

In Vadodara women are left without alternatives or supports for their survivals in the hour of need. There is no physical and emotional place where they can go –no available shelter, Inaccessible or non-existent services and professional help like therapies, medication and legal - **The Result? A cycle of struggles, hardships, tears and toils leads their lives to ruin.** And this goes on.....These are the real life situations of young girls and women in our surroundings.

We asked ourselves, “Is it only a matter of these women or their families?” or “Are we as fellow humans also have a part to play in this dehumanizing drama?”

To fulfill our goal what we need today is...  
In coming years we seek to extend our services and meet the most crucial needs in terms by creating a Holistic Women’s Resource, Retreat and Training Centre for Creative Energies and Collective Expressions – A women’s campus which will provide holistic services with a right-based approach with focus on the safety and security of women, who are struggling for justice and need to hold the hand of those who have already started their journey towards liberation. Though the struggles of all women in their homes, communities and places of work to assert their rights, identity, dignity, is continuous....

### Let us join Hands

**We as humans have realized that problems and struggles are an integral part of our lives and whatever we are today, wherever we are, is because of many known and unknown persons who have contributed to our growth, concerned themselves with our well-being.**

**This appeal is for every sensitive individual who wants to create a non-violent - joyful humane society with justice and dignity for all. All are welcome to this journey of enlightenment! Let us not fail in this duty towards ourselves and human kind! The contentment and happiness that we get from such contributions is far exalted and great. Let us not let these opportunities miss our hearts...Let’s give back in every possible way and Reach out, beyond the ties of Friends or Family! So, arise, awake, open your hearts and extend your arms, The Hour has come to unite to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination. This will lead to a better, just and happy world.**

### You can be a part of Olakh

By extending financial and other support – you may contribute in cash or kind. The amount could be as small as 1% of your monthly expenses, income or savings, or even the cost of a restaurant meal or a dress.

By contributing your valuable services and skills or just giving your time to support those in moments of crises and loneliness. By participating in our activities and spreading the word about it everywhere you go. Most importantly, you can contribute by extending your support to any woman you come across who is in crises or in need.

If you choose to donate and join us in our journey of justice – you can directly transfer your funds to Olakh account. We need to report all funds so please when making contribution let us know by email or post when it is made and for what purpose. We are a registered non-government organization and all donations will be exempted from tax under section 80G. Your contribution will be utilized for women -- who are our mothers, sisters, partners, friends or Unknown – caught in moments of loneliness and crises.

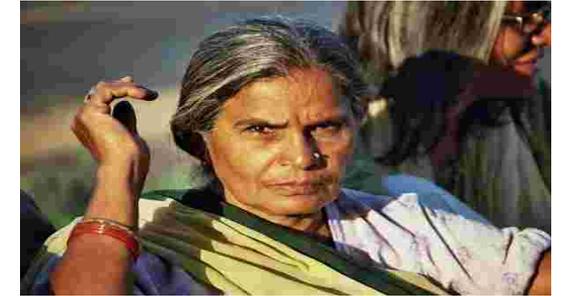
*Olakh*  
A Word that Reflects the Very Essence  
Of  
Ourselves - Our Work - Our Being - Our Identity  
as Women  
Women with Talents,  
With Dreams and with a Voice  
It is a Journey We want for all of us...  
To embark upon;  
So through our Passion and Ideology  
We want to be with Women,  
Who start their Own Journeys  
Or  
Join the Hands of those...  
Who are already on their Way!

*Olakh is your space*  
Come be with us, feel enriched, recharge and empower

Please contact: **ઓળખ Olakh**  
જન્મા જય્યાં મન મુકીને કરીએ પાત  
A Feminist Documentation, Resource and Counselling Centre  
A space for women

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*“My husband did not earn; he used to drink. My child and I were starving. When I went out to earn, he got suspicious not allowing me to step out of our home or talk to anyone. When I demanded money, he started beating me. I couldn’t raise my voice against him; I couldn’t stop him or even take him to the police. What should I do? Where should I go? Can you keep me here; give my child and me food and shelter? I will do anything you ask. I want a violence free life!”, Prerna.*



*“For us the situation is the same, be it at home or outside. Violence and harassment come from perpetrators who are known – unknown and consider our sexual and religious identities as a means to mete all types of violence on us. But if we look back in our homes, we face these harassments and violence everyday, in one or the other form. We are so tired of this that now we feel badly the need to have a common holding, maybe a tent where we all women can live together, be our own selves, breathe freely without the shadow of violence hovering above us.”, minority community from Maretha.*



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## In India :

