



PROPOLIS TOUR REPORT

20
23

About Propolis

The social organisation Propolis was created last October 2022 in India, during the leadership program Kanthari, a Kerala-based institute training social change makers.

Charlotte, the Founder and Director of Propolis, realised that throughout her life, **a lot of topics were not addressed to her because they were taboo** (the divorce of her parents, menstrual cycles, sexuality...) and this silence led her to mental health issues.

The name of our organisation, Propolis, has been carefully chosen.

Propolis's etymology comes from two latin words:

“Pro” – meaning “in favour of” and “Polis” – meaning “city”

The propolis is a natural substance created by bees to protect the hive and has amazing medicinal properties for humans. It has been used for healing open wounds since ancient Egypt.

Likewise, with the organisation Propolis, **we want to heal society by making people speak freely about any taboo topic.**

Who are we?

1. Founder and Director

Charlotte Cotton, formerly working in communication agencies (at Havas and JCDecaux Hong Kong) and today a launcher of social projects (two in Rajasthan, in northern India before Propolis, on the themes of menstrual poverty and slow fashion).

Hidden talent: ready to pitch Propolis and raise funds in all circumstances.



2. Manager of social networks and external communication

Vincent Chiu, professional theatre actor, and passionate about video editing.

Hidden talent: able to warm up a room full of shy beneficiaries in less than 10 minutes.



The Problem we want to solve

Since the beginning of this century, we see a tendency for in-person social interactions being replaced by digital social media.

Nowadays, fast and easy access to information via the internet and various social media platforms could give us the false impression that we are able to speak freely about all matters. And still, there are several worldwide taboos that are not addressed, either publicly nor privately.

In most countries, these taboos include topics such as sexuality, incest, illness, mental health, and death.

All these topics create barriers to free exchange.

At a deeper level, it also creates exclusion, stigmatization, and trauma.

For example, sex education has been proven to play a key role in combating sexual and gender-based violence.

However, in France, relationship and sexuality

education courses are largely ignored by national education, as teachers are not equipped to address this "uncomfortable" topic with students. The primary consequences of this social silence are confusion, shame, fear, and anxieties

Our Solution

Audience: We train social workers, teachers, health and corporate professionals

- **Step 1:** We offer a training called "No More Taboo!" to the above-mentioned audience, so they get equipped with the power of storytelling
- **Step 2:** The trained staff applies the storytelling method to their beneficiaries, using local language, skills and context for people to benefit fully from it.

Method: The programs consist of a series of workshops in which we, through the means of storytelling, allow the individual to detach from their problems and enable him/her to talk.

On top of storytelling, we empower the beneficiaries to express themselves through drawing, writing, cooking and theatre.

Propolis Themes

At Propolis, we address taboo topics, that are culturally relevant.

We believe they need to be addressed to avoid exclusion, stigmatization, and trauma.

In our workshops, we talk about

- **Sexuality**
- **Abuse**
- **Mental health**
- **Death**
- **Having the courage to dream**
- **And many more topics**

