

Welcome to our first annual report since our inception in September 2014. SHB Social Foundation was started in response to a need for a space where people can speak in a free and safe environment about issues close their hearts, minds and bodies. SHB Social Foundation came together as a group of volunteers who were willing to listen, deeply and carefully, without judging, advising or opining. The foundational thought being that talking is therapeutic.

This commitment to listen marked the organisation's first and key initiative: 'Listening Post'. Listening Post functioned as a weekly programme held twice a week, welcoming anyone who wanted to talk. This programme since its very inception has been run free of cost and has impacted almost 70 beneficiaries so far.

Reaching out beyond the immediate community, SHB also conducted gender sensitization programmes in schools, working with close to 200 students.

Gender sensitization and trainings for setting up and running an Internal Complaints Committee, now mandatory under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, were conducted at Principal Global Services, an investment management company.

LOOKING AHEAD:

These first two years of working in the community made us aware of our strengths and limitations. The largest group of people who reached out to us belonged to the middle class in our society. We realised that we were bridging a gap that had arisen from the breakdown of traditional social support systems in fast-paced urban metropolitans. At Listening Post we 'heard' stories of sorrow, but also of joy; concerns about education choices and career prospects; enquiries about law, finance and technology; discussions about entrepreneurial ventures and the struggles of dealing with generation gaps. We heard them all.

What this also pointed towards was the need fine tune the listening into more specialised units that cater to specific issues. In the next years, SHB plans to develop programmes that will reach out specifically to senior citizens, teenagers and people seeking financial and legal help.
