

**Emerging Leaders**

The future of feminism will be shaped by how well the feminists of today prepare the ground for tomorrow. Enter the Emerging Leaders Initiative **2**

**Disruptive DSROI**

How ten years of the Disability, Sexuality and Rights Online Institute influenced and helped transform the global disability rights landscape **3**

**Art + Activism**

The arts can be alchemical – appealing, provoking, influential enough to help push social change. A wrap of our artistic engagement over the year **4**

**Saying Hello**

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A cultural festival gave us another opportunity to do what we love – challenge social perceptions, loosen inhibitions and instigate deeper thought **8**



# reTHINK

ANNUAL REPORT 2023–2024

www.creaworld.org

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear friends,

To many of us, the world this past year has seemed a broken place, when human beings wallowed in hate, war, genocide, deliberate cruelty, uncaring discrimination. At times like this, though, it strikes me that activist organisations like ours turn to the arts, deriving inspiration from thoughtfulness, beauty, imagination and energy. This has been one such year, as you will discover through this unconventional report.

The past year was also one of introspection. We reassessed organisational policy, necessitated in part by our tremendous growth – from 34 employees in 2022 to 56 employees and several consultants who contributed significantly in 2023. This infusion of new talent also helped fuel new initiatives.

First, the Emerging Leaders Initiative, through which eight young feminists joined us for a year-long journey. Other milestones included the publication of “Disability, Sexuality, and Consent...” in *The New York Times*, where again, CREA used art to build an innovative narrative. The publication of *Flaws in Laws* marked a pivotal achievement in knowledge creation, while the new CREA Storytelling Initiative was another intervention in the creative space. Our other major work continued apace, including our flagship Institutes such as SGRI (Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute), for which we revisited and revised the curriculum to address today’s digital world. We are, as always, deeply grateful for the support of our donors, partners and allies. Together, we will work to drive progress, amplify voices, build a more just world and help keep hope alive in what can seem like the darkest of times.

GEETANJALI MISRA

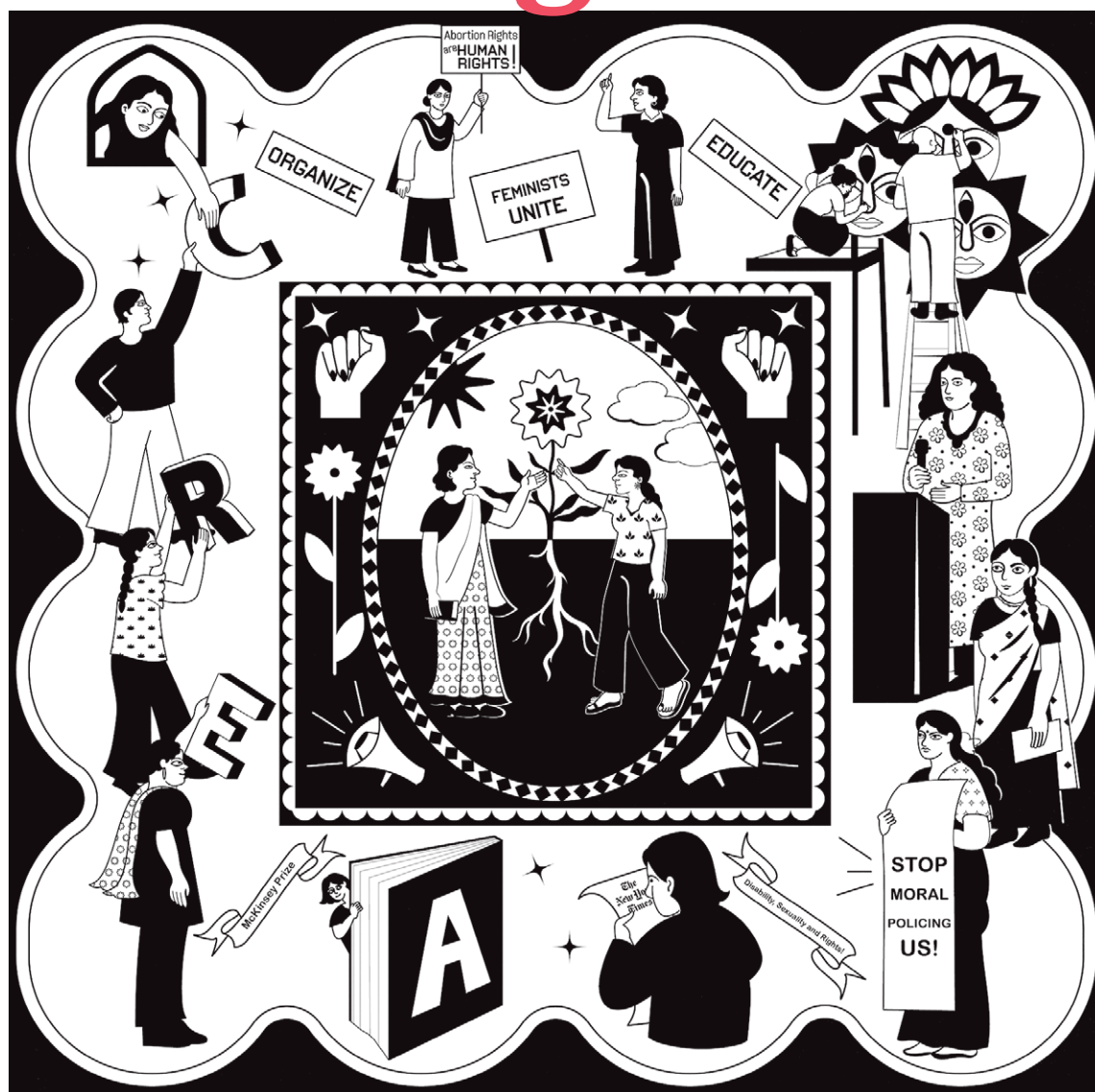
## BUILDING STRENGTH

# Shifting Power

Sometimes, the big story isn’t a screaming headline. Thus ran the story of CREA’s past year: We launched no massive new programmatic works, organised no ambitious events of the scale we have been known to (remember #reconference 2019?). Nevertheless, we will remember the past year as very significant, one in which we invested in activities that called for us to introspect, build and rebuild. A year spent putting ourselves in a strong place to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary resoundingly in 2025.

**BUILDING STRENGTH WITHIN**

With swift organisational growth – staff virtually doubled and program advisors became a big part of our work – came the need to create pillars to support the growth. By the end of 2023-2024, we had put in place (or lined up) no less than four crucial teams to help propel our programmatic plans and ambitions in the years ahead. The Impact & Learning team received further ballast with new members who are crucial to our ongoing initiatives. Our Operations team is now led by a senior advisor along with two full-time team members. Our People and Culture Unit, fully staffed with three team members, now plays a crucial role in fostering a dynamic work environment and ensuring we can continue to achieve our mission and drive impactful initiatives. And we finally have a full-fledged Communications department, with a team lead and two new employees in addition to a consultant. A final key addition included the hiring of a manager for administration & IT.

**BUILDING POWER WITHOUT**

Fretful conversations in recent years about the need to foster intergenerational feminist leadership converted into concrete action last year. The first edition of the Emerging Leaders Initiative saw us welcoming eight young feminists into the organisation for a whole year.

Each was placed with a different unit to learn, absorb, assist and – to our delight – challenge. ‘Old feminists’ engaged with ‘new feminists’, the former sharing knowledge gleaned from experience while the latter infused the organisation with new energy and fresh viewpoints. This exchange of intergenerational

insights will continue into the next year, with a fresh cohort of ‘ELs’. The previous batch goes out into the world with new learnings. And we push forward with our ambition of transferring knowledge and helping shift the balance of power in as many ways as we can think of.

Illustration by Reya Ahmed

## Gifts that Keep on Giving

Generosity travels deep into minds and hearts and communities to effect big change

Mid-year, we received exciting news: that philanthropist MacKenzie Scott had given CREA a generous one-time gift after an intensive due diligence process. Commitment like this allows us to expand our impact, advance our programs and keep striving for systemic change.

