



MOUNTAIN CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

Annual Report
2016-17



The Mountain Children's Foundation

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2016-2017	5
2016-17 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES.....	7
CHILDLINE	7
CRY partnership On child rights and participation	9
MCF/Himnotthan Partnership: Central Himalayan Education Initiative (CHEI)	13
Good Souls Initiative	18
PABAM Magazine.....	18
Bridging the Digital Divide: Nucleus Software Foundation.....	19
Institutional Support: Indians For Collective Action	19
Financial Report	19
Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy	20
Awards and Appreciations	21
Meetings, network and outreach	21
Media and outreach.....	23
Conclusion.....	23
ANNEX 1: BOARD AND GOVERNANCE / YEAR 2016-17	25
ANNEX 2: CASE STUDIES	26
ANNEX 3: FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS	27

INTRODUCTION

In a region where many still lack running water, toilets, electricity, health care, access to education and economic opportunity, The Mountain Children's Foundation (MCF) works to empower children in rural mountain villages to improve their communities from the ground up.

Our "bottom-up, inside-out" model of development leverages the power of collective action and the energy and idealism of youth to create organic, lasting impacts that strengthen communities, build citizenship, combat discrimination, and raise the profile of child rights and child participation.

Over the past 14 years, we have developed a network of children's groups and non-governmental organizations across the Indian state of Uttarakhand that collaborate to remove barriers for children and enhance the role of young people in transforming their communities.



WHY MOUNTAINS, WHY CHILDREN?

As India leaps forward, its rural mountain communities continue to fall behind, due to a lack of resources, limited economic opportunities and governmental neglect. But the greatest handicap to these communities is a pervasive and debilitating sense of helplessness brought on by the belief that they cannot change the forces of corruption, apathy, and greed that rob their villages and steal their children's futures.

The problems are widespread and deeply rooted:

- ♣ Poorly equipped and inadequately staffed schools, often with teachers drawing generous government salaries who don't bother to show up for class;
- ♣ Villages that still lack water, electricity, roads, and health care, even as the government vaunts its investment in rural development;
- ♣ Forests rapidly receding under the onslaught of ever more people relying on them for fuel and fodder;
- ♣ Water sources drying up from neglect and overuse;
- ♣ Extensive migration to the cities in search of work, which tears up families and destroys the social fabric of the community; and, increasingly,
- ♣ Natural disasters that shatter lives, homes and livelihoods.

In the face of these daunting challenges, we believe children are the most effective purveyors of information and the best agents of change. Their impact spans multiple generations: The children themselves, their parents and, as these engaged, empowered children reach adulthood, their own children.

Across Uttarakhand, you can find evidence of dramatic transformation wrought by the children – from using India’s Right to Information (RTI) law to get action from the government to getting their communities to understand and change habits related to hygiene and sanitation to ensuring 100 percent birth registration in their communities and pushing for gender equality.

HOW WE WORK: THE MCF’S UNIQUE MODEL

The MCF helps young people become agents for change in their community. We do this through bal sangathans (children’s groups) at the village level — gathering the community’s young people and asking them about their concerns and what they would like to change. Through games, activities, and discussion, MCF facilitators talk to these young people about their rights as children and responsibilities as citizens of the community. It’s like turning on a light switch: children who were previously aimless and uninterested in studying or helping in their homes suddenly become passionate agents for change and more engaged in all aspects of their homes and schools.

The most active children are generally in the age range of 10-17. But younger children often tag along and grow into committed activists and members of the bal sangathans. And young adults who leave the village to work sometimes return and mentor their old bal sangathans. We strive to ensure gender equity and inclusion of children of all communities, religions and economic circumstances in the group and in our discussions. In fact, we often see more girls than boys participating in and leading the groups and we have started seeing the children begin to take on complex social issues such as gender and caste discrimination within their villages.

VISION AND MISSION

Real and lasting change only occurs from within the community. We seek to invert the “top-down, outside-in” model of development and help communities help themselves.

The MCF works to:

- ♣ Enable children to become committed, effective citizens who, through collective action, build a foundation of trust and respect for one another and become agents of change.
- ♣ Create spaces for child participation wherein the individuality and rights of the child are respected by:
 - Working closely with the government and its agents to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of programs designed to help and serve children,
 - Nurturing communities that give children the opportunity to develop to their full potential, and
 - Identifying and removing obstacles to such growth.



This year required a significant recalibration of the MCF's activities. After a 6-year partnership, CRY decided to withdraw completely from Uttarakhand, including our hygiene and sanitation project in the Vikas Nagar block of Dehradun. (Notably, MCF was the last partner CRY worked with in the state, which speaks to the strength of that project.) This caused a significant gap in both our funding and our ability to continue to support the children in the 16 villages that has been participating in program.

However, thanks to support from individual donors, we are using the transition to explore how we can make our bal sangathans more self-sustaining over the long term. The program, which is now called the Good Souls Initiative, is being implemented in 8 out of the 16 villages in Vikas Nagar.

In addition, the MCF team's work of the past 14 years and the sturdy partnership we have developed with the children is beginning to be recognized. This year, MCF won the [eNGO Challenge Award](#) and received a Certificate of Merit by World CSR, Asian Confederation of Business and Thought Leader. We have also earned a [Gold Seal from Guide Star India](#), which we hope will open us up to more fundraising opportunities.

This year, MCF has made direct difference in lives of some 5,000 young people and through them 13,000 adults. Through our various outreach programs we have touched the lives of more than 18,652 adults and reached out to 31,744 adults. Our programs include:

MCF CHILDLINE - An emergency helpline for children.

This year, our team responded to a total 406 children in need of protection and support and conducted several outreach activities to generate awareness among the public about drug addiction, begging and child labor.

