



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Child Development	21	Publications
7	Adoloscent Mental Health	23	Awards/Recognition
13	Adult Mental Health		
16	Addiction Research		

CHILD DEVELOPMENT



BEYOND BOUNDARIES

The project aims to support mainstream teachers with strategies that encourage inclusion of all children, help schools create an inclusive and enabling environment, to explore involvement and experiences of parents in schools and to create policy document for government of Goa.

Before the project activities in schools had to be put on hold because of the pandemic, we

- Supported more than 60 schools and trained more than 1000 general education teachers, conducted workshops for all special educators in Goa and sensitized more than 1000 across Goa
- Interviewed parents of children who participated in the remedial education program and conducted focus group discussions with teachers, to explore parental involvement in the project
- Prepared a draft of the manual that will support schools in Goa to create an inclusive environment in the general education schools



COMPASS

Communication-centred Parent-mediated treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorder in South Asia

COMPASS evaluates effectiveness, at scale, of a parent-mediated intervention for ASD in South Asia, delivered by non-specialists in community health settings, to investigate the cost-effectiveness of the intervention and to generate tools and evidence for policymakers to guide scale-up of the intervention.

The trials had commenced from November 2019 and families were recruited from AIIMS and MAMC LNH. A total of 36 participants were evaluated at baseline and randomized to trials and 18 were allocated to the intervention arm 12 participants were met for face to face interaction and a few received some sessions of intervention



ZIPPY'S FRIENDS

This program helps to build coping and resilience skills in 5-8 year old children by facilitating them to identify and talk about their feelings and explore ways of managing them.

It has been delivered by 50 trained teachers in 4 schools in Goa and Delhi, reaching about 3500 students.

Online classes were being conducted in Goa during lockdown and future plan is to launch this in Pune in next academic year.

STREAM

Scalable Transdiagnostic Early Assessment of Mental Health

The project aims to develop, test, and validate a scalable transdiagnostic early assessment of mental health on a digital platform. The project is in its formative phase, where the digital developmental assessment tool (STREAM) is being developed and all other study tools are being adapted for use in the Indian context. Pilot testing has started in 2020 keeping all the measure sfor COVID-19 safety in place.



STREAM

Scalable Transdiagnostic Early Assessment of Mental Health

The project aims to develop, test, and validate a scalable transdiagnostic early assessment of mental health on a digital platform. The project is in its formative phase, where the digital developmental assessment tool (STREAM) is being developed and all other study tools are being adapted for use in the Indian context. Pilot testing has started in 2020 keeping all the measure sfor COVID-19 safety in place.

ASPIRE

A Scalable Program Incorporating Early Child Development Interventions

The program was launched in August 2019 for a duration of 18 months to design and pilot an integrated Early Child Development & Nutrition intervention promoting nurturing care in the first 1000 days of life, to be embedded into the Integrated Child Development Services scheme in Hyderabad. The aim is to deliver it at the community level by Anganwadi teachers.

We conducted a survey with 242 pregnant women and mother child dyads from 3 ICDS projects and developed storyboards and initiated development of the ASPIRE video intervention to be used by AWTs during community interactions.

With the impact of COVID-19, the project undertook few new initiatives.

- Study undertaken to assess the impact of the pandemic on early child development Data analysis is underway
- The ASPIRE team in collaboration with UNICEF and the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare, Government of Telangana, developed a series of messages on nutrition, childcare and parenting in the context of COVID 19 and shared with beneficiaries
- Development of an Advocacy brief on ECD and COVID 19 as a part of the Nutrition Consortium created for the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka



03

Our brain, Our World, Ourselves

The project explores the ethical debates and opinions around use of cognitive enhancement drugs with children in low and middle income countries .

During 2020, data collection to understand parental opinions on cognitive enhancement was being conducted and as next phase a comprehensive analysis of this will be conducted.

ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH



PRIDE

Premium for Adolescents

PRIDE is 6 year program (2016-22) developing psychosocial interventions for school-going adolescents with mental health problems in Delhi and Goa.

We have continued to refine and elaborate the suite of school-based adolescent mental health interventions, making rapid adaptations to enable remote delivery in the context of COVID-19 restrictions. Despite national school closures caused by the pandemic, we are on pace to deliver at least two additional randomised controlled trials to extend the evidence base for the PRIDE model during the remainder of the programme.

