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MUMBAI MOBILE CRECHES NEWSLETTER

BAL SHRISTI

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Foreword

Greetings from all of us at Mumbai Mobile Creches! We have been busy these past six months with both new and continuing activities as we endeavour to fulfil our promise to give children who live on construction sites a happy and healthy childhood.

The nature of the construction industry in Mumbai is changing, and Mumbai Mobile Creches has been studying the changes to come up with the best ways to serve the children who would otherwise remain unseen, uncared for and lost in the fringes of this mega city. To this end, we have expanded the reach of our Care on Wheels - Mobile Bus programme to 19 sites that are too small to support a standalone centre. In addition, we have expanded our facilitation centres model in which the builder covers all the operational costs of running a centre on the construction site and takes full responsibility for managing the centre. MMC provides trained personnel to operate the facilitation centre but their salaries are provided by the builders. The builder also allows the centre to be regularly monitored by MMC staff. We first embarked on the facilitation centre model in August 2013, and over the past six months have opened two more. Through these initiatives MMC hopes to expand our reach and make day care facility a sustainable programme.

Heading Towards a Stable Future!

Divya was born and brought up in a village in Maharashtra but moved to Mumbai after her marriage in 2000. Currently, she lives in a slum in Ghatkopar. Two years ago, Divya lost her husband to a heart attack. This was a terrible blow to Divya, who was left to raise two girls (one in the 4th standard and one in the 1st) by herself. For the next six months, Divya remained in depression and grief.

She came to know about the Bal Palika Training (BPT) course through a woman from the Young Women's Christian Association. After the initial visit, Divya approached MMC's training team to find out more about MMC's BPT course. Divya had studied until the 10th grade in her village and had always wanted to pursue her education further, so the BPT course on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) caught her attention. After getting all the information on the programme, she decided to join the course because she wanted to be independent and take financial responsibility for the family after her husband's death.

Divya continued to face hardships during the training, like the death of her mother-in-law, who had encouraged Divya to take the course. But all these challenges did not affect Divya's determination to successfully complete the course. Divya completed her BPT course and appeared for exams, which were conducted by SNDT University, an accredited affiliate of the course, and secured 54% in the exam.

Immediately after being awarded the diploma certificate, Divya got the opportunity to join a nonprofit organization which works with young children afflicted with cancer, where she earns over Rs. 10,000 per month. The BPT course has only increased her desire to pursue a higher education and now she is working to graduate from the Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University.

We wish Divya all the very best in her future!

*Name changed to maintain anonymity.

By the Numbers

3 day care centres opened & **4** closed in the last six months

3 facilitation centres run and **19** sites covered by Mobile Bus, their education programme reaching **69** children across **2** sites

27 lokdoots conducted and facilitated and over **4500** community members reached

7 general health camps, **10** eye camps and a dental check-up camp facilitated benefitting over **900** community members reached

86 bank accounts opened and **45** PAN cards and **9** PRAN cards facilitated for people living on construction sites

8 women from construction workers' community trained under Building Child Care Capacities programme

38 ICDS teachers trained in early child care and education

Notes from the Field

Indian Premier League Cricket Match

MMC's children once again had the opportunity to enjoy an Indian Premier League cricket match this past April. A total of 178 children, along with 15 teachers from MMC, travelled from the far suburbs of Mumbai to Wankhede Stadium to see their favourite cricketers and to cheer for the Mumbai Indians as the team played against the team - Kings XI Punjab. The overjoyed children created a sea of blue as they sported the Mumbai Indians' colours and flags at Wankhede Stadium.

The Reliance Foundation deserves all of our thanks for taking such good care of the children during the match. They were well fed with delicious snacks and given an array of Mumbai Indians memorabilia which they could wear during the game and take home as a keepsake to remember that evening forever.

Overall, it was a wonderfully fun-filled day that the children will surely never forget! This opportunity was truly an once-in-a-lifetime chance for many of these children, and the amount of joy and excitement they experienced is immeasurable.



Here are some smiling faces of MMC's children on Wankhede

Graduation Ceremony

This August, we were proud to see 29 women complete our year-long childcare giver training course Bal Palika. Nine of these graduates were from families who work at the construction sites. With our renewed affiliation with SNDT University 15 trainees from this batch appeared for SNDT examination and secured a Diploma certificate in Nursery/ Crèche Management. The training not only provides community women with valuable skills and professional knowledge that will allow them to work as child care workers but also encourages community investment in childcare and education programmes. Becoming certified child care workers provides these women with the opportunity to become financially independent and develop a sense of identity. We are happy that 12 of our graduates were successfully placed at various organisations and are working as professional child care workers.



