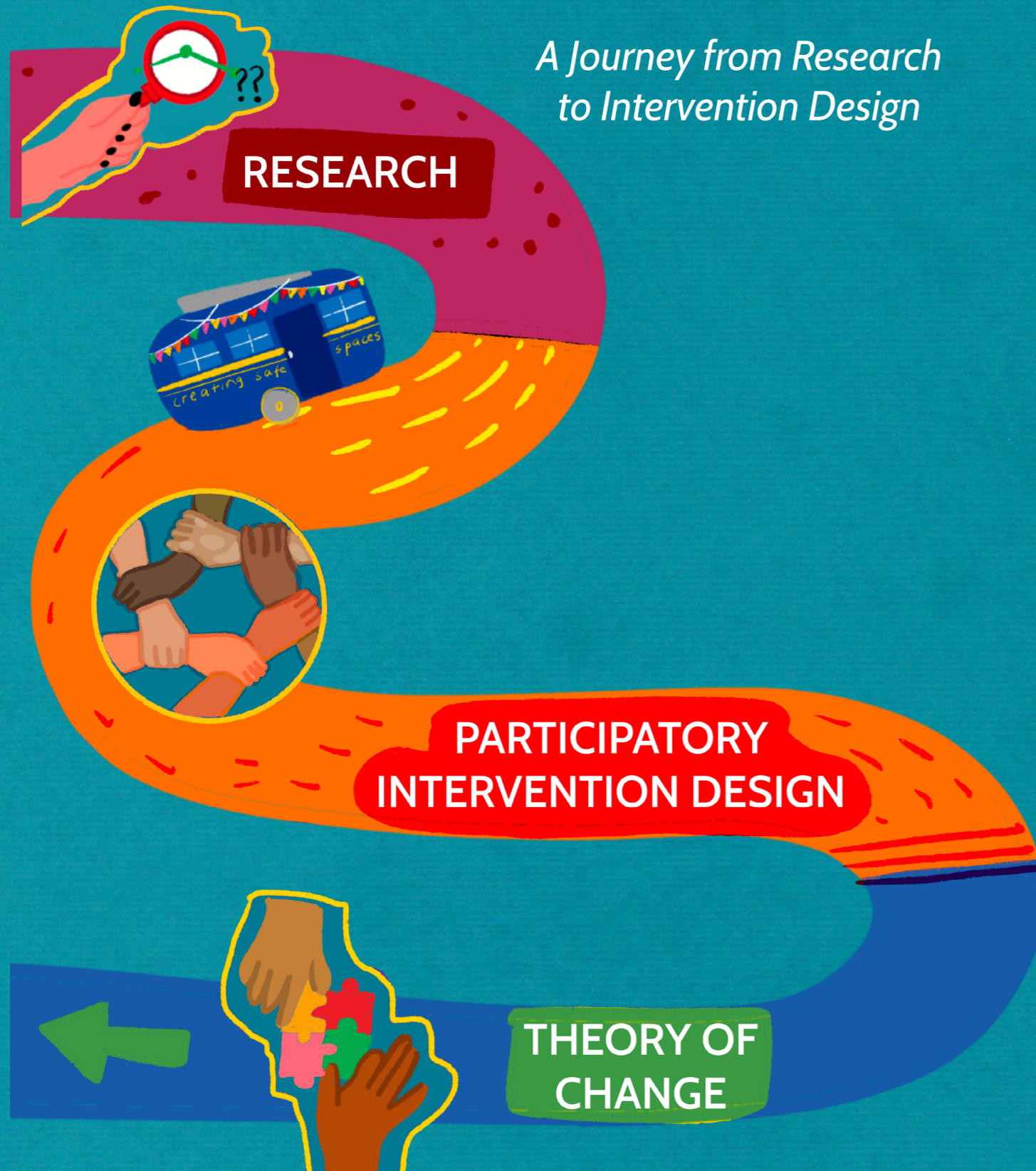




CAMPUS CARAVAN

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*A Journey from Research
to Intervention Design*



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About The YP Foundation

The YP Foundation (TYPF) is a youth-led and focused organisation that facilitates young people's feminist and rights-based leadership on issues of health equity, gender justice, sexuality rights, and social justice. TYPF ensures that young people have the information, capacity, and opportunities to inform and lead the development and implementation of programmes and policies that impact their lives and are recognised as skilled and aware leaders of social change.

