

BAL SHRISTI



MUMBAI
MOBILE CRECHES
FUTURES UNDER CONSTRUCTION



The last six months have seen hectic activity and many exciting changes at MMC. We now have a new director on our board, a newly appointed CEO, new heads in Advocacy, Finance and Administration and a renovated office space to work in. We are also making breakthrough in advocacy. To strengthen our efforts, in the last few months we have forged new partnerships and spent time and resources networking with various stakeholders, advocating the rights of the child at the site. The environment at our centres has also changed in many ways. Over 35% of our teachers at centres now come from construction sites; our curriculum has vastly changed to accommodate the different levels and competencies at which our children join, we are trying to work more closely with parents and are studying the impact of positive parenting on children.

We are happy that the external environment we operate in has also changed, for the better. With the enforcement of the landmark Right to Education Bill, education has now become a fundamental right of every child of school going age. We are optimistic that the child at the construction site will now have access to free education and hope that these children will not be forgotten behind the tall tin walls of the construction site. The Construction Workers Act is also moving ahead, with the government now collecting a one percent cess on all construction towards a welfare fund.

Change sets the tone for this issue of our newsletter. With a young team and a changing environment our mission remains steadfast: every child living on a construction site must be safe, healthy and educated and able to enjoy her childhood.



The MMC team in the 1980's (above) and
the new team at our renovated office in Colaba (below)





Sasha Sicurella from Omi International Arts Center, an NGO in New York, conducted a two day art session with children at the Nahar centre in Powai. The session used art as a medium to help the children understand their value, potential, and beauty as individuals. The art work done at the workshop was exhibited at the Hacienda art gallery, Kala Ghoda. The uniqueness of the session was that it transcended barriers of language, colour and geography, uniting everyone through the medium of art.

We are continuing our efforts towards building a robust curriculum that reinforces the progress of children of school going age. Since children enrol in our centres through the year, we have recently devised entry and exit levels for the primary section. The levels are classified as red, yellow and blue (in the order of proficiency in math and languages). All children will be tested at the time of their entry and grouped in one of the three levels. A similar test will be administered when a child exits a level. We hope that the captured data will help us analyse the programme critically and continue making fresh inputs and improvements.

We now have a dedicated community coordinator, trained by Ummeed, an NGO working with special needs children, to identify and address medical problems in the community. In the last four months we have supported 15 children with issues of cleft palate, club foot, speech impairment and various developmental disabilities. We work closely with families of these children providing them financial and moral support throughout the entire process of hospitalisation and recovery.

News Bytes

Our community leadership programme, the "Sakhi Federation" has reached its first major milestone. We are in the process of forming two self help groups for women in the federation. While the agenda right now is only to save a part of their income every month, our ambitious members aim to start their own enterprise some day.

In December, 463 children and 20 staff members attended MMC's annual camp at Marve, a picturesque beach front in Mumbai. Everyone had only one agenda at the camp, to have as much fun as possible! Two fulfilling days saw lots of dancing, singing, yoga, theatre and games.

On 12th March, 2010 Mumbai Mobile Creches completed 38 years of operations, a proud and nostalgic moment for us, to reflect on what we have accomplished thus far and contemplate our direction from here.



Children from the American School of Bombay(ASB) and MMC children working collectively on an activity as part of the Child-2-Child programme. These sessions serve as an empowering platform for MMC children, enabling them to interact with children from privileged schools on an equal footing. Robin Age, a children's newspaper, coordinates these sessions regularly with ASB, Ecole Mondiale and FLAG.



One-and-a-half year old Swaraj is a happy and playful child. However, he was born with bilateral club feet. He cannot walk and can barely crawl to his mother sitting less than a foot away. When Swaraj came to our centre at HCC Powai, our teachers immediately informed us about his medical problem. Our field officer Rajkumari accompanied the family on several rounds of doctor visits and consultations. Finally this month Swaraj was operated on his right foot at KEM hospital. Doctors are going to wait a while before they operate on his left foot. We hope Swaraj has a speedy recovery and lives the childhood he truly deserves.