BPT trainees proudly displaying their graduation certificates



MMC's veteran teacher Katta Babu addressing a group of youths at the centre

Guiding Futures!

Continuing the tradition of mentoring the youth who live on construction sites, we conducted three summer camps in April and May, which reached a total of 137 young people, ages 15 to 18 who were from four centres. Many of these youths were alumni of MMC centres and are ready to step into their future. During these summer camps we focused on working with older children to provide them with information regarding opportunities for higher education, vocational training courses, and preparation for entering the job market. We hope that these youths will be able use the information we provided to make informed decisions and access every available resource to achieve their highest potential.

Reaching out to the Construction Workers' Community

In the efforts to empower the construction workers' communities that we serve, we held vocational trainings in past six months to teach both men and women a skilled trade, like plumbing or electrical work, which would enable them to increase their earning. On two sites, a total of 47 men were trained as electricians, and on a third site, 20 men learned about plumbing. For 20 women, we also held skill training seminars on Home Management to hone their culinary skills and operating electronic home appliances.

For the first time we have created a Bachat Gat (savings group) for the members of construction workers' community. The group, encourages its members to collectively save and use that money for entrepreneurial activities that would benefit the members.

Building Capacities of our Teachers

MMC also partners with the expatriate community of Mumbai to develop the skills of our teachers. Last year, the American School of Bombay began working with three MMC teachers as part of the school's two-year teacher training programme. This programme aims to encourage ongoing professional development and the growth of teachers by providing training and coaching in areas of child development and learning behaviour, classroom management and relationship building. We are very proud that three of MMC's teachers were selected for this training, which will be completed in 2015. We are hopeful that this training will equip our teachers with professional teaching skills which will enhance learning among migrant children.

Research Conference for Children

This year MMC's children got an opportunity to participate and conduct a research project under City as Lab initiative organised by Renaissance Education. 14 children in the age group of 12-14 years from MMC's three centres participated in the initiative. It provided our children a rare platform to present their original research work to a wider audience in a programme organised at Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastusangrahalaya (Museum) on 22nd September 2014. Their projects addressed questions relevant to their living environment in the city of Mumbai. The three groups conducted research on the topics of 'Life on construction sites', 'Traffic on the streets Mumbai' and 'Voice pollution during the festivals in the city'. MMC is proud of all these young researchers who enthusiastically planned and executed their own research projects under the mentorship of MMC teachers!

New Initiatives

Nourishing our Future

We continue to make significant strides in our nutrition programme for children living on construction sites. Last year, we arranged for a review of MMCs nutrition programme by an expert in the field. In accordance with the expert's recommendation, we have made changes in the dietary provisions for our children. A few months ago, we increased the sizes of the portions of essential foods in the children's daily diet. Additionally, we also increased the frequency of fruits in diets of our children to four days a week.



Children enjoying fresh fruits at MMC!



First-aid training in session

Promoting Safety

For the first time, MMC provided Fire Safety training for all its staff. The training was conducted by Cease Fire and emphasized preventive measures and methods to arrest fire. All teachers prepared a basic centre fire evacuation map for their centres and tried their hands at operating a fire extinguisher. In addition, the MMCs staff were also trained to provide first aid. This training has equipped our teachers and staff to better handle emergencies and arrest impact of injuries and accidents. Our staff found the workshop enriching with practice sessions that gave them confidence in application of the first aid knowledge they gained. Field experiences our teachers shared were discussed by the resource person, helping teachers relate training contents with the ground realities they faced. Both these trainings have prepared our staff to enhance safety measures for the children we serve.

Advocating for Change

At MMC our advocacy programme is crucial part of our efforts towards breaking the vicious cycle of poverty that plague so many vulnerable communities in Mumbai. In these last six months, our advocacy team helped 9 members of the community to avail Unique Permanent Retirement Account Number (PRAN) card under the National Pension Scheme for Indian citizens. Central Government encourages workers from unorganized sectors to save for their retirement through co-contributory pension scheme – 'Swavalamban Scheme' wherein Government will contribute a sum of Rs. 1,000 to a subscriber who contributes minimum of Rs. 1000. The PRAN card ensures access to the personal account meant for these savings for retirement.