MCF CRY - Child Participation, Sanitation, Hygiene and Nutrition

The collective actions of bal sangathans in Vikas Nagar, Dehradun, has motivated 258 families to construct toilets in their homes without any money from MCF paying for construction. Through Healthy Home Surveys and Healthy Schools Surveys, the young people continuously inspire their peers and elders to follow healthy practices. They also remain active in the governance of their villages. And in a quest to ensuring a clean and green environment, the young change makers and have been planting saplings every year and caring for them to ensure that they all grow into healthy trees. This year they planted 1,381 saplings.

MCF-CHEI: Central Himalayan Education Initiative: Bringing quality in education

In remote villages in Chamoli, the MCF-CHEI team at Vikas Nagar Ghat block worked to inspire children and their communities to voice their concerns and demand solutions, especially with regard to the quality and functioning of their anganwadis. As a result 20 mata samitis, anganwadi workers, SMCs, CBOs and bal sangathans are actively engaged to make Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) effective in their communities.

MCF E-WaSH:

This program, which operates in concert with the MCF-CHEI initiative, is focused on providing potable water and safe sanitation facilities, improving anganwadis, and changing behaviors and attitudes on health and sanitation in the Vikas Nagar Ghat region of Chamoli.

Good Souls Initiative

This program picks up the work of the MCF CRY initiative on hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, reforestation and more after CRY's decision to withdraw from Uttarakhand.

PABAM Magazine:

So far 168 issues of this monthly publication, which serves as a forum for the young people to share their ideas and experiences and documents their activities, have been printed. *PABAM* serves as a vital link, connecting children in remote pockets of Uttarakhand to one another. We also published and distributed a poster on nutrition, which was displayed at key locations.

IN MEMORIAM:

This year we lost a supporter, friend and guide — Dr. R.S. Toila. Since the start of the children’s movement in Uttarakhand, he supported all the MCF did, and even as Chief Secretary of the newly formed state of Uttarakhand, he would find time to attend our children’s meetings. When he was Information Commissioner for the state, he supported us in our work to teach children about the Right to Information Act (RTI), often saying children were the best users of the RTI Act and were so much more effective than adults and disseminating information and awareness. We will truly miss him.

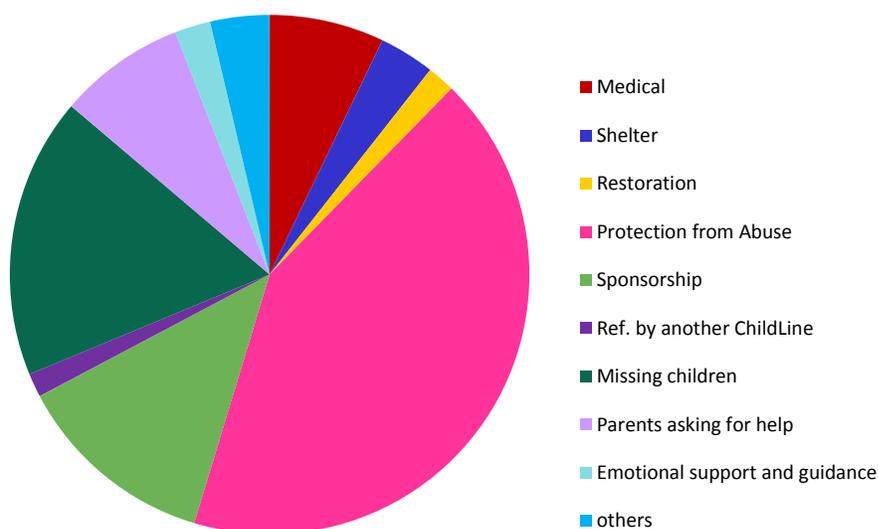


2016-17 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

CHILDLINE

Since December 2010, MCF has been a partner with CHILDLINE, a Government of India initiative, serving as a crucial link between children in need of care and protection and the resources that can help them. Over the past 7 years, we have seen a steady growth in the use of the 1098 helpline, which we believe is due largely to our outreach efforts in Dehradun. The helpline receives as many as 220 calls per month, resulting in 406 active cases in 2016-17.

The CHILDLINE project spans a variety of state and national laws and policies and the MCF team works closely with various government departments to obtain the necessary services for the children including shelter, medical care and — when necessary — aid from the police. This year, the MCF CHILDLINE team responded to 406 children in the following categories:



While responding to calls and aiding children in crisis is our priority, creating awareness to report such cases and reduce child labour, child abuse and exploitation is equally important.

Hence the team carried out outreach activities to promote a safe childhood for each and every child by building awareness and mustering public support:

- ♣ Distributed pamphlets against child labour in residential areas.
- ♣ Discussed child sexual abuse and “good touch and bad touch” with the students of government schools utilizing an animated movie “KOMAL.” The movie was also screened at shelter homes to help children understand what touch is inappropriate and how to raise their voice if they feel that something wrong is happening.
- ♣ Conducted activities in slums of Dehradun city to sensitize children on child rights, good and bad habits, sanitation and hygiene, safety issues, and the dangers of drugs. Linked children in need of medical assistance with the National Child Health Program (*Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram*).
- ♣ Visited anganwadis on *Wajan Diwas* (Weight Day) to generate awareness of malnutrition.
- ♣ Celebrated *CHILDLINE se dosti* week from 14th to 20th November 2016. The weeklong event enhanced trust and communication between street children and police. Children from slum areas of Shastri Nagar and Sapera Basti tied friendship bands on the Uttarakhand Director General of Police, ADCP, IG Garhwal Range, IG Law and Order and HR and the SSP of Dehradun.
- ♣ Conducted anti-begging awareness: Wearing brightly colored masks and holding placards with anti-begging messages, the MCF CHILDLINE team talked to the motorists and pedestrians about the harm caused to the children by giving money when they beg as it keeps them out of school and puts them in harm’s way.
- ♣ Organized a debate competition on the topic “Advantages and disadvantages of social media” for the students of Shri Guru Nanak Mahila Inter College, Khudbuda and Dayanand Inter College, Subhas Nagar.