Contact Info

-  [instagram.com/theypfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/theypfoundation)
-  [facebook.com/theypfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/theypfoundation)
-  twitter.com/theypfoundation
-  [youtube.com/ypfoundation](https://www.youtube.com/ypfoundation)
-  [theypfoundation.org](https://www.theypfoundation.org)

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1. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CREDITS

Research

Data Collection: Ipsa Agnani, Sagar Sachdeva, Sudipta Das, Manak Matiyani

Analysis and Writing: Ipsa Agnani, Sagar Sachdeva

Creation of Intervention Design: Arzoo Garg, Surbhi Kumar, Sagar Sachdeva, Prabhleen Tuteja

Report Design: Ipsita Dwivedi

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2. INTRODUCTION

College and university campuses are important and formative sites in young people's lives. They offer young people the space to shape their worldview, interact with new kinds of people, and exercise autonomy in new ways. As important sites of dialogue and exchange, these institutions are governed by a set of norms that can either mimic larger social norms or challenge them. The significance of this phase in young people's lives, where they hold the power to question and even change popular discourse, makes it extremely relevant to engage with campus spaces. Students in India have faced and continue to face gender-based violence in their environment. Caste-based violence has also seen a marked increase in the last few years. Rajasthan in particular has seen an uptick in caste-based violence and yet remains afflicted with inadequate resolution mechanisms.

Rajasthan is home to thousands of higher educational institutions. The Commissionerate of College Education in Rajasthan, housed under the Rajasthan Department of College Education, has 15 universities, 51 regional colleges, 372 government colleges, 2033 private colleges, and 1479 colleges offering Bachelor of Education degrees under its purview.

The YP Foundation conducted research with college and university students in Rajasthan's capital, Jaipur, to delve deeper into perceptions of violence among students and institutional actors, explore the manifestation of violence on campus, analyze the efficacy of institutional mechanisms of redressal for complaints of violence, and identify student concerns and needs for intervention on violence-prevention on campus. The intention behind the process was to create a youth-led and youth-centered intervention design that speaks to their needs and realities within campuses. The intervention was co-designed with students and Civil Society Organization members, centering an intersectional and well-being affirmative lens.

3. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: A RESEARCH STUDY

Methodology

The research was conducted in the form of a qualitative study across two private and one public institution in Jaipur. Data was collected through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and in-depth interviews, the respondents for which were recruited through purposive sampling methods. 52 students, 3 institutional actors, and 1 community-based organisation representative were interviewed for this research. Findings from the research were transcribed and analysed for emerging trends which are noted in this report.

Research Questions

This study focused on three key questions:

1. What are young people's perceptions and experiences of violence and discrimination in higher education institutions in Jaipur?
2. What kinds of institutional mechanisms exist to address instances of violence on campus? How do students interact with and perceive these mechanisms?
3. What are the key considerations emerging from young people's experiences that any violence prevention intervention in college campuses needs to account for? What kinds of external interventions are/can be made available to address violence on campus?

Limitations

The study faced a few limitations like mobilisation challenges owing to examinations and the onset of summer vacation in colleges, which ultimately led to a very limited representation of students from oppressed castes and minority religions, and no representation of queer or trans* perspectives in the findings. The information on violence that the team managed to gather may also have been limited due to social desirability bias which the team tried to mitigate through individual interviews.