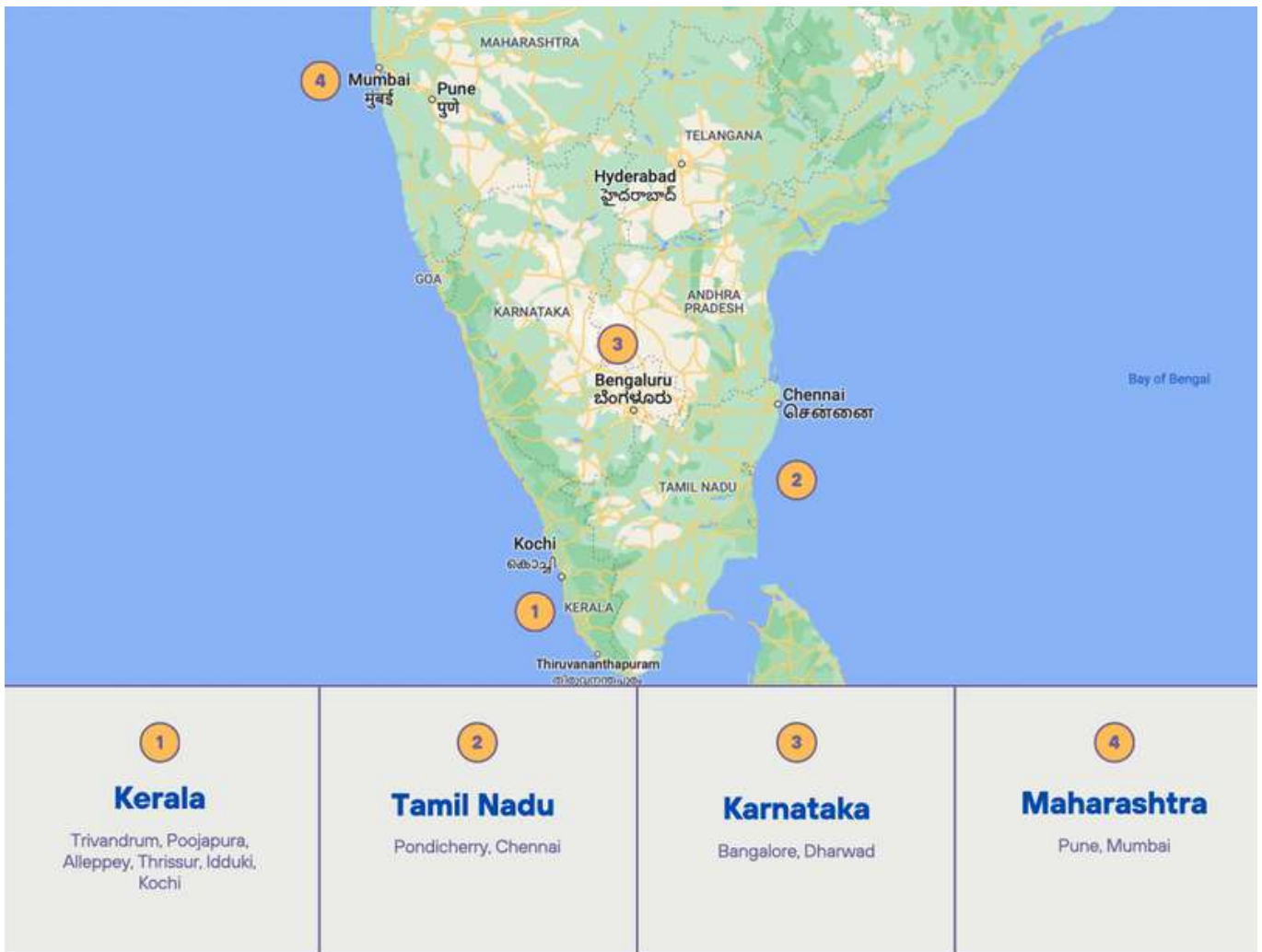
We want to open dialogues in order to build a healthier society, with less violence.

The First Propolis Tour in India

From January to mid-March 2023, the Propolis Program "No More Taboo!" was tested on the roads of South India.

We organised more than 50 sessions in 12 cities, reaching **1,000 people** (beneficiaries and trainers) in 19 different organisations such as Alliance Française centres, universities for social workers, NGOs for special adults and street children.

The tour allowed us to understand our beneficiaries better, about our program, and to categorise the needs according to the different social environments.





