

Preventing Violence Against Women *Announced*



Changemakers around the world are doing extraordinary work to end violence against women. We received 155 great solutions from more than 30 countries and we're pleased to announce the winners of this important challenge, selected by our panel of judges, as the best solutions to change our societies' approach to gender-based violence.

Congratulations to the winners!

Grand Prize winner: **Yuva Maitri**

(Friendship Among Youths: MAVA'S INITIATIVE ON GENDER & MASCULINITY ENGAGING YOUNG MEN AND REDEFINING MASCULINITY), India

The two runners up

Ending Violence...One Green Dot at a Time, United States
Daughters of Cambodia Cafe and Visitor's Center, Cambodia

Special recognition from judges

Testimonios Positivos, España

Thank you to our panel of judges:

Ana Lucina Garcia Maldonado
President, Latin American Federation
of Women Lawyers (FEDLA)

Antonio García Domínguez
Fundador, Asociación de Hombres
por la Igualdad de Género (AHIGE)

Rosalía Arteaga Serrano
Directora Ejecutiva y Presidenta
Fundación Natura Regional para
Ecuador y Colombia y Fundación Fidal

The grand prize winner will receive a USD \$5000 prize, and the winner plus the two runners up will be invited to the 2010 Campus of Excellence event in Spain. Visit Changemakers to learn more about each initiative.

<http://www.changemakers.com/en-us/stopviolence>



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Sambhaji Bhagat, theatre activist, at a residential camp for the Mumbai students in Lonavla.

Men pause, rethink masculinity, reach out

Neha Bhayana
Mumbai, October 18

SANJAV CHAVAN(24) and Aniket Patil(23) think a lot about women these days. That's not unusual for men their age, but their reasons are entirely different.

They are concerned about women not being treated as equals. They are also incensed that women are subjected to violence and unborn girls are killed — even in Mumbai.

Chavan and Patil are two of the over 100 young men from four city colleges — Kirti College, Siddharth College, Guru Nanak College and TK Tope Night College — participating in a project aimed at redefining masculinity and promoting gender-sensitive behaviour among young men.

The three-year project called 'Yuva Samvad' is a brainchild of Harish Sadani, a gender rights activist and founder of Men Against Violence and Abuse. The project is

funded by NGO Swiss Aid India.

After sensitising the youngsters on issues related to gender, sexuality, domestic violence and masculinity for one year, Sadani will pick 20 to 25 of them and train them to be peer educators. "These boys will in turn influence their friends and young men in other colleges," said Sadani, who had implemented a similar project in rural Pune.

In Mumbai, Sadani identified colleges to cover a cross section of students. "The students at TK Tope Night College belong to poor families. Siddharth College has a lot of backward class students. Gurunanak caters to the lower socio-economic class and students of Kirti College are from the middle class," said Sadani.

Since Yuva Samvad was kicked off in August, the participants — mostly 18 to 24-year-olds — have attended



several workshops on the status of women, including one on sex selective abortion held by Dr Ravindra Pandhripath, an expert on the subject.

"After attending the talk, I realised that by keeping quiet we are supporting female foeticide," said Chavan, a TK Tope student who works as a printing operator by the day. "I feel sad that women do not have the same status as men so I have decided to participate in this project." Patil, a student of Kirti College, said the project was really needed in colleges as boys "ill treat girls and harass them".

Professor Santosh Pathare from Guru Nanak College said they had agreed to let their students participate in the project as many of them had a "chauvinistic attitude". TK Tope's principal Vithal Rokde said it was important to change men to improve the status of women.

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Importance of gender sensitisation

■ Nearly two in five (37 per cent) married women had experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their husbands, according to the National Family Health Survey conducted in 2005-06.

■ In Maharashtra, about 30 per cent of the surveyed women (aged 15 to 49) had been slapped by their husbands. Eight to 12 per cent of the women reported that their arms had been twisted, hair pulled or they had been shaken, kicked, dragged and beaten up.

