



Advocating for Change

In April this year, the Indian state passed a landmark judgement-the Right to Education Act – mandating that all children between six and fourteen have the fundamental right to education. In response, Mumbai Mobile Creches (MMC) has been busy supporting children on our sites to get enrolled in local municipal schools – and with a fair bit of success. We have also actively been a part of state wide networks to support other migrant children’s inclusion in the education system. Our advocacy efforts have not been limited to the child on the site, but have included their families.



The past few months have seen a detailed socioeconomic survey of over 500 families, formation of self help groups and strengthening of our Sakhi Federation, which aims to support families, especially women, on the sites. We are also a member of a new national network of organizations working with migrants and earlier this year we collectively signed a memorandum of understanding with India’s Unique Identification project (UIDAI). Alongside, we also commissioned a detailed evaluation of our work and increased the number of our centres to 28 – the highest number of centres in the last decade! It’s been a hectic few months indeed.

Growing Our Numbers – Our Next Class of Teachers

In August of this year, fourteen trainees of MMC’s Bal Palika – our year long early childhood care and education training programme – completed their training and became certified child care workers. Thanks to our guest of honour, Mr Pirojsha Godrej, Executive Director, Godrej Properties (below), for joining us in the celebration.



Partnerships for change

Expanding Our Reach – Engaging Our Communities

Over the past two decades MMC, has conducted lokdoots (street plays) with a group of six to eight performers, focusing on a wide range of topics such as education for the girl child and the ills of child marriage. The plays are performed on construction sites and encourage community dialogue about many local and challenging issues. We recognize that these plays are an engaging way of disseminating important information at the grassroots level and for that reason over the last six months, we have reinvigorated the program. Many of our performers have worked with MMC since the beginning of this initiative and they are now teaching their craft to the next generation of lokdoot performers. Additionally, the performances have been reworked to include costumes and music (performers play the dholak – a type of drum, ghungharoo - bells and kanjira – a tambourine). The themes of the plays continue to focus on topics such as HIV/AIDS awareness, gender equality, identity issues, child labour and the importance of saving money. We hope that the growth of this programme and our inclusion of new performers will leave construction workers and their families feeling excited, curious and better informed.

Collective Power of the Sakhis. Our year old women's federation group, Sakhi, recently formed two self-help groups (SHGs) – "Samruddhi" and "Pragati," and are now on their way to building their savings. The Sakhi group has served as a pilot project in forming SHGs and we now hope to replicate this model with many more women living on construction sites.

Supporting Positive Parenting on Construction Sites. As part of a continuing study to better understand cultural influences on parenting, we asked several parents to do a simple drawing of their relationship with their children. These drawings were shared by the MMC team at a conference organised by BalaMandir in Chennai with other NGOs working with children and involved in promoting good parenting techniques.

Health First. In the wake of increased incidences of malaria in our city, this past July, MMC collaborated with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and BSES Hospital to organise health camps for communities on construction sites. We have already organised five such camps, and over 550 people have been examined by BSES hospital doctors. Cases have been referred to nearby municipal hospitals for treatment and some individuals have been hospitalised. In the coming months, we plan to have regular medical camps on the construction sites where we work to ensure greater access to medical services, which are otherwise not easily within reach of these communities.

One Child At a Time. Seven year old Ashwini's parents were distraught when she was born. She was born with a cleft palate and cleft lip, which overshadowed her otherwise beautiful face. Not only did this affect her appearance, but as she grew older, the cleft palate also affected her ability to eat and to speak and was damaging to her self confidence. In November 2009, Ashwini joined the newly opened MMC centre in Powai – this was her first schooling experience. On seeing children her age speaking perfectly, she recoiled into a shell and refused to interact with anyone at the centre. The regular doctor's visit to the MMC centre was the first medical attention that Ashwini had received in her life. On seeing Ashwini, our doctor recommended she get the cleft operated immediately and our community health coordinator started working on Ashwini's case. Ashwini was operated in early May, thanks to the Smile Train Foundation, and when she returned to the centre after recuperating, the first thing her schoolmates said was, "Ashwini, you look so beautiful!" Today, Ashwini is a changed person at the centre. She is confident, lively and smiles freely!



Fun and Learning with Past MMC Students

This past June, 72 of MMC's "graduated" 14+ year children attended a three day camp outside of the city. Pratham (PACE) conducted a two-hour session on vocational training and employment in order to help the children begin to think about their skills and their future. We also invited some of our past students who are now successful artists, lawyers, civil contractors and teachers to meet with the children and share their experiences. It was a wonderful exchange and the children greatly enjoyed themselves.

