

BAL SHRISTI

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As Mumbai Grows – Mumbai Mobile Creches Responds

We are currently in our 40th year as a basic service delivery organisation and have reached over 150,000 children and their families living on Mumbai's construction sites. As the need for our services grows, however, we have to think of new and creative ways to expand our reach.

This year alone we have opened 30 centres and are now experimenting with new models of service in order to maintain the quality and integrity of our programme. While our focus remains on child care, over the past year we have strengthened our advocacy work and our advocacy team in order to address the myriad socio-economic challenges faced by children and families living on construction sites. As part of a recent study, MMC found that 41% of labourers on our sites migrate to Mumbai from within the state of Maharashtra, whereas earlier trends showed greater migration -

to construction sites from other states. The MMC advocacy team travelled to Parbhani and Yavatmal in Maharashtra, to better understand the reasons for migration and found that drought was the major cause of large scale migration.

Ironically, Maharashtrian migrants, within their own state, face many of the same socio-economic and entitlement issues as their out of state counterparts. MMC is developing mechanisms to address the challenges faced by these migrant workers, including obtaining P.A.N. and U.I.D. cards, bank accounts, and information related to health and education rights. MMC sees a great opportunity for growth in advocacy, while continuing to improve our day care model.

We look forward to expanding our reach alongside the ever changing geography of Mumbai.



Mohim Shaikh, standing with his wife Fatima and son Mohit, proudly displays his newly acquired P.A.N. card at our Billimoria Centre

A Time for Play – Annual Children's Camp



Children having fun at MMC's annual camp at Marve

This December, 377 children drawn from all the MMC centres enjoyed an overnight camp on Marve Beach in Malad. The two day retreat, an annual feature, is a delight for the children and teachers as they enjoy the different scenery, a change in schedule,

and the opportunity to play on the beach and explore nature. Facilitators led the children in various activities, including playing musical instruments, balloon games, and arts and crafts. We thank Mr. Rashid Talyerkhan, who has generously allowed MMC to use his property in Marve for the camp for the last 20 years.

Exhibiting our Creativity

On 19th March, fifteen trainees from MMC's Bal Palika teacher training programme exhibited teaching aids that they have created over the last few



Trainees at the annual teaching aid exhibition

months. Notably, ten of the fifteen female trainees are women living on construction sites. The exhibition was well attended by MMC supporters and the trainees were proud to display their work as well as put on a play and puppet show. We were delighted to be joined by our gracious partners at DHFL, and offer special thanks to Mr. Deepak Singh who attended as our Chief Guest.

Understanding Parenting

How do we think about and approach parenting? This was a central question for the 18 trainees from various NGOs, such as the Salaam Balak Trust, Smiles Fun School, Life Trust, IWSA, the Door Step School and AAWC, who attended the parenting workshop, jointly held by MMC and the Association for Early Childhood Education and Development (AECED) in November 2010 and February 2011 at the Godrej Pragati Kendra Centre. In 2006, MMC had taken part in a training camp with Bala Mandir Research Foundation (BMRF), directed by Maya Gaitonde, which addressed these questions and provided a model of care laid out in a simple and user-friendly calendar for parenting. BMRF had first modified this calendar to the



Nalini Chugani, Secretary, MMC, (right) and Vrishali Pispati, CEO (back centre), pose with the parenting team

Indian context, espousing the philosophy of “Learning Through Play,” in collaboration with The Hinck-Dellcrest Children’s Centre (a Canadian organisation) in 1997. The calendar sensitises caregivers to understanding the needs of children at various stages of development and provides them with guidance on appropriate care. While MMC and AECED have collaborated in the past, the workshop marked

their first partnership as co-trainers on parenting and it was a huge success. The participants were engaged in the activities and will now bring their heightened awareness and skills to their communities. MMC and AECED look forward to a continued partnership in reaching out to communities and encouraging sensitised and responsible parenting.

Introducing a Child Protection Policy

Though child protection has always been woven into the fabric of our work, the MMC Board recently approved a formal Child Protection Policy for the organisation. The Policy was written in partnership with Dr. Narges Mahaluxmivala and emphasises the importance of every child’s right to safety and security, while under MMC supervision. MMC has begun implementation of the Policy and every person involved with MMC is expected to learn and adhere to the Policy. We thank Dr. Mahaluxmivala for her commitment to MMC and to Mr. Santosh Shinde, from Bal Prfula, for leading the staff training.

Creative Movement at MMC

Following the rhythm of a lollipop drum and a calimba (an African instrument), MMC teachers, trainees and students took part in three separate workshops with Ms. Priscilla Harmel, a dance therapist from the United States at the Agripada Centre. Ms. Harmel has been teaching graduate students to incorporate the arts into their general curriculum for over 30 years and also works with mainstream and special needs children, teaching creative movement and learning skills. Everyone particularly enjoyed the “brain dance,” engaging different parts of their bodies and minds as they danced around in the centre. MMC thanks Ms. Harmel.