## THANK YOU, DONORS!

Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance	Fòs Feminista
Agence Française de Développement	Global Fund for Women
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Global Labor Justice-International Labor Rights Forum
Channel Foundation	International Planned Parenthood Federation
Comic Relief	Medicus Mundi Gipuzkoa
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
Foundation for a Just Society	Open Society Foundations
Ford Foundation	United Nations Population Fund
	Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

INDIA PROGRAMS

RADIO JAMIA

CREA's involvement with Radio Jamia's community radio show led to the production of weekly episodes that discuss gender and sexuality, amplifying the voices of marginalised groups. The second phase saw enhanced engagement with Jamia Millia Islamia students. More than 53 episodes were released.

GENDER & WASH

Engaging approximately 250 participants, CREA organised gender-inclusive sanitation trainings, learning exchanges and a national symposium across India. These events aimed to promote gender-inclusive sanitation practices and policies. New collaborations with four WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) partners in Odisha and a national-level partner were formed.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CHAMBAL MEDIA

Focused on digital safety and visibility for marginalised communities in rural Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar, this partnership led to impactful content production, including a series on WASH policies and Panchayati Raj, alongside shows that humorously address everyday sexism.

SELF ACADEMY

The Sports, Expression, Leadership and Freedom (SELF) Academy took place in Delhi in August 2023 with the theme 'Art of Storytelling and Its Impact in Online Space' and drew 30 participants from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand.

SAYWLM MENTORSHIP WORKSHOP

Held in December 2023 in Bengaluru, this South Asia Young Women's Leadership and Mentoring (SAYWLM) workshop trained young women leaders and girls in feminist mentorship, focusing on dismantling societal hierarchies, stereotypes and prejudices.

SGRI HINDI

A Hindi edition of our flagship Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute (SGRI) was held in Delhi, attracting participants from diverse professional backgrounds and regions.

TWIN SISTERS WITH CAMERAS: AN EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEBALINA MAZUMDER & MANOBINA ROY

CREA hosted the exhibition in collaboration with Lucknow Bioscope and Jadunath Bhavan and supported by PhotoSouthAsia, at the Lalit Kala Academy, Lucknow.



# The Young Feminists' Lab

Intergenerational learning at CREA took wing with the launch of the Emerging Leaders Initiative. Urvashi Dinkar describes the year



from left: Vipasha, Mahvish Shahab, Anvita Parmar, Anamika KH, Sneha Sandez, Urvashi Dinkar, Renuka N, Digamber

In July 2023, CREA chose the first cohort of eight young people for its new programme, the Emerging Leaders Initiative, and I stepped into the world of sexual and reproductive health and rights, advocacy and gender justice. The comprehensive sessions during the week of orientation were followed by extensive conversations about feminist politics in our hotel rooms. By the end of the first day, we all felt familiar to each other. That familiarity was rooted differently, for some in our faces and for some in our way of talking. But the strongest link was perhaps the shared inheritance of dissent that the times had shaped for us. We laughed, bonded and complicated our understanding of feminism.

The word 'co-create' became central. Being introduced to a new

vocabulary, ideas, policies and action while holding collaboration as a core value provided us with fascinating exposure to people and projects. We received invaluable lessons in the root causes of gender-based violence (GBV). Our learning sessions with senior adviser Srilatha Batliwala shed light on feminist leadership and guided us on movement building, while our travels for 16 Days of Activism to partner organisations across India aided us in critically engaging with communities. Digamber recalls how travelling to Muzaffarpur, the town of his roots, aided him in "connecting and engaging with the community" with Akanksha Seva Sadan. Vipasha notes how coordinating and organising several CREA Institutes helped "invigorate and agitate [her] politics through [her] many

interactions with the participants". Our work also constantly pushed us to upskill. Anvita told me how "working on Management Information Software (MIS) increased [her] data analysis and interpretation skills exponentially". From understanding the nitty-gritty of contracting to the breathless (quite literally!) world of logistics, operations and administration became key learning for many of us. And I can't describe the elation I felt when I finally held the book I had typeset for the CREA Initiative.

And so the curtain falls on us, as our year at CREA ends. But we will forever be glad we got to hold each other's hands behind the stage. We pass the baton to the next cohort and we wish them the very best as they too expand their horizons of learning with CREA.

# ETAJLIQMOJ | CLARIFY

Two new knowledge products help make sense of a hard-to-navigate, contested space. The story of what it took to produce the *Flaws in Laws* primer and sourcebook

Through knowledge production, capacity strengthening and advocacy, CREA challenges criminalisation of young people's bodily autonomy and protectionist approaches to their rights. We advocate for non-punitive approaches for preventing, addressing and redressal for gender-based violence.

Sounds heavy and vague? We thought so too.

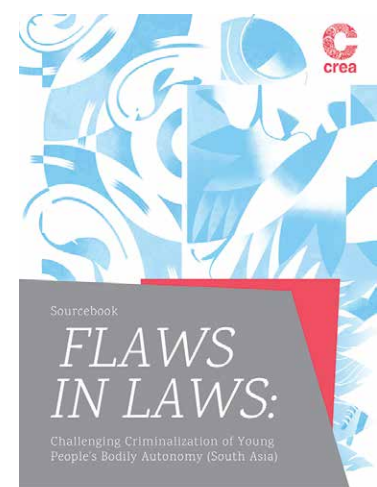
Many resources exist that speak about young people's legal rights and criminalisation as a theoretical concept, but we did not find many that made the connection clearly, cogently and easily. So, we created the *Flaws in Laws South Asia Primer* to unpack these complicated themes in an accessible manner. To illustrate, we used examples of the laws, socio-political contexts and advocacy in five countries of South Asia.

But the process of creating the document was far from easy.

We were compelled to grapple with questions often taken for granted: What is the difference between gender-based violence and gender-based harms? Is protectionism a form of criminalisation or completely different? Who are 'young people' and what do they have to say about all of this?

The primer has answers to all these questions and more. With the help of our *Flaws in Laws* partners in South Asia, we showcased what criminalisation can look like in young people's daily lives, with a focus on their gender expression and identity, sexuality and access to information.

We also shared different ways of challenging criminalisation. Instead of looking at punishment, shame and stigma, we emphasised the need to centre young people's perspectives and decision-making capacities. Also, not to forget about pleasure, desire, curiosity and agency, which are a big part of our



lives and are often left behind in these serious discussions. Excited by the prospect of writing more and anticipating interest in this theme, we also created a *Flaws in Laws* sourcebook with additional references.

Our aim is to change how people think, so they can change how they act. We hope these books help!

# Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday, DSROI!

To call our Disability, Sexuality and Rights Online Institute 'pioneering' would be to invoke a cliché and the truth at once. Sri Lankan disability educator and researcher Niluka Gunawardena is an alumnus of the first edition and now DSROI faculty, co-facilitator and consultant. She spoke to CREA about the Institute's 10-year-long journey, her own growth with the Institute and the remarkable changes in the disability justice landscape over the same period. Excerpts from a conversation:



Niluka, you attended the very first DSROI and now you're faculty... So you have a unique perspective. How have things changed?

Well, at multiple levels. At the level of technology, where we earlier used discussion groups online. We didn't have live lectures. We didn't have Zoom. Material was uploaded and participants engaged with the material and then corresponded with faculty through messaging boards. So, from that to now - having live lectures, having the radical action components, having multiple avenues in which you could engage with other participants and faculty. The way it looks has changed a lot. And Covid also really accelerated that.

For persons with disabilities, this has become easier in some ways?

Over the years DSROI has really [been] fine-tuned. We have sign language interpretation, closed caption cards, CART, image descriptions, just general accessibility protocols. Alumni have also pointed out how they have learned from how DSROI approaches accessibility. It's like a culture that is created through DSROI, and I think it's

very much in line with the ethos and ideas that the original founders of DSROI had.

