

Newsletter

April - June 2022



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Iswar Sankalpa is 15 years - I hardly realised how time galloped by. I guess I was so immersed with carving the path on a rocky terrain that every moment was about surviving and ensuring choices for the last persons on the street. Today I can look back with a smile of affirmation to myself that the path has led us in the right direction and surrounded me with a great set of people who shared the dream. The overwhelming feeling is that of gratitude to the Universe and all of you - for having conspired to grant me my deepest wish.

Sarbani Das Roy
Secretary and Founder



Homelessness and Mental Health

CAUSES FOR HOMELESSNESS OR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

LACK OF ACCESS DUE TO:



i) Migration



ii) Unemployment



iii) Disability

SOCIAL STRUCTURES SUCH AS:



i) Stigma & Illiteracy



ii) Caste



iii) Class



iv) Gender Discrimination

LIVING CONDITIONS:



i) Poverty



ii) Violent Family Structures



iii) Hunger



iv) Env/Man-made Disasters

HEALTH CONDITIONS SUCH AS:



i) Physical Illness



ii) Mental Illness

THE ISSUES A HOMELESS PERSON WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS FACES

INHUMANE TREATMENT BY THE COMMUNITY



INJUSTICE & VIOLATION



Violation of right to food, shelter, healthcare

APATHY OF THE STATE



City police, Municipality, state & cent Govt

BROKEN FAMILIES



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES



FURTHER RISK OF POOR PHYSICAL HEALTH



And deterioration of mental wellbeing

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE



A homeless person with psychosocial disabilities experiences an intersection of vulnerabilities.

SYSTEMS TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING



UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME



ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE



ENTITLEMENTS & SERVICES



A HOLISTIC CARE NETWORK

Connecting different resources together to ensure a reliable, accessible, efficient, responsive and responsible support care network.



Social welfare



Health Systems



Police



Local Governments



Transport systems



Families & Communities

SUPPORT REQUIRED BY HOMELESS PERSONS WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL DISABILITIES

SAFE SHELTER



FRIEND/CAREGIVER/ANCHOR



RECOVERY ORIENTED SERVICE & PROGRAMMES



REINSTATING PERSONHOOD



ADDRESSING STIGMA



SOCIAL PROTECTION



PRIORITIZING 'INCLUSION'

By ensuring a life of dignity, we as a society can Prioritize Inclusion of these individuals at the margins.

Mapping Iswar Sankalpa's Journey

2007

Naya Daur: A community based outreach programme which caters to homeless persons with psychosocial disabilities on the streets, with the aim of building a community support system around them

2008

Reintegration: Inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities through reunion with families, access to entitlements, vocational skill building, avenues for supportive employment and community resettlement

2009

Day Care Centre: A centre located in the Hastings Police Station to provide psychosocial support to persons with psychosocial disabilities

2010

Sarbari: A shelter for recovery and rehabilitation for urban homeless women with psychosocial disabilities

2015

Marudyan: A shelter for recovery and rehabilitation for urban homeless men with psychosocial disabilities

2013

Day Care Centre: A centre located in a community centre to provide psychosocial support to persons with psychosocial disabilities

2012

Urban Mental Health Programme: Integrating mental healthcare services with the primary urban healthcare centres in partnership with the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) in wards 78 and 82.

2016

Nayagram: An assisted community living programme in Uttar Kashipur, West Bengal for homeless women with psychosocial disabilities, where the women earn a livelihood through engagement in agricultural work and animal husbandry

2017

Urban Mental Health Programme: Expansion of the Urban Mental Health Programme in partnership with Kolkata Municipal Corporation to wards 11, 26 and 54.

2018

Crust and Core: A livelihood venture of Iswar Sankalpa, serving as a café cum training unit to develop skills for sustainable employment

2019

Women's Collective: Working with urban homeless women to create a women's movement to access their rights and entitlements





Gestures Towards Home

Iswar Sankalpa's clients and caregivers share their experiences...

" I have been here since the last 1.5 years; a lot of my family issues have been taken care of...I feel a lot healthier here; I am doing good. I help the didis (referring to the shelter caregivers) here and I have also shared with Priyeta di (referring to the shelter counsellor) that I wish to work as a caregiver too...I can take care of other residents...I would like to learn how to execute the related documentation work. I want to work. If this doesn't work out, I would like to undergo training in a beautician course."

