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MUMBAI MOBILE CRECHES NEWSLETTER

# BAL SHRISTI

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## Greetings from Mumbai Mobile Creches!

The lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic led us into uncertain times as our day-care centres on construction sites and other communities shut operations in mid-March 2020. During April and May, in collaboration with other non-profit organisations, we provided dry rations and cooked meals at 29 construction sites in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, reaching over 18,000 migrant workers and their families.

Due to the lockdown, we could not organise regular summer holiday activities like Khel Mahotsav (Festival of Play) and Shramadaan (contribution of voluntary labour); nor could we hold career guidance sessions for alumni between the ages of 14 and 18. In addition, our children missed going to the Wankhede Stadium to watch an IPL match; they also missed going to plays and movies and other outings.

Since our centres were closed, our staff members made phone calls to community members at various sites and initiated several interventions.

## MMC in Numbers

1023 children reached through different digital programmes and ration distribution across 17 day care centres, 2 slum centres and 4 Mobile Bus sites

260 educational audios on different themes shared with children during August and September.

Our teachers created a bank of more than 2400 audios and videos by September end.

158 immunisations facilitated in September

506 children in 9 day care centres and 3 Mobile Bus sites received dry rations in August and September.

395 children received education materials across 13 centres in the month of September 2020

392 parents reached through virtual Chai Pani meetings conducted in the month of September 2020 across 19 day care centres and 4 Mobile Bus sites

130 construction workers received skill training in electrical works, painting, and plumbing in the months of August and September 2020

27 trainees have joined the new batch of Bal Palika Training programme and attending virtual classes since September, 10 of them are from construction site communities

## COVID-19 Impact Survey

During May 2020, a phone survey was conducted with 100 women across 24 construction sites and disadvantaged communities to assess the access of children under six to early learning, care and stimulation, nutrition, medical care and other issues. Nearly half the women said that they were worried about their children learning anything during the lockdown. Nearly a quarter were concerned that their children weren't getting adequate nourishment. An equal number said they were concerned about their children falling ill. Ten percent of the mothers were worried stressed about the safety of their children and four percent were upset at their not being able to take proper care of them. Most of the women also said that none of their family members had been able to work during the lockdown; nor did any of them receive their wages.

We felt that it was essential that our children have access to different modes of early learning, through digital, radio or telephonic media and that they did not miss out on any development activity. We helped workers to register for different government schemes and the Maharashtra Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board so that they could avail of benefits they were entitled to.

# Notes from the Field

## Digital Education

Through Zoom meetings, MMC's programme team trained 60 teachers to create an innovative digital education programme. Teachers of our creche, balwadi and afterschool support sections developed art & craft projects, stories, songs, riddles, poems, general knowledge, etc. and recorded them on their own mobile phones. These were then edited, uploaded online and shared with children and their parents via phone calls. MMC provided internet data packs to teachers and programme team members and at the end of September, MMC's digital content bank had more than 1800 audio and 600 videos. 104 audios and 156 videos were shared.

Called 'Shiksha Ghar Se Ghar Tak' the programme was implemented in 17 construction sites, 2 slum communities and four mobile bus sites. We were able to reach more than a thousand children.

The programme has led to the increased involvement of parents, especially fathers, in the education and growth of their children. Many parents were also very pleased that MMC had kept in touch with them during this very difficult period.

"Your digital programme has been very beneficial for our children. We were very worried about their education but we are not anymore. After watching teachers work so hard to make audios and videos we realize how important it is to make sure that children continue to learn even during a lockdown. Our children study really well and we think they should continue to study in this way."

- Anwari Aftab Shaikh, a parent from a construction site in Bhakti Park, where MMC has a day care centre

"My child is delighted that her mother is teaching her. And when I teach my child, I also learn at the same time. While teaching my child I act like a friend."

- Savita Gaikwad, a parent from a construction site in Taloja, where MMC has a day care centre



# Notes from the Field

## Online Capacity Building Trainings

Our programme team also held training sessions for teachers on topics such as COVID-19 awareness, Parenting and Child Stimulation, Hygienic Behaviour, and Centre Reopening Routines.

## Education Materials Distribution Initiative

Along with our digital education programme, we gave crayons, drawing paper, kite paper, poster colours, sketch pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, note books, drawing books and adhesives to 610 children in 19 day care centres and 33 children covered under the Mobile Bus programmes. Teachers and supervisors observed social distancing norms during the distribution of these items.



## Dry Ration Distribution Initiative

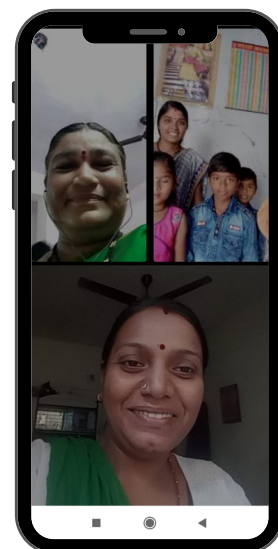
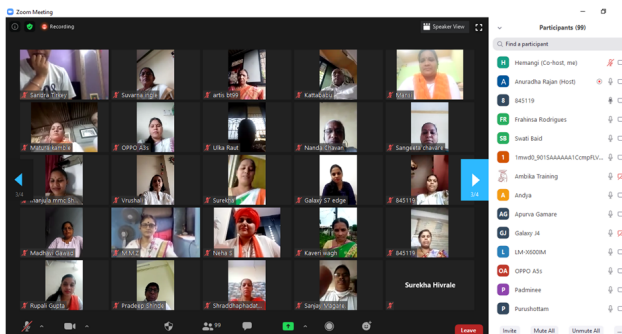
In a dipstick phone survey of 106 parents from nine sites, 24% reported that they did not have sufficient food. So in August, we distributed dry rations including rice, wheat, moong dal (yellow lentils), toor dal (split pigeon peas), chawli (cowpeas), dry peas, oil, rajgira (amaranth grain) laddoo, salt and sugar to 506 children at 9 day care centres and 3 Mobile Bus sites. Parents said that the moong dal (lentils) and other nutritious items such as chawli (cowpeas) and rajgira (amaranth grain) and laddoo were very beneficial for their children. Some parents also said they were now able to include vegetables in their children's diet since they didn't have to spend money on grains and other staples.