Key Findings

Perceptions of violence

- Social capital as a catalyst to violence: Across all institutions, respondents predominantly defined violence as any form of domination over someone. Clear explanations of dominance, often explained through examples from college life, revealed that specific attributes determined who typically dominates and who gets dominated. Those with large social groups, often comprising people from similar caste backgrounds, or those with large amounts of familial wealth and contacts within the city were often described as perpetrators of violence in campus. Conversely, those without the protection of social or financial capital became common targets subjected to violence.
- Difference in violence defined and violence identified: Students' definitions of violence included its various forms such as mental, physical, and psychological. However, they only spoke of ragging, "eve-teasing" (sexual harassment in public), or other overt forms of sexual violence when asked about violence on campus. None of their initial responses involved the mention of caste, despite its frequent evocation while narrating inter-group conflicts. Subtle caste-based and religion-based microaggressions were mentioned when probed but missed in the listing of incidents of violence on campus altogether.

"Common factor [among those who generally incite violence] is that they don't want to study. They have this attitude that 'We have big farms and our father is very rich, so we only have to get a degree for the sake of it and can otherwise pass time.'"

"If someone is troubling you and you don't share it with anyone, then you cannot fight them alone. In this case, the biggest problem was that the boy did not share this with anyone. And he couldn't have fought them alone. They were in a group. If we had been with him, maybe we could have confronted them and this matter would not have escalated so much."

Incidents of violence

- Violence prompted by hierarchies: Students from two out of the three institutions identified senior-junior relationships as tense. Violence perpetrated by seniors took different forms of bullying and intimidation, most commonly exercised through demands of being referred to as “sir” or “ma’am” by their juniors. The rules of suppression were dynamic, often informed further by caste, gender, or social capital. Those with more privilege in any of these categories could either enhance intimidation as a senior or subvert dominance as a junior.
- Violence based on religion and caste: The majority of incidents narrated were of violence amongst men instead of violence by men against women, which reinforced the influence of other identity markers in shaping the relations between students. Bullying based on caste or religion was common in some friend groups, and often took the form of discriminatory remarks or harmful jokes at the expense of a group member. In more formal settings such as classrooms, such bias surfaced as political debates in vehement opposition to caste-based reservations or claims of allegiance to certain religious groups.
- Mistrust and resentment of others: Whether or not students felt safe on campus depended heavily on the people around them. At the public university, respondents reported fearing judgement, harmful remarks, or teasing by anyone outside of their department. In another institution, the students expressed strong resentment of institutional actors such as the hostel warden who strictly policed female students’ mobility and dress code, as well as the university administration who prioritised preserving the institution’s reputation over student safety or conflict resolution. At another institution where students were happy with the management, the lack of physical spaces to convene outside of classrooms prevented them from forming trusted friendships. The various kinds of tension in students’ relationships with those in their environment seriously impeded their sense of safety.

“A girl had to file a false complaint against her friend because her boyfriend did not believe that they’re just friends. You can also see how severely the girl was suppressed. He was a good friend of hers ... what choice did she have? Either she could have spoken the truth which [her boyfriend] was not ready to believe.....and if she didn’t blame [the friend], they would have broken his limbs. She must have thought ‘It’s better to blame him. That will cost him his degree and 2 years but at least he will get out of this safely.’”

“Even though there are restrictions for both (boys and girls), they’re followed more strictly in the girls’ hostel.”

“Boys really don’t have to do much to get permission [or a night out], but girls have to work really hard.”

“A girl had to file a false complaint against her friend because her boyfriend did not believe that they’re just friends. You can also see how severely the girl was suppressed. He was a good friend of hers ... what choice did she have? Either she could have spoken the truth which [her boyfriend] was not ready to believe.....and if she didn’t blame [the friend], they would have broken his limbs. She must have thought ‘It’s better to blame him. That will cost him his degree and 2 years but at least he will get out of this safely.’”