Propolis Tour Numbers

19

INSTITUTES VISITED

9

INSTITUTES RECEIVED A
TRAIN THE TRAINER

12

CITIES

74%

SHOWED ENTHUSIASM FOR OUR WORKSHOPS

70

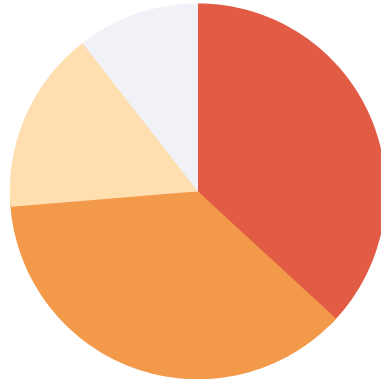
DAYS

www.connectpropolis.org

PROPOLIS

Propolis Tour Results PART 1

Unknown
10.5%



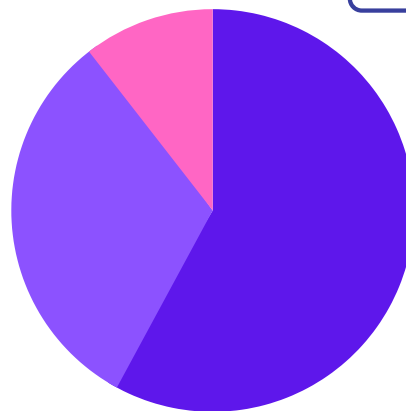
Staff neutral about the program
15.8%

Staff fairly enthusiastic about the program
36.8%

LEVEL OF ENTHUSIASM

Staff highly enthusiastic about the program
36.8%

No noticeable Transformation
10.5%



Fairly noticeable Transformation
31.6%

Highly noticeable Transformation
57.9%

LEVEL OF TRANSFORMATION AFTER THE WORKSHOPS

CITIES



Propolis Tour Results

PART 2

58%

of organisations shared their staff struggle with their mental health



During the tour, we had the opportunity to talk deeply with many staff who burned out, mainly coming from the nonprofit sector.

One house parent shared that they were understaffed: she was in charge of 12 children instead of 4.

Social workers are passionate about their work, and they handle very critical situations.

Unfortunately, the majority of them have no space for giving feedback and expressing how they feel because everyone is under the water.

That causes a lot of stress and mental fatigue.

Many people told us the Propolis workshops helped them to take a break from their intense routine, reconnect with colleagues (which whom they have no time to share personal things), and rethink their work from a different perspective.

This phenomenon is less present in more established and stable work environments (staff from language centers, high-end universities...)

Propolis Testimonials



Testimonial of Akshita, trainer at Mann Center for Individuals with Special Needs, in Mumbai.

"Our special beneficiaries need more cognitive activities, and Propolis storytelling, involving role-playing, is a great idea for them to express themselves. Our special adults are very often judged in their life, limiting them to dreaming and projecting anything. At the start of the workshop, some beneficiaries were very introverted and the Propolis activities gave them the freedom to feel lighter and talk about themselves. We were surprised at how unlimited their dreams were and how much reflection they could bring."

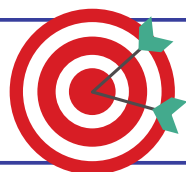


Testimonial of Nita S Iyer, Ex French Teacher at Alliance Francaise de Trivandrum and volunteer coordinator for Kerala Mahila Samakya Society.