Things have changed in terms of the disability landscape as well. When you look at the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from 2007-08 onwards, that was a relatively new framework when DSROI was set up. So, talking about the rights-based language of disability was new and pretty radical in many ways because even as a person with multiple disabilities, the way we view disability outside those spaces can be very limiting. Especially in countries where there are strong socio-cultural taboos and stigmas around disability, even conceptualising through a rights-based framework is radical.

Then, the disability arts sector. So, 2009-10 onwards, disability arts was emerging and now it's become a global phenomenon. How to better engage with arts as an advocacy tool is something that is very much on the table. Then, there's the emergence of new scholarship, especially around disability justice as a framework. There's a global North framework of approaching disability and now new scholars and activists coming up from the global South looking at a more decolonial approach. So these changes, in terms of thinking around disability and cross-movement solidarity and intersectionality, have also occurred within this 10-year period.

That's an amazing coincidence of both the changing times and CREA's work... Would you like to say

a little about how this has affected you personally?

Absolutely. I remember when I was a teenager, I didn't know anyone else like me. I remember that sense of, do I even want to identify as a person with a disability? All your life you are told it's something you must overcome, something you must make up for, that you have to be better in order to be equal. So, for me, DSROI was amazing because it was this community of people with disabilities. I was like, oh my goodness, these people are amazing and they're doing amazing work. And do I really need to be like a little turtle hiding in a shell? (laughs) This is such a big shift from a culture of isolation and helplessness. It's not just me sitting here in Sri Lanka. It's regional connections, global connections. Your horizons expand, your ideas of what you can do, or what kind of advocacy can take place, what kind of collaboration can take place.

The other way in which it has been significant is looking at disability, sexuality and rights, that component of sexuality is often not even recognised. The desexualisation of people with disabilities. In countries like Sri Lanka, often when we talk about disability, sexuality is not on the agenda, right? It's denied. Growing up, you're not encouraged to think of yourself as a sexual being. DSROI really disrupts that.

How would you assess DSROI's impact in terms of the larger world?

DSROI is now the leading global space for people with disabilities, especially from the global South, to

come together on this issue of disability, sexuality and rights.

Also for knowledge generation. When we co-create or co-facilitate the Institute, we look at emerging issues. In recent editions, we've had engagements with the anti-gender, anti-rights movement, the situation in Palestine, issues like around the right to maim and carework and there are still areas that we need to build upon. But responding to what is going on in the world through the Institute as well, I think it's also important. For participants having that space to have timely topical dialogues around what is the experience personally and as well as in terms of international events and developments, DSROI is important.

What are your views on the global North/global South dynamic, through the disability lens?

I was thinking of the work of Bhargavi Davar, who passed away recently, who looked at decolonial approaches to disability, especially psychosocial disability and the colonial impact in terms of institutionalisation of persons, especially people with psychosocial disabilities. South-South collaboration and knowledge creation is important. Not to say that there's this big division between the North and the South. But even when we look at a lot of the decolonial approaches to disability, the scholarships have been coming out from Canada, UK, Australia. That's where things like the CREA Initiative become important because the programme created that opportunity for six people to generate knowledge from

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I remember that sense of, do I even want to identify as a person with a disability? All your life you are told that it's something you must overcome, something that you must make up for, that you have to be better in order to be equal.

a southern perspective on intersection of disability justice, sexual and gender diversity, intersex rights.

At the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration this February, what was your big feeling or thought?

There were two things that came to mind. One was around community building and the alumni networks. How do we ensure that this is not just an Institute that people go through for six weeks, and that's the end of that? How do we utilise that aspect of building community? The second thing was about the knowledge and resources that have been generated for DSROI over the past so many years. Even the projects that some people have done, really brilliant end-of-Institute projects and creative outputs. Do we just let it, again, serve a one-off purpose? These are conversations we need to have.

The last thing was how much fun it is to be with other crips! (laughs)

# telling the Untold

CREA's Storytelling Initiative was launched in December 2023. The initiative provided an opportunity for creative feminist storytellers to narrate stories of resilience, of the power of collective action to effect social justice, of the hope and hard work that can lead to change. Five storytellers produced a nuanced understanding of issues faced by structurally excluded groups. Project outcomes have a home on the CREA website, and we hope they will travel widely soon, to other publications in the mainstream.

FIZA RANALVI JHA created a long-form essay about the Dawoodi Bohra women pushing back against female genital mutilation. The essay describes how they reclaimed the term 'survivor', channelling pain into power and personal trauma into a sense of community.

JANHVI SAINI created a graphic essay on the lives of those who call Delhi's Yamuna floodplains home. It tells stories of resilient people, with a focus on the experiences of different generations of women.



NIMMI S painted an essay in water colours, telling the story of her mother, Mini - a Bahujan woman and first-generation learner. The essay describes the evolution of her identity through Kerala's Kudumbashree programme which gave them a feminist impetus.

TANVI JADWANI made a multimedia essay following the unusual journey of female singers from the Malwa region who are now making critical enquiries into 'Kabir Vani'. The women write, compose and perform the poet anew on stages and in the public domain.

SUDIPTA DAS, a queer feminist practitioner, wrote a long-form essay that explores inclusiveness in therapy along intersectional lines. The essay critically examines the experiences and relationships of Dalit-queer individuals in therapy in India.

GLOBAL PROGRAMS



**FLMBARI, EAST AFRICA**  
The Feminist Leadership Movement Building and Rights Institute, held online, had 26 attendees from across Africa. It was led by a senior advisor and the East Africa team, with sessions that covered topics critical to feminist theory and movement building.



**SAYWLM**  
The South Asia Young Women's Leadership and Mentoring (SAYWLM) project culminated in a convening in Kathmandu, Nepal, in May 2023. This gathering of young women leaders and heads of 19 partner organisations celebrated the conclusion of Phase II.

**MSI**  
The Movement Strengthening Initiative (MSI) represents a pioneering effort under the Dutch-funded Women Gaining Ground (WGG) consortium, targeting CREA Institute alumni to foster cross-movement alliances. This initiative brought together activists from various movements to focus on sexual and gender-based violence and included virtual meetings and an immersive workshop in Kenya.



**ART FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**  
Launched by BRAC JGSPH under the OVOF (Our Voices, Our Futures) initiative, the program provided 11 young artists (aged 15-19) a platform to exhibit their works on the topic of structurally silenced women in Bangladesh.

**SELF ACADEMY, UGANDA**  
The second iteration of the Sports, Expression, Leadership and Freedom (SELF) Academy was held in Uganda. The academy successfully engaged 21 young leaders in an eight-day session.

**INFLUENCING OXFAM**  
We supported Oxfam MENA's program on feminist mentoring, which provided online training on feminist mentoring theory and its application.

**WGG MEETING**  
Leads of the Women Gaining Ground (WGG) consortium met with strategic partners from India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. The meeting discussed how to advance addressing gender-based violence through anti-carceral and non-punitive approaches.