- ♣ Taught the children of Gulab Basti, Madrasi Colony and Saheli Trust shelter home about sanitation and hygiene by using SARAR tools¹.
- ♣ Celebrated the founding of the MCF (PABAM Day) with a cultural program at Sapera Basti, which included the children talking about the concerns they had discussed over the year and the changes that they now see in their community. The children in the Jhuggi Basti slum took part in a cricket match and they also discussed sanitation and hygiene and its importance in staying healthy.
- ♣ Organized a signature campaign on World Day to Prevent Child Labour (12th of June 2016) to generate public support. An appeal was made to the public to cooperate by reporting the cases of child labour.
- ♣ Continued to work with organizations like Aasara Trust, Latika Roy Foundation, and Raphael Home to extend immediate protection and safety to the children in difficult circumstances.
- ♣ Continued our 4-year partnership with Aasara Trust on an anti-begging campaign. The campaign links the children with education programs while also generating awareness among public that giving money to children in the streets only perpetuates cycle of poverty and begging rather than helping children. As a result several children are now mainstreamed into government schools.

CRY PARTNERSHIP ON CHILD RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION

MCF and [CRY](#) joined hands from January 2011 to December 2016 to increase child participation and equip the children with information to transform their communities from within. Over the years, the focus expanded from child rights to sanitation, hygiene and health, and nutrition.

More than 600 children across 16 villages of Vikas Nagar block of District Dehradun were inspired to get involved and take action through their bal sangathans. During the process which included continuous interactions and discussions with stakeholders throughout the community, these village-level children's groups have matured, racked up significant achievements and earned the respect of their elders.

On an individual level, too, a dramatic change is visible in the children, their behavior and how they perceive themselves and their role in the community. Glimpses of their success are given below.

¹SARAR tools were created as part of the SWAJAL program. The tool is comprised of flash cards to teach concepts of hygiene and sanitation. SARAR stands for self-esteem, associative strengths, resourcefulness, action planning & responsibility

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRESS IN 2016-17 FOR THE MCF CRY PROGRAM

- This year children's efforts resulted in construction of 40 new toilets. Over the course of this program, a total of 258 toilets were constructed in the 16 villages. MCF-CRY did not spend any money in construction of these toilets, rather the children's advocacy provided the impetus to families to find resources and build the toilets.
- The Anganwadi Center of village Dobhari did not have a toilet and water tank. The village children's group, Unnati Bal Sangathan, raised this issue in the open meeting of panchayat. This resulted in construction of toilet and water tank in the premises of the anganwadi center.
- Lahar Bal Sangathan of village Papadiyan participated in their village panchayat's open meetings and raised several issues identified by the children during their monthly meetings. One notable issue was about the unconstructed causeway from the main road to the junior high school in Papadiyan. In response, panchayat leaders constructed a track from main road to the school.
- The children have taken up a mission of planting trees in and around their villages.
- Thousands of children – and many adults – have obtained their birth registration certificates, after a hard-fought battle against government inaction. For the past two years, the birth registration rate in the 0-5 age group has been 100 percent.
- Knowledge of and attitudes toward hygiene, sanitation and nutrition have improved, which is clearly evident in the habits and practices of all the residents, not just children.



But the most profound change is perhaps the least visible. Through this project, the children of the villages have found a new voice and, for the first time, stepped forward to play an active role in the community and work to make it better.

Governance and civic engagement have improved as the children brought people together to understand and address their collective problems. And this empowerment did not stop at hygiene and sanitation. The children have taken the initiative to prevent child marriages, help drop-outs go back to school, tackled issues of cast and gender discrimination, and become vocal advocates for the environment.

They are now invited by their elders to participate in the panchayat meetings and have developed leadership and communication skills and gained a new self-confidence and sense of potential.

HEALTHY HOME AND SCHOOL SURVEYS

Conducting Healthy Home Surveys has become a ritual for the bal sangathans. The practice was started in 2012 to promote awareness and adoption of healthier and hygienic practices in homes and throughout the communities. Since then the bal sangathans have been conducting the survey every year with enthusiasm. In 2016, a total of 1,552 children and adults including ASHA workers, anganwadi workers, ward members, and village pradhans in 16 villages participated in the surveys. The impact is noticeable in form of increased number of families having – and using –toilets, almost all the families have waste receptacles, the village pathways are much cleaner than before, people are adhering to better personal hygienic practices, etc.

The children then expanded this effort to their schools with the Healthy School Survey, beginning in 2015-16, as a tool to measure cleanliness and healthy practice followed in the schools. This year the survey was conducted in 10 schools in which total 631 children and 97 adults including teachers and *bhojan mata* (person who prepares the midday meals) participated. The young people surveyed each room of the schools including classrooms, kitchen and toilets. They also checked the cleanliness of each child, such as clean hair, trimmed nails, clean and washed clothes, etc. These surveys resulted in more hygienically cooked mid-day meals, clean drinking water in schools and toilets in the schools are now kept clean. There are dustbins in every class for the garbage disposal.

Mrs. Vimla Devi of Village Sorna:

Healthy Home Surveys conducted by the bal sangathans not just made children more conscious about adhering to healthier practices but had a similar impact on adults as well. Now we have dustbins and toilets in our houses and the family members are more conscious about keeping water pots and food covered.

Comparative figures of Healthy Home Survey conducted in 2012 and 2016

Parameters	2012	2016
% of people who trim their nails on regular basis	59	98
% of people who wear slippers while going to toilets	41	97
% of people who wash their hands before meals	44	98
% of children bathing within an interval of two days	65	99
% of households keeping drinking water covered	72	98
% of households using dustbins	39	83
% of households having toilets	77	88
% of households having clean toilets	5	86

CHILD RIGHTS

Awareness workshops on child rights were organized in all 16 villages of MCF-CRY. In total, 736 adults and children participated in these meetings. The facilitators and the children used the



pictorial booklet on child rights to explain and discuss the topic in details.