-Current resident in the women's shelter

"...In the last 2 years, I have learnt the art of decoupage, have learnt to sew my clothes...if I were to return home someday, I would carry the immense love I've received from all the male and female staff members. I have also been given the space to be myself. I wish to appear for 9th and 10th standard exams...would love to read news like a news reporter...learn to speak in English. If these plans do not materialise, then I would want to at least earn a living by working as a domestic help."

-Current resident in the women's shelter

" I have been in the shelter for over 10 years now... Iswar Sankalpa is offering shelter, treatment, medicines for all illnesses, doctor's check-up, hygiene material, literacy classes, singing classes, story classes, newspaper reading sessions, sweaters during the winter and new set of clothes during the Pujas...it feels good. We get a variety of food through donations. There are decoupages, sewing classes too. A lot is being taken care of, here. Though I would love to return home, I have accepted the current circumstances and am happy to be here."

-Current resident in the women's shelter working at the cafe

“My mom and I currently reside here at Hooghly...she has been a mental health patient for the last 20 years. Sometime in 2017-18, we happened to grapple with a medical emergency; my father had a stroke and one side of his body got paralysed. Since I had to be by his side, my mother went unattended; her medication discontinued and she happened to wander away from home, towards Kolkata.

Some members of Iswar Sankalpa then happened to see her and extended support– they gave her medicines and helped her get better. Meanwhile, I was looking for her for many days and also asked the police for help... My mother was being taken care of, by members of Iswar Sankalpa; she was with them for 5 months. They asked her whether she wished to return home and she shared that she has an elder daughter, a younger daughter and a son and that she would like to get back with her elder daughter. They traced our home, met my in-laws and only when they agreed and assured of my care and support to my mother, the Iswar Sankalpa team made us sign a handover sheet.

They contacted me again to be sure whether I am willing to shoulder the responsibility...I agreed to the same. After a month of mother returning, they called us up and encouraged us to continue medication and treatment at their OPD free of cost. I had requested them of medicine support given there is no one to take care of her except myself.

They've also taken the effort to visit us every 3-6 months to ensure her continued care and treatment and to gauge the bond I share with her. She has been doing much better since. She is doing very well now; she lends a hand in household chores. I learnt about Iswar Sankalpa and its exemplary work because of my mother...I am extremely thankful to them for taking care of her and helping me reunite with her...I had truly lost hope. Not just my mother, the way they extend help and support to all the patients, is incredible. I am left amazed every time I visit the OPD and I am touched by the follow up...they continue to offer their love and care.”

-Daughter/Caregiver of a former client



From Our Funders

In the last 15 years, Iswar Sankalpa has made stellar contributions to address the correlated issues of homelessness and mental health. Their innovative and risk-taking attitude have made the growth story very inspiring and worth emulating. It has helped homeless people, who were written-off by the state and their families, overcome mental health conditions, regain well-being and be treated with dignity. Iswar Sankalpa can be immensely credited for fostering an environment with others where homeless people with mental illnesses are not stigmatized and persecuted. For me, the aspect which is most remarkable is their ability to professionalize individuals with a history of mental health issues and homelessness to stand at par with their peers. I have come back deeply inspired and humbled every time I met the team and the communities. Oak is glad to have co-travelled in Iswar Sankalpa's journey so far and wishes them the very best in setting new standards for care and support for homelessness people with mental health issues.

-Oak Foundation

"Iswar Sankalpa's work with homeless persons wandering on the streets is guided by the principles empathy, respect, dignity and enormous patience. We have our highest regards to these values and the team behind their engagements with the most vulnerable. Our best wishes are with Iswar Sankalpa in this journey."

-Azim Premji Foundation

"The Hope Foundation takes the opportunity to congratulate Iswar Sankalpa for completing 15 years of its wonderful journey. We cherish this 15 years of collaboration in Naya Daur Project which is one of the most successful programmes that supports homeless people with psychosocial disabilities from the streets of Kolkata to build a community based support system for an improved life.

