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MUMBAI MOBILE CRECHES NEWSLETTER

BAL SHRISTI

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Foreword

Greetings from Mumbai Mobile Creches!

We are delighted to share our organisational updates for the last six months (April to September 2015). We successfully continued to run our day care centres on construction sites and relatively new initiatives of Child Care Centres (in partnership with the builders), Care on Wheels - Mobile Bus, and day-care centres on brick kilns, expanding our reach to the welfare of migrant children in Mumbai. Through our centres, spread across Mumbai, we strive to provide safety, education, health & nutritional support to these marginalised children, and we have catered to an average of over 1300 children.

Efforts were made to improve the nutrition programme giving the best possible nourishment to the children. Summers were made more exciting and lively by the introduction of new activities. In keeping with the pace of time, we also started our very first English medium day care centre in Ramabai Nagar slum at Wadala.

In a significant development which marked MMC's long efforts to bring the cause of childcare on construction sites on table with the active stakeholders, we were successful in putting the requirement of crèches on constructions sites with children at multiple fronts. For the first time ever, Maharashtra Chamber of housing Industry (MCHI) – a body of Real Estate Developers in Mumbai, the Department of Women & Child Development, Maharashtra and MMC signed a MOU promulgating the establishment of crèches on construction sites in Mumbai. We were also successful in getting the Maharashtra Housing & Area Development Authority (MHADA) to provide a day-care centre on each of their current construction sites. Lastly after regular follow up a directive was issued by Thane Municipal Corporation mandating a provision of crèche on all the proposed construction sites with children living on them.

अगर MMC नहीं होता तो....? (If there was no MMC...)

“अगर मुंबई मोबाईल क्रेशज़ नहीं होता तो मैं कपडा धोता, बर्तन धोता, पानी भरता...”

“If MMC was not there I would have washed cloths, utensils and filled water at home...”

- Sachin Varma, 11, from MMC's Nahar centre

By the Numbers

23 Day Care Centres operating 6-days a week, for full working day

2 Mobile Bus-Education sites providing half-day care services for 4 days a week; **18** construction sites covered by the Mobile Bus, 2 days a week, to facilitate healthcare intervention

6 Child Care Centres, which are builder managed, operating either full days or half days

5 centres under MMC's Special Projects

Over **15** Lokdoots conducted and facilitated, reaching more than **1700** community members

Over **9** general health camps held, benefiting over **100** community members

Over **500** Aadhar cards facilitated

16 new bank accounts opened

7 bank account holders linked to the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Scheme for financial inclusion; **17** bank account holders linked to the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Scheme for insurance; and **4** account holders linked to the Pradhan Mantri Atal Pension Scheme

32 women trained in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) under the Bal Vikas Sahayog programme

85 Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) government teachers trained during an MMC refresher course on ECCE

Notes from the Field

Puppetry Talent on Display at NCPA

The National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai organised a Variety Show on 22nd April 2015, which displayed the artistic skills of children from different NGOs based in Mumbai. For MMC children, it was a unique opportunity to perform on a professional stage in front of an unknown audience. Four girls from MMC's Bhaktipark centre presented a puppet show featuring one of the Panchatantra tales. They grabbed the crowd's attention with their attractive puppets, beautiful backdrop, amazing voice modulation, and by the sound effects they created using musical instruments. The event also included a wide range of performances by children from other NGOs, and it was a pleasure to see them all display their talents on stage.

IPL Cricket Match

With the continued support from the Mumbai Indians' "Education for All" initiative, 53 children and seven teachers from MMC attended an Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket match between the Mumbai Indians and the SunRisers Hyderabad on 25th April 2015. Children had a gala time at the famous Wankhede Stadium and enjoyed delicious snacks and goodies during the match. As part of the same initiative, seven children from MMC's Bhaktipark centre participated in an event which brought together players of the Mumbai Indian team and children from various different NGOs. The children visited the five-star Palladium Hotel where they sang a song and gave a brief speech about their stay on construction sites. It was a proud moment for us to see them perform so confidently in front of the audience.

Celebrating Creative Play and Civic Duty

Summer months at MMC are filled with the holiday spirit, and in keeping with this festive mood, we introduced two new initiatives at our centres this year: Khel Mahotsav or Festival of Play, and Shramadaan, which emphasised civic responsibility. The two celebrations were held in consecutive weeks, keeping children continuously engaged in interesting activities.

