

# MOVING OUT TO GO WITHIN

A MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS & LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME  
FOR STUDENTS OF ASHOKA UNIVERSITY



JAN 2020

## REDBALLOON'S YOUNG PEOPLE FOR CHANGE PROGRAMME

9 STUDENTS ● 4 MENTORS ● 5 DAYS  
1 PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION

Red Balloon's Young People for Change programme in collaboration with Ashoka Centre for Wellbeing at Ashoka University put together a week long residential workshop to initiate conversations around mental health among the youth. In a time where the lack of information coupled with the stigma around seeking help for mental health is the biggest barrier, this workshop brought together 9 young Ashokans from diverse cultures and backgrounds to mindfully connect and explore the importance of emotional expression and self awareness, to build a sense of wellbeing.





## MOVING OUT TO GO WITHIN

**WORKSHOP ● DISCUSSIONS  
SELF PORTRAITS ● PAINTING ● POETRY  
ESSAYS ● JOURNALING ● ART  
INSTALLATION**

The workshop was designed around the subject of mental health and each day was dedicated to a few activities. Deep discussions and self reflection activities were followed by mask making, painting, journaling and mirror imaging. The activities gave students a chance to reflect on their feelings, aspirations, fears and guided them to become mindful and empathetic individuals.

Participants wrote their thoughts and feelings in forms of poems and verses. The different artworks created during the workshop along with their written text culminated into a public art installation under the guidance of installation artist and mentor **Sumant Jayakrishnan**.

“

The explorer in yourself must seek to be mindful, with the courage to listen to your inner voice and stay free and authentic  
- Participant



The experiential workshop was mentored by Psychotherapist and Founding Director of ACWB, **Dr. Arvinder J Singh** and by Red Balloon's **Samar S Jodha** and **Lavanya Agarwal**. These mentors helped the participants experience an empowered sense of self, by imagining themselves as being capable of co-creating a better world.

Lead facilitators: Dr. Arvinder J Singh & Sumant Jayakrishnan  
Red Balloon mentors: Samar S Jodha & Lavanya Agarwal



The installation is a circular structure , 28 feet in diameter and 12 feet tall, it has an outer shell of acrylic, wood and glass held together by metal. Printed on the outer panels are writings, poems and verses by the students. A viewer can enter the structure, the centre has a pole topped with a brass eagle. Around the pole are 9 inner panels which reflect the students body maps and self portraits. These rotate on individual axis which make the entire piece interactive



## PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION ON VIEW AT STIR GALLERY TILL APRIL 2020

The entire experience culminated into an interactive public arts installation, co-conceptualised under the guidance of design stalwart **Sumant Jayakrishnan** who gave the work its final form. The installation shares the participants' personal expression and messages of awareness on mental health, well-being and self worth.

This artwork will be installed in Ashoka University as a symbol of acknowledging mental health and its significance in building leaders of tomorrow. The 9 students who participated in the workshop will lead discussions on mental health awareness with other students from Ashoka University.

“

I felt the installation was mine, it was a beautiful journey, a life changing one  
-Participant



REDBALLOON



REDBALLOON



REDBALLOON



REDBALLOON

# REDBALLOON

In collaboration with  
ASHOKA CENTRE FOR WELLBEING at Ashoka University



Promoted by

**INDIAARTFAIR**  
2020 30.01 - 02.02

Outreach Partner

**stir**  
see. think. inspire. reflect.

Workshop Venue



20 SHOWCASE

THE HINDU  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2020

SUNALINI MATHEW

Sahil Balmiki's poem talks about how it isn't easy to stand up for oneself, especially if you have to fight your own shadows. It goes on to say that other people feel he's nothing, but he can't believe them, and so is on a journey to find himself.

Balmiki, 18, is a student of Ashoka University on a full scholarship. He moved with his family from Kolkata to Delhi for his education and for better prospects. His parents, both unwell, are unable to work, and his brother, who works in a shop in Chandni Chowk, is the sole earning member. "I had a lot of problems. Academically, I didn't do well. I come from a different background and culture [compared to the others in the university], and I didn't participate in class," he says.

Balmiki and eight other students from diverse income groups, genders, and nationality in Ashoka, were a part of a residential project of self-exploration and inner work across five days, led by Arvinder Singh, a psychotherapist. The workshop was initiated by Red Balloon that does creatively-led Immersive leadership programmes with students.

As a culmination to the workshop, the students designed an installation titled Moving Out to Go Within that was pieced together by Sumant Jayakrishnan, a designer who works with scenography and installations, and who is a mentor in Red Balloon.

The work, designed as a circular structure, about 28 feet in



diameter and 12 feet tall, has an outer shell of acrylic, wood and glass, held together by metal. Printed on the outer panels are writings by students that they did towards the end of the workshop. A viewer can enter the structure, the centre of which is a sort of totem pole topped with a brass eagle and rainbow-hued strings flowing out from it.

Around the pole are nine inner panels, each of which moves on its individual axis. The panels are framed outlines that the students drew of one other. The students then took their own bodymaps

# OPENING DIALOGUE

Organisations and individuals come together to facilitate a workshop around students' mental health, culminating in a piece of art

and did self-portraits, filling them with little bits and bobbles, a representation of how they saw their inner worlds and their aspirational selves. Balmiki's was the most colourful. Another student, grappling with body image issues, depicted herself with a crop top to show her aspiration of wearing one, and the sense of freedom she'd have from doing so.