# a year of



Clockwise from top left: *Embrace* by Nancy Willis; *underneath* by Kim Kaul; *Dis-cycle* by Val Resh; *Postcards from Karnali* by Priyanka Singh Maharjan



## "Disability, Sexuality and Consent" in the NYT

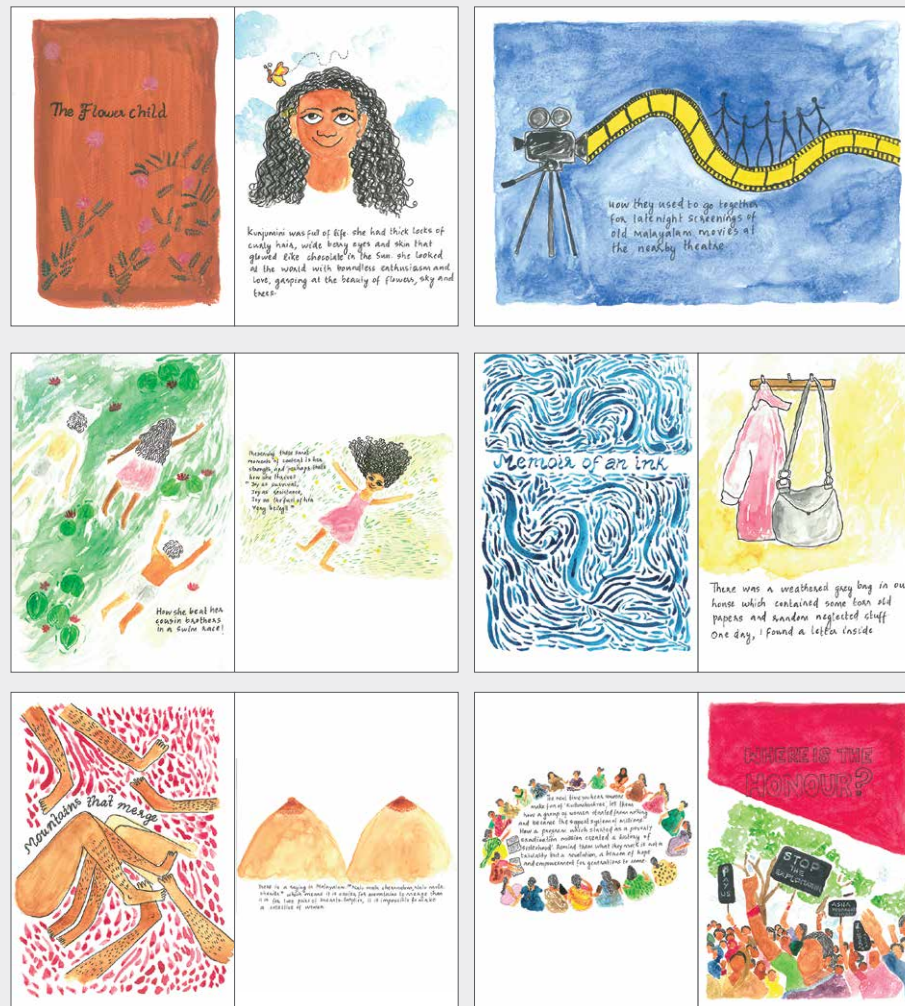
This year, we took our penchant for creating knowledge materials to the next level by reaching deeper into the mainstream. A two-year-long collaboration with T-Brand Studio, the content studio of New York Times Advertising, finally bore fruit, with the publication of "Disability, Sexuality and Consent: How Activists Are Reshaping the Narrative" in the paper. Spotlights the experiences of seven disabled activists and featuring art by disabled artists from the global South, the article aimed to draw the attention of broader audiences to critical but often overlooked issues. With over 39,000 views, we hope the article helped achieve some part of that goal. Just in: The studio's design featuring this art has won Gold at the globally respected Native Advertising Awards 2024!

## Art from the Storytelling Initiative

Two of the five storytellers selected in this Initiative (described on Pg 3) proposed art projects: Nimmi S telling the story of her mother's struggles against caste oppression and poverty through water colours and Janhvi Saini's graphic narrative about those living precariously on the floodplains of the Yamuna river in Delhi. But other remarkable art was generated en route, with Fiza Ranalvi Jha commissioning the artist Reya Ahmed to illustrate her long-form essay on female genital mutilation in India.

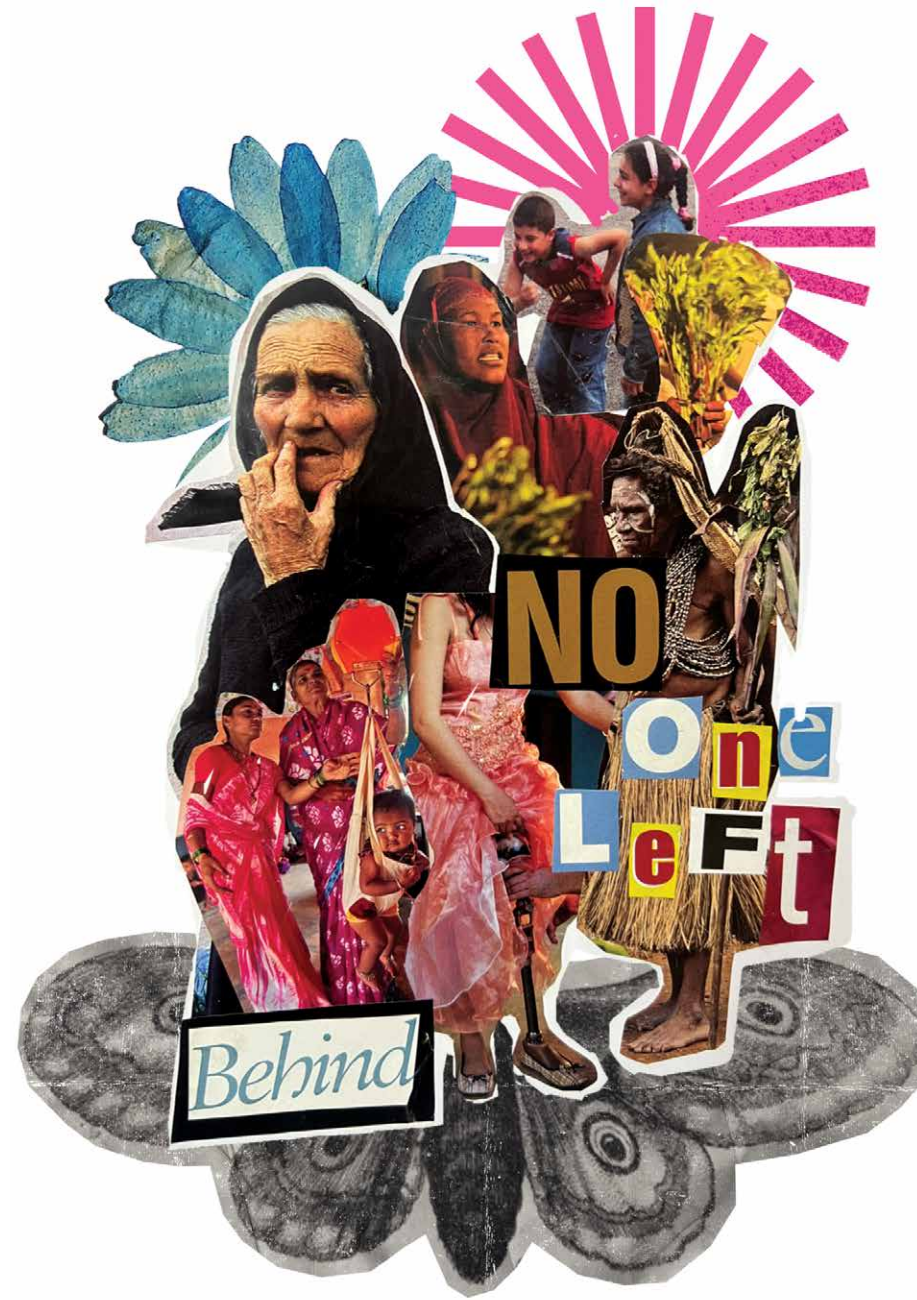


Pages from Nimmi S's project



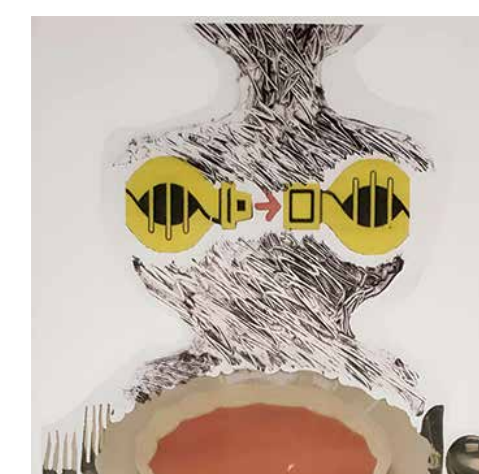
# ARTIVISM

CREA has always believed in art's magical ability to change perceptions and mindsets in order to foster empathy and new understanding. And this year produced a bumper crop



## Our 16 Days of Activism Campaign: Visible/Invisible

During the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence 2023, CREA chose as its theme the tagline 'Visible/Invisible' for its campaign to advocate for inclusive feminist practices. In line with this theme, an online art competition attracted submissions from artists across South and Southeast Asia, including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia. This contest invited submissions of pre-existing artworks that resonated with the theme and saw us selecting 16 contributions from 14 artists. Reflecting the campaign's daily momentum, one artwork was featured each day, enriching the dialogue around visibility and inclusion within the community.