- Khel Mahotsav was held from 4th to 15th May this year, and announcements about it were displayed at centres and at common areas in communities. Children, with the help of teachers, organised and conducted games for all in the community. Each centre made a 5 to 6 feet tall mascot out of recyclable materials, in the shape of humans, animals and robots, for their Khel Mahotsav event. Throughout the week, different types of games and competitions were organised inside the centres and outdoors, and parents happily played alongside their children. Handmade gifts like showpieces made out of painted stones, clay bracelets, and beautiful greeting cards created by the children themselves were given as prizes for the competitions.
- MMC held Shramadaan during the week of 18th to 29th May. *Shramadaan* signifies a variety of volunteer labour for the good of society, and throughout the week children were encouraged to contribute to the society through activities. At some centres, children performed short street plays to promote the usage of cloth bags, garbage segregation, and cleanliness, and to discourage paan spitting, public urination, and other polluting habits. Recycling was a major theme throughout the week. Children made posters explaining how to separate recyclable items from non-recyclable items in the garbage; reused old newspapers to make shopping bags to be used by their parents; and turned recyclable boxes into dry waste bins for all the households in their community. They also learned more about nature by collecting seeds of various fruits and planting them in pots made from fruit and egg cartons, creating small compost pits in boxes and bottles, and making bird feeders and bird houses from cardboard cartons and toilet rolls.



MMC Children playing tug of war during the Khel Mahotsav



Children playing Kabaddi at one of our oldest day care centres

Strengthening Nourishment

- **Eggs Now Provided Six Days a Week at Centres**

In another major development in improving our children's nourishment, we began providing eggs six days a week for our children at the centres, the centres being closed on Sundays. The deprivation experienced by children living on construction sites makes them vulnerable to a weakened immune system and undernourishment; therefore the protein-rich eggs prove to be a very effective way to improve the health of our children.

- **Summer Special**

Summer months can be very harsh especially on the construction sites. In order to keep the children hydrated and to maintain their potassium levels, we provided lime water (nimbu pani) to all the children and teachers during the raging heat of summer.

Celebrating the Success of Our Graduating Stars

Just as in the past 32 years, this year too we proudly saw our new batch of Bal Palika trainees graduate successfully after a rigorous one-year course on Early Childhood Care and Education. Ten out of the 25 trainees who graduated as *Bal Palikas* (childcare givers) were from the community of construction workers. Because of the programme's affiliation with Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University (SNDT), 12 trainees also sat for the SNDT examination and secured a Diploma certificate in Nursery/Creche Management. The Bal Palika Training equips these women with the valuable skills to teach and care for children from birth to six years.

We are very proud to announce that six of our graduated trainees from earlier this year were successfully placed in various child care organisations in Mumbai. We wish them all the luck for their future plans.

Currently we have over 30 women registered for the next training session, which began in August 2015.



New Initiatives

Mandatory First Aid Training and Kits

Recognising the need to safeguard physical safety and the fact that medical emergencies can occur at any time despite precautions, MMC made it mandatory for all staff members to be trained in administering First Aid. We also made sure that every centre has a complete First Aid kit including, among other essentials, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory, and antibiotic medicines, as well as a thermometer, antiseptic solution, and bandages.

English-Speaking Course for Teachers

MMC understands the importance of communicating in the English language in an increasingly globalised economy. This year we have enrolled a batch of 20 teachers in an English-speaking course conducted by Kings Learning, to build their capacity to interact in English with our children at the MMC daycare centres. The 40 hour course was spread out over six weeks, and the teachers were really excited to learn how to use the language fluently in their daily lives. Now they take an active role in teaching English to the children at our centres as well. We are very proud to see them confidently using their newly acquired language skills.

Introduction of English-Medium Preschool at Wadala

We started our first English-medium preschool (Balwadi) at one of our oldest slum day care centre in Wadala. The parents in the slum community had lobbied for such a preschool because they knew that an English-language education will facilitate their children's higher education in the future. With an improved infrastructure, brightly coloured classroom walls, new toys, and new bookshelves, the centre welcomed over 30 children in June, 2015. Two Bal Palika graduates and caregivers with a good English-language exposure now teach at the centre from 10 am to 1 pm. The programme emphasises active participation and readiness through pre-reading and pre-arithmetic activities, using rhymes and picture books through the medium of English.



MMC Goes International!



MMC had the wonderful opportunity to present its work with a unique set of people through an international platform when Ms. Debika Chatterjee, on behalf of MMC, participated in a research conference hosted by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, in June. The conference was titled 'Gendered Dimensions of Migration: Material and Social Outcomes of South-South Migration', which included experts from all over the world working in the field of migration studies. MMC presented a media clip called 'Against the Odds', which is a collection of short media clips narrating the experiences of five women who migrated from rural areas of India to various construction sites of Mumbai and completed our yearlong Bal Palika teacher training course with MMC against all odds. The women described their experiences of empowerment and their journey towards becoming independent, active, and confident stakeholders in the migrant construction workers' community. These clips document the migrant women's struggles as they further their education and participate in the formal economy.