Redressal Mechanisms

→ Preference for informal redressal mechanisms: While most students were aware of formal redressal mechanisms on campus, nobody reported having complained about a case of violence. Recalling popular cases from their institutions, students from two universities expressed discontent or doubt about the efficacy of such mechanisms. They were either governed by the biases of the administrative staff or altogether misused by powerful students. The chair of the committee against sexual harassment at one institution herself cautioned against making these mechanisms too visible to students. Largely, it was evident that students and staff alike preferred informal conflict resolution mechanisms, each for different reasons.

“If as a student you call the police, [the administration] will take disciplinary action against you, even though you are innocent because ‘campus matters should not be taken outside.’”

“Even in the administration building, there are people who protect these students [who engage in violence] because they are from their community.”



Recommendations

The research demonstrates the need for an external intervention that can aid critical, intersectional discussions about gender, caste, class, and religion, in order to facilitate a more nuanced awareness of violence among students. It was evident that facilitation of these discussions must also be complemented by filling perspective gaps among teaching/administrative staff so as to strengthen systems and create a safer environment for students on campus.

The intervention design must focus on closing perspective and infrastructure gaps in the following ways:

- Enhance students' understanding of violence as a system so that they are better equipped to perceive subtle discrimination and bias both as a form of violence and as a precursor to other kinds of violence.
- Train students in developing an intersectional lens with which they can view gender-based violence as a multidimensional issue so that they are prompted to check their own biases.
- Establish, both among students and other stakeholders, an understanding that all degrees of violence are serious and that the redressal mechanism must enable survivors to process and respond to incidents of violence in a safe environment.
- Promote the existence of redressal mechanisms as a student's right and an essential part of a safe campus environment, so that students and other stakeholders may recognise its need better.
- Strengthen the efficacy of available redressal systems by shaping the perspectives of those within these systems and training them to cater to diverse student needs
- Emphasise the importance of campus being not only violence-free but pleasure positive spaces where students can safely interact with others, express themselves, and articulate their needs.
- Build student leadership by promoting the creation of student-led spaces where they can confidently discuss issues important to them.