Strengthening Governance at MMC

Information technology (IT) system resources are necessary to improve access to information in today's world, and MMC is adopting these resources for their optimal use. We hope that easy access to tools and information through IT will boost attainment of MMC's goals and objectives. With new IT opportunities come certain rights and responsibilities to which every IT user is expected to adhere. As MMC anticipates wider use of IT both at the office and at our centres, we created an Information Technology Policy to document user expectations to prevent misuse of the IT resources.

Geared Up to Lead

Early this year Vrishali Pispati, CEO was selected for the 2014 Ford Motor Company International Fellowship of 92nd Street Y. During the intensive three-week residency in June 2014, Vrishali took classes in areas including nonprofit management strategy and leadership training at Columbia University's Picker Center for Executive Education. The academic curriculum was complemented by visits to model nonprofits in New York City and meetings with academic and business leaders.

Fundraising and Friendraising

Global Giving Summit on Social Media and Online Giving

Following our incredible success during the Global Giving Open Challenge in September 2013, MMC was invited to be a part of the panel for Global Giving's first summit in July 2014, held in Delhi. Additionally, MMC addressed the participants through an engaging presentation on 'Building Lasting Donor Relationships'. The two-day conference, which drew more than 150 individuals from different nonprofits across India and South Asia, was also a wonderful opportunity to learn more about using online outreach tools like e-mail and Facebook for fundraising and to exchange ideas with other nonprofits.

Thank You!

MMC's various programmes would not have been possible without the generous support and faith from our many supporters, corporates and other organisations, from all of our children, teachers and staff. Many thanks to all of you. In particular we would like to thank ...

- Our donors- Child Vikaas International, Concern India Foundation, Give India, IDBI Bank Ltd, IL&FS Investment Managers Ltd, Impact Foundation, Schindler India Pvt Ltd, United World College of South East Asia
- Our volunteers – Avery Cambridge and Chanel Thomas from the Columbia University CEO Programme, Sei Chong, Luna Kulkarni and Jenny Roberts for their wonderful work at the office and volunteers from the Mumbai Connexions for their continuous volunteering at our centres.
- Employees from Abbott India Ltd, Batra Group, CRISIL Ltd, KPMG in India, Nomura Service India Pvt Ltd, Renaissance Hotel, Powai, for volunteering at our centres.
- Employees of Thomson Reuters for generous contribution through the matching grant programmes.
- Abott India Ltd for taking over 40 children from 2 of our centres for an outing to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastusangrahalaya (Museum) and their employees for fundraising for MMC's programmes.
- Alison's Books for Children for their generous donation through Charities Aid Foundation towards our education programme.
- American Women's Club of Bombay for having MMC as one of the beneficiaries of their annual AWC Bourbon Street Bash.
- Asha for Education (Cornell University Chapter) for their support towards our education and nutrition programmes.
- B. P. India Services Pvt Ltd for their donation towards our education programme.
- Bachooali Hospital for organizing free eye check-up camps for our community members.
- Cravatex Ltd for their grant towards our nutrition programme.
- Institute for Design of Electrical Measuring Instruments and Jan Shikshan Sansthan for organizing construction trade related trainings for the communities we serve.
- KPMG in India for continuing to support our work, and for organizing a number of volunteering events and fun outings for the children.
- L&T Hospital, Andheri for arranging a free health check-up camp for our community.
- McGraw Hill Financial and CRISIL Ltd. towards outings for our children and towards nutrition programme.
- Smile Foundation for organizing a dental checkup camp and - distributing a dental hygiene kits at our Bhaktipark centre.
- The Breadsticks Foundation for their steadfast faith and support towards our work.
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- Dr. Neerja Takkar for her dedicated support towards our health and



nutrition programme and for conducting free regular health check-ups of our children, parents and staff members.

- Dr. Paresnath Paul for his dedicated support to our work.
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- Ms. Diane Chatterji for her continuous support and for choosing to donate her parting away gifts by her friends to MMC.
- Ms. Kim Murch for her steadfast support towards MMC and a special thanks for organizing a brunch at the Barking Deer Restaurant, we also thank all her friends whose participation made this event a success.
- Ms. Mayumi Murch and Mr. Zahaan Daver for fundraising on their birthdays at such a young age.
- Sangeeta Bhansali and the team at Vakil and Sons Pvt Ltd for organizing an exposure visit for our staff to their printing and publishing house.
- Prof. Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta for her continued guidance to the research team.
- We also thank all donors, friends and supporters who donated through the Give Foundation and Global Giving online platform and continue to support us through the year.