Digital problem solving

- Modified RCT planned for classroom delivery; conducted a remote pilot RCT over Dec 2020-May 2021
- Developed bespoke platform for remote data collection and intervention delivery
- Developed a Hindi version and an open-access version of the POD Adventures app for public use

Digital training package development

- Developed of digital training package to train non-specialists in partnership with Population Foundation of India (PFI)
- Partnered with six educational institutions and organizations comprising 5000+ potential participants to evaluate the training package

POD Adventures



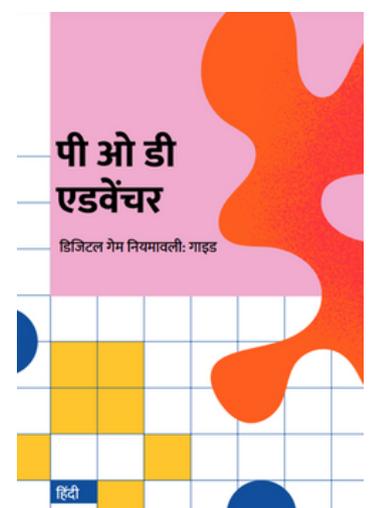
Problem solving is one of the most widely used elements in evidence-based psychological interventions for children and adolescents globally.

POD Adventures was collaboratively designed by young people and our team of mental health experts, researchers and game designers. It is a guided app intended for use in schools (with guidance from a counsellor/guide) or by young people in their own time (with support from a



Telephone counselling

- Delivered telephone-based counselling to adolescents in PRIDE partner schools during the pandemic



MANN MELA

A web museum of young people's mental health stories

The project was launched in August 2019 to enhance the school climate and promote mental health, reproductive and sexual health, gender equity, substance use mitigate bullying and violence, enhancing study skills and other adverse health outcomes through school health facilitators.

Reach

- Young people aged 18-25, especially those with lived experiences of mental health needs.
- 6 youth as part of Youth Steering Committee
- 9 youth contributors
- 70,000 website visitors

Goals of the project met during the year,

- Launch and dissemination of a multimedia website (<https://www.mannmela.in/>) dedicated to mental health awareness for young people
- A suite of interactive mixed-media featuring personal narratives and basic psychoeducation about mental health
- Engagement with youth via advisory group meetings and workshops
- Online engagement via webinars



The COVID-19 health and safety restrictions in India implemented since the end of February, 2020 led to cancellation of all on ground events (planned user testing and pilot events), deferment of all physical events and project travel both nationally and locally. To mitigate this, we restructured our strategy to adopt a 'digital-first' approach and preparing flexible and responsive work plans. We also included the development and dissemination of an audio podcast to capture young people's experiences of living through COVID-19 pandemic.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: LIVED EXPERIENCE

This short-term project is part of ongoing work by the Wellcome Trust for their Mental Health priority area. The findings from the project are being used by the Wellcome Trust to build their lived experience strategy for funding further research and interventions in mental health in Low and Middle Income countries.

We organised four virtual consultation meetings organised with 9 young people aged 18-24 who have lived experiences of anxiety and depression and one consultation meeting with 5 youth mental health leaders to understand cultural factors that shape mental health awareness and stigma for Indian youth.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: SUICIDE PREVENTION

Engaging and Enabling Youth to address Suicide prevention in India

Reach

- 16 young people aged 18-25, who have lived experiences of mental health needs.

Goals of the project met during the year,

- Conducted a scoping review of global online projects/campaigns on suicide prevention
- Development of a youth engagement campaign strategy is ongoing, highlighting key themes, messages, contents and artefacts and engagement protocols
- Co-design workshops with 16 youth with lived experience for reflections on suicide prevention; early feedback on key messages/ lo-fi prototypes/ brand identity
- Engaged a nationally representative group of 8 youth advisors serving as "Young People's Advisory Group" for the programme
- Conducted two virtual events to introduce youth mental health concerns, anti-stigma and suicide prevention messages and help seeking information
- Project staff attended three web trainings on youth and suicide prevention (Conversations with suicide prevention experts, youth survivors, persons engaged in intersectoral work)
- Project staff were trained in suicide first-response

As part of next phase, national co-design workshops and interviews will be conducted with youth for reflections on suicide prevention. A national online survey and multilingual digital campaign will be launched to reach youth and understand their suicide behaviours, to develop and disseminate 5 psycho-educational materials on suicide prevention (printed and online) in 3 languages to generate awareness.