Before the MCF-CRY intervention, the communities were completely unaware of the concept of child rights. But after six years of conversations, they have developed an understanding that every child is entitled to a meaningful childhood — all children have right to survive, be protected, and participate in decisions that impact their lives.

TREE PLANTATIONS

The members of our bal sangathans are also playing the role of “green fellows.” They are committed to increasing green cover around their villages and have planted 1,381 saplings this year. To encourage protection and healthy growth of these saplings, they have integrated this into their healthy home surveys by giving two additional points to homes with healthy trees in their premises.



To further connect the plantation drive with health and nutrition, the bal sangathans asked their village leaders (*pradhans*) for saplings of fruit-bearing trees and thus planted 1,000 peach and 200 apple trees. The other 181 saplings were of fodder species.

NUTRITION MELA & EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

As a part of public awareness campaign, all 16 bal sangathans organized a nutrition *mela*, or fair, in their respective villages. Posters and charts on nutrition were used as a tool to disseminate information about commonly consumed food and their nutritional value. With the help of a play, the children discussed the importance of a balanced diet and role of proper nutrition in health development of young children.

Anganwadi centers cater to the health and educational needs of children aged 0-6 years. *Mata samities* (mothers groups) have been formed by the government to monitor and supervise early childhood services at village level but in many cases this crucial tool is either defunct or exists only on paper. To tackle this issue the MCF-CRY met with the members of the *mata samities* to inform them about their roles and responsibilities and help them understand how their engagement can ensure effective implementation of the six essential early childhood

development services that anganwadi centers are supposed to provide. As a result the *mata samitis* now actively participate in the activities of anganwadi centers, significantly improving transparency and oversight. The bal sangathans also learned about the importance of anganwadis and visited the anganwadi center in their respective villages to learn about the six essential services, nutritional value of the food offered there and the nutritional needs of young children. Empowering bal sangathans has resulted in tremendous changes in the villages in terms of effective implementation of these vital services.

On the 14th of August, the vice president of the MCF board Mr. Sunjoy Joshi participated in a nutrition mela organized by one village bal sangathan. He took part in all the activities and said he was impressed with the children's knowledge and how the children involved the adults in their programs and transferred their knowledge to them as well.

The MCF/CRY partnership has made a profound and widespread difference in these 16 communities, especially in how the young people see themselves and their role in the world. It has also been an incredible proving ground for the MCF's model of nurturing change and development through children, developed MCF's administrative capacity, and positioned us to take on new initiatives such as our work with Himmotthan, which is described below.

MCF/HIMMOTTHAN PARTNERSHIP: CENTRAL HIMALAYAN EDUCATION INITIATIVE (CHEI)

We are working with the Central Himalayan Education Initiative (CHEI) of Himmotthan Society on a three-year program in 20 villages of Vikas Nagar Ghat block of District Chamoli. The aim is to improve the quality of education and services starting with pre-primary and moving on to primary education. Our work this year included the following activities:

STRENGTHENING OF ALLIANCES

Mata Samitis & School Management Committees (SMC):

Quarterly meetings were organized with *mata samitis* (mothers group responsible for monitoring and supporting the anganwadi) and the school management committees to raise awareness about their role and responsibilities, the importance of monitoring of young children for malnutrition, midday meal and take home ration and nutritional value of local grains.



Before our intervention, the *mata samitis* in these villages were defunct but now the members are actively visiting the anganwadi centers to monitor the care and services provided

there. Actual implementation is now taking place, whereas most “activities” in the past were only on paper.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs):

Without the active involvement and engagement of the community, especially village leaders, it is impossible to achieve the program objectives. Many government schemes fail for lack of community participation. This is a major reason behind poorly run anganwadis and primary schools. Therefore the project staff has had regular interactions with all community-based organizations to engage the residents in the goals of this initiative. The meetings were well attended by the members of self-help groups formed under Fodder Federation Program. Meetings with the CBOs have also assisted in the roll-out of the E-WaSH program.

Government Departments:

The project team also ensured regular interactions with ICDS officials (DPO, CDPO and anganwadi supervisors), anganwadi workers, and officials from the health and education departments. Their support is essential to the success of the program.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Training of Anganwadi Workers:

In these villages, the anganwadi workers have little knowledge of or skills for working with young children. This hampers the effectiveness of the anganwadi, especially the early childhood education services.

Therefore our team provided a training for all the anganwadi workers.



During the three-day workshop, the anganwadi workers learned various activities and games for developing cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of children. We also worked on showing them how to use local material to develop Teaching-Learning Materials (TLM) using local items. The block anganwadi supervisor also participated in the training, which was led by Mr. Mohan Panwar from Anjanisain Paryavaran School, Tehri.

EXPOSURE TOUR:

To help them better understand the aims of this new initiative, we took the new field staff of the MCF/ Himmotthan on an exposure tour of the MCF CRY field and the APV school in Anjanisain, which provided a variety of experiences relevant to the project they were starting.

MCF Vikas Nagar Dehradun Tour: The MCF/ Himmotthan team visited the MCF/CRY field and met with the bal sangathans in Pipalsaar, Langha and Pasoli. They saw first-hand how the children's groups worked, how they interacted with the adults in their village and the impact the children had made in their communities.



They also spoke local government officials, including ward members and pradhans. This visit helped the team understand child participation and its impact on the community that has now been replicated in the Vikas Nagar Ghat villages in Chamoli.