"We weren't looking for skills or creativity," says Samar Singh Jodha, the founder of Red Balloon. The hope was to help the young adults look past drawing and painting, and get into a "space where they could present

their own voices." The process of how the piece of interactive art came about is set out in an album beside the installation. When the students saw the completed work that they'd conceptualised, they were delighted. "I felt it [the installation] was mine. It had been a beautiful journey — a life-changing one," says Balmiki.

The journey itself came about as a chain of communication, with Jodha reaching out to Jayakrishnan, who in turn spoke to Singh. She had been his therapist when he'd suffered depression and anxiety, and he'd benefited



Of mind and art (Clockwise from extreme left) Amit Gupta of STIR (left), Samar Singh Jodha of Red Balloon, artist Sumant Jayakrishnan and psychotherapist Arvinder Singh; the students; and views of the installation and parts of the process



from sessions with her. "A lot of what you experience at my age (he recently turned 50) goes back to when you were young," he says, referring to events in childhood that can have an impact later in life.

"The workshop that Singh conceptualised revolved around mental health, with each day dedicated to a few activities. There were exercises on fear for instance — what it is, how to deal with it and ways of navigating through it. There was mask-making, journaling, painting messages on T-shirts, and mirror-imaging which taught empathy," says Singh.

All of these brought out the students' pain, thoughts, and aspirations, while empowering them

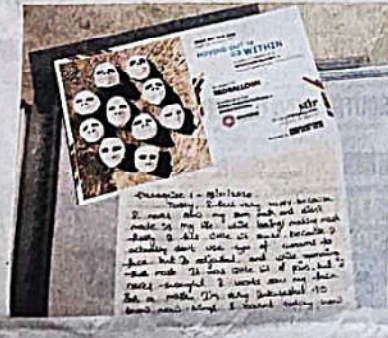
with choices. "Restoring your story to restore your empowered self" is the way she sees it. One reflective exercise involved the students asking themselves: "How are you?" Balmiki says he broke down at this and cried for a while.

Jayakrishnan, who was involved in some parts of the process, had conversations through sessions with the students to understand their ideas for the installation. He helped weave the ideas together, with some being put to a vote. "The core idea came from them," he says, recalling that they went through several before they settled on this, as they held each other in a tightly knit circle. "Ideas ranged from the petals of a flower to fire and

an eagle, which made it to the final design, and actually holds it all together," he says, adding that a number of the students' stories resonated with him.

The installation that will be taken to Ashoka University in April, is a symbol of acknowledging mental health and its significance in building leaders who will show the way through self-awareness and empathy. There'll be a week-long mental health awareness week in the university, where these nine students will lead the discussion, Balmiki says. He is now able to participate in class without feeling the pressure of being 'different'.

At STIR gallery, DLF Cyber Tower, Farouk on New World April 15th



India cities opinion world crises entertainment education trending videos tech podcasts health auto HTLS 2019

Home / Education / Art installation on mental health awareness in Delhi

## Art installation on mental health awareness in Delhi

Ashoka University's Ashoka Centre for Well-Being (ACWB) in collaboration with Red Balloon's Young People for Change put together a week-long residential workshop to initiate conversations around mental health among the youth.

By Shikha Upadhyay, Feb 24, 2020 12:58 IST

From Ashoka Health Service, New Delhi



## Outlook

THE NEWS SCROLL

01 FEBRUARY 2020 Last Updated at 9:06 PM | SOURCE: IANS

## Art installation on mental health awareness in Delhi



Art installation on mental health awareness in Delhi

New Delhi, Feb 3 (IANS) A public art installation on mental health awareness "Moving Out to Go Within" by nine Ashoka University students, under the guidance of designer Sumant Jayakrishnan will be on display at STIR Gallery here from February 2 to April 15. The installation is being promoted by the India Art Fair.

Ashoka University's Ashoka Centre for Well-Being (ACWB) in collaboration with Red Balloon's Young People for Change put together a week-long residential workshop to initiate conversations around mental health among the youth.

This workshop brought together nine young Ashoka students from diverse cultures and backgrounds to mindfully connect and explore the importance of emotional expression and self-awareness, and to build a sense of well-being. The experiential workshop was facilitated by psychotherapist and founding director of ACWB Dr. Arvinder J Singh.

The students' experience culminated into this interactive public arts installation that shared the participants' personal expression and messages of awareness on mental health, well-being and self-worth.

# ABOUT RED BALLOON

**RED BALLOON NURTURES YOUNG LEADERS TO BECOME  
ADVOCATES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH CREATIVE  
EXPERIENCES AND MENTORSHIP**

Our core objective is to create '**empathetic leaders of tomorrow**'

With Red Balloon, young people experience an enriching journey of self-awareness, knowledge enhancement, solution based creative thinking and pro-active contribution.

We partner with Arts and Design professionals and experts from the social development space to mentor and lead the workshops, along with the Red Balloon team.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE FOR CHANGE (YPC) CHILDREN FOR CHANGE (CFC) PROGRAMS**

Under these initiatives, we encourage youngsters to  
**Express** freely and creatively,  
**Engage** with issues affecting the world meaningfully,  
**Explore** creative solutions to share positive  
social messages & public awareness, and  
**Exchange** their ideas with other young people  
& assume leadership roles in their communities

In addition to Awareness and Leadership workshops, Red Balloon also offers training and creative engagement content for educators.

Red Balloon works with children and young adults from all socio-economic backgrounds.

[www.redballoonglobal.com](http://www.redballoonglobal.com)