ASHRAMSHALAS

School Mental Health Promotion Program

The project's goal is to develop and evaluate a mental health promotion intervention, aimed at reducing the effects of psycho-social and mental health issues in 22 ashramshalas in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, covering students from grade 5th-12th.

Although, the project could not commence because of the pandemic and schools closure, we completed some of the preliminary set-up work.

- Permission received from Tribal Development Department (TDD) for rolling out the intervention in 22 schools
- Setting up of project office at Gadchiroli
- Senior team appointed (coordinator, Senior Researcher)
- Mapping activity conducted with 22 Ashramshalas as rapport building activity

SMHPP

School Mental Health Promotion Program

The project was launched in August 2019 to enhance the school climate and promote mental health, reproductive and sexual health, gender equity, substance use mitigate bullying and violence, enhancing study skills and other adverse health outcomes through school health facilitators.

During 2020-21, with the closure of schools all planned activities could not be conducted and almost 60% students did not have access to phones and internet. Despite that, we

- Trained and supervised School Health Facilitators (SHF) placed in schools (1:3 ratio)
- Covered 15 government and low-income schools
 - Total students covered (2020-21): 5500
 - Total teachers covered: 190
- Telecounselling was conducted for students and teachers handling 474 cases



ADULT MENTAL HEALTH

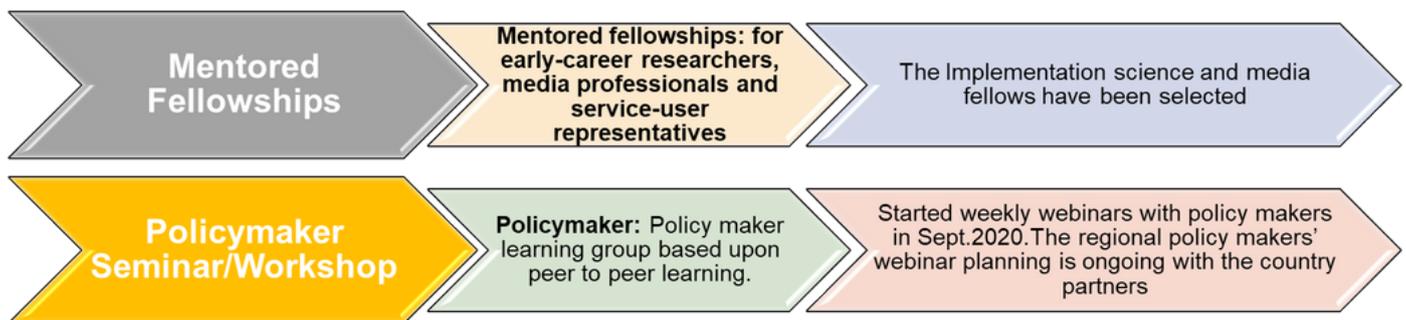


ESSENCE

Enabling Translation of Science to Service to Enhance Depression Care

The goal of the project is to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of digital interventions (compared with face-to-face training) in matters of training ASHA workers/ govt. accredited community health workers in the delivery of HAP (Healthy Activity Programme) for depression care. And the long term goal is to strengthen the capacity in South Asian countries to conduct implementation research, dissemination of its findings and the uptake of this evidence in policy and programmes

This year, we started with designing digital courses with mentored fellowships and structured workshops for media professionals, service users' representative organisations, implementation researchers and policymakers to increase the knowledge generation, exchange and uptake of the knowledge into national/state health policies.



The fig. represents capacity building overview and status for ESSENCE in 2020-21

EMPOWER

Enabling Translation of Science to Service to Enhance Depression Care

The overall aim of EMPOWER is to build India's mental health workforce through a digital platform to enable non-specialist health workers (such as ASHAs, ASHA facilitators, ANMs, and other non-specialist health workers) to learn evidence-based brief psychological treatments for mental disorders, assess their competency, and assure quality as they deliver these interventions in primary care settings. Our primary hypothesis builds on what we have learned through the ESSENCE project: we anticipate that the new digital training content and adapted digital training program will be feasible and acceptable for non-specialist health workers in diverse primary care settings in India.

The pilot was implemented with 43 frontline health workers (29 Accredited Social Health Activists-ASHAs and 14 Community Health Officers - CHOs) in Jhagadia block, Gujarat by evaluating change in pre and post knowledge competencies to understand perspectives on feasibility, acceptability, and scalability of the training.