APV Anjanisain Tour: The new team also visited the Anjanisain Paryavaran School in Tehri. The school follows a child-centric education philosophy and has pioneered innovative teaching methods to simplify the concepts of mathematics and science, activities to build connection between children and nature and use of stories and games to make teaching and learning joyful. Through this visit, the team was able to see beyond the more common school model of rote learning and passive students who simply parrot their teachers.

Trainings of MCF-HIMMOTTHAN team On ECCE, RTE and Health & Nutrition:

The field team shoulders the responsibility of ensuring effective implementation of the program. It is imperative for them to have sound understanding of early childhood care and education (ECCE) and the Right to Education (RTE) law.

The training on ECCE and Right to Education was imparted by Sudhir Bhatt and Aditi P. Kaur. The ECC training built on the training given to the staff members in the previous year. It focused on the roles and responsibilities of *mata samitis*, the six essential services delivered by anganwadi centers, the different machines that should be used for weighing children and the reasons monitoring child weight, etc. The Right to Education Act of 2009 was discussed in detail so that the staff could develop a good understanding about it.

During the two-day session on health & nutrition facilitated by Dr. Sachin Srivastava, the participants discussed the importance of a balanced diet, particularly in context of mountain regions, the nutrient requirement of pregnant and lactating mothers, growth monitoring of young children and causes and symptoms of malnutrition. Through this training, the participants also explored practical ways of transferring this knowledge to their community and came up with innovative delivery models.

CHILD PARTICIPATION THROUGH BAL SANGATHANS

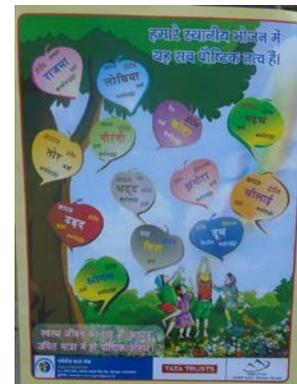
The program is marching ahead with the collective strength of 774 members of 21 bal sangathans. The members have learned about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, child participation, birth registration, sanitation and hygiene, environmental conservation, waste management and other community related issues. These well-informed children are now ready with their survey formats to conduct Healthy Home Surveys starting next year. They also planted 597 saplings, out of which 411 are still thriving.



On the 21st of May 2017 the 22nd bal sangathan – Nandakini Bal Sangathan - was created. Children living in the small town of Vikas Nagar Ghat also wanted to form a bal sangathan, while they are not in the program area, we were excited that the children felt that they wanted to start their own group. There are 20 children in that group and now we will slowly start building on their enthusiasm.

PRINT MATERIAL FOR AWARENESS GENERATION

We designed a colorful and attractive poster on nutrition for information dissemination. One thousand copies have been printed and distributed for display at anganwadi centers, schools, and local offices of the ICDS, horticulture, BRC, BEO and health departments. On the suggestion of the executive director of Himmotthan Society, the poster was also displayed at mills where the villagers take grain to be ground so they could see them while waiting for their flour.



These nutrition posters are being used to discuss the importance of the local grains, pulses and green vegetables with the community. The poster depicts the essential elements present in different foods.

EDUCATION-WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROGRAM

In concert with the CHEI program, MCF, with support from Himmotthan Society/TATA Water Mission Dehradun, is also implementing the Education-Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (E-WaSH) program in the 20 villages of the Vikas Nagar Ghat Block in district Chamoli. This program is focused on improving Anganwadi Centers (AWC) in the communities. The program has two main components:

1. "Hardware" such as building or repairing toilets and water tanks, providing pipe connections for water, etc.
2. "Software" including awareness generation and changing habits and attitudes.

The MCF is responsible for the “software” portion of the initiative, but our team works closely with the Himmotthan team to ensure that both components are implemented in a coordinated fashion.

The program was kick started with a baseline survey in 20 anganwadis. The report has been submitted to the HMS/TWM office, Dehradun. This was followed by demand-generation meetings in the 20 villages during which the community members also gave their written consent for the program. The program activities are now in full swing. Several meetings have been conducted since then with *mata samitis*, bal sangathans and CBOs, which focused on personal hygiene, domestic hygiene and environmental sanitation. Purchase and construction committees have been formed in all of the anganwadi centers.

SOFTWARE ACTIVITIES

Global Handwashing Day:

This event promotes better handwashing habits. Demos on handwashing with soap were held at the anganwadis and rallies were also organized. Soap is still less commonly used for washing hands in these mountain communities, where many don’t know that using soap removes germs much more effectively than water alone. Regular awareness-raising activities can help change such habits and promote good practices.



World Water Day:

On 22nd March 2017, the team celebrated World Water Day with bal sangathans in Saintoli and Kumjug. They also discussed the importance of safe, potable water and the conservation and management of water resources. The children organized a rally and cleaned up the spring that served as the water source in their village.



HARDWARE ACTIVITIES

Although not our primary area of work, MCF facilitated the “hardware” work in the anganwadis – which included building toilets and water tanks, and provision of water filters – by helping get the necessary permissions, providing transparency in the process, and getting community support. This included steps like obtaining No Objection Certificates(NOCs) jointly signed by the president of the *mata samiti* and anganwadi worker of each anganwadi center and getting each of their signatures on a Detailed Technical Report; getting proposals from the anganwadis for whitewash, and finalizing quotations for procuring construction material. All these steps have been completed, paving the way for the construction work. The MCF/E-WaSH team has also been helping the Himmotthan Society-TATA Water Mission team in monitoring and supervising the construction activity.

GOOD SOULS INITIATIVE

Six years of partnering with CRY has enabled the MCF to build a relationship with 16 villages of Vikas Nagar block of district Dehradun that has helped in laying a strong foundation for resilient communities. Since CRY has decided to phase out from Uttarakhand, the impact of six years of intervention in the villages has encouraged individual donors to help us continue our work in these villages. Currently the financial support from the individual donors is enough to carry out our work in 8 out of the 16 villages. This will also help us understand whether the bal sangathans, once established, can continue on their own without continuous, active facilitation and support from MCF. While we are trying to search for other avenues to further our work in these villages, the children continued to be the leaders for this paradigm shift.

