

A JOURNEY OF DIALOGUE, LEARNING, AND COLLECTIVE CARE

STORY OF JAGRITI ACHARYYA CHOWDHURY FROM INDIA



Jagriti Acharyya Chowdhury is participant in one of Mutual Learning Programs. In daily life she collaborates with Know Disaster Magazine in India, an organization that aims to reduce risks for children and their families.

Here is her story:

Building the Women's Resource Centre: A Journey of Collective Imagination

This story is not only about a destination, but about the dialogic and collaborative journey that brought it into being. What began as a shared intention to explore and learn, evolved into the co-creation of a Women's Resource Centre in Assam—a space envisioned not by one, but by many.

Our journey started with listening. From Panikhaiti to Sonapur, Bongaigaon to Kokhrajhar, Dibrugarh to Golaghat and Nalbari, we moved not as experts, but as fellow travelers, carrying questions rather than answers. In each community, we sat with women, adolescent girls, local leaders, and partners, engaging in conversations that invited trust, vulnerability, and imagination.

We asked, "What would a space centred on women's voices, wisdom, and leadership look like?" The responses were not immediate blueprints but unfolding dialogues. Each story shared, each silence held, helped shape what the Women's Resource Centre could become. The process was inherently collaborative—not just in outcomes, but in the spirit of shared reflection and co-creation that sustained it.

These were not formal consultations but moments of deep human connection. Feedback became openings: a misspelled name was not a mistake to correct alone, but an invitation



A JOURNEY OF DIALOGUE, LEARNING, AND COLLECTIVE CARE

STORY OF JAGRITI ACHARYYA CHOWDHURY FROM INDIA

to slow down, to be more present, to care more deeply. Through such moments, the fabric of the initiative grew stronger.

When the day of the gathering arrived, it was not a culmination, but a continuation of many conversations. Everything—from charts and materials to the welcoming of guests—was done collectively. Welcoming people at airports and stations became rituals of relationship-building, acts of mutual hospitality.

Inside the consultation space, something alive took root. Voices rose not in competition but in resonance. Stories were shared, not performed. A young boy, included in the gathering, stood to tell how his mother saved him from a burn incident. In that moment, the Centre became more than an idea—it was a space of recognition, rooted in everyday love and resilience.

Children were not just present; they were part of the dialogue. Their inclusion reminded us that imagining a space for women also meant envisioning intergenerational care. And as the event came to a close, the small gestures—chocolates handed out, hugs exchanged—underscored that trust and transformation are built through relationship.

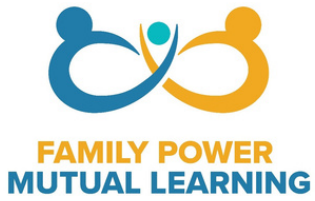
This journey to co-create the Women's Resource Centre stands as a reflection of what becomes possible when we lead with openness, listen deeply, and imagine in community.

A Parallel Journey: Dialogues on the Move

Alongside the building of the Women's Resource Centre, another journey unfolded—this one set on the move, across railway platforms and shared compartments.

Our travel to New Delhi began with simple acts of care: farewells from family, shared laughter with friends, and the anticipation of being together in dialogue. The train became more than a mode of transport—it became a space for encounter. Musicians, teachers, caseworkers, and children shared the compartment, and with them, stories began to flow.

When we saw children sweeping the train floor, we didn't offer judgment—we asked, "Where is your home?" Their answer, "Railgate No. 3," revealed a world invisible to many, yet real and immediate. That moment was not an inquiry but a meeting—a recognition of presence.



A JOURNEY OF DIALOGUE, LEARNING, AND COLLECTIVE CARE

STORY OF JAGRITI ACHARYYA CHOWDHURY FROM INDIA

Further along the journey, a conversation with army personnel reminded us of shared concern. Their reflections on children at railway stations like Bongaigaon and Patna stirred collective responsibility, reminding us that awareness must be carried forward into action.

At Ittawah Station, we met poets whose questions deepened our own: What does it mean to accompany children in institutional settings? How do we remain rooted in our intentions? These shared reflections enriched our journey and strengthened our resolve.

Arriving in Delhi, we faced the unknown together. From finding our way through the city to being welcomed by government officials, caregivers, and community members, we experienced hospitality and openness in unexpected places.

In shared workshops, we explored counseling and healing as relational processes. Laughter sessions reminded us of joy as a resource. Field visits, storytelling, puppetry, and shared meals made space for honest exchange, for connection, for healing.

Photographs taken during these days became more than memories—they were testaments to the relationships formed. As we returned to Assam, we carried not only insights, but commitments: to remain in dialogue, to walk alongside, and to keep creating spaces of care and possibility.

Whether in village halls or moving trains, these stories intertwine. Both journeys remind us that healing and transformation arise not from authority, but through shared presence, careful listening, and collective imagination..

Whether on the rails, in a workshop, or in village halls, this journey was never about delivering knowledge. It was about being with. About staying open to what emerges when we hold space for pain, for play, for dreams, and for dialogue.

Healing, we've learned, doesn't flow from authority—it grows through connection. And transformation, when shared, becomes not only possible, but inevitable.