

Greetings from Mumbai Mobile Creches!

We are delighted to bring out this newsletter after a hot summer and prolonged monsoon. The weather, however, could not curb the enthusiasm of our team and our children! Their bright, smiling faces illuminated our centres through fun activities, interactive sessions and educational visits. Even as we continued our various models of child care, we made some additions to our programme methodology. For example, we collaborated with the NGO Ummeed to train our staff to facilitate early childhood development using a parent-mediated play-based approach. This helped us to enhance our engagement with our communities and to empower them with information about the development needs of their children. We also made significant progress in facilitating the registration of workers under the Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996 (BOCWA). More than 2000 workers from our sites registered themselves. Registration under the Act enables workers to access various schemes such as maternity benefits, educational benefits for children; for marriage expenses, hospitalisation, disability etc.

MMC in Numbers

MMC operated day care centres on **17** construction sites and **1** Brick Kiln; half day care centres at **2** slums.

We also ran **6** child care centres and community outreach programmes at **3** sites.

6 construction sites were reached by education programme activities & **19** sites were reached through health interventions by the Care on Wheels Bus.

On an average **1247** children were benefited across all our models.

MMC reached **4000** construction site community members through **32** Lokdoots. **580** community members each month were reached through **215** Chai Pani meetings.

1800 children were screened through **14** eye check-up camps, **18** ear check-up camps and **3** general health camps; and **1100** community members were screened through **13** health check-up camps.

Empowering Teachers in Improving Parental Engagement in Screening of Developmental Delays Among Young Children



Teachers attending practical sessions on parental engagement along with trainers from Ummeed

With the aim of empowering our teachers in enhancing parental engagement in developmental delays among their children, we collaborated with the non-profit organisation, Ummeed, on a long term capacity building programme. Ummeed specialises in the care of developmental disabilities among children, and has expertise in the screening of such disabilities. Through this training, seven teachers handling children in the crèche section (birth to 3 years) and five supervisors are learning ways to create awareness in the community about the importance of screening developmental delays in children. They are also being trained on teaching parents simple play activities that address the developmental needs of children and promote parent-child communication. The topics included developmental milestones of children up to 3 years and working with families on a strengths based approach.

A standardised tool to monitor development among children from birth to 3 years was covered in the second module. As a part of the training process, practical sessions were conducted with mothers and caregivers at one of MMC's centres.

Notes from the Field

Abstract Accepted for a Poster Presentation!

Our abstract titled “Bridging social and linguistic diversity through theme based learning and peer to peer Programme” got accepted for a poster presentation at a conference of the American Evaluation Association, USA.

Building Awareness and Capacities of teachers on Sexual and Reproductive Health

Since July 2019, SNEHA, a non-profit organisation that works on maternal and child health has been training our teachers on adolescent health issues so that they can discuss these issues with older children at our centres. Five sessions have been conducted with teachers and have covered topics such as the stereotyping of girls and boys; female and male reproductive systems; changes in the bodies of girls and boys during adolescence etc. Along with technical inputs our teachers are also being taught how to conduct such sessions with children.



English at our centres

MMC is collaborating with Teach A Class Foundation to provide a tablet-based application aimed at equipping children above the age of eight with grade-level skills in Math and English. English classes are held at our Bhakti Park and Agripada centres. Tablets powered by ClassCloud Technology are being used by children. This technology allows students to use the tablet even if there is no internet access. The data uploaded from each classroom enables us monitor the quality of teaching and the progress of each student.

Developing Life Skills!

In addition to education, children need to prepare for the outside world by developing life skills. We introduced life skills sessions for our older children in collaboration with the NGO, Apni Shala. Sessions were conducted on conflict resolution, decision making and teamwork, using interactive tools such as story based discussions, role playing, mind mapping techniques and focus group discussions.

Chess Classes

This year, chess classes continued at six of our centres: Patlipada 1, Patlipada 2, Dharavi, Bombay Dyeing, Airoli, and Ghansoli. 309 sessions were conducted with children of afterschool section. The trainer, Mr Kunal Pawar, says that the children at three of the centres have now moved on to the intermediate level. They are brilliant at practice games. The children at the other three centres are still at the basic level and practicing to move up to the intermediate level.