The children in those eight villages organized a total of 19 meetings between January 2017 and May 2017 to discuss the various issues. They revisited the topics which have been discussed with them in past to reinforce their understanding. They have also hosted a celebration for PABAM Day – the MCF’s founding day —independently and without any external support. It was a great success, which the children described in their words through *PABAM Magazine*. To organize the event successfully, meetings were conducted to prepare a detailed plan, the members even decide to contribute a small amount for buying snacks for the celebration. On 21st May, the plan was executed with utmost care. Along with the fun component, the bal sangathans decided to keep the center point intact: they started the day with the activities like cleaning the premises of the venue, talking about child rights and responsibilities, health and hygiene, what can be done to eliminate gender discrimination from the society, and other issues of concern to them.

PABAM MAGAZINE



The idea of having a colorful magazine as a medium to connect children from all over Uttarakhand came in 2003. Since then, the magazine has served as an effective tool to spread awareness as well as a forum for mountain children to share their views, stories and experiences. This monthly publication features children’s activities, drawings, letters and photographs and serves to connect children with each other. The magazine inspires adults as well,

especially when they see the names of their children in the magazine.

This year we printed 12 issues of the magazine. About 250 articles were sent in by the children. Our general knowledge quiz has not only the children eagerly waiting for the answers but adults, too, look forward to taking the quiz.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: NUCLEUS SOFTWARE FOUNDATION

The Mountain Children's Foundation signed a tripartite agreement with Nucleus Software Solutions and ConveGenius Edu Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (technical partner) in October 2016. The Mountain Children's Foundation was provided with 45 tablet computers to be distributed in government primary schools as the content in the tablets was for children in classes 1-5. These tablets are to support children in learning English, math and environment studies and help teachers, especially where there are only one or two teachers for an entire primary school. The tablets are designed to create a unique account for each child and track and be responsive to the child's progress through the lessons and activities. They were distributed in both our Vikas Nagar Dehradun area and the Chamoli villages. In Dehradun the tablets were distributed to four schools while in Chamoli one tablet was assigned to each bal sangathan. The tablets have been received with enthusiasm and the children are excited to learn through an interactive medium. It was encouraging to see young children find and read difficult English words. Math is still proving to be the most challenging subject and the principals in schools have asked for someone to help the children in English and math. The teachers themselves are not very confident in English and find it difficult to help the children out.

However, after a 6-month field test, we concluded the tablets did not work in the bal sangathans as we had hoped because there were too many children for a single tablet. So we have decided to send the tablets to 4 primary schools in Chamoli instead. The bal sangathan members are sad to lose access to the tablets and we will continue to explore ways in which to bring this experience back to them in a more constructive way.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT: INDIANS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Indians for Collective Action (ICA), continues to provide ongoing support for our general operating expenses. This covers costs of running the office that are not supported by other project funds and provides MCF with needed flexibility and stability.

In the wake of the CRY withdrawal these funds have been able to support the senior team that facilitates and supports each program like Finance Head and Coordinator Programs.

FINANCIAL REPORT

While the program implementation in the field has been on track and the results have been above and beyond expectations, the withdrawal of CRY from Uttarakhand and consequently the end of our 6-year partnership was a significant financial setback. Our senior management team took cuts in salary to help bridge the decrease in our funding stream. Support from ICA

helped mitigate this slightly, but it was not sufficient to close the gap and MCF is looking to broaden its fundraising base with a focus on institutional support.

Delays in receiving funds from CHILDLINE have caused additional hardship as the MCF has to cover staff salaries from its already slender organizational budget. We have not received funds from CHILDLINE since September 2016.

Nonetheless, CHILDLINE and our Himmotthan programs have provided considerable financial stability to the MCF after the withdrawal of CRY. We have also mustered some new support – The Good Souls Initiative – to continue working in the communities where we had been conducting the CRY project, albeit at a less intensive level.

Starting July 1, 2016, MCF partnered with Himmotthan for an E-WaSH program in Ghat, Chamoli, which overlays the same working area as the CHEI program. Our funding in 2016-17 was 48.79% less than in FY 2015-16 due to the phase out of the CRY partnership in December 2016. However, some funds for the new CHEI program for the 2016-17 year were received in 2015-16, making the prior year's budget appear higher.

Even as our revenues have decreased, our expenditures in 2016-17 increased by 31.65% over the prior year as a result of the new E-WaSH program.

However, we do need to continue to diversify our funding streams in the coming years because the loss of any one of these major programs could greatly disrupt our ability to continue our work.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

To abide by the guidelines put down by the Supreme Court and to ensure a healthy working environment that enables employee, contract workers, part-time staff or volunteers to work without fear of prejudice, gender bias and sexual harassment, MCF has adopted a policy on prevention of sexual harassment. An Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) has been formed for redressal of grievances related to sexual harassment. The chair and members of the committee are as follows:

1. Deepika Panwar - Chairperson
2. Himani Chandola Chhimwal - Member
3. Ravindra Singh Chauhan - Member
4. Ranu Bisht – External Member

The first meeting of the committee was held on 19th May 2017 at the MCF office. All the four members of the committee were present in the meeting. The following report has been submitted by the committee.