Introducing English to the MMC Curriculum

We are happy to announce that we are beginning a formal English programme with our primary grade students (ages six to fourteen) at all MMC centres! Previously, volunteers had led English programmes at various centres. In January, 25 MMC primary teachers took part in a six day training programme with Pratham Mumbai Education Initiative in order to learn basic English to implement the programme at our centres. Pratham’s easy to follow calendar of English



Teachers listening intently at the English training with Pratham

learning provides a model for instruction that guides the teacher’s 30-minute daily lessons with the children. We thank Pratham for their training and their user-friendly model of English language learning!

Registration Under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976

MMC is glad to announce that late last year we received a registration number under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, easing the process for foreign donations to be made to our organisation. We are most appreciative of our foreign donors and are happy that their contributions will reach us with greater speed and efficiency.

New Initiatives

First Annual Book Week

Do you remember your favourite children's book? Do you remember how excited you were when your parents read it to you? And do you remember how excited you were when you learned to read it on your own? In December, MMC celebrated the first annual Book Week at all of our centres with the intention of kindling a lifelong love for books in our children. During the week, children explored books, their characters and vocabulary, designed new cover pages and created new endings for the books. The children honed their reading skills by participating in child to child programmes,



A little girl displays her new book from MMC's Book Week

visiting local and school libraries, and reading books to the pre-school children. The children also participated in a survey to rate their favourite books. Parents were involved in the Book Week as well, visiting the centres to hear their children read books and newspapers, and participating in book sales at the centre. Following this week we began rotating libraries at our centres, allowing children to take books home and return them to the centre when finished. We thank the many generous sponsors who contributed their time and resources to our children for this initiative!

Building the Capacity of Child Care in Mumbai

With a generous grant from Macquarie Bank through Charities Aid Foundation India, MMC hired a research coordinator, Aarti Ware, to head a social action research project to study the existing child care options in five poor socio-economic communities in Mumbai. In collaboration with NGOs in the five communities, Aarti and her research team have interviewed over 160 mothers, who have children under three years old, and have interviewed 40 professional child caregivers.

Following the research and interview phase, the team will report on their findings to other NGOs working in similar fields and create a collaborative advocacy strategy. MMC will also enrol 50 women interested in becoming teachers in our Bal Palika training programme and will conduct professional development training with an additional 100 professional child care givers. The project is in its first stages, and we look forward to keeping you updated on the team's progress.

Adopting and Adapting Models

Mumbai is expanding at an increasingly rapid rate and we can see new constructions coming up on every street. With this growth comes a challenge and an opportunity for MMC to respond and to bring the same quality of child care to the children of a larger community of migrant construction workers. MMC has decided to experiment with modifications of our standard models. We started this experiment in May 2010 in far off Boisar. Here we got our staff to buy supplies at nearby places, eliminating the usual procedure of providing supplies from the main office, which in this case would have proved too expensive in terms of transportation costs and time. By making a small change in our usual practice, we were able to cater to children who otherwise would not have received our services. Another modification has been implemented at our Neelkanth Centre, where the builder provides food for the workers and their families, while MMC contributes educational expertise. Fewer resources are required and in this way we can work on sites where it is not viable for us to use our standard centre model. As construction modes change in the city, MMC must adapt and evolve to meet the needs of the children living on new sites and we hope that introducing new models will enable us to continue to reach children who need us.

Shine On Festival

In November 2010, MMC participated in a successful collaborative charity event along with CHIP Mumbai, the E.A.R. Society and Nanhi Kali to benefit children and education. Percival Billimoria, Delhi based lawyer and founder of Amateurs Performance Bureau, presented three shows of an Indian adaptation of Neil Simon's "Sunshine Boys" and all of the proceeds went to the four NGOs. It was a fun-filled 10 day festival including a children's



MMC children draw their visions of Mumbai's architecture

art workshop and an exhibition of their work, as well as children's and adult book readings. The children's art work was most recently displayed at the annual Kala Ghoda art festival. MMC thanks Mr. Billimoria and the other NGOs for their collaboration! MMC also extends a big thank you to the many brochure and event sponsors for their immense generosity and support in making the whole venture so successful.

Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2011

On 16th January 2011, MMC participants joined about 38,000 people in the Mumbai Marathon. This event is always an exciting day for MMC, as our corporate teams and individual runners wear our logo with pride, in support of all children living on construction sites. MMC also supported the "Run for the Tiger" campaign in solidarity with many other NGOs. A big thanks to AFL,



Tata Motors ran for MMC here they display our helmets, logo, and puppets

the American School of Bombay, DHFL, Johnson Controls, Macquarie Capital Advisers (India) Pvt. Ltd., Macquarie Capital Securities (India) Pvt. Ltd. and Tata Motors, for choosing to run in the Mumbai Marathon 2011 for our cause. We also thank the nearly 200 runners for their participation and support in making this fun event a successful awareness raising one.