Khel Mahotsav

During the summer vacations this year, children engaged in a range of indoor and outdoor games, especially traditional games, for two weeks in the month of May. These games built teamwork, healthy competition, communication skills and alertness in children. Through Khel Mahotsav, they had an enjoyable summer vacation before going back to school the following month.

Summer Vacation special

Shramadaan: Donating time & skills

This year's mascot for Shramadaan was a monster with a crushed plastic bottle on his chest, designed to create awareness about the excessive use of plastic in our communities. Visuals were used throughout the week of Shramadaan to make children aware of the damages to the environment due to the indiscriminate use of plastics. After watching the visuals, some of the responses from children were, “We did not know that plastic bags can cause so much harm including killing fish in the ocean. Do cows also eat plastic?”; “I will request my mother to stop using plastic bags and use only cloth bags”; “I will take a steel tiffin box to school”; “We will inform our parents about the harmful effects of using plastic.”

The children were encouraged to make eco-friendly items using art materials and waste products. They prepared handmade photo frames and roses for their families. They also made separate boxes for dry and wet waste. They also made bird houses from empty milk cartons in which bowls for food and water for birds could also be kept during the summer months.

Notes from the Field

Celebrating Literacy Day!

The “World Literacy Day (Shaksharata Din)” falls on 8th September every year and we always celebrate this day enthusiastically. This year we had organised a number of activities to mark Literacy Day. Parents were also invited to take part.

Our teachers shared the significance of this day with everyone. Story telling sessions and follow-up activities were conducted for the children, who sang a special song - “Padhna-likhna” created by our teachers.

Balwadi children made alphabets using clay while school going children created their own stories. The children were given paper and pen/crayons/sketch pens and asked to create their stories/news. This activity was called “Meri Kahani, Meri Zubaani.” The children infused a great deal of innovation and creativity into their stories. Their parents took time out to participate in various activities such as storytelling, role play, skits and art and craft activities.

Outings as a learning opportunity

- A new initiative this year has been an outing for parents and children on the Care on Wheels Bus. 23 children and 15 mothers visited the Maharashtra Nature Park in Mahim in July 2019. After a delicious breakfast of Misal Pav they were given a guided tour of the Park’s interesting flora and fauna. This outing helped enhance our community engagement, especially with women.
- 22 children from our Patlipada centre went on a guided sightseeing tour of Mumbai organised by the Global Alliance for Sustainable Development. They visited the Nehru Planetarium, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSVMs Museum), Gateway of India and other tourist spots.
- 15 children from our Bombay Dyeing centre visited Shishu Vihar School in Parel on 2nd August 2019 to celebrate Friendship Day. They made new friends at the school and enjoyed the trip.

Learning through Dance

Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) is widely recognised as a very effective technique to enhance intellectual, emotional and motor functions. It increases self-esteem, improves social skills and builds self-confidence. Students doing the Dance Movement Therapy diploma course conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in collaboration with Kolkata Sanved, were placed at our centres to conduct DMT sessions for our children in the pre-school and afterschool sections. Their needs assessment showed that the children needed support in developing social skills, physical movement, teamwork and team building. The DMT students developed sessions accordingly and addressed issues such as awareness of our body and emotions, self-control, building empathy and problem solving. These sessions enabled the children to use their bodies and explore different types of movement.

Since July 2019, the Victory Arts Foundation has been conducting regular dance classes with over 50 children at three of MMC’s day care centres. This has contributed to greater communication and coordination among children and also between children and their teachers.

Summer Sessions for Youth

In April 2019, youngsters between 14 to 18 who had graduated from MMC daycare centres attended sessions on “Personality Development and Gender Equality” at four of our centres. Resource persons emphasised the importance of education and values such as equality between men and women. 131 youths from 12 construction sites attended these sessions.



Breastfeeding Week

Early marriages, repeated pregnancies, and ignorance about the importance of nutrition make economically disadvantaged women, especially those in their early twenties, and their newborn children, unhealthy. We used our yearly annual celebration of Breastfeeding Week to raise awareness about the nutritional needs of women during pregnancy. We held an innovative event called ‘Godbharai’ (baby shower), where we identified pregnant women from the

construction sites and celebrated a baby shower for them by offering them fruits and holding a haldi-kumkum* ceremony. This was followed by a session on breastfeeding and feeding practices for infants and young children. Staff from the local Municipal Health Post were invited to attend the sessions enabling us to strengthen our rapport with them.