■ Over 50 per cent women and 48 per cent men (15 to 54 years) in the state thought that a husband is justified in beating his wife if she goes out without telling him, argues, doesn't cook food properly or refuses to have sex.



AKSHAY JHADAV

'I no longer call girls *item*'

TILL A few months ago, Akshay Jhadav (19) had only male friends. He used to think having girls in the group would lower its standard.

His only interaction with women was when he whistled or passed comments at one passing by.

But since he became involved with 'Yuva Samvad', Jhadav is a changed person. "I don't call girls '*chikni*' or '*item*' anymore. I respect them and consider them equal to men," said the first year

B.Com student of Siddharth College.

A Sholapur resident, Jhadav came to Mumbai earlier this year and attended the workshops by Harish Sadani.

"I feel like I had made a big mistake by ignoring the plight of women," he said.

"Back in Sholapur, I had seen my neighbour beating his wife after getting drunk every night even though she was breadwinner. But I never stood up for her. Now, I will not let such a thing happen."

— Neha Bhayana

PUNE NGO INITIATIVE IMPRESSES CENTRE

SHASHWAT GUPTA RAY

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Pune: Yuva Maitri - a programme meant for engaging young men on gender issues, started in Pune by social organisation Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA) has been listed by Government of India in its 2011 list of Best Governance Practices in the country.

"Yuva Maitri, a gender sensitisation programme in Maharashtra uses innovative youth-friendly communication tools to promote a healthy dialogue amongst young men on sexuality, masculinity, patriarchy and related issues," stated the Governance Knowledge Centre (GKC) website, promoted by department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India.

MAVA has been working to build a movement that



Sakal Times

CAMPAIGN: MAVA communicator Amol Kale protesting on violence against girls and appealing to students to join in his campaign at Saswad ST stand.

explores the role of men as partners and key stakeholders in addressing gender inequality.

It launched an initiative 'Yuva Maitri' to engage young men from rural colleges in Pune on gender related issues. "These students were trained under a 'Personal change' plan for a year with guidance from gender experts and sexologists and

the usage of innovative tools like interactive workshops, awareness songs and wall newspapers," the GKC site stated.

Many of these students went on to become 'trained communicators' and spread MAVA's message of gender equality among their peers.

The initiative has gradually spread to Mumbai, Satara, Kolhapur and Jalgaon.

To date, Yuva Maitri has reached more than 20,000 young men and 5,000 young women encouraging them to break gender stereotypes.

"I feel that many interventions of similar kind need to be undertaken at a wider level: By universities in other states across the country through the National Service Scheme (NSS) programme run in colleges," MAVA honorary secretary Harish Sadani told 'Sakal Times'. He also said that government educational bodies like NCERT can help MAVA in reaching out to many adolescent young boys in schools by providing them 'comprehensive, integrated sexuality' education by youth bodies and other voluntary agencies which can organise periodic interactive sessions for the youths in communities where they work.

think!

MUMBAI LOCAL

TRENDS, PEOPLE, PLACES

Emancipating men

HARISH SADANI WON an international award recently. And it's about time. The Mahim resident has spent the last 19 years battling gender stereotypes

Mini Pant Zachariah

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A college in Jejuri in rural Pune is no different from any other college in rural Maharashtra. Young boys and girls attend classes together but there is little, if any, interaction between them. Neither side knows how to begin to deal with the other.

So it was, that four years ago, three boys from a Jejuri college were given expulsion notices for harassing a female student by playing lewd songs on their cellphones. Out of college, they would have spent their time drinking or gambling or both, maybe working at a garage for a few extra bucks.

"Our volunteers pleaded with the college to reconsider and give the boys a chance to learn from their mistake," says Harish Sadani (43). "The boys never misbehaved again, and one of them ended the year as the college's top

Sadani's effort is special. He has brought in an interesting turn by involving the next generation of men at an impressionable age

MANISHA GUPTA, founder of Masum, a Pune-based NGO working for women's rights

NSS [National Service Scheme] cadet."

It is just this lateral, 'second-chance' approach that, last month, won Sadani and his four-year-old NGO Yuva Maitri the Ashoka Changemakers and Campus of Excellence award.

