

Greetings from Mumbai Mobile Creches!

We are back with our news and happenings of the last six months. The past six months have been eventful. We celebrated the tenth year of our Book Week and rekindled memories of past years, revisiting each year's theme through books and activities.

We made greater strides in knowledge sharing and capacity enhancement on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Through a 12-day intensive training programme we built the capacities of 30 Balwadi teachers of municipal schools in the Mira-Bhayandar Municipal Corporation. The teachers expressed their delight in being part of such a programme since it enabled them to learn several new skills on age appropriate teaching methods.



Hitting a Pause but Not Stopping...The COVID-19

The pandemic threw up several challenges for the communities we serve. Following government guidelines and in the interests of the safety of the children as well as our staff, our day care centres have been closed since mid-March. The programme team has been making every effort to stay connected with the families of the children attending our day care centres as well as with builders to ascertain the situation on the ground. MMC staff have been coordinating with various relief agencies to ensure that these workers and their families on construction sites receive either dry rations or cooked food.

Through MMC's facilitation with other organisations over **13,000** construction workers received dry rations and **5000** people received cooked food at **29** construction sites across Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane. We networked with AIMS Foundation, Rotary Club, companies. Furthermore, we facilitated linkages with the Maharashtra Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Welfare Board for meals under the Atal Aahar Yojana and with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). These linkages benefitted over **2700** workers across **12** sites with regular cooked meals.

While our administrative office continues to function with employees working remotely, our education team has been encouraging teachers to plan innovative educational activities. Through regular phone calls and WhatsApps, our teachers and trainees have been sharpening their skills in Early Childhood Care and Education as well as planning various educational activities that can be carried out at the centres once they reopen.

For example, teachers of the preschool section have been developing songs, art & craft sessions and ways of learning alphabets, words, numbers and shapes, etc. that they can take up with the children on the monthly themes followed at MMC. Our afterschool support teachers have developed lesson plans for teaching fractions, as well as for discussions on specific themes, for art and craft activities. They've also created worksheets for the children.

Notes from the Field

MMC Statistics

MMC operated day care centres in **18** construction sites and **1** Brick Kiln; half-day centres in **2** slums. We also ran **6** child care centres and our community outreach programme in **4** sites. We had education programme activities in **6** construction sites and health interventions in **19** sites using the Care on Wheels Mobile Bus.

MMC served an average of **1247** children every month.

We talked to **1821** community members on construction sites through **19** Lokdoots.

We spoke to **668** community members on average each month through **183** Chai Pani meetings. **1800** children were screened at **14** eye check-up camps, **18** ear check-up camps and **3** general health camps. **1100** community members were screened at **13** health check-up camps.

10 years of Book Week

Every November, we celebrate Book Week (Children's Day is on the 14th of the month) to inculcate a love of reading among our children. This was our 10th celebration and the education and library programme team as well as teachers began preparing for it several months in advance. The main theme this year was 'किताबों की दुनिया की उभरते सितारे' (Kitaabon Ki Duniya Ki Ubharte Sitaare) i.e. The Rising Stars in the World of Books. Three themes from the past--'अंतरिक्ष में गुल' (Gul in Space), "अद्भुत दोस्ती के अनोखे रंग" (Colours of amazing friendship/ Amazing colours of incredible friendship) and प्राणियों के संग (The World of Animals) were also included. At every centre, we invited authors, our volunteers and representatives of builders to read books to the children. Our children were also engaged in creating slogan and selfies corners, poster-story maps, and friendship trees. Other activities during the week included children reading to each other and taking part in skits. We also encouraged parents to interact with their children.



Annual Camp

The annual children's camp was held in four batches during December at Vidhayak Sansad, Vasai, and the Yusuf Meherally Centre, Panvel. 413 children from our daycare centres enjoyed overnight camps where they danced, sang, performed skits and also went on a nature trails.

