



# Digital Storytelling Workshop

28th January to 3rd February 2021 in Maharashtra by  
SANGRAM and Point of View as part of the  
VAMP Institute series 2021

From the 28th of January till the 3rd of February 2021, participants across the National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW) were part of a Digital Storytelling Workshop. The workshop was held with groups of female sex workers in three locations- Pune (Saheli Sangh), Jalgaon (Swadhar Sangh) and Sangli (VAMP) over Zoom.



Organised by SANGRAM and Point of View as part of the VAMP series 2021. The workshop was aimed at providing resources and knowledge to members of the community to create and present their voice and stories effectively using technological skills and tools available around them. Point of View is a Mumbai based organisation that has been doing different training workshops and training modules with a variety of communities across India. Their digital storytelling workshop has been in the works since 2015. The workshop, according to POV 'sounds fancy and high-tech, but it's simple and low-tech'- POV believes and practices that anyone can tell digital stories, regardless of age, education, technological comfort. And it has the power to change lives, including that of storytellers and the communities in which they live and work. Through the hands-on workshop, the participants were trained in the participatory media making process and learnt that digital storytelling is most widely used to report and reflect on personal incidents and stories that communities want to narrate themselves. The 6 day workshop, facilitated by trainers from POV supports the participants from start to finish and provides the equipment the participants need for the workshop. The trainers of the workshop are highly experienced professionals in their own fields within storytelling and digital media;



Hansa Thapliyal is a filmmaker, writer and artist whose works have tried to move between different ways of telling stories. An Film and Television Institute of India Pune alumna, her diploma film, *Jee Karta Tha*, travelled to festivals in India and abroad.



Lalita Iyer is a journalist, writer and blogger based in Mumbai, India. She is the author of two books, *"I'm pregnant, not terminally ill, you idiot"* and *"The Boy Who Swallowed A Nail And Other Stories"*, as well as writing two blogs: *Chickwit* and *Mommylightly*.



Diya Correa is a filmmaker based in LA and Mumbai. She is currently studying Film and TV Production at the University of Southern California. Her short films have won awards at local and international film festivals. Outside of school she works as an editor, an animator, producer (for short form content) and director.

Here is a breakdown of what happened during the workshop, and how the participating members experienced and took forward their learnings;

## Day 1

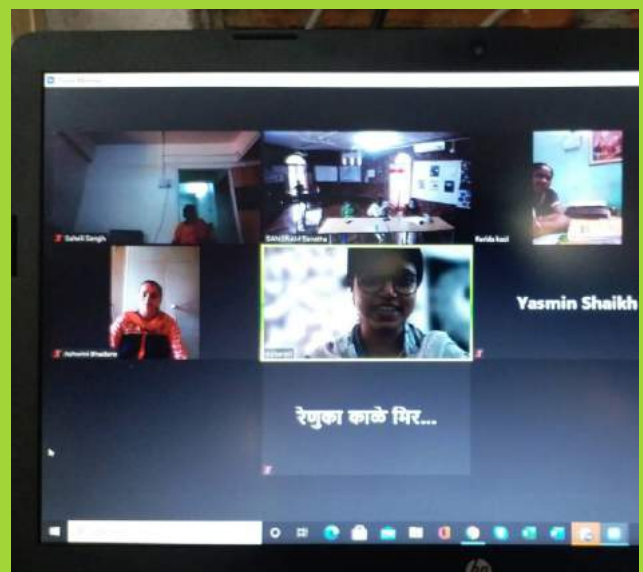
On day one, after a circle of introductions, the participants were asked to reflect on how COVID 19 affected them individually in the past year to find an idea to talk about in their story which they then shared with the group. All the participants presented deeply emotive stories, embellished with details that moved each other in the room. It was during this time, that the trainers explained that these stories, which already were so complete could be said in different ways with the use of technology; through music, film, photos and shown on computers, phones and tablets. Through digital stories, storytellers can catch the attention of the listener/reader and take them to the heart of the story.



These ideas were further developed off-session, aided by mentors from Point of View to create the first sentence and title of the story. The participants learnt what reflecting on their stories meant, and how they could develop these ideas to make meaningful stories to talk about their lives on various platforms. They further learnt how they could title their stories and follow a theme that was born out of one incident/memory from the past.

## Day 2

The participants returned on the second day with titles ready to take their stories further. They were shown two films from members of their own community, and then led into a discussion on how to structure their story. Through the films, they learnt that a story needs to be built gradually and that a story is like unwrapping a present, or even peeling an onion. The participants worked on writing their own character dialogues, editing, and writing detailed descriptions. They were further advised on how to record voice recordings in optimum conditions, and how to ensure that the voice recordings they create are structured, clear and accurate. Jayashree, a participant, at the end of the day said- 'I have realised that for my audience to feel my pain, I need to show them that emotion of pain as well'. The second day ended with a homework assignment to send completed stories to the mentors of the group.