Ashoka Changemakers is an international online community that awards innovative solutions in various fields.

Yuva Maitri — Marathi for Friendship Among Youngsters — beat 155 global entries to win a \$5,000 (Rs 2.3 lakh) cash prize and an invitation to attend and

deliberate at the Campus of Excellence event to be held in Spain in October.

For Sadani, the award is recognition of how far he has travelled towards a goal he set for himself some 19 years ago.

"Growing up in a Mumbai chawl, I saw domestic violence at close quarters. That's why gender-based violence and the subjugation of women are issues I have always felt very strongly about," says the Mahim resident.

But for change to be effective, Sadani says, the men need to be sensitised rather than penalised, included in the process rather than branded perpetrators.

That's exactly what his statewide network of 120 volunteers now does, through workshops, a helpline (26826062) and their website (www.mavaindia.org).

"The best time to sensitise men is when they are young and amenable to changing their outlook," says Sadani, who has a Master's in Social Work from



SATTISH BATE/HT

■ Harish Sadani says even errant men need to be involved in the battle for women's rights, rather than excluded and condemned.

the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

So, in 2006, Sadani went on a tour of six colleges in rural Pune. He had already been honorary secretary for 13 years of Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA), an initiative by journalist C.Y. Gopinath.

"The challenge was to evolve a strategy that would engage young men who thought they had everything to gain from the dominant patriarchal system," says Sadani. "So, wherever we went, we would talk to young men about how patriarchy was holding them back too."

Sadani would explain to the youngsters how the system was stifling them, clamping down on their creativity, particularly in female-dominated fields like cooking, art and dance.

Out of this initiative, Yuva Maitri was born in 2006, so named because it encourages young men to see women as friends and equals, rather than subordinates or sex objects.

"In Jejuri, an 22-year-old boy called Ganesh Phule defied the men in his family to stand up for his sister, who was being married off against her wishes,"

says Sadani. "Phule had been attending our sessions and is now one of our gender sensitivity instructors."

For Sadani, who has worked with child rights organisation Child Relief and You and in the corporate social responsibility division of a multi-national corporation, it's a long road ahead.

"My dream now is to expand the Yuva Maitri programme across the state, the country and through the Internet," he says, "so that anyone anywhere can reach out to us to understand why they act the way they do."

Activist awarded for fight against gender violence

Bhavya Dore

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MUMBAI: A Mumbai-based gender rights activist will receive a national award from a confederation of non-profit groups in New Delhi next week for his work on gender sensitisation among men.

Harish Sadani, 43, who founded and runs the non-government organisation, Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA), has been working with men on women's issues such as domestic violence, women's

rights and matters of sexuality for the past 17 years.

The awarding body, The Indian Confederation of Non-Government Organisations (ICONGO), a national platform of NGOs, has since 2006 been annually awarding individuals 'Karmaveer Puraskars' for work towards social justice.

"Harish Sadani has been spearheading a movement in India that explores the role of men as key partners and change agents in preventing gender-based violence against women," reads the citation letter. The

ABOUT THE AWARD

■ The Karmaveer Puraskaar was first awarded by ICONGO – a confederation of NGOs – in 2006. Awardees from past include MS Swaminathan, Verghese Kurien and Anu Aga.



■ Harish Sadani.

HT PHOTO

other awardees will be formally announced on Thursday.

"Gender issues are normally seen as women's issues but just empowering women doesn't help," said Sadani. "We need to address patriarchy and ensure

the active involvement of men."

Sadani began his work in 1993 after seeing an advertisement in the Indian Express that said "Wanted: Men who believe that wives are not for battering". Sadani was one of the 205 men

who responded to the notice and later came for a meeting.

Sadani has been mobilising men and boys in different parts of the state to fight against gender violence through publications, a counselling service and an active awareness programme. The group's latest project has involved training groups of college students, all young men, as "communicators" to educate their peers on gender sensitivity.

"Men are slowly beginning to realise the evolving models of masculinity that are gender equitable," said Sadani.