Alumni meeting at Yusuf Meherally Centre

The 7th alumni meeting was held on 17th November at the Yusuf Meherally Centre in Panvel. 28 alumni between 16 and 30 years, including seven girls, came.

Several of them had been with our centres for nearly a decade. They talked about what it was like growing up at MMC centres and how that had made a difference in their lives. All of them wanted to help us in its various activities such as career counselling, community outreach with male labourers, creating awareness about health, etc. Their enthusiasm was a great encouragement for us to take our work forward! The alumni also learnt about the community development projects of the Yusuf Meherally Centre.

Skill Training by Asian paints

16 workers from a construction site of Nirmal Lifestyle in Mulund completed a certified skill training programme on painting conducted by Asian Paints.

Puppet Week and Exhibition

The theme for this year's Puppet Week, held in January 2020, was "Our Earth". Puppet Week was celebrated at all the centres.

MMC's 5th Annual Puppet Exhibition was held on 17th & 18th January, 2020 at the Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work. More than 200 people visited the exhibition. All kinds of puppets were on display--bottle and box puppets, finger puppets, sock puppets, stick puppets and many others. Children from four of our day-care centres performed a spectacular puppet show for the visitors. Four puppet-making workshops were conducted for 98 participants who learnt the techniques of making puppets.

Notes from the Field

Building Our Homes – Teaching Aids Exhibitions

On 18th & 19th February, 2020, the annual Bal Palika Training programme's Teaching Aids Exhibition was held. Trainees had visited an architectural studio named Alchemy Design for preparation of teaching aids related to theme ' Building our Homes'. The studio's owner, showed 3 D models made by architects. The trainees produced excellent 3D artworks for models. They put up a puppet show and enacted a story on the theme "Home is where our Heart is".

Capacity Building in Sexual and Reproductive Health

MMC partnered with the non-profit organisation, SNEHA, to conduct sessions on Sexual and Reproductive Health for teachers of older children at the centres. 10 sessions were held. 17 afterschool support teachers, a programme coordinator and other programme staff members attended these sessions. Beginning with the basics, the sessions moved on to issues such as gender discrimination, stereotypes, sexual abuse of children and adults, the management of emotions such as anger and where and how to seek help.

Enhancing Parental Engagement in monitoring developmental milestones of children

To train our teachers to make parents more aware of their children's developmental delays, we collaborated with the non-profit organisation, Ummeed, on a long term capacity building programme. Seven crèche teachers, a health organiser and five supervisors took part. They were trained to use a standardised tool called Guide for Monitoring Child Development (GMCD) meant for children upto the age of three and a half. Ummeed staff members also helped our teachers to make parents more sensitive to problems in their children's physical and mental development.

Speaking of the training, Shraddha Phadtare, a crèche teacher said, "Initially, I didn't understand the difference between closed and open-ended questions. We are used to asking parents closed ended questions which elicit one word replies like yes or no. But, of course we need mothers to tell us much more about their children's problems. The Ummeed staff helped us achieve this through role playing and by conducting numerous sessions with the community." - Shraddha had to struggle to get working mothers talk to her. "Woh aage aage rehte the, aur main unke peechhe peechhe," she said. (They would always be ahead of me, leaving me behind.) But eventually, she said, the mothers realised the importance of what she was doing and how it would help their children.

"We will not be there forever, so parents need to understand the developmental milestones of their children," says Shilpa Jambulkar, Assistant Programme Coordinator

EvalFest 2020

MMC presented a research paper titled 'Learning to Read with Peers' at EvalFest 2020 which was held at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on 12-14 February 2020. The paper evaluated reading level among 234 children across 10 MMC centres who were part of the peer learning exercise. The results showed that after three months there was a 40 percent increase in the number of children with the highest reading proficiency levels. The paper was presented in the Innovation Bazaar, where people came to learn about innovative evaluation techniques.