## Virtual Independence Day Celebration

The lockdown did not mar Independence Day celebrations at MMC. Our teachers and supervisors celebrated the occasion virtually in all MMC sites. Our children and their parents had been told about the celebration in advance and, wearing the appropriate colours, enthusiastically took part. Every household sang the national anthem, and children sang, danced and gave recitals.

Our children, who'd assumed that there wouldn't be any celebrations this year, were thrilled. Our entire 108-member staff took part in a one-hour virtual event. It began with a video of the national anthem, which was followed by teachers singing, dancing and giving recitals. It was the first time in the lockdown that our entire team had come together. It was wonderfully coordinated and was full of energy. The celebrations ended with a vote of thanks to everyone.

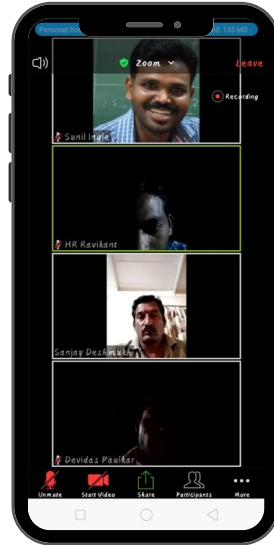




# Fundraising & Friendraising

## Skill Training

A preliminary phone survey was conducted by our team with workers from different sites where MMC has its day care centres, to find out their interest in improving their skills. Many of the workers had been working in various trades for a long time, but they did not have any proof of their experience or expertise. Others, who were not so experienced, wanted to learn more and get certificates. So we partnered with Pratham to conduct virtual skill training through Zoom.

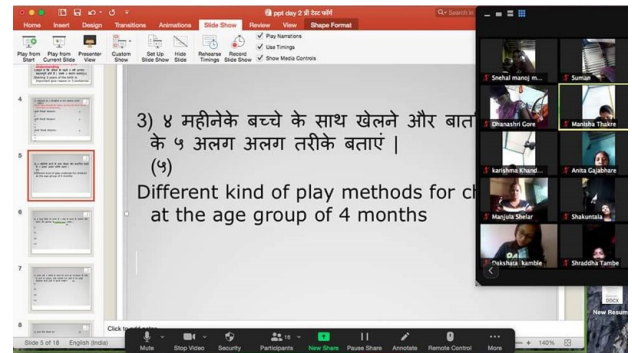


- Wiremen Training – A 11-day virtual skill training programme conducted in partnership with Pratham Education Foundation for 43 participants from 10 construction sites
- Painting Training – A 10-day virtual skill training programme conducted in partnership with Pratham Education Foundation for 37 participants from 4 construction sites
- Plumbing Training - A 10-day virtual skill training programme conducted in partnership with Pratham Education Foundation for 50 participants from 12 construction sites



## BPT Programme – Going Digital

From interviewing candidates to holding classes, everything in our Bal Palika Training programme was done digitally. 27 trainees, 10 from construction sites, joined the 2020-21 batch. Trainees from the previous batch did their examinations and end-line tests virtually. In September, there were 19 three-hour sessions of theory lectures.



**Thank you!**

## Individuals

- Our sincere thanks to Nikhil Marwaha for consistent support to MMC.
- Our heartfelt thanks to Seenu and Ashok Samuel for their wonderful and consistent support towards MMC year after year.
- We thank Dr Rajeev Ohl for his generous donation to our corpus fund.
- Many thanks to Ms Hetvi Shah, an intern from NMIMS School of design, for developing infographics for our Annual Report 2019-2020.
- We thank staff members of Schindler India Pvt Ltd for digitally volunteering with us and training our team on Google spreadsheets and Google docs.

## Organisations

- We are grateful to Bajaj Finance Ltd., Schindler India Pvt. Ltd., and PNB Housing Finance Ltd for supporting our comprehensive day care programmes.
- We sincerely thank Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative, Child Vikaas International, Kalpataru Trust, Leaders' Quest Foundation, the United Way of Mumbai, the United World College of South East Asia, and Verein Mobile Krippen, for their grants and donations.
- Our special thanks to Lata Sita Manga Kalipatnapu and Biju Pillai for supporting MMC through the United Way of Mumbai.
- We sincerely thank all those who donated through platforms like Give Foundation, Give India, and United Way of Mumbai.

**Support us**

**by donating Rs 200/- @ <https://www.unitedwaymumbai.org/ngo-21>**

**Your donation will help to ensure that children living on construction sites are happy, healthy and educated.**