Thank you!

We deeply appreciate the support we receive from individuals and corporates in extending both time and resources to the children of MMC. Our sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all of you!

- Rustomjee Global City Centre in Virar celebrated its first birthday in December. Thanks to the site Supervisor for attending as the Chief Guest and treating the children to chocolates and laddoos – it was a special celebration.
- Our appreciation to UNI TV News for featuring MMC's Pratiksha Nagar Centre in print and on their website.
- Our gratitude to Capita for celebrating Christmas with MMC children from the Chandivali site at their Andheri office. The children greatly enjoyed the music and games.
- Our thanks to Nomura Services India Private Limited for hosting MMC children from our Nahar and Chandivali Centres for a Christmas party in their office in Powai. The children participated in different competitions and games and were shown a magic show. They had a wonderful time.
- Thanks to the Singapore International School for hosting MMC children from the Ashok Nagar Centre for a Christmas party. The children enjoyed sharing the experience and learning different customs.
- With gratitude to Mr. Pankoke and the Felix Nussbaum Schule for holding their annual Christmas Bazaar to benefit MMC. We are most appreciative of their generous and long standing support.
- Thanks to Akanksha Foundation for visiting MMC's Agripada Centre and participating in a drawing competition with our primary and municipal class children. All the children had a great time together!
- Our appreciation to DDI India (from Powai) for visiting MMC's Nahar Centre and facilitating a talent competition for the children, including songs, role-plays and skits. It was wonderful to see the children's talent in action!
- A special thanks to Boston Consulting Group (BCG) for sponsoring an outing for 30 children from our Agripada Centre to the Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Udyan Zoo. The children were thrilled to see the animals and have the opportunity to play in the playground.
- Heartfelt thanks to Rajhans Vidyalaya School in Andheri for organising a sports day for 200 children from 10 MMC centres in honour of their Silver Jubilee. The children will have fond memories of the exciting activities from the day!
- Our appreciation to the Edelweiss Wealth Management team for visiting the MMC Pratiksha Nagar Centre in Sion and conducting activities with the children, who enjoyed spending the afternoon with the team.
- A warm thanks to the Lady Mayoress of London for taking the time to visit MMC's Agripada Centre and spending time learning about our work.
- Thanks to the six students from the Institute of Technology and Management (ITM) Mumbai who volunteered with MMC in January to upgrade donated laptops and create a computer training manual for teachers to use with our children at seven centres. They also compiled a book of poetry and songs for the preschool and primary children.
- A heartfelt thanks to ACC AHEAD for organising activities for Children's Day, participating in Book Week, conducting a drawing competition, celebrating Makar Sankranti and Girl Child Day and for facilitating a female literacy class. We are most appreciative of their support for MMC children and their communities.
- A deep thanks to Pratham Books for their generous contribution of books for our Book Week. The contribution provided an excellent opportunity to encourage children to keep books at home.
- Our appreciation to Ecole Mondiale School for their generous contribution to our first annual Book Week. The children will treasure the books donated to their new library collections at the centres.
- Thanks to the American School of Bombay for contributing books to our centres and especially to Scott Hoffman's class for collecting and distributing art supplies to MMC's Pratiksha Nagar Centre in Sion. The children were so glad to receive the material!
- A special thank you to Zaal and Maheen Vasania for visiting MMC's Ghatkopar centre and donating generously to our cause.
- Our deep gratitude to Pirojsha Godrej for Godrej Properties Ltd.'s extremely generous contribution to MMC for the Mumbai Marathon. We are so appreciative of his continued commitment, and incredible support of our cause.
- Congratulations to Dino and Erika Preverte on their marriage and a heartfelt thank you for encouraging their family and friends to contribute to MMC. We wish them all the best!
- Our heartfelt appreciation to GiveIndia for directing many generous donors to MMC in support of our corpus, general fund, teaching aids and educational outings. This support allows us to expand our programmes and to spread awareness about our cause.
- Thanks to the entire TATA Group for their incredibly generous contributions to MMC in honour of their Founder's Day.
- With deep appreciation to our donors who have made recent and generous contributions to MMC in the last six months: Amrit Vasudeva Trust, Mr. Anantharaman, Camelot Trading Pvt. Ltd., Credit Suisse Securities (India) Pvt Ltd, Crisil, Disha Foundation, Brigitte and Bert Farber, Garware Charitable Trust, Global Fund for Children, ILFS, Ipartner, Macquarie Group Foundation, Monica Rabagliati Charitable Trust, Nomura Financial Advisory, PREMADHARA-Strom der Liebe e. V., Primeway S.A., Sadguru Kamubaba Foundation, Captain B Sreekumar, United World College of South East Asia, and Western Union Foundation.