S.No	Particulars	# cases/activities
1	Number of complaints of sexual harassment received in a year	Nil
2	Number of complaints disposed of during the year	Nil
3	Number of cases pending for more than 90 days	Nil
4	Nature of action taken by the employer	NA
	Number of workshops or awareness programs conducted by the organization	Two awareness meetings were held with the team

AWARDS AND APPRECIATIONS

MCF received following significant awards this year:

- ♣ GuideStar India Gold-Advance Level- Gold Seal (2017) GuideStar India: It recognizes organizations that practice and voluntarily demonstrate their transparency and in the public domain.
- ♣ eNGO Challenge Awards South Asia 2017: Enabling the enablers - Winner Health and wellness category. This award was particularly exciting for us as it acknowledged child participation in its citation – “for promoting child participation into ensure better sanitation and hygiene”
- ♣ Certificate of Merit (2017) by World CSR, Asian Confederation of Business and Thought Leader: NGOs for the quality of their work rural reach and outlook and ability to contribute value of social change.



MEETINGS, NETWORK AND OUTREACH

The past 14 years of experience of working with children has positioned MCF as a key resource agency on children’s issues. We continue to serve our mission by bringing the voice of the children from the Uttarakhand Mountains into development forums and other discussions that would affect their lives at statewide and regional meetings and conferences. MCF is also recognized as a trainer by other NGOs and has been invited to different forums to deliver trainings. Details of meeting attended and trainings imparted are given below:

- ♣ MCF attended a Stakeholder Meet organized by SBMA on 27th and 28th May 2016. NGOs from across Uttarakhand participated in the meeting.
- ♣ On 4th June 2016, Plan-India organized a consultation on ending the worst forms of violence against children. NGOs working on children’s issues were invited to discuss the issue and find solutions. MCF actively participated in the consultation as well as the

follow-up regional consultation in Lucknow in August 2016, and a national level workshop from 23 to 25th of November 2016.

- ♣ In the last week on June 2016, NACG-EVAC² India organized a three-day National Consultation to end violence against children. Thirty-three children from 11 states gathered to discuss issues of child marriage, child labour, child trafficking, child sexual abuse and corporal punishment. Children from the MCF field attended the meeting and MCF President Aditi P Kaur was a facilitator for the event. She is the Chair of the NACG EVAC India Sub-Committee on child participation. Following the children's consultation, there was a debriefing session for the adults, at which Aditi P. Kaur gave a presentation on child participation.
- ♣ Aditi P. Kaur attended the Executive Committee Meeting of NACG-EVAC India on 24th June 2017. She attended the meeting on behalf of MCF as MCF is an Executive Committee Member.
- ♣ MCF has been empaneled in SCPCR³ as an organization working on Child Rights. Aditi P. Kaur represented MCF in a meeting organized by SCPCR on 20th and 21st July 2017.
- ♣ SCPCR conducted a meeting and training program on the new Juvenile Justice Act 2015 on 9th August 2017. This was attended by Deepika Panwar, Anita, Hemant Dhiman, Amit Chetty, Sudhir Bhatt and Aditi P. Kaur.
- ♣ On 9th August 2016, Aditi P. Kaur and Sudhir Bhatt attended the Book Release of Uttarakhand at 15, edited by Dr. R.S. Toila, which was presided over by H.E. The Governor of Uttarakhand. The book has of 24 articles by 24 authors, including Cyril Raphael and Aditi P Kaur, on their view of Uttarakhand after 15 years.
- ♣ On 22nd September 2016, Aditi P. Kaur attended another meeting organized by UNICEF. In the meeting a national study entitled "Online Child Sexual Abuse" was released.
- ♣ Sudhir Bhatt and Aditi P. Kaur trained Child Welfare Officers from across the state on the Juvenile Justice Act, CHILDLINE and role of child welfare committees (CWC) for children in need of care and protection. The training was held on 5th and 18th October 2016 at the Police Training Center Tehri.
- ♣ Aditi P. Kaur represented NACG-EVAC in a training program, Strengthening Participation, at SAARC level held in Sri Lanka from 8th to 10th December 2016. This was followed by participation as a facilitator for listening to children's voices in child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation. In this training program, children from all 8 SAARC nations participated.
- ♣ Sudhir Bhatt conducted a training on sanitation and hygiene for 60 young people up to the age of 24 from our partner SEAD on 4th January 2017.
- ♣ On 14th January 2017 Sudhir Bhatt trained the staff of Aasraa Trust on communication, child participation and leadership in Pithoragarh.

² NACG-EVAC-India : National Action and Coordination Group to end Violence Against Children in India

³ SCPCR: State Commission for Protection of Child Rights

- ♣ From the 17th to the 22 of January 2017 Sudhir Bhatt and Pritam Panwar trained The Himalaya Trust staff and children in Pithoragarh (Bhram) and Bageshwar (Kapkot) on sanitation and hygiene in schools.
- ♣ Aditi P. Kaur, as a trainer of NIPCCD, gave training at the state level on two topics: 1) Child Care Institutions according to the JJ Act and Rules 2015-16 and 2) keeping children safe in Child Care Institutions.
- ♣ MCF Co-founder Ms. Smita Patel visited MCF office and field areas in Vikas Nagar Dehradun and Vikas Nagar Ghat, Chamoli in April 2017. She was impressed by the changes brought about by the children in their communities and the impact of their leadership skills as well as the quality of the MCF team.

MEDIA AND OUTREACH

This year, the work of MCF was published in following newspapers:

- MCF was highlighted in the article of Peeper Times for the impact created through program on sanitation and hygiene. <http://thepeepertimes.com/33206/268176/a/children-the-force-behind-swachh-bharat-abhiyan>
- An article in The Statesman discussed how the MCF's work is bridging the gender divide as boys to make a greater effort to support their sisters at home and in their desire to go to school. <http://www.thestatesman.com/features/bridging-the-gender-divide-1488412494.html>

Our website (mcfglobal.ngo) is being updated regularly and we are getting support from our volunteers Brent Zupp and Smita Patel. We have also created a YouTube page and registered with Big Tech, which will enable us to access Google nonprofit services as well as low-cost technical products.

We have also had many articles in the local newspapers with reference to our work in Vikas Nagar Chamoli, Vikas Nagar Dehradun and our MCF CHILDLINE programs.