Advocating for ECCE Policy

MMC has been a frontrunner in the propagation of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) in Mumbai through our model day care centres on construction sites, where more than 60% of the children are aged 0 to 6 years, and through our Bal Palika and Bal Sahayog teacher training courses which impart the knowledge of ECCE to help women become child caregivers. We realise the importance of keeping up with the government policy decisions in the field of ECCE so that we can push for changes which will promote quality child care and spread the awareness of its importance among all the sections of society. To strengthen these efforts, MMC started networking with other NGOs in Mumbai working with young children. On 11th August 2015, we organised our third meeting where representatives from 18 NGOs came together to discuss the aspects of the newly formed ECCE policy by the government of Maharashtra. We invited Ms. Archana Jamdar, an expert in the field of ECCE, as a chief speaker during the meeting. She spoke on the topic of 'Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum' and critically discussed the current ECCE policy in that regard.



Fundraising and Friendraising

Run for MMC!

Our biggest annual fundraising event, the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon, is approaching. Next year's marathon will be held on 17th January 2016. MMC has participated in the marathon for past eight years, and we are proud to share that in 2015 we were one of the top 15 fundraisers.

The marathon is exciting and we watch with pride as participants bear our logo and show support for the cause of migrant children's welfare. We love to cheer on our runners – it's our way of 'friendraising'!

Whether participants complete the Dream Run (6 km), the half marathon (21 km), or the marathon (42 km), they all have great fun. We're thrilled with the large number of corporations and individuals who have committed to running on our behalf. For details on how you can get involved in our largest fundraiser, please contact communications@mmcmil.org.in

Thank You!

We are immensely thankful for the support of our many friends - individuals, organisations, and corporates alike in helping us build a bright future for Mumbai's migrant children. Our work would not have been possible without your kindness and commitment to our programme. In particular, we would like to thank...

- Mr. Anantharaman and Mr. Rajat Gupta for generously funding the core component of our comprehensive programme, our teachers.
- We are truly grateful to Mr. Vineet Dhingra & Western Consolidated Ltd. for their generous support in providing 'Nimbu pani' for our children in the hot summer months, and towards our nutrition programme respectively.
- Mr. Chandramouli S. Batibrolu, Ms. Rumana Hameid, Ms. Padmini Khare, Ms. Reshma H. Piralal and others for their generous donations towards our corpus. These contributions have helped to ensure the continuity of our programmes and in securing MMC's financial stability.
- Dr. Pareshnath Paul for his committed support to our work.
- Our volunteers – Darius Ansari and Cinthia Fabian from the Columbia University CEO Programme, Sei Chong, Luna Kulkarni and Kim Murch for their dedicated volunteering at the office.
- We thank Amrit Vasudeva Trust, Asha For Education, Bombay Community Public Trust (through Mumbai Connexions), Child Vikas International, Comic Relief, Concern India Foundation, Global Fund for Children, Godrej Properties Ltd., Hersheys India Pvt. Ltd., IL&FS Investment Managers Ltd, Impact Foundation (India), Owens Corning (India) Pvt. Ltd., Reliance Foundation, Schindler India Pvt. Ltd., Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd., United Way of Mumbai, United World College of South East Asia for their support.
- We are thankful to The Breadsticks Foundation for their very generous support towards our programmes and institutional strengthening to help MMC reach greater heights.
- We thank Give Foundation, GiveIndia, and GlobalGiving for continuing to effectively facilitate funding for us by providing us access to interested donors and all donors, friends and supporters



- who donated through these platforms.
- Our Bal Palika teacher training programme is being supported by the Tata Trusts under the Teacher Education initiative. We sincerely appreciate this generous contribution.
- We are thankful to Central Social Welfare Board for supporting MMC's work.
- Shane O'Donnell, Maria Eliana Testolin and Jay Zhao from the SAP Social Sabbatical program (through Pyxera Global) for creating a blueprint for data digitization at MMC.
- Mr. and Mrs. Pankoke, Premdhara Strom Der Liebe e.V., and Verein Mobile Krippen Freiburg Germany for their ongoing and dedicated support to our work.
- KPMG in India, who have shown admirable dedication in their commitment to our work over the past years in many ways, and for organising a number of volunteering events and fun outings for the children.
- Employees from Batra Group, Hersheys India Pvt. Ltd., KPMG in India, Nomura Service India Pvt. Ltd., Renaissance Hotels, Vodafone India Ltd. for volunteering at our centres.
- We are indebted to Mumbai Connexions for their continuous volunteering at our centres.