- Every year more than 10,000 women are killed within their homes;
- Every 12 minutes a woman is molested.
- Every 42 minutes there is an incident of sexual harassment.
- Every 43 minutes there is a kidnapping of a woman.
- Every 77 minutes a woman is murdered.
- Every 32 minutes a woman is raped - 1 in 5 victims of rape is a girl child, 1 rape out of around 69 gets reported 19 out of 20 rape accusers walk free, or are acquitted.
- 52% women suffer physical, mental or emotional violence at least once in their life.
- 40% of married Indian women were victims of sexualized violence, perpetrators being their partners.
- 85% of men (in a sample population of 971) reported that they have indulged in violent behavior at least once, be it physical, psychological or sexual, 32% men had perpetrated violence on their pregnant wives.
- According to the 2003 Civil Registration System (CRS), there were only 824 women to 1000 men in 2004 (as reported in November 2006).



## Olakh is born...

In a struggle to address and support women, *Olakh a Space for Women* started from these humble meanderings. After much exhaustive efforts and volunteer spirits of 3 years in 1996 the foundation stone was laid considering all prevailing violence, discriminations and injustice that the society renders to its women. Slowly and steadily it took a shape of a **Feminist Documentation, Resource and Counseling Center**.

**Olakh** (Gujarati word which means IDENTITY) is a warm, safe, secure, confidential, nonjudgmental, non-sectarian, and knowledge-based space to share and nurture joy, to have dialogue, to give and get support in moments of helplessness and isolation. Olakh has created spaces for women to mutually share, learn, grow and assert their identities with pride and dignity.

It is open to everyone-to raise a voice against discrimination, violence and injustice towards a better society. Olakh's work revolves around two concepts: '*Jagya*' (*Space*) and '*Samvad*' (*Dialogue*).



## Vision

**To create a humane society** which affirms diversities and equity, celebrates inclusion and complementarities and moves towards sustainable peace and development.

## Mission

**To center-stage feminist perspectives** and practices in order to challenge existing structures, systems of discrimination and dominance like the system of patriarchy, caste, class, and racism. **To create new forms of human relationships** and corresponding institutions based on a Feminist World-View.

## Objectives

- To create** safe, supportive, confidential and non-judgmental, emotional and physical spaces for women to learn, share, heal and grow to their full potentials.
- To contribute** to an inclusive, women friendly discourse in creating a violence free society with safety and security of all which respects diversity and coexistence.
- To provide** counseling to women - experiencing violence, discrimination, injustice and consequent emotional, mental distress to heal and take control of their lives.
- To establish** a resource base to share, network, interface, and create avenues for self-assertion, self worth and self-dignity.
- To promote** empowerment processes through trainings, campaigns and seminars.
- To network**, lobby and advocate with other movements for macro level policy changes that reflect from micro-level realities and experiences.
- To emphasize** synergies between theory, practice and policy; between academics, the formal structures of policy and diplomacy and those engaged in direct actions.

## Activities

- Issue based resource centre with library**
- Counseling and intervention centre with healing and support**
- Collective initiative for justice at doorstep with emergency shelter and immediate support**
- Dialogues, workshops, trainings and seminars,**
- Action based research**
- Issue based campaigns, advocacy and networking**
- Emergency interventions in disasters with women centered approach**

## Annual outreach

**1,200** women and girls, survivors of structural, domestic and sexual violence and emotionally – mentally disturbed served by counseling and intervention through a toll free telephone helpline and collective initiative for justice at door step.

**500** regular visitors from diverse background

Students, researchers and academicians and **479** marginalized literates and neo-literates served by mobile, mini libraries and reading workshops.

**20** regular placements students and trainees from national and international educational institutions.

**500** grass root and middle level activists, professionals and interested individuals from Government, non-governmental organization (NGO) and society served through **trainings, workshops and seminars.**

**5000** families from **marginalized and minority communities** served through relief, rehabilitation and reconciliation.

**50** women survivors trained as barefoot counselors and lawyers.

**50,000 people** through mass programs campaigns.

*Olakh works with dialectic, nonviolent, participatory, and inclusive and bottom up approach based on mutual respect and faith. Services and support structures we provide are based on dignity and pride relating to the women as fellow human being as opposed to victim or case histories.*

*Our effort is 'proactive' rather than reacting to events or incidents in order to nurture the questioning and the challenging that goes on in the mind of every woman, but which is never given the space to exist and grow. We have initiated and developed different activities and programs. Some have been direct responses, some are permanent services and others are responses to special situations such as the Earthquake (2001), Communal Carnage (2002) and Flash Floods (2005-06) in Gujarat.*