Clockwise from left: *No One Left Behind* by Roel; *United Against Violence* by Mariyeh Mushtaq; *Gul* by Zubair; *Banquet* by Jailekha Zutshi

## CREA CONVERSATIONS

This initiative took advantage of CREA friends, scholars and writers passing through cities where we were based. We seized the opportunity to raise a toast and thoroughly discuss feminist politics and so much more.

**WITH SHOHINI GHOSH**  
In the inaugural session in September 2023 in New York City, Executive Director Geetanjali Misra and long-time CREA collaborator Shohini Ghosh kickstarted what we hope will be a continuing series with "Living the Analog Afterlife". Misra and Prof. Ghosh, a film and media scholar at Jamia Millia University, Delhi reflected in front of an invited audience on life, love and work in a changing world.

**Watch Without Seeing:**  
Cinema and Our Lives  
A Conversation with Shohini Ghosh

Join Geeta Misra, Executive Director of CREA, and Shohini Ghosh, Professor and Media Scholar, as they reflect on cinema as a medium to understand the complexities of the human experience.

When: 19th February, 2024  
7:30 pm: Aperitivo @ drinks  
7:45 pm: Conversation

Where: Palazzo Velabro Via Del Velabro 16, Roma, Italy



**WITH SOHAILA ABDULLI**  
Later the same year, in November and this time in Rome, Misra engaged with another lively voice. Sohaila Abdullali, the author most recently of the book *What We Talk About When We Talk About Rape* and a respected voice on gender-based violence issues, had plenty to discuss with Misra on the subjects of life, writing and the impact of feminist narratives.

**CREA Conversations**

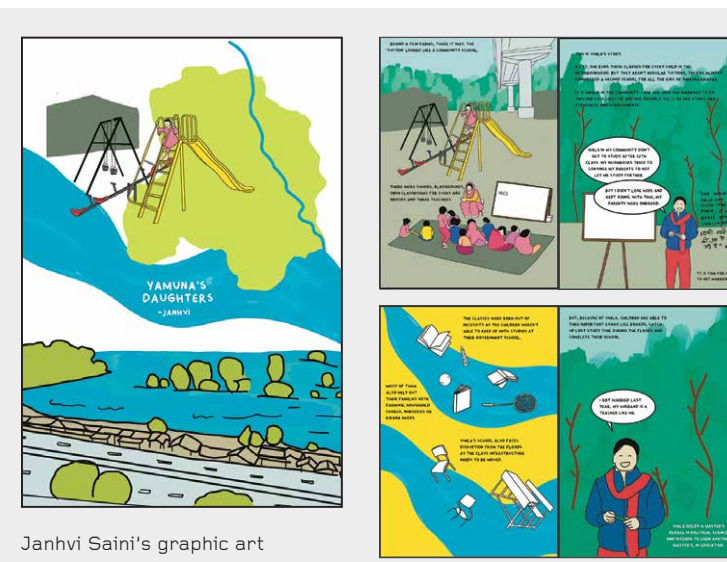
Join Geeta Misra, Executive Director of CREA, and Sohaila Abdullali, a prolific author and global advocate for gender violence issues, for a conversation on life, writing, and the impact of narratives.

Where: 18th, Rome

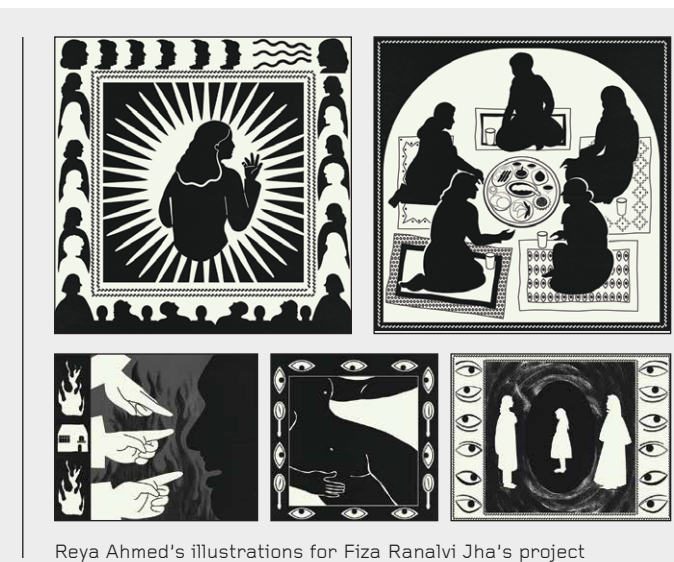
When: 19 November, 2023 6:00PM

Aperitivo and Talk

RSVP by 10 November at [gmisra@creaworld.org](mailto:gmisra@creaworld.org)



Janhvi Saini's graphic art



Reya Ahmed's illustrations for Fiza Ranalvi Jha's project

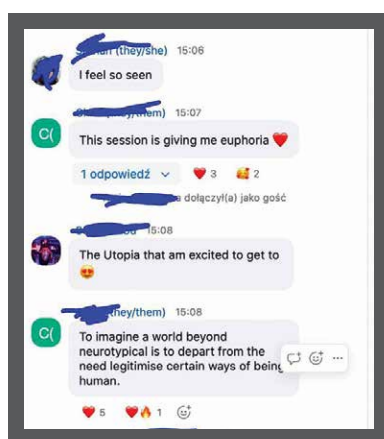
VOICES WITHIN



**AARUSHI MAHAJAN**  
After two years of hard work, I was excited to introduce the Primer on *Challenging Criminalization of Young People's Bodily Autonomy* to the world!



**ADITTI GOGIYAA**  
I successfully coordinated and facilitated board meetings, which ensured seamless communication and logistics for key decision-makers. I hope this contributed to enhanced governance and strategic alignment.



**AGNIESZKA KRÓL**  
What I will remember from this year from CREA's Disability & Sexuality programme is the strength, joy and nuance of political visions of feminist disability rights organising. The initiatives led by individuals, small collectives and various organisations as well as thought leadership and community organising of feminists with disabilities is really making us rethink how we practise feminism.



**AMIT SAXENA**  
I loved working on proposal budgets.



**ANAMIKA KH**  
Advocating for disability rights in co-created, intersectional, feminist and growth-oriented ways – while embracing the joy of it all – was the highlight of my year!



**ANURADHA CHATTERJI**  
This year has been a year of learnings and planning and preparing for new ways of working – all quintessential CREA!



**ANVITA PARMAR**  
I engaged with several diverse and inspiring individuals, fostering a profound dedication to the social development sector.



**ARKINA SINGH**  
Working with Ibtida, a grassroots network of organisations, was a highlight. Not just for the leadership work that we are trying to build but also the peek into laying the foundations for sustainable networks and working around human relationships. This was rewarding and also challenging!



**BABITA SINHA**  
The year was about grassroots reflections, new responsibilities in global initiatives and deep insights to the feminist journey and as a changemaker! This photo is with Hakima Ben (left), taken during a recent visit to Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, Bhuj. This is my picture of the year, as she inspired me to think deeply about what a true feminist looks like, working as she does in a remote village in a corner of the world.

# Meet the



**ATHIRA PURUSHOTHAMAN**  
The opportunities, exposure and support I've received. I've worked with many wonderful people, both inside and outside CREA, who have taught me so much. Being part of the ED unit and the Comms team is surprisingly fun and educational. No Monday Morning Blues: I actually look forward to our Monday catch-up calls!



**AUDREY MUGENI**  
This year has been all about working intentionally with partners in East Africa and managing transitions at the team level in chewable bits.