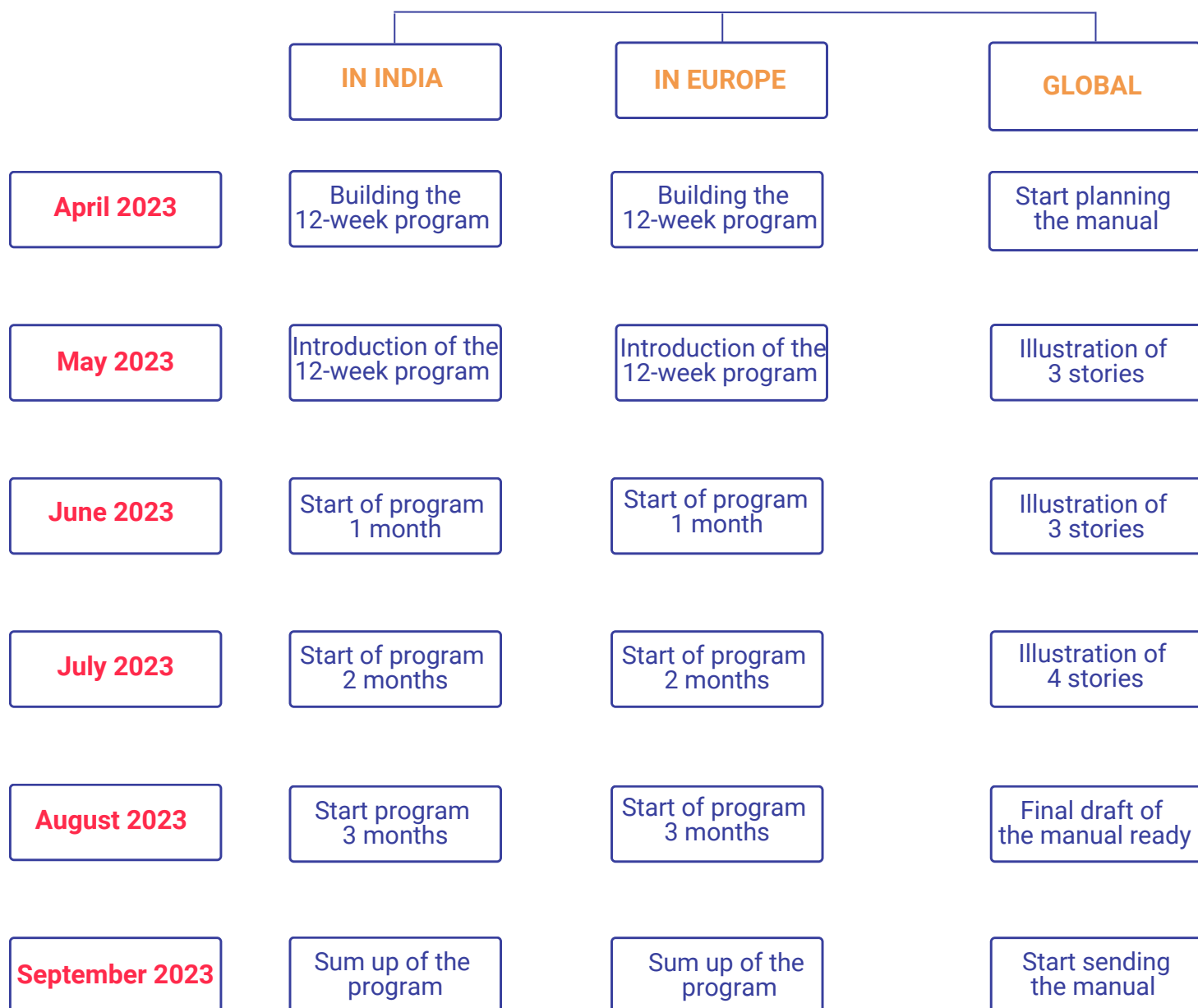
"The Propolis workshops are responding to the need of the hour.

The focussing on emotional and communicational side was welcome and seemed to be empathetic. Concerning the change in behaviour of the beneficiaries, it showed a more positive behaviour in the form of openness to talk, expressed a desire to know more on sexuality (homosexuality, periods, consent...)

