



Apni Shala's Youth Project

Announcing Batch 1: Dec, 2015 - Feb, 2016

Why?

Apni Shala's Youth Project (ASYP) is based on Paulo Freire's idea of praxis - action and reflection - for a person's critical engagement with self, society and environment. Many programs offer these experiences of action and reflection, by "creating" the experience of "action" (ex - service learning, community projects, lab experiments, classroom team games, etc) for educational purpose upon which the reflection is based. While it has its own value, sometimes it separates itself from the day-to-day life that students live. The life where they get bullied and they bully. The life where decisions of careers are made. The life where parental love, neglect, abuse or concerns are affecting the child's life on a daily basis. This life *is* action.

However, we find there are very few spaces where youth can engage in meaningful reflection upon these experiences safely. ASYP aims to use this daily action, called 'life', to make deeper sense of their lives.

Our ideas of life are based on the identities we assume and identities start shaping up in teenagehood. With that starts the formation of stereotypes, prejudices, biases, micro-aggression and bullying. This further leads to discrimination and violence.

The questions in front of us are: Can we create a safe space of continuous reflection to complete the cycle of praxis? What if our youth is enabled with the skills of critical praxis for rest of their lives? What if our youth is enabled with a self-mechanism to question and cleanse their biases and stereotypes (for self and others) for a healthier engagement with self and society? Will it help them realise their true potential?

What are the objectives?

With these and similar questions, ASYP hopes to create a space for youth to -

- reflect upon their actions in life from a diverse lens of identity systems
- build self-mechanisms to generate empathy as a lifelong process
- recognise their own social positions and the privilege, power and marginalisation that comes with it (also imagine how can we engage with these positions to recognise the need for equity and our ok-ness with that)

How will it work?

- In a cohort of 10-15, participants will have open discussion to generate the themes undertaken during the project. Their lives will form the core curriculum!
- All the themes will be facilitated for deeper understanding by subject experts during Sunday workshops.
- Opportunities for integration with academic learning (for school/college going students) and with daily job/work/self-study (for non-school/college going) will be emphasised
- Some of the tools to be used - Expressive writing, Book and movie club, poetry, theatre, art/craft, play, privilege walk and visits to city-based free events
- The ASYP day will be designed keeping in mind the needs of introverts and extroverts alike. It will not be overloaded with group work. There will be planned individual time and differentiated instruction (highlighting equity in practice).
- The project will end with a final group work, nature of which will emerge from the group discussions

For whom?

- Age group - 14 to 18 years
- 9th grade or 11th grade students (if studying)
- Should be able to commit all Sundays (10:30am to 5:00pm) given in the schedule

Schedule (Dec, 2015 - Feb, 2016)

Dec - 20th and 27th

Jan - 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

Feb - 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th

Timing: 10:30am to 5:00pm

Gratitude!

ASYP is inspired by the works of Paulo Freire (Pedagogy of the Oppressed), Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity ([SEED](#)) project, Wellesley College, USA, Chimanda Adichie ([Danger of a Single Story](#)), [fifth space](#) and learnings from The Akanksha Foundation's Service Learning Program (2012-2015 [The vision](#)). We thank all the above people/organisations for doing the kind of work they have done and making it available in public domain for us to have access to and be inspired by.