**Haldi-kumkum is a social gathering observed by women in India where they exchange haldi (turmeric) and kumkum (vermillion powder)*

Fundraising & Friendraising

MMC in Media

Check out articles about our work and our e-book featured in various newspaper/ website:

<https://asiasociety.org/india/mumbai-mobile-creche-visit-dr-kaosar-afsana>

<https://www.firstpost.com/living/mumbai-mobile-creches-e-cookbook-documents-food-memories-of-the-citys-migrant-women-6754021.html>

<https://epaper2.mid-day.com/epaper/07-06-2019-252-archive-edition-Mumbai-Page-1.html>

<https://indiaculturelab.org/videos/library/special-events/migration-museum-the-aftermovie/>

<https://indiaculturelab.org/blog/migration-museum-on-home-and-identity/>

MMC at Migration Museum

Godrej India Culture Lab organised an innovative event titled Migration Museum which explored migration in contemporary India through conversations, films and art. Being one of the few NGOs working with migrant populations, we were invited to talk about our e-book- 'Food Memories of Migrant Women'. Monica Laxman, a community member and Mrs. Vrishali Pispati, a Director on Board of MMC, talked about the e-book. Visitors to the Migration Museum were also treated to sumptuous delicacies prepared from the traditional recipes of migrant women from our communities. The delicacies served included Ambadi Bhaji- a stew made with sorrel leaves; Jowar Bhakri- a bread made of sorghum; and Patishapta, a rice flour crepe stuffed with sweet coconut, which was also a star attraction.



From left: Manisha Patil (Programme Officer), Monika Laxman (Community Member), Vrishali Pispati (Director)

Thank you!

Individuals

- A special thank you to Nikhil Marwaha and Dr Pareshnath Paul for their consistent support to MMC.
- Our heartfelt thanks to Seenu and Ashok Samuel for their wonderful and consistent support towards MMC, year after year.
- Our sincere thanks to Savita Dhingra, Vineet Dhingra and Hetal Ruparelia for providing fresh lime water to our children.
- We thank Neena Bhalla, Reetu Gandhi for their generous contributions towards our nutrition programme.
- Our special thanks to Joshua Elias, our intern this summer from Columbia University, USA. He was of great help in the completion of our Annual Report, 2018-19.
- Our sincere thanks to Chandramouli Batibrolu, Dr. Rajeev Ohol, executor of the estate of the Kamal Rajadhayaksha, and N. Vaidheeswaran Iyer, and Vijaykumar Shingrani for their generous donation towards our corpus fund.
- We thank Sushmita Biswas for providing support through English language sessions at our centre in Vikroli, Mumbai.

Organisations

- Our special thanks to KPMG in India for their outstanding efforts in organising a number of volunteering events and fun outings for the children.
- We also thank Global Alliance for Sustainable Development for organising the outing for our children to the Nehru Planetarium.
- We would like to thank Schindler India Pvt Ltd. for their generous donation of educational materials for our day care centres.
- Employees from Medusind, Sanctum Foundation, Google, Altico Capital India Ltd, UBS securities Ltd volunteered at our centre. We thank them for the time and efforts they invested in our cause.
- 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 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 Leaders for Change initiative.
- We are grateful to Altico Capital India Ltd. , Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd., Coface India Credit Management Services Pvt. Ltd., Hershey Pvt. Ltd., KPMG, Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Ltd., Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Ltd., Mahindra Lifespace Developers Ltd., Medusind Solutions India Pvt. Ltd., National Payment Corporation of India, Owens Corning (India) Pvt. Ltd., PNB Housing Finance Ltd., Schindler India Pvt. Ltd., Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd., Tata Chemicals Ltd., and Western Consolidated Pvt. Ltd. for supporting our Comprehensive Day Care Programme.
- We sincerely thank Child Vikaas International, SNDT University's Department of Human Development, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kalpataru Trust, Reliance Foundation, Sanctum Foundation, Savita Khemchand Dhingra Foundation, United Way of Mumbai, United World College of South East Asia, the V.V. and Smt. K.V. Mariwala Charity Trust, and Verein Mobile Krippen, Freiburg, for their support through grants and donations. We sincerely thank our supporters who donated through platforms like Give Foundation, Give India, GlobalGiving and Benevity, Inc.