00
• GRIT Workshop Fees	50580.00
• R. Rajaram GRIT Research Fellowship	158645.60
Education for Peace	10000.00
Vasundhara donations	300000.00
Total	1203767.29

WHAT WE SPENT IN 2017-18

Administrative Expenses	429362.00
Prajnya Resource Centre on Women in Politics & Policy	12062.00
Gender Violence Research and Information Taskforce	502205.00
2017 Prajnya 16 Days Campaign against Gender Violence	139276.00
Education for Peace	38658.00
Total	1121563.00

WHAT WE HELD IN 2017-18

	Cash	Bank	FD
What we held April 1, 2017 (Opening Balance)	9811.00	234310.00	309708.63
What we held March 31, 2018 (Closing Balance)	213.00	337308.23	329430.63