Key findings:

- Found **98%** of the participant had used smartphones in their life. While **86%** of them owned smartphones.
- **Endline competency scores** (median 34.6) were **significantly higher** than **baseline competency scores** (median 30.8) ($p = 0.0448$).
- **Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior** of ASHAs and CHOs **did not show any significant change** before and after the training.

As next phase, EMPOWER aims to train 1000 frontline health workers in Madhya Pradesh by Mar 2022.



ADDICTIONS RESEARCH



IMPRESS

IMPlimentation of evidence based evidence based facility and community interventions to reduce the treatment gap for deRESSion

The project aims to reduce this treatment gap by addressing both supply and demand side barriers by combing two strategies previously developed by Sangath. The supply-side will be targeted by scaling up the Healthy Activity Program (HAP), a manualised psychological treatment based on behavioural activation, which was shown to reduce symptom severity and increase remission among participants with depression in Sangath's PREMIUM study. This program will be the first systematic attempt in LMICs (lower- and middle-income countries) to scale up the psychological treatment in primary care, supported by evidence.

Objectives met during the year,

- Developed and finalised the formative research protocols for the project.
- Recruited a team of qualified researchers to undertake the research processes for the formative phase of the project.

During the next phase, we will be

- Conducting systematic reviews to gather evidence on strategies to increase demand and improve adherence to mental health services.
- Collect data of the community level stakeholders

NIHR DV

A package of care for mental health of survivors of violence in South Asia

Our NIHR Global Health Research Group is a collaborative research group working towards developing a comprehensive, adaptable package of care to improve the mental health of survivors of violence against women in resource-constrained settings in India, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan. At the India site, our aim is to develop a package of care for the mental health impact on survivors of domestic violence that can be delivered by lay health workers operating in low-resource settings

Goals met during the year,

- Completion of literature review and distillation process leading to 21 components that could potentially be included in the intervention and finalising the intervention manual and training plan
- Delphi study conducted to elicit feedback from international experts in violence and mental health in Feb 2021. We received responses from 13 experts from a spread of countries including HIC like USA, U.K. and Australia, and LMICs such as India, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka. The respondents rated the 21 components on perceived acceptability, feasibility and effectiveness. They also provided detailed qualitative feedback on each component.

TO QUIT

Ecological Momentary Assessment/ Interventions

The objective of ToQuit is to develop an evidence-based tobacco cessation treatment for our local context and that can be delivered to people on their mobile phones.

We plan to conduct a preliminary evaluation of ToQuit intervention in terms of acceptability and feasibility of intervention content and platform, and impact of intervention on tobacco use, through a before-after cohort and pilot randomized controlled trial (RCT). A before-after cohort study assessed acceptability of intervention content, acceptability and feasibility of intervention delivery processes, and preliminary impact of program.

During the year, we completed an expert survey and a systematic review to finalize intervention package, developing a refined mobile-messaging based intervention to be deployed in a pilot RCT in next phase.



DATING VIOLENCE

Exploring association between dating violence and mental health among youth in India

Young people who experience violence in intimate relationships are particularly vulnerable as they are not able to openly speak about their experiences due to social norms around dating, and are unable to access good quality and affordable support for the same.

Goals of the project met during this year,

- Data collection completed with 45 young people, 10 teachers and 5 counsellors interviewed. 2 FGDs were conducted with 11 teachers and 6 counsellors.
- Data analysis is ongoing
- Systematic review on dating violence among young people in LMICs ongoing

ME WE SPORTS

Preventing substance use in youth using sports based platforms

The project aims to co-produce and evaluate a sports-based substance use prevention program for young people. It will use the Medical Research Council's framework to develop and evaluate complex interventions.

The short-term impact of the project would be to provide intervention and framework for evaluation, designed for local use and ready for further evaluation. In the longer term, if the developed intervention is found to be effective then it has the potential of being integrated into alcohol, tobacco and drugs and public health policies, programs and guidelines in India

Goals met during this year,

- Conducted formative research of the project including qualitative interviews and consultative workshops with community stakeholders
- Developed interview guides, consent and assent forms and protocols for formative research with young people and families.
- Commenced formative research with young people
- Restructured the Sangath surveys website to host young people's health survey
- Developed and revised the Young People's Health Survey