**DIGAMBER KUMAR**  
I really enjoyed my experience at the Sanatkada Festival in Lucknow. It was all about having delicious food and interacting with people and a rich culture.



**DULAL DAS**  
I love working at CREA. My work is usually at the backend but I love the chaos. I really enjoyed the celebratory lunch we held at Khan Market. I am interested in the meetings that happen.



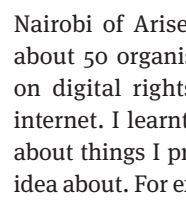
**ELENA GHIZZO**  
I appreciated the coming together and embodiment of collective care and joy at the OVOF Biannual in The Hague 2023. The moments of unwinding together, exploring Amsterdam, enjoying delicious food, the deep and light chats, the togetherness. I felt loved, nourished and learnt immensely.



**FARZANA**  
The love and support that I receive from all CREA staff is so special. The way that CREA treats its employees and how we treat each other is the reason I am here.



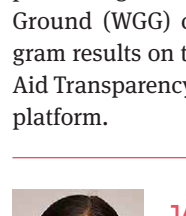
**GEETANJALI MISRA**  
My highlight from last year was attending a meeting in Nairobi of Arise – a meet-up of about 50 organisations working on digital rights, tech and the internet. I learnt so much there, about things I previously had no idea about. For example, the 'real name' policies on Meta and other platforms and how they lead to non-consensual outing of people; how they track users' locations which can lead to stalking, harassment, even physical danger; how private messages, photos and contact details are leaked through data breaches. I came away with the conviction that the only way forward is to demand accountability from these platforms. So, it's exciting for me that we are now midway through planning a campaign that focuses on the digital platform landscape from the global South perspective.



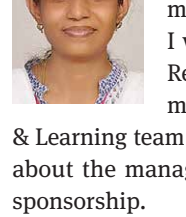
**HARSH MANDLIK**  
The highlight of my year was successfully leading the process of publishing the Women Gaining Ground (WGG) consortium program results on the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) platform.



**JAISY GEORGE**  
As a brand new member of CREA, I worked with the Resource Development and Impact & Learning team and learnt more about the management of fiscal sponsorship.



**JANNAT FAROOQUI**  
My highlight? Being given the freedom to fly and flourish under empathetic leadership!



**KAAINAAT KHAN**  
I loved how the team came together in a very powerful way to create a safe, empowering and impactful space at the DSROI 10th anniversary celebrations.



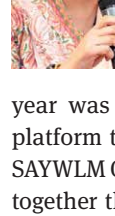
**LAVANYA MEHRA**  
Space for reflection is a feminist agenda! A key highlight of the year was the intergenerational platform that was created in the SAYWLM Convening that brought together the young women leaders and heads of organisations of 20 partner organisations from Bangladesh, India and Nepal. It was an opportunity for younger feminists to state their aspirations and ideas around strengthening feminist leadership and for the more senior heads of organisations to share their organisational legacies and their movement journeys. It allowed an exploration of who we are in our feminist journeys and how we can together strengthen our feminist ties.



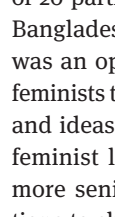
**MARY SIRENGO**  
My favourite memory? OVOF at the CREA office [in Delhi] – what a beautiful evening.



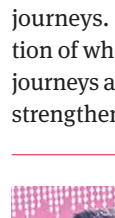
**NAYANTARA PATEL**  
Epiphanic moments of the past year, in no particular order: Listening to Srilatha on "leading from behind" and recognising aspects of myself in her life story; realising I had actually gathered the first cohort for the Storytelling Initiative; receiving super-patient Disability 101 lessons from Agnieszka; being persuaded by Geeta to take on a challenging new role and then being gifted a great team to start it with.



**NISHA RANI**  
Observing abortion services at the district hospital in Mahoba (above); and a learning exchange visit in Odisha at a waste recycling unit.



**RENUKA NAIK**  
Having a space for collaborative learning, unlearning and relearning to build spaces of healing and collective resilience in the light of shrinking civic space.



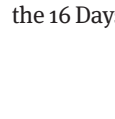
**SEEMA JAIN**  
Enhancing the capacity of Assistant Managers from the Water Corporation of Odisha to strengthen gender inclusivity to program in Bhubaneswar.



**PADMA DEOSTHALI**  
The conversation I had with leaders of movements during the 16 Days' Visible/Invisible campaign.



**PIYUMI SAMAWEERA**  
This past year has been one of revelations for me – and CREA has contributed significantly to what I have discovered and learned.



**SHALINI SINGH**  
The best part of my year was talking about love. I realised that we spend so much time on negative experiences like discrimination, violence, control etc. So, thinking about love, romance, care and support – and working and writing on it for the Sanatkada Festival – was very refreshing. Being in a different mind space and engaging with multigenerational audiences was an enriching experience.



**MARIANUS BAGHWAR A.K.A. MANOJ**  
CREA has really good office rules. And it feels so good to work here!



**PRAJESH SJB RANA**  
The highlight of the year for me has been our work with art and activism. Working on the artistic side of projects like our collaboration with T Brand Studios for the *New York Times* and the 16 Days of Activism campaign was particularly rewarding. I was fortunate to receive tremendous support from a wonderful new team, whose creativity and dedication have been instrumental and immensely inspiring.



**SHALINI SINGH**  
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# Village!

It really does take one.

CREA staffers and programme advisors reflect on the highlights of their year – moments, days or experiences that served as a reminder of why they do the work they do. Some offer photos to match



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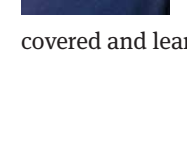
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**PIYUMI SAMAWEERA**  
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**RAISA PHILIP**  
One of the centrestones of movement building should be the practice of feminist accountability; the CREA Count Me In! South Asian partners co-created a feminist accountability dialogue series (online and in-person) exploring the practice of feminist accountability for sustainability of movements within challenging political environment and reshaping inherent power relationships within MEL practices.



**RENUKA NAIK**  
Having a space for collaborative learning, unlearning and relearning to build spaces of healing and collective resilience in the light of shrinking civic space.



**SEEMA JAIN**  
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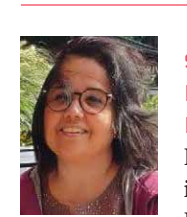
**SHALINI SINGH**  
The best part of my year was talking about love. I realised that we spend so much time on negative



**SNEHA SANDEZ**  
The highlight of the year for me was the opportunity to interact and work with partnering organisations from South Asia and East Africa, working on women's rights, LGBTQI+, sex workers, and disability rights at the intersection of caste, class, religion, language etc.



**SOUMYA TIWARI**  
Facilitating a discussion on gender integration in sanitation, with WASH partners from different parts of India, during our learning exchange visit to Trichy, Tamil Nadu.



**SUDIPTA MUKHOPADHYAY**  
Participating in the OVOF Biannual at The Hague, meeting the OVOF team for the first time and agreeing on our collective plans for 2024.



**SUSANA FRIED**  
Nurturing new initiatives!



**SRI LATHA BATLIWALA**  
Completing the research and report on Feminist Allyship, and its Principles and Practices, was the greatest achievement of the past year for me! Proud to add one more unique knowledge resource to CREA's collection of feminist knowledge materials!



**TARUNA PAL**  
Empowering efficiency through streamlined IT processes and user-friendly guidelines.



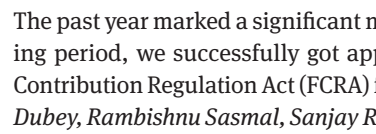
**URVASHI DINKAR**  
Typesetting for the CREate Initiative was a highlight. It was an honour to design VINO's book, *I Am I*, about their journey as an intersex and disabled person and wonderful to meet them at the DSROI 10th Anniversary.



**VALLERI SHARMA**  
Organising the SELF Academy around Digital Storytelling was amazing. It was so much fun watching people dive into different ways of storytelling, from acting to narrating.



