

**Apne Aap  
Women's  
Collective**

**CG 7**

# Apne Aap Women's Collective's Mission

“To provide a caring and supportive platform of wholesome services to help women, girls and children in the Red Light Area make choices for a dignified and better quality life.”  
(AAWC, 2013)



# Background

- AAWC serves women and children in Kamathipura (Mumbai's largest red light area)
  - Targets brothel-based sex workers and marginalized children
- Focus on outreach, finance, health, education, empowerment, recreation, and shelter
- Three age-based programs
  - Umeed (women over 18)
  - Udaan (girls 5-18)
  - Umang (toddlers)
- Overall goals of women's empowerment and stopping intergenerational prostitution



media@aawc.in



# Our Role

- Created a **sex-education manual** for the children (ages 10+) of Mumbai's sex workers
  - Topics including human development, sexual and reproductive health, the reproductive system, and gender and sexual identities
  - Considerations included making the material age-appropriate and culturally sensitive
- Created a questionnaire and **ethnographic study tool** to assist with AAWC's research in the red light area
- Maintained regular contact with AAWC supervisor Sneha Mahajan to remain aware of the organization's needs and their impact in the district



# Sex Education Manual

- The sex education manual for AAWC was designed with the target audience of women and girls ages 10-15 who live in the red-light district in mind
  - Manual included structured lessons plans and scripts for the teachers, videos, and classroom activities
- Topics covered in lessons
  - Human Development
  - Reproductive System
  - Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity
  - Sexual Health



*First Session: Introduction to Sex and Gender*

<i>Timing</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Activity Description</i>
5 minutes	Class Discussion	Full class discussion about students' existing ideas about sex and gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● See "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: First Session Discussion Guide" for guiding topics and questions</li></ul>
5 minutes	Video	Introductory video about sex and gender: <a href="https://youtu.be/XN-wD8O9tRI">https://youtu.be/XN-wD8O9tRI</a>
10 minutes	Class Discussion	Full class discussion of key topics from the video, with emphasis on <i>sex and gender</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● See "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: First Session Discussion Guide" for guiding topics and questions</li></ul>
10 minutes	Worksheet	Students will complete the worksheet individually and then a full class discussion of answers will take place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● See "Sex vs Gender Worksheet" and "Sex vs Gender Worksheet Answer Key"</li></ul>

Example of one of our lesson plans

# Ethnographic Study Tool

- The Ethnographic Study Tool was created to help researchers conducting an ethnographic study by giving them guidelines for interviews, collecting data, and analyzing data.
- Topics covered in Interviews
  - Healthcare
  - Personal History
  - Education
  - Wages
  - Housing

## Ethnographic Tool

### *Gathering Participants: General Guidelines*

- Be prepared to take quite a bit of time to gather participants (~1-4 months).
  - Make sure the data pool of participants is fairly large (at least 20).
  - Ensure that all participants are at least 18 years old.
- When trying to gather participants, explain the purpose of the study, the primary method of the study (interviews), and the general themes of questions that will be asked.
- Before interviewing, ensure that verbal and/or written consent is gained from the participants.

### *Interviews: General Guidelines*

- Interviews should be substantial in length (~45 - 90 minutes long).
  - Time will vary based on participants' answers.
  - Interviews should all ask the same questions and the same number of questions.
- Questions should be fairly open ended to allow participants to elaborate as much or as little as desired.
  - Participants are not required to answer questions they do not feel comfortable answering.
- If given consent from the participant, interviews should be recorded for easier analysis.
  - Whether or not the interview is being recorded, handwritten notes should be taken for all interviews.

### *Opening Questions:*

- Could you describe your typical day?
- How old were you when you came here and began working? How long have you been here?
- Where are you originally from?

### *Healthcare and Education Questions:*

- Could you describe any type of education (formal or informal) that you have had?
- If you have children, could you describe any type of education that they have had?
- Could you describe what types of medical resources are available to you (readily and non-readily)?



# What we learned

Information about living conditions in red light districts in India, the Netherlands, Thailand, Brazil and etc.

Sex education in India, including the cultural differences varied across regions.

Drafting lesson plans to promote student engagement and learning.

Ethnographic study tools and heuristic implementation.

Communication across time differences and workplace cultures.



# Personal Reflection

Annabella: “Throughout the past two semesters, this project has given me a renewed appreciation for working hard at work worth doing. I felt that what we contributed to AAWC had a direct positive impact, and that felt amazing. Additionally, I got to work with people I really liked and had a joyful and memorable experience.”

Auriana: "My time with AAWC allowed me to work and learn with wonderful people while gaining valuable experience and insight into the world of educational nonprofits, a major aspect of my intended career.”





# Personal Reflection

David: “Working with AAWC and my CG gave me an opportunity to learn more about a different part of the world!”

Kota: “I was able to learn how to work on projects, collaborating with other members who have different backgrounds. It was challenging sometimes, but I believe we learned a lot from each other.”

Shaun: “I really enjoyed working with my CG members. It was fascinating to look at global issues in an entirely different cultural narrative. The skills I have learned and the experience I have gained shaped myself as well as my understanding into the future”



# Personal Reflection

Erik: “I’m thankful for the time I got to spend working with AAWC and my CG. Through this experience I’ve gained valuable new skills and built relationships that will last a lifetime.”

Isabella: “The most challenging part of our work was staying in active contact with our supervisor despite the major time difference; this was also one of the most rewarding parts of the internship, though, because we were able to work alongside an organization on the other side of the world.”

# A big thank you to...

Apne Aap Women's Collective, and our supervisor Sneha Mahajan

Our wonderful CG facilitators, Damaris and Mariam

The ALA instructional team, Benjie, Clary, and Lisa

The GSP staff, Nita and Ashley

And the entire GSP community :)