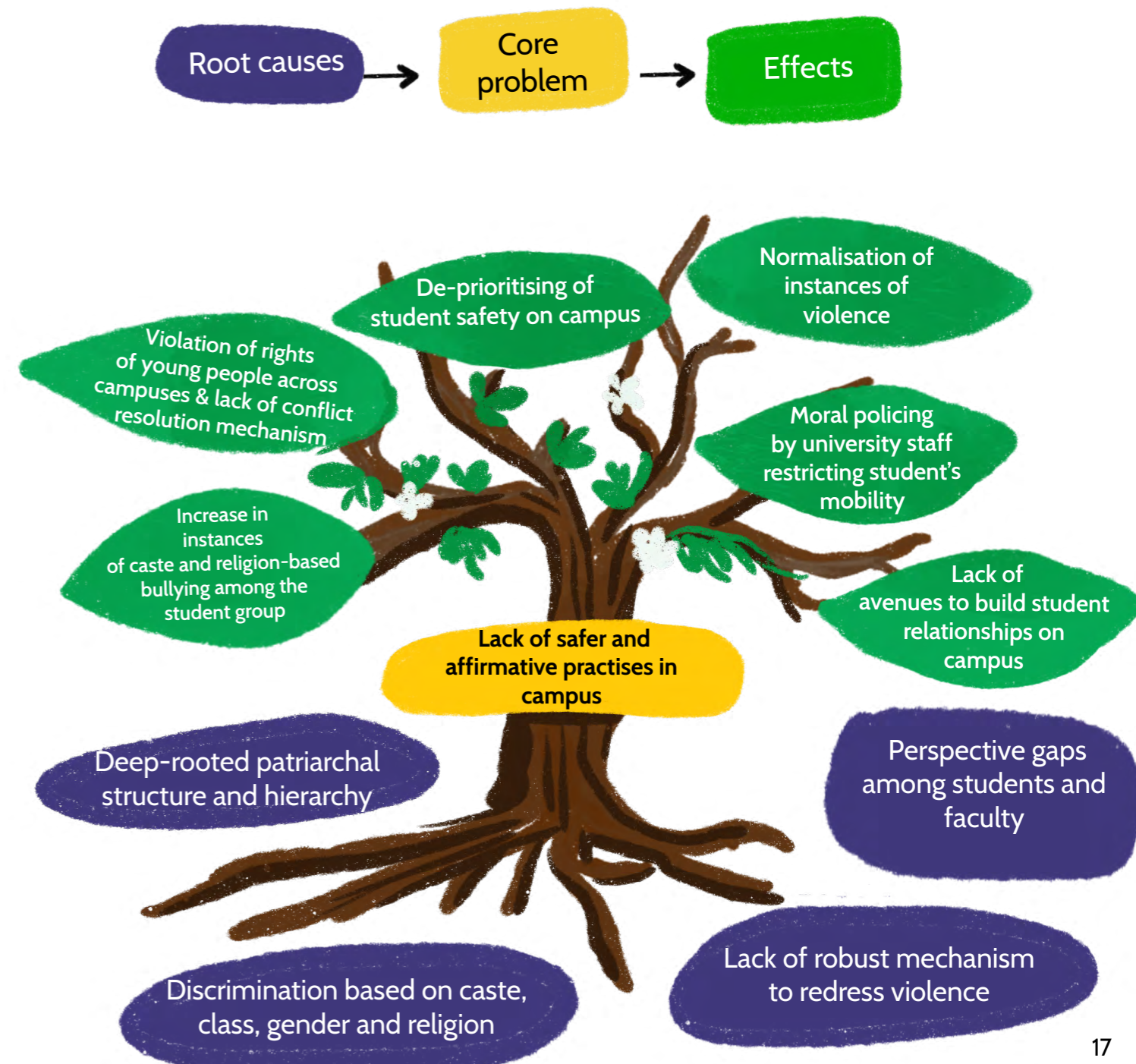
4. INTERVENTION DESIGN

To address the emerging needs from research and in order to create a robust sustainable intervention, student-centered consultative workshops with young people (students) and a consultative dialogue between multiple stakeholders such as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) (working with young people or on issues of violence), faculty members of Universities, and students from Universities in Jaipur were organised. The problem tree tool (representing the root cause, the core problem, and effects) was used to share the research learnings back with them and to co-create an intervention design with strategies to make campuses safer, youth-affirmative, and violence-free.