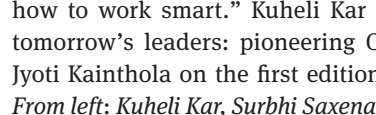
**ZIYAN AHMED**  
Learning about rural journalism from two dedicated journalists of *Khabar Lahariya*, Shyamkali and Geeta! (Ziyan is at the left.)



**THE FINANCE TEAM**  
The past year marked a significant milestone. Following a three-year waiting period, we successfully got approval for the renewal of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) for the next five years. From left: *Diksha Dubey, Rambishnu Sasmal, Sanjay Rana, Rahul Prajapati, Nityanand Bhatt*



**THE LOGISTICS TEAM**  
"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. The strength of the team is each member. The strength of each member is the team." From left: *Dulal Das, Sushma Luthra, Manoj, Rupsa Mallik, Anu Verma, Lukas*



**THE PEOPLE & CULTURE TEAM**  
"Championing inclusivity: ensuring equal opportunities and accessibility for all." *Surbhi Saxena* on the reasonable accommodation policy. "Allocating time and resources well: how to work smart." *Kuheli Kar* on the timesheet system. "Shaping tomorrow's leaders: pioneering CREA's emerging leaders initiative." *Jyoti Kainthola* on the first edition of the Emerging Leaders initiative. From left: *Kuheli Kar, Surbhi Saxena, Jyoti Kainthola*

experiences like discrimination, violence, control etc. So, thinking about love, romance, care and support – and working and writing on it for the Sanatkada Festival – was very refreshing. Being in a different mind space and engaging with multigenerational audiences was an enriching experience.



**VIPASHA**  
Helping organise the Feminist Leadership Movement Building and Rights Institute Hindi 2024. From finalising the participants to communicating logistics, I fully experienced what it's like to conduct an Institute. For a whole month, I made notes before I went to bed and cross-checked every list. It all seemed worth it when participants reflected on their experiences, took initiatives, debated during meals and shared the learnings from the Institute. That is when I truly realised the impact of my own work.



**ZEBAN KAZI**  
Being part of the formation of such a great team, working together smoothly, and both receiving and giving support have been the highlights of my year.



**ZIYAN AHMED**  
Learning about rural journalism from two dedicated journalists of *Khabar Lahariya*, Shyamkali and Geeta! (Ziyan is at the left.)

**THE YEAR IN NUMBERS**

**TRAINING SESSIONS**  
107  
(55 IN PERSON, 52 ONLINE)

**PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED TRAINING**  
2,415  
(1,290 IN PERSON, 1,125 ONLINE)

**CREA INSTITUTES**  
9  
(4 IN PERSON, 5 ONLINE)

**PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED THE INSTITUTES**  
328  
(117 IN PERSON, 211 ONLINE)

**KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS**  
193

**IN-PERSON PUBLIC EVENTS**  
12

**PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED THE EVENTS**  
32,549

**ONLINE EVENTS CONVENED**  
15

**PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED ONLINE EVENTS**  
610

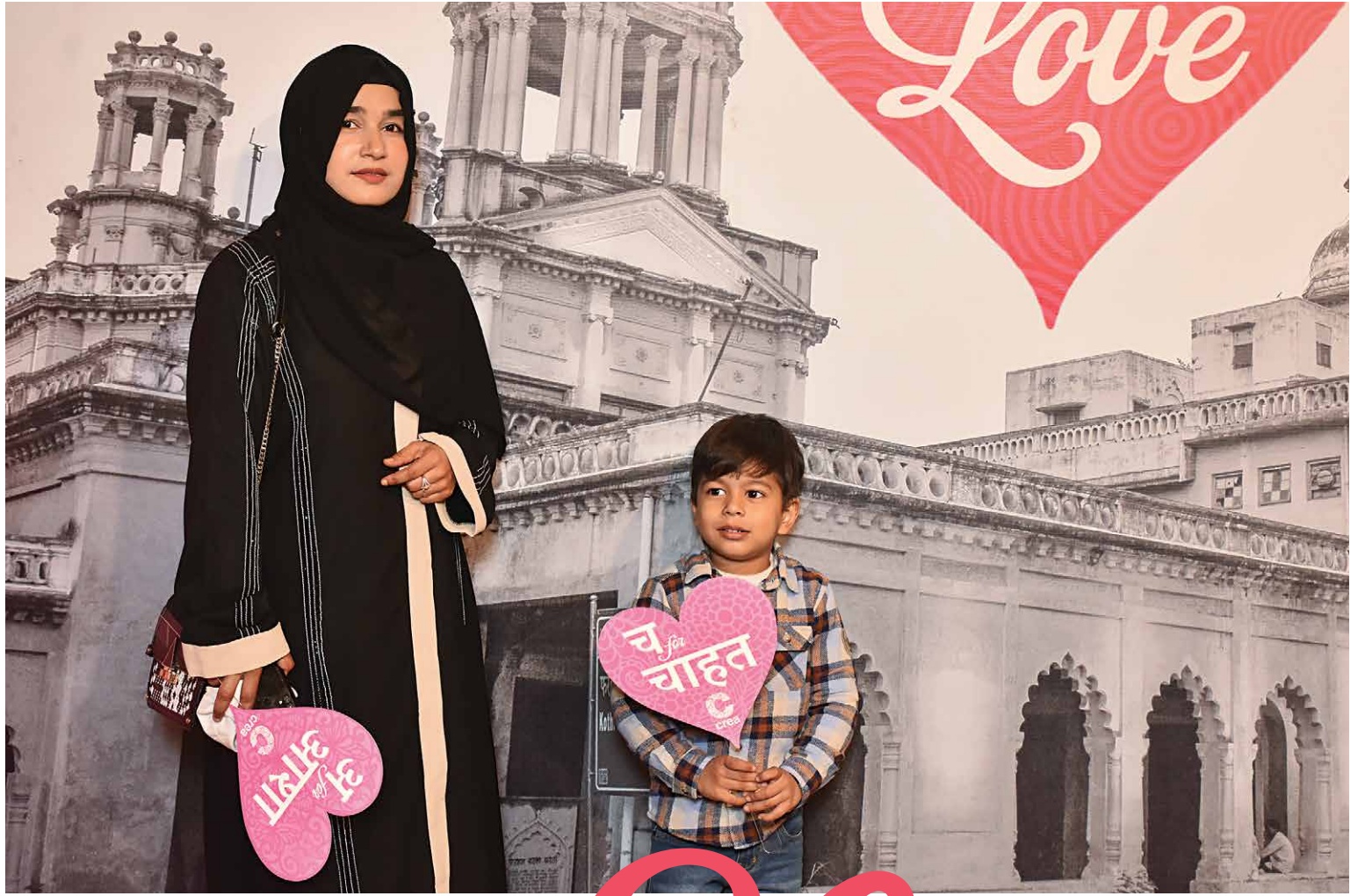
**SUBGRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS**  
31

**INDIVIDUAL GRANTS**  
18

**PROGRAMS INVOLVED IN CO-CREATION**  
45

**SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS AND VIEWS**  
1,007,699

**APPEARANCES BY STAFF AT EXTERNAL EVENTS**  
46

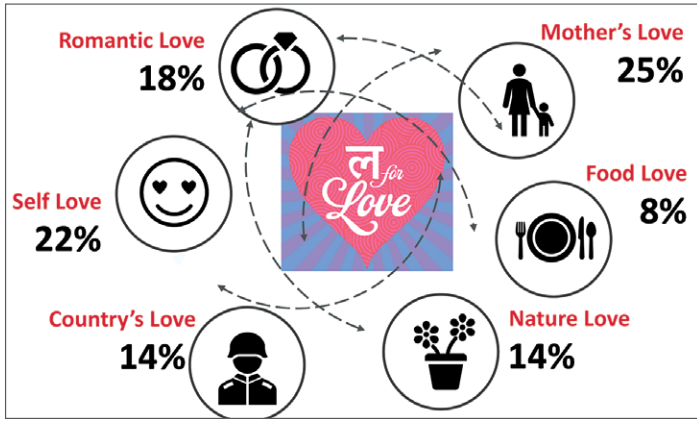


## A photobooth of

This year, too, CREA travelled to Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh for the annual Mahindra Sanatkada cultural festival in February. The festival chose 'Aashiqana', or love, as its theme this year. And we responded in kind, by developing our 'L for Love' campaign

# Love

## against a backdrop of hate



hesitate: "Love is a private affair", "We should not talk about love in front of elders" and "What will people think?"