Propolis Next 6-month Plan

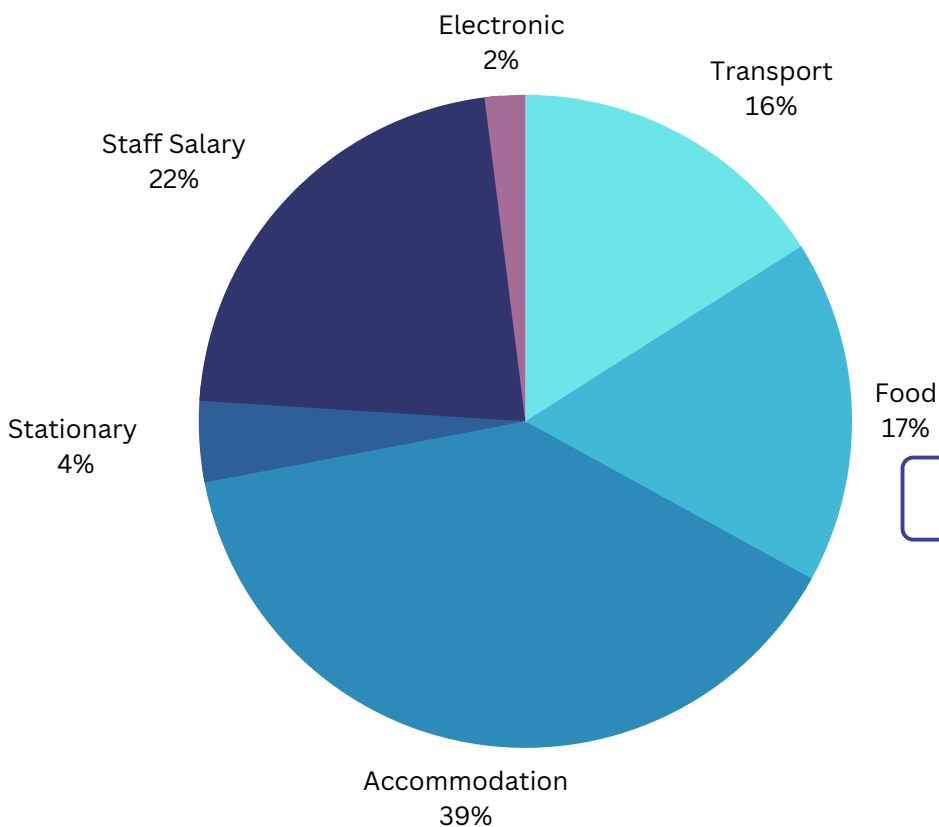
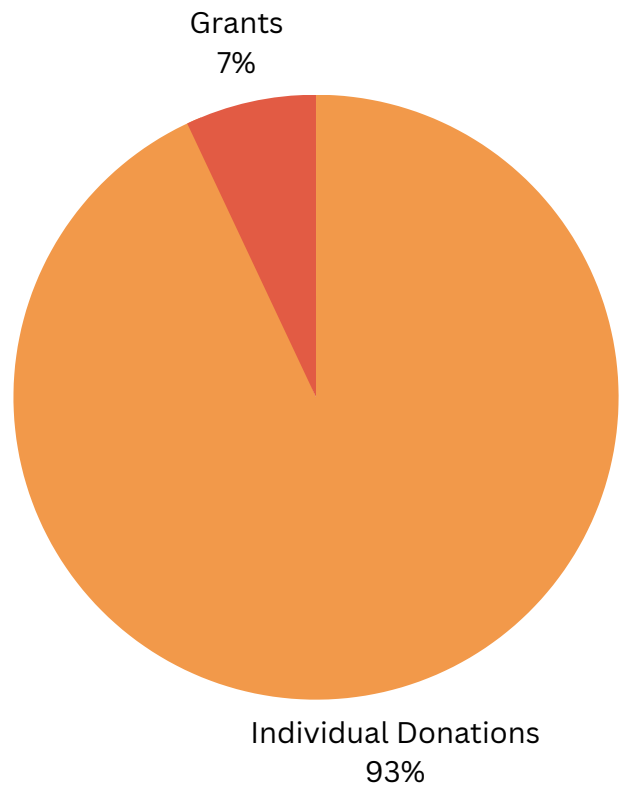


Propolis Plan From April to September 2023



Propolis Financials

TOUR INCOME



TOUR EXPENDITURE

CITIES

Thank You!



This tour wouldn't have been possible without the very generous support of our individual donors and the amazing **Giving Joy Foundation** associated with **Curio Spice**, who trusted us to share our love for cooking to open up deep conversations.

We are **SO GRATEFUL** to all of you, and cannot wait to share more adventures and impactful stories with you all.

Financial individual donations listed in alphabetical order:

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