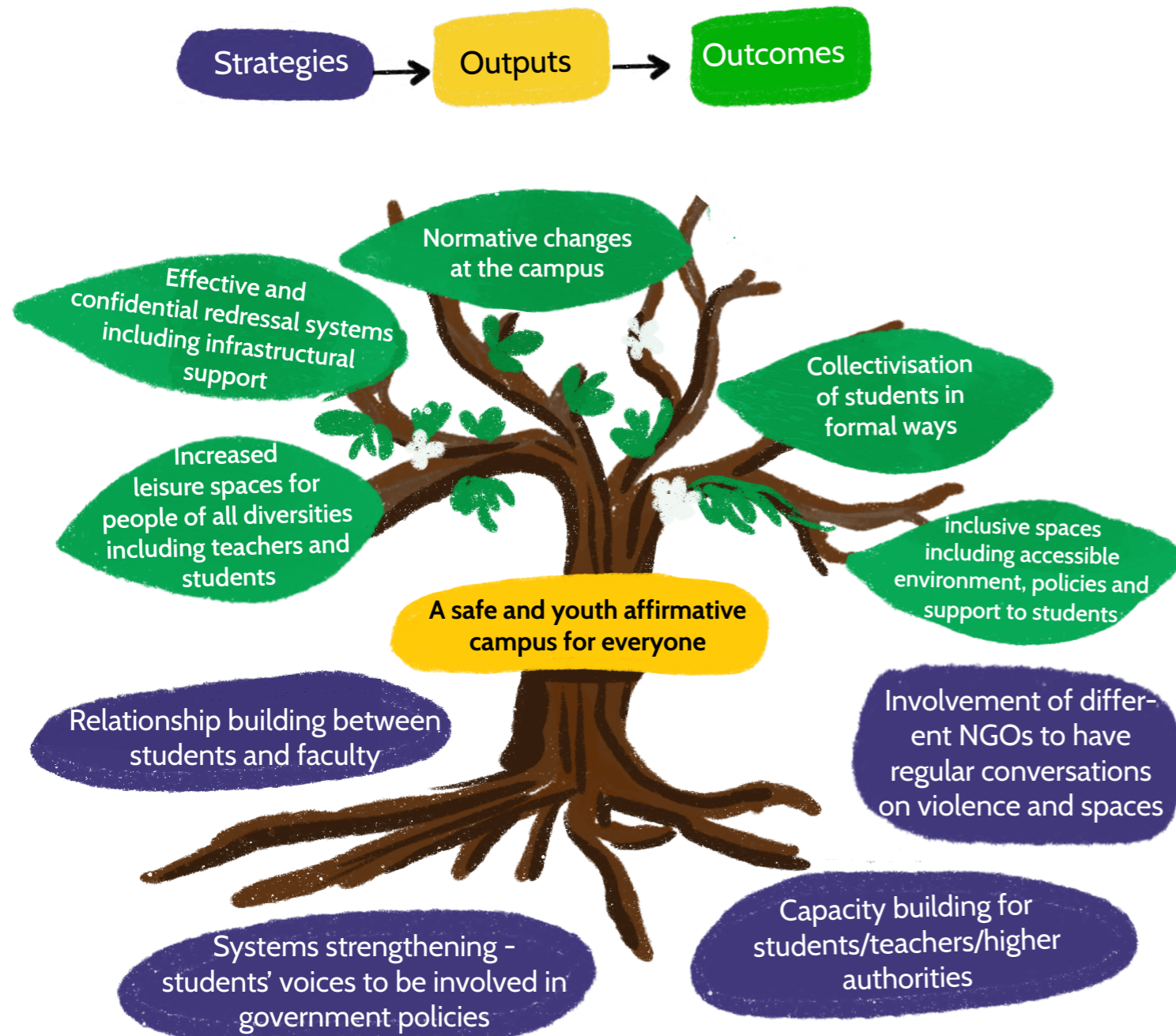
Problem Tree:

Consultations held with students and stakeholders helped in taking the problems towards probable solutions which guided the process of designing the Campus Caravan project. The project is aimed at building young people's leadership to build narrative towards for making their campuses safer and more affirming for everyone. This solution tree represents the various strategies, effects and outcomes co-created by the different stakeholders for creating holistic and sustainable impact towards realising young people's right to violence-free campuses.



Solution tree:

The consultative process helped to take problems towards probable solutions (the solution tree represents strategies as roots and leaves as outcomes from those strategies) which guided the process of designing the Campus Caravan project. The project is to build young people's leadership to build narrative for making their campuses safer and more affirmative for everyone to realize their right to violence-free spaces.



5. THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change (TOC) for the Campus Caravan project has been built on the foundation of centering young people as informants, co-creators and leaders. Young people will be involved in every step of the process to ensure there is an accurate representation of their lived realities in this project. Having said that, decision-making stakeholders play a vital role in influencing students' environment. Therefore, the project will bring together several stakeholders such as students, faculty, campus administrators as well as government functionaries in order to address systemic and policy-level gaps to create new mechanisms that will enable young people to reach this goal in a sustainable manner. Moreover, the outcomes within this TOC have been designed with an intersectional and well-being affirmative lens.