Other memorable lines from the survey: "What are we all...just love and stardust", "For me, love is about butterflies in the stomach", "Love is both intimacy and boundaries", "Love is selfish...but love only becomes love with consent" and "Who says love doesn't happen in old age? Mango is no fun unless it is flabby!"

The majority of those who agreed to fill up the survey (36%) were in the age group of 15-25, followed by those aged 25-40 (20%). Athira Purushothaman, a CREA staff member, summed up: "My favourite moment was when Rahul [his wife]. There's great comfort in knowing that there are good men out there who think of love beyond podcasts, breathing techniques, bitcoin, and intermittent fasting. And then there was Valleri, who turned the photobooth into the event's heartbeat. She walked around asking people what love meant to them. Everyone loves love, but defining it is hard. People stood at our booth and had discussions. We asked singles, young couples, elderly couples, newlyweds, even kids. The answers were a beautiful mess of definitions and emotions."

Two innovative photobooths, featuring a traditional Lucknow backdrop and colourful material, beckoned to curious visitors to get themselves photographed for free. Giggling students, interested activists, wistful singles, and in-love couples thronged our booths. Holding colourful fans of their choice inscribed with letters from the Hindi and English alphabet, they were photographed professionally and given large photos to take home and be reminded of love. Call them love letters from CREA – our joyful way of doing our bit to foster love in a time of hate.

Our Impact & Learning team conducted an audience survey, collecting and analysing 267 responses from the approximately 2,000 people who visited the booth. Respondents were overwhelmingly female (64%). To the question 'Do you hesitate to talk about love?', 78% per cent said they didn't. Some explanations from those who did

प्यार पर क्यों बवाल करे हिंसा पर सवाल

अ. आदले अफिकार आरजू आसा आशिकी आदाय अनुभव व. पुरुषा सगमति संवेदना सहायोग समान साथ समानता ल. लपज विहाज विहाजक न. निर्णय नजदीकियों नास नजर क. कभीपर कबिरा कास काविल कुर्बान र. रिता रोमांस रू. रुद्रमिन्न स. स्वाइय स्वास खुस खुवदुल स्वास खुची श्याल ग. गुजरिया मुलाव मेर व. वापस बेरिजक वेदद वेरिजक बेमिरालन बेरिजक वेरिजकक ह. ह. हौसला शिमत हदे हम्-नुस हसरत हसरफर व. मुवाद भजत मिजाज भर्ती व. पाहत पवन पुनीती पुणी द. दावय दीवाना दर्द दिल्लीगी ज. जवान जुदाय जुदुन जन्वा जुन जिनगी व. युवा यारे यारियों ई. इच्छा इमोनान इबाजत ईबादत व. वादा वदन विभिन्नता विविध वरिदियों ज. सति सौम विद्वान सावरी फ. केसला फिलहाल रिता फना फुररान प. पडवान परिवय प्यार पसियार परवाना व. तमसा तारीक सरस उ. उलटून उजो उमीद उदास

crea www.creaworld.org

# GOVERNANCE *and* FINANCE



## CREA'S BOARD

CREA's Board serves the organisation in its journey towards achieving its vision and mission, by facilitating programs and ensuring compliance and sustainability. CREA's Board met in person in India and virtually in New York in March 2024.

### CREA GLOBAL

- Shilpa Phadke PRESIDENT
- Bindi Aibara SECRETARY
- Jyoti Makhijani TREASURER
- Ajay Agrawal MEMBER
- Geetanjali Misra MEMBER

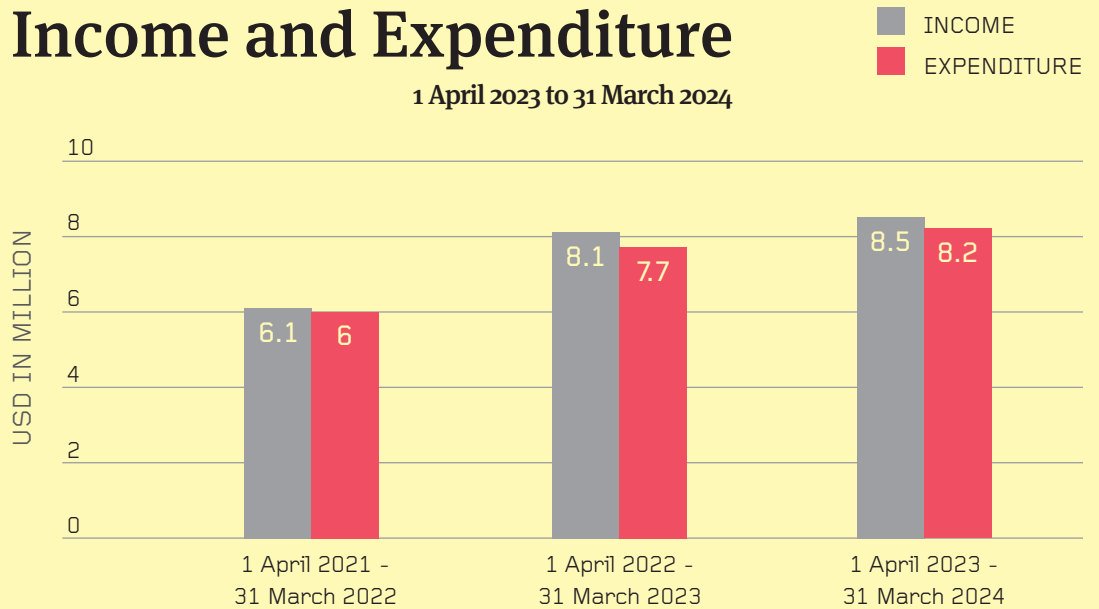
### CREA INDIA

- Kanchan Pamnani PRESIDENT
- S Santanam Swaminadhan SECRETARY
- Jyoti Makhijani TREASURER
- Anindya Hajra MEMBER
- Geetanjali Misra MEMBER
- Jasmine Lovely George MEMBER
- Paramita Kundu MEMBER
- Renu Addlakha MEMBER

This is a summary of our activities. To know more about our programs, sign up for our mailing list at [www.creaworld.org](http://www.creaworld.org). Also, do write in to [commsteam@creaworld.org](mailto:commsteam@creaworld.org) to tell us what you think of this Annual Report.

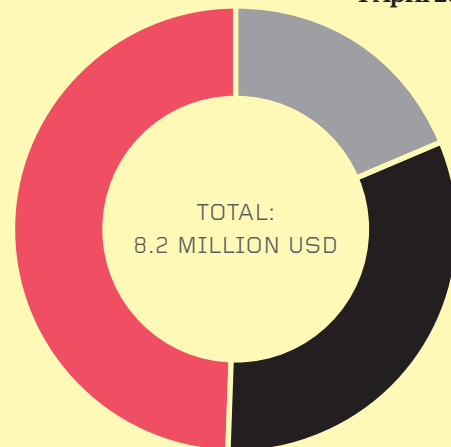
## Income and Expenditure

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024



## Allocation of Expenses

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024



- PROGRAM COSTS: 49.2%
- INDIRECT PROGRAM COSTS: 18.8%
- ALLOCATION TO PARTNER ORGANISATIONS: 32%

## Legal Compliance

### FCRA RENEWAL

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act registration certificate in India is mandatory for NGOs to receive foreign funds. This certificate gets renewed after every five years. CREA India submitted the renewal application form to the Ministry of Home Affairs in early July 2021.

Following a three-year waiting period, we successfully got approval for the renewal of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act for the next five years. This achievement underscores our commitment to compliance and enhances our ability to continue impactful work.