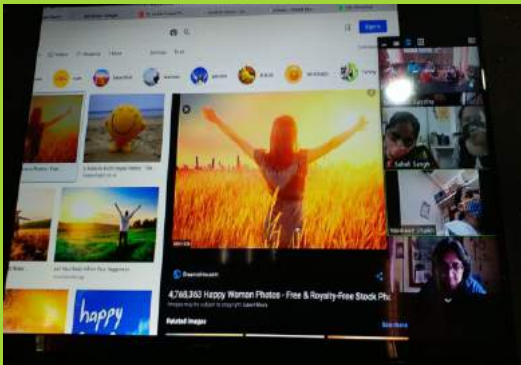


## Day 3

On the third day, participants were shown two films that they analysed with the help of their mentors to learn storytelling through additional elements like sound effects, background scores, and effects. They were then asked to add sound effects, emotions and pauses to their stories as part of their homework. Ayeesha, a participant reflects, 'through this workshop, I have learnt how to make my story by expressing my feelings, through emotion and sound balance. As I start sending voice notes, I remember rehearsals of the films we have made and feel a similar feeling of being the character of the story I am saying'.

## Day 4

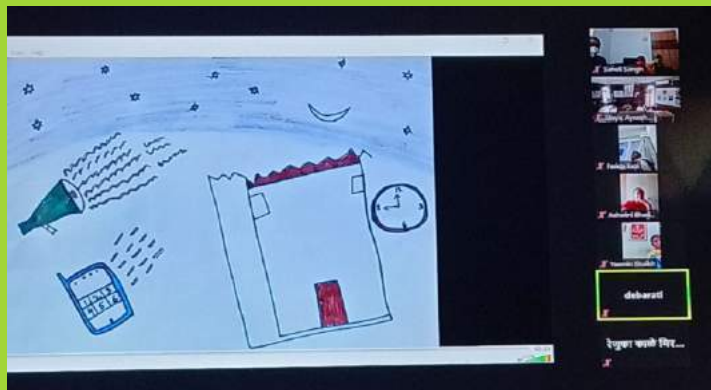
On day four, participants were taught how to present their stories. The larger group was split into two break out rooms on Zoom- one that was a picture group and one that was an art group. The picture group was taught how to collect and capture pictures and videos through phone cameras while keeping the structure of their stories in mind. They were later asked to collect pictures to match the stories they were working on off-session, even if they weren't clicked by themselves. The collection activity also taught the participants the importance of colour when it comes to collecting pictures to reflect a certain story or mood. Maya, a participant said 'I learnt to find out pictures according to my story which represent my story and also learnt to use from app. I started collecting pictures for my story'. Those in the art group were taught colour and style within art to create images that would represent their stories, which they completed over homework for the day.



Art Group



Picture Group

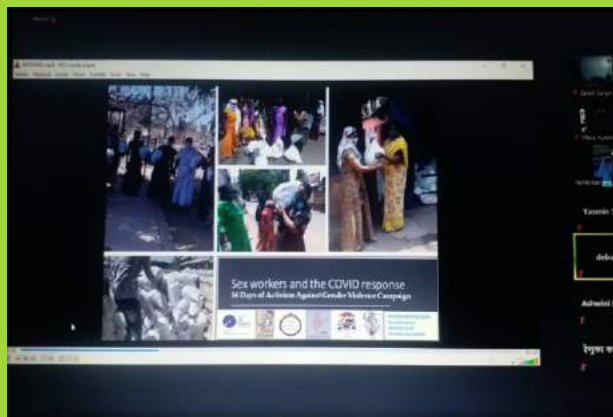


## Day 5

On day five, the participants brought their created art and pictures that were collected on the day before to illustrate parts of their story. This exercise was followed by short calls with mentors in order to guide the participants through the process on how to complete their work. The trainers used Bollywood music and videos to illustrate how entire sequences bring the story forward in a film- and the participants related to them greatly.

## Day 6

On the sixth and final day of the workshop, all the participants were asked to present their work to the facilitators and larger group. The mentors offered support in furthering the stories that were created during the group to add more elements like background sound, effects and artistic touches. All the participants shared feelings of strength and power through the stories they created at the workshop, which can be summarised through this statement by a participant- 'I understood through this workshop, what power strong storytelling has, and what it can do for my voice to reach far and wide. I can support my sisters more while also taking control of my own story'.



## Some of the feedback from the participants include;

- “We always have many things to tell and have different feelings/ emotions too. This training helps in giving words to it”.
- “Drawing part seems difficult but Vaishali madam taught me and built my Confidence”.
- “It is a very new thing, I easily learn so I like it very much”.
- “It is something that will boost me to go ahead. I will reach one step forward in assessing community”.
- “I felt happy knowing that it was not too difficult to show my stories on a screen”
- “I have learned how the structures work in our story to make it beautiful, how is the way of voice recordings, what to cut, how to do editing and add or paste in my story”.
- “Editing can be used in editing interviews also”.
- “Though I did not learn editing, we got an idea I like to use mobile and I will try to use editing apps”.
- “We can raise our voice using our stories also”.

## List of participants

Priya      Rani      Bharati      Renuka      Maya      Ashwini      Pushpa  
Vanita      Deepa      Jayshri      Sanghita      Ayeesha      Farida      Yasmin



Swadhar Sangh