Extending Knowledge in ECCE: Training Programme for Government Preschool Teachers

A 12-day training programme on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) was conducted for Balwadi (pre-school) teachers of Government-run municipal schools in the Mira-Bhayandar Municipal Corporation in Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The topics covered included holistic child development, developing poems and songs, preparing low cost teaching aids and using them, the uses of play, making puppets, the role of preschool teachers, children's behavioral issues, child rights and the child protection policy, developing a class schedule, and communications and life-skills for the teachers. The Balwadi teachers visited MMC's daycare centres on construction sites and Bal Palika Teaching Aids Exhibition. Most of the trainees were thrilled to be part of this programme and said that they found it very useful.

Extending Knowledge in ECCE: Workshops for Other Organisations

Attraction towards Story Books: 15 participants

Multiple Intelligence: 16 participants

Muppets: 13 participants

Free Play: 12 participants

Fundraising & Friendraising

Support for MMC at the Marathon

This year, nine youths from our sites participated in the Mumbai Marathon. They enjoyed it and have decided to persuade more of their peers to run next year. In addition, 175 employees of three companies and 17 individuals ran to raise money for MMC.

Four staff members also took part in the marathon. Our Programme Associate, Sandra Tirkey, ran the Half Marathon (21km) for the second consecutive year. This year, she had raised funds for MMC for her run and completed the Half Marathon in three hours! Aarti Morvekar (Sr. Finance and Compliance Officer) ran in the 10 K category. Anju Panikulam (Head- Programmes) and Anuradha Rajan (Chief Executive) took part in the dream run category.

MMC in Media

Check out articles about our work featured in various newspaper/ website:

<https://www.newkerala.com/news/read/247234/29th-credai-mchi-exhibition-promises-to-be-a-bonanza-for-the-home-buyers.html>

[*Devika Singh, Mobile Creches: Impacting childhoods for blue-collared - The Indian Wire*](#)

Thank you!

Individuals

- A special thank you to Nikhil Marwaha, Dr Pareshnath Paul for their consistent support to MMC. Our heartfelt thanks to our supporters all the way from Germany: Gunther Pankoke and students and staff of Felix Nussbaum Schule and nearby schools in Walsrode for their wonderful and consistent support towards MMC, year after year.
- Our sincere thanks to Ashwin Assomull, S. Rajgopalan, Satyendranath Bhat for their generous contributions towards our programmes.
- Special thanks to Asmita Africawala for raising funds for us through the online fundraising page Mumbai Marathon 2020.
- Our special thanks to Meera Bhagwat Devidayal, Vidya Vasania and Chandramouli Batibrolu for their generous donation to our corpus fund.
- Many thanks to Rinti Sengupta and Kalpana Trivedi for volunteering at our centre during book week.

Organisations

- We are thankful to Hersheys India Pvt. Ltd., Owens Corning (India) Pvt. Ltd. Schindler India Pvt. Ltd., Tata Chemicals Ltd., and UBS Securities Pvt. Ltd. for their contribution through the Mumbai Marathon. The runners from these organisations greatly helped us. Many thanks also to those who ran to support our cause including youths from our construction sites.
- We thank staff members of Medusind Pvt. Ltd., Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd., Deloitte Consulting India Private Limited, Mariwala Trust, Bayer Group in India, Accenture, and NPCI for volunteering and engaging our children in various interesting educative activities.
- We are grateful to staff members of Google Mumbai for arranging gifts for the 420 children who attended our Annual Camp.
- We thank Songbound, a charity that helps children from marginalised backgrounds to benefit from the transformative power of music, for their dedicated and effective volunteering at our centres. We are also grateful to the team members of Dalberg Advisors and UBS securities Ltd. for their pro bono support and guidance to the MMC team through their 'UBS Leaders for Change' initiative. We especially thank those from UBS Securities Mumbai, and UBS Group Switzerland for spending so much time to help us.
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- We sincerely thank our supporters who donated through platforms like Give Foundation, Give India, Global Giving, Benevity, Inc. and United Way Mumbai.
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