MMC in Numbers

- 7 centres opened and 1 closed in the last six months
- 8 sites were surveyed and 266 children were found needing support
- 3647 children were reached in the last six months
- 9 training and puppet programs were conducted by MMC staff
- 72 children attended the older children's camp

One Metre for One Rupee –

In Support of MMC . On August 21st, 2010, 62 year-old Mr Ashok Mahadevan, Director of MMC, scaled Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak and the tallest freestanding mountain in the world! Not only did he reach the peak of "Kili," but he also raised over Rs 800,000 for MMC. We extend a big thank you to Mr Mahadevan and to his generous supporters and we wish him many more successful climbs.



Tracing Their Roots

In the last six months the advocacy team has made steady progress in understanding the causes of and reasons for migration from villages to construction sites in Mumbai. As part of the ongoing Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) grant, the team has been in the field for the last six months, conducting source and exposure visits to the places of origin of many Mumbai construction workers. Exposure visits to the Ajeevika Bureau in Udaipur and the Disha Foundation in Nasik provided an insight into the work of other NGOs that focus on migrant populations. These visits have been instrumental in developing a deeper understanding about migration patterns to construction sites and will give direction to our in the future.

Beautifying Our Spaces with a Little Help from Our Friends

Because our centres are located on construction sites, dust and cement are our constant companions. In May, we received a grant through GiveIndia from Mrs Anjal Malkani to improve the infrastructure of our centres. Simple infrastructure improvement to the centres, such as the addition of cupboards, boxes and files have made a world of difference! Our classrooms are now better organised and the space is transformed into a more inviting and effective learning environment. A well organised centre goes a long way in welcoming our children, holding their interest and assisting our teachers. Our sincere thanks to Mrs Malkani for her generosity.

A Goal of Inclusion – Putting Construction Workers on the Agenda

MMC is now a part of the newly formed National Coalition of Organisations for the Security of Migrant Workers, and we recently signed a memorandum of understanding with India's Unique Identification project (UIDAI). There are 15 other civil society groups from across India in the coalition, and together we aim to lobby for better services and protection and security for migrant workers in India, estimated to be over one hundred million people.

And Prize Winning Artists

We are proud to announce that Heena and Anwar, two children from our Agripada Centre in Mahalaxmi won the 2nd and 3rd prize in a drawing competition at the Nehru Science Centre's



“World Earth Day” Celebration. Their talent was recognized and awarded among a very competitive group of young artists.

Published Authors

What is it like to be a published author? Ask 10 year old Swapnil from MMC's Kalpataru Aura Centre in Ghatkopar West. Swapnil's story, “Mela” was published in Chakmak, a children's magazine produced by Eklavya, an NGO that develops educational programs and literature for children. We congratulate Swapnil for this wonderful accomplishment and thank our Aura volunteer Indu Harikumar for her support in making this happen.

Friends and Partnerships

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



Thank you!

- For the last three years, the Neptune Group has celebrated the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi with great pomp and splendour with our children at our Bhandup centre. Now, it is a day that all of the children and teachers look forward to celebrating.
- Thanks to the Inner Wheel Club of Mulund for gifting our teachers with a small token of their appreciation for our work on the occasion of Gurupournima. Our teachers were both thrilled and humbled by the acknowledgement.
- Zoom Entertainment Network for bringing the children to their office in Lower Parel to celebrate Mother's Day. The children were delighted to feast on the cakes and snacks.
- The Children's Film Society for conducting a special screening of the children's film Karaamati Coat at their auditorium. The children greatly enjoyed the movie.
- Concern India Foundation for organising a Disney World celebration at the Inorbit Mall, Malad for over 60 children from our centres. Our children will surely cherish the experience for a long time.
- Rotary Club of Bhandup for their contribution of toys to our crèche and their donation to our centre.
- ACC Ahead held many educational sessions at our centres and organised health camps for the community. We are extremely grateful for their services.
- Indu Harikumar, our enthusiastic volunteer, for conducting innovative art-sessions at our Aura centre in Ghatkopar. We really appreciate the effort you put in for the children, Indu.
- Dr. Narges Mahalaxmivala, Sudha Patel, Natasha Gupta (in memory of her grandmother) and Jessica Mahadevan (in memory of Sheila Jacob) for treating our children to many healthy nuts and fruits over the past few months.
- Syntel Corporation's Foundation, S'prayas, for the exposure visits they conduct for our children. Thanks to their efforts our children have visited many new and exciting places.
- Nilima and Ananjan Mitter, friends of MMC, for their generous commitment to and support of our cause over the past years.
- Trisha Satra for designing the earlier edition of MMC's newsletter.
- Michela Anchen and everyone at Hopping Bunnies for donating many lovely toys to our children. Your gesture has brought smiles on the faces of many children.
- Prajkta Kamtekar and the Bindaas Marathi group for organising a full day event filled with fun and excitement for 50 children from our Patlipada centre in Thane.

Special thanks to Kalpataru Foundation and Cipla for a very generous grant to our corpus fund.