Earlier this year, Mr. Scot Hoffman, a teacher at the American School of Bombay began a unique project at our centres. He wanted our children to have a photograph of themselves which they could always keep. We initiated the project at two centres and the response it elicited from the children and their families cannot be described in words. Joy, trepidation, amazement and awe were seen and captured on their faces; for many it was the first photograph of themselves that they had. We want to thank Scot and all his friends who helped make his project possible. We are sure in the months to come more centres will benefit from it.

We are very excited about receiving a grant from Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) to conduct a year long study to identify the problems of migrant construction workers and work towards the financial and social inclusion of this marginalised sector of the city's population. As part of the project, we plan to survey 500 families and understand their socio economic background. The data will help us in our advocacy for basic facilities such as financial inclusion, and our attempts to deal with identity issues of migrant workers living on construction sites.

News Bytes

We are now registered with GiveIndia, a donation platform that hosts NGOs that have been scrutinised for transparency and credibility. You can now donate to us online by visiting <http://www.giveindia.org/m-1055-mumbai-mobile-creches.aspx> . Only Indian nationals or donors with a functional Indian bank account can use this route to donate.

We are also registered with GuideStar India. Guide Star is a UK-based NGO that accredits and rates NGOs on various parameters for their credibility.



Volunteers from ACC Ahead, the not-for-profit arm of ACC Cement, have been spending time at two MMC centres for the last few months. They use innovative techniques to conduct sessions on various themes. They have also started an adult literacy program at the Thane centre and together we hope to reach out more effectively to the community there. Kudos to Mrs. Banerjee and her super enthusiastic team!



Team Mumbai Mobile Creches raced to the finish at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2010. As many as 400 individuals and ten corporates ran for the cause of children living on construction sites.

MMC's children along with their friends from Fazlani L' Academie Globale carried MMC's hand puppets creating quite a stir among passersby!

We would like to thank American School of Bombay, Citibank, DBS, DHFL, Fazlani L'Globale Academie, HSBC, Macquarie Bank, MHFC, Nomura, Religare Macquarie and Tata Communications for running the 2010 Mumbai Marathon with us.

The support we receive from Individuals and Corporates in sharing both time and resources with us is always much appreciated. Our sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all of you.

In memory of her late husband, Paresh, **Dinita Chauhan** donated a special lunch for the children at all our centres. She has said that she will make this an annual event. We feel honoured that Mrs. Chauhan has made us a part of this very significant remembrance.

Claire Greville-Heygate, for hosting a Bollywood night in London and raising funds for our cause.

Eldeweiss Capital and **EdelGive Foundation**, for donating furniture for our office renovation. The furniture has completely transformed our space!

Syntel and its corporate volunteers, for organising a field visit to the Prince of Wales Museum for the older children of our Agripada centre.

Tata Consultancy Services for donating two brand new laptops for our administrative team.

Everyone at **Hopping Bunnies**, for contributing educational material for the crèche and balwadi children.

Rustomjee Constructions, for celebrating Christmas with our children at their construction site in Goregaon.

KPMG Foundation, for organising a visit to the Nehru Science Centre for 30 children.

Dr. Jyoti Dave from Jyoti Care Foundation, for conducting an eye camp at our Pratiksha Nagar centre.

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited, for donating ten Godrej cupboards to our centres.

NYK Line (India), for organising an afternoon at the Agripada centre where children learned about various aspects of Japanese culture and life.

SNDT college for the Fun Fair they put up in their campus for our children.

Convergys for conducting a sports day with over 100 children in Thane.

Brigitte and **Bert Faerber**, friends of MMC from Germany for 20 years now, for their support over all these years.

Gulshirin Dubash and her fabulous team from Clowns Without Borders for the amazing clowning act they put up for our children at the Ghatkopar and Powai centres. You really had the children in splits.

Our star volunteer, **Dafnah Meron**, who volunteered at our office for three months coordinating volunteering activities.

Finally, our sincere Thank You to **ALL VOLUNTEERS** both at our main office and in all centres, who have devoted their time to our cause. The work you do is invaluable to us.



MMC in numbers

2 centres set up and 3 centres closed in the last four months

1491 children attended our centres

16 women are currently in training, 9 of whom are from construction sites

7 construction sites surveyed; 145 children were found needing support

4 Lokdoots were conducted

463 children and 20 teachers attended our annual camp