Location

Jaipur, Rajasthan

Demographic Details

The project will engage with diverse groups of young people in the age group of 18-25 years, with a focus on the following marginalizations:

- Dalit, Bahujan, Adivasi
- Religious minorities
- Queer and trans persons
- Cisgender women
- Persons with disabilities

Ecosystem Stakeholders

- University administrators and Faculty
- Local organizations working with young people
- Government bodies including the Department of College Education and Ministry of Education

OBJECTIVE 1:

To create safer and affirmative campus spaces where young people can learn, thrive and realize their right to violence-free spaces.

AIM:

To build young people's leadership to advocate for making their campuses safer and more affirmative for everyone to realize their right to violence-free spaces.

OBJECTIVE 2:

To influence policies and mechanisms for supporting violence-free youth-led and youth-affirmative spaces.

OUTCOME 1:

Strengthened mechanisms and practices to prevent and respond to instances of violence within campuses.

OUTPUTS:

A policy guide highlighting gaps in the existing systems and policies with recommendations to create safer spaces on the campus.

Capacitated policy and office holders to strengthen their roles and efforts towards building safer campuses.

A multistakeholder college body for ensuring the implementation and revision of safeguarding mechanisms on campus.

OUTCOME 2:

To influence policies and mechanisms for sustaining violence-free and youth-affirmative spaces.

Mixed-media resources to engage with young people and faculty members on nuances of gender-based violence.

A cohort of students capacitated to lead dialogues on gender-based violence through an intersectional lens.

Larger student body engaged through peer learning processes on the issue of gender-based violence.

Teaching and non-teaching staff trained on issues of gender, violence and youth-affirmative spaces.

Student-led safe and non-judgemental spaces created for young people to freely express, share and have conversations.




OUTCOME 3:



Strengthened networks and discourse building for inclusion of youth-affirmative policies with Higher Education Departments and UGC.

An alliance of CSOs, young people, and university stakeholders to strengthen mechanisms for building youth-affirmative campuses.

Multi-stakeholder dialogues between alliance members and government functionaries to advocate for youth-affirmative inclusive policies for building safer campuses.

Strategies:

 <p>Resource Creation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identification of gaps in existing mechanisms and policies through in-depth analysis and participatory process.2. Creation of a policy guide incorporating recommendations and suggestions.3. Creation of audio-visual resources, resource books, posters, educational material, and art installations on themes of gender, autonomy, safety, violence, and rights, co-designed and co-developed by young people.
 <p>Capacity Building</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Capacitating youth advocates to build leadership through continuous dialogues on nuances of gender-based violence through an intersectional and well-being-informed lens.2. Perspective-building training and dialogue with teaching and non-teaching staff on nuances of gender-based violence through an intersectional and wellbeing-informed lens.3. Capacity building training and regular dialogue with policy and office holders of gender forums, Prevention of Sexual Harassment Committees, and disciplinary committees to strengthen their roles in ensuring safer campuses.
 <p>Building Partnerships and Network</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Building and strengthening partnerships with local CSOs through capacity building and co-planning, to co-lead the implementation and sustain the engagement with young people.2. Working closely with networks of CSOs in the state to engage in narrative building processes for driving the narrative towards wellbeing-centric and inclusive spaces for young people.

 <p>Public and Policy Advocacy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Youth-led dialogue on nuances of gender-based violence through campus-based social action projects, campaigns and trainings with students.2. Student-led narrative building demanding inclusive policy-making processes with university management and higher authorities.3. Consultation/Dialogue led by multi-stakeholder bodies to engage with state-level higher education departments and government bodies for seeking accountability and ensuring mechanisms to create safer campuses for young people across Jaipur.
 <p>System Strengthening</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Creating new support groups and strengthening already existing safeguarding/gender forums on campuses for violence survivors.2. Identifying and creation of leisure spaces for students as well as staff members.3. Creating mechanisms to ensure increased support from CSOs in policy-making and ensuring safer campuses.

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