PUBLICATIONS



- Gauri Divan. The Lancet Commission on the Future of Care and Clinical Research in Autism. The Lancet Commission
- Estrin GL, Bhavnani S. Brain Development: Structure (book chapter). Benson, J.B. (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Infant and Early Childhood Development, 2nd edition. vol. 1, Elsevier, pp. 205–214.
- Bhavnani S, Lockwood Estrin G, Mukherjee D, Patel V. Promoting early child development: using convergence science for the scalable assessment and monitoring of cognitive development (Book chapter). Convergence Mental Health, Oxford University Press
- Divan, G., Bhavnani, S., Leadbitter, K., Ellis, C., Dasgupta, J., Abubakar, A., Green, J. Annual Research Review: Achieving universal health coverage for young children with autism spectrum disorder in low- and middle-income countries: a review of reviews. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*
- Naslund, J. A., Tugnawat, D., Anand, A., Cooper, Z., Dimidjian, S., Fairburn, C. G., Hollon, S. D., Joshi, U., Khan, A., Lu, C., Mitchell, L. M., Muke, S., Nadkarni, A., Ramaswamy, R., Restivo, J. L., Shrivastava, R., Singh, A., Singla, D. R., Spiegelman, D., ... Patel, V. (2021). Digital training for non-specialist health workers to deliver a brief psychological treatment for depression in India: Protocol for a three-arm randomized controlled trial. *Contemporary Clinical Trials*, 102,
- Mitchell, L. M., Joshi, U., Patel, V., Lu, C., & Naslund, J. A. (2021). Economic Evaluations of Internet-Based Psychological Interventions for Anxiety Disorders and Depression: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 284(February), 157–182.
- Rodriguez-Villa, E., Mehta, U. M., Naslund, J., Tugnawat, D., Gupta, S., Thirtalli, J., Bhan, A., Patel, V., Chand, P. K., Rozatkar, A., Keshavan, M., & Torous, J. (2021). Smartphone Health Assessment for Relapse Prevention (SHARP): a digital solution toward global mental health. *BJPsych Open*, 7(1), 1–7.
- Rodriguez-Villa, E., Rozatkar, A. R., Kumar, M., Patel, V., Bondre, A., Naik, S. S., .& Torous, J. (2021). Cross cultural and global uses of a digital mental health app: results of focus groups with clinicians, patients and family members in India and the United States. *Global Mental Health*, 8.
- The Systematic Development of a Mobile Phone Delivered Brief Intervention for Hazardous Drinking in India. Abhijit Nadkarni, Costa, S., Danielle Fernandes, Gupta, D., Catalano, A., Richard Velleman, Seema Sambari, Subhash Pednekar, Hussain, F., D'Souza, E., Houde, A., Chaudhuri, N. and Heath, A. 2021 *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 126, 108331. DOI: 10.1016/j.jsat.2021.108331
- Gonsalves, P.P., Hodgson, E.S., Bhat, B., Sharma, R., Jambhale, A., Michelson, D., & Patel, V. (2021). App-based guided problem-solving intervention for adolescent mental health: a pilot cohort study in Indian schools. *Evidence-Based Mental Health*, 24 (1), 11-18.
- Michelson, D., Malik, K., Parikh, R., Weiss, H. A., Doyle, A. M., Bhat, B., ... & Patel, V. (2020). Effectiveness of a brief lay counsellor-delivered, problem-solving intervention for adolescent mental health problems in urban, low-income schools in India: a randomised controlled trial. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(8), 571-582.
- Chorpita, B. F., Daleiden, E. L., Malik, K., Gellatly, R., Boustani, M. M., Michelson, D., ... & Patel, V. H. (2020). Design process and protocol description for a multi-problem mental health intervention within a stepped care approach for adolescents in India. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 133, 103698.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- Invitation from UNICEF to join the Nutrition Consortium created for the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka, Sangath ASPIRE team to take lead in drafting the Early Child Development policy in these states.
- Gauri Divan, Director, Child Development Group (Sangath) received the recognition as INSAR Global Leader 2021
- It's Ok To Talk, India's first youth focussed mental health campaign, profiled by World Economic Forum (2020)
- Sangath's #IMPACTIndia project under the #AddictionsResearchGroup funded by the Medical Research Council has been hand-picked by <https://globalinnovationexchange.org> to be featured on the #COVID19 #Innovation Hub <https://bit.ly/2XJD8dL> as an #innovation with the potential for COVID-19 response



H No 451 (168), Bhatkar Waddo, Socorro, Bardez, Porvorim, Goa 403501

<https://sangath.in/>