We feel extremely proud of the Naya Daur team for their hard work and commitment which is recognised as one of the best practices in Community Mental health by World Health Organisation in June 2021. We really appreciate the support of other organisations' that came forward and allowed Iswar Sankalpa to scale the reach."

-Hope Foundation

From Our Team

I am grateful to it as this is my first job and gotten opportunity to gather experiences and knowledge - it's been 13 years and I have learnt a lot. So I am very thankful to the organisation.

-Mrinmoyee Bose



Akdam rastar marush der sange nie chalar ak swapna ja aj sankalpa hoe utheche lakhha manuser...

-Ratna Naskar



- Laboni Roy

I find Iswar Sankalpa just as an umbrella with wings to ensure an ever growing support system with dynamism and enriched with the voice of the invisible. It spreads its wings and flow of path wherever there is a call for care and support.



"I have realised that if I have not joined Iswar Sankalpa then my circle of life would be incomplete! I strongly believe Iswar Sankalpa and it's cause towards the last person of the street have completed my journey towards life. I wish Iswar Sankalpa will work that much where one day there will be no need of IS to work directly."

-Nabanita Mukherjee



Swapan Haldar

The work at Iswar Sankalpa has been challenging and in the shadows you can clearly see the real work you do reflected. I have complete satisfaction and I am proud of Sankalpa.



-Chameli Rana Saha

When I first joined I didn't know much about psychology but I knew that our residents don't need to be jailed and locked. They feel better when they live with us. This was my belief. When I started working I used to carry some fear and embarrassment with me but I was also determined towards the cause.



-Tapan Prodhan

"The path is never closed but we have to find the right way for ourselves; Never wait for the right time and keep trying. Iswar Sankalpa will always bring out the best of all your qualities. There is never a dull moment."

Embracing Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) in Mental Health Care and Services

Between 2016- 2019, SOPs were developed, discussed and adopted to strengthen and deepen service delivery by the organization; it only then seemed natural to take the next leap, i.e., begin conversations around 'quality service' in latter half of 2019. Having developed faith in meeting desired outputs and numbers, the organization decided to work on developing 'Quality Assurance Frameworks' for all its programmes. With processes and systems spelled out clearly to master the art and science of working with the target group, the need for a culture assumed paramount importance- a culture of commitment, participation, ownership and responsiveness, where all the staff are aware and attuned to their responsibility towards quality processes and outcomes.

Training in QAF in mental health services for all the 9 projects of the organisation was led by public health consultant, Dr. Vikram Gupta and his team and completed in two phases between

November 2020- June 2021. Including both online trainings and on-site visits, the process involved all the staff members of the organization, encouraging them to embrace quality, person centred care and intervention as a regular part of their work.

At the end of 7-month long training, the projects zeroed in on their change projects (initiatives taken in the organization to improve the way work is done - in this particular context, in the way service is provided to persons with mental illness).

The organisation aims to develop as a QAF lab eventually- into a dynamic lab which responds to both the needs of the clients as well as the growth and development needs of its team. It also aspires to serve as a learning ground for other organizations interested in incorporating QAF in their processes, ethos and culture.

How You Can Help?

| Donation options | Details |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Support Medicines for a Client ₹1200 | Covers medicines for one client for 3 months |
| Meals for Male Shelter Clients ₹10,000 | Covers breakfast and dinner for one week for 30 residents |
| Special Occasion Lunch (Non vegetarian) ₹26,000 | Special lunch freshly cooked and served in our shelters for 120 clients in celebration or in memory of an occasion |
| Festival Dresses ₹36,000 | Covers new dress for 120 clients |
| Supporting a Client towards Independent Living in the Community ₹13,500 | Supports living expenses for 3 months for one client working on an organic farm land owned by Iswar Sankalpa |
| Corpus Fund ₹50,000 | Provides financial stability to the organisation and aids in sustaining the projects |

Any amount of your choice can be donated through online transfers, cash or cheque, for the cause of supporting homeless persons with psychosocial disabilities.
You can also contribute through donations in kind.

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All Donations are exempted from tax under 80G



SanKaIpa

SUPPORT FOR THE MIND

NAYA DAUR

NO HEALTH
WITHOUT
MENTAL HEALTH

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