CONCLUSION

The 2016-17 year has been busy and challenging, as we wrapped up our long-running CRY partnership in Dehradun and launched a new initiative in Chamoli.

We based our Chamoli programs on the model we have built and evolved over the past five years on the hygiene and sanitation program in Dehradun, enabling us to quickly ramp up in a completely new working area and with a different focus. This is an important milestone for the MCF: we have achieved a level of maturity and capacity that positions us well to execute large-scale campaigns at the local level.

The response of the community in Chamoli has been amazing and reaffirmed the power of our child-driven model. The anganwadis in the program area have developed into lively, vibrant centres that are finally providing all the services to the community that they were created for. The organizational aim to get government and its schemes to work for people as opposed to setting up parallel structures seems to be on the right track with this program. The focus on community buy-in over the first year has dramatically and visibly improved the outcomes.

While the withdrawal of the CRY program was a financial setback, we view it as an opportunity to encourage self-sufficiency in the community. It has also highlighted the need for us to widen our funding base and increase our institutional strength so that the withdrawal of a project does not jeopardize the viability of the MCF itself.

While pursuing traditional funding avenues, we are also looking at crowdfunding as a new source of institutional support. The GuideStar India Gold Award will ease the way for both conventional and new forms of funding as it validates the organization both professionally and financially.

In the MCF CHILDLINE program, the number of children that we have helped has increased per month but the remittance of funds continues to be an area of concern as we have not received funds since September 2016 despite several requests, creating considerable financial hardship for our organization and project staff.

PABAM continues to link many children and communities and they continue to learn from each other and share stories of their success.

As we move forward more confidently in our second decade, we are grateful to all our partners and supporters and look forward to a year filled with achievement and progress.

ANNEX 1: BOARD AND GOVERNANCE / YEAR 2016-17

NAME	ADDRESS	NAME OF FATHER/HUSBAND	GENDER	OCCUPATION	DESIGNATION
Ms. Aditi P Kaur	63- A VyomPrasth, G.M.S Road, Dehradun, U.K.	D/o Capt. Joginder Singh	F	Gender Specialist/ Social Worker	President
Mr. Sunjoy Joshi	C II – 81 First Floor South Extension Part II New Delhi	S/o Late R.L Joshi	M	Director Observer Research Foundation	Vice President
Ms. Khila Bisht	62, GF, A Block Greenwood City Gurugram Haryana	D/o Late S.S. Bisht	F	Writer/ Social Worker	Secretary
Mr. Sudhir Bhatt	63- A VyomPrasth, G.M.S Road Dehradun, U.K.	S/o Late Govind Ram Bhatt	M	Social worker	Treasurer
Ms. Kiran Ghosh	24 Rajender Nagar Kaulagarh Road Dehradun, U.K.	W/o Late Manus Ghosh	F	Teacher	Member
Mr. Cyril R Raphael	12/26 Ashirwad Enclave, Dehradun, U.K.	S/o Dr. Stephen C. Raphael	M	Secretary THT and Chief Advisor-SBMA	Patron
Ms. Shalini Sinha	12 AWHO flats Indira Nagar, Dehradun, U.K.	D/O Ranvir Sinha	F	Artist	Member

CASE STUDY 1 – CONSTRUCTION OF CEMENT ROAD TO SCHOOL

Lahar Bal Sangathan, Village Papadiyan, Dehradun

The children of Lahar Bal Sangathan of village Papadiyan participated in their village panchayat's open meeting where they raised several concerns. One notable issue was about the unconstructed road from the main road to the junior high school in Papadiyan. The panchayat representatives listened to the problem of the children and followed up by getting the road to the school constructed. This indicates that the children are creating awareness on children's issues in their community as well as changing the behavior of their community members and panchayats through their advocacy.

CASE STUDY 2 – TOILET AND WATER TANK CONSTRUCTED AT ANGANWADI CENTER

Unnati Bal Sangathan, Village Dobhari, Dehradun

The Anganwadi Center of the village Dobhari was lacking the basic facility of toilet. Moreover there was no provision of water in the premises for the young children. Members of Unnati Bal Sangathan, which had been discussing hygiene and sanitation and also learning about the role of anganwadis through the MCF, raised the issue in the open meeting of the panchayat. The panchayat representatives noted this issue and the panchayat constructed a toilet and water tank in February. Now the children of Anganwadi center are using the toilet properly and they have water as well.

STUDY 3– FROM IRREGULARITY TO REGULARITY

Anganwadi Kendra, village Saini, Vikasnagar Ghat, Chamoli

Anganwadi Kendra Saini is running in the Saini Panchayat Bhavan. Mrs. Shashikala is the anganwadi worker. When Ms. Shashikala moved to her husband's home some distance from the village, she stopped opening the Anganwadi regularly, but she did not resign from the job either. Seeing that the Anganwadi was not functioning properly, the MCF/HMS team met with the mata samiti, the community members and the pradhan. The mata samiti mentioned that the anganwadi worker would come once a month and complete the official paperwork. When MCF/HMS team explained the importance of the anganwadi, the pradhan called a meeting on the 16th of May 2016. Ms. Shashikala was also invited to the meeting, where they discussed the importance of the anganwadi center in detail, along with the roles and responsibilities of anganwadi worker. Realizing the vitality of the services provided by anganwadi centers, Ms. Shashikala promised to ensure regular and effective functioning of the anganwadi center going forward. Since 1st August 2016, the center is again providing regular services to the young children and community.

The comments below are from community members who have seen the effect of the children's activism and advocacy.

Smt. Guddi Devi of Village Badawa: "The children argued with us, if adults can buy mobile phones and TV then why they can't make toilets for themselves? By understanding the importance of hygiene we have made toilets without being dependent on village pradhan."

Smt. Sarita Devi of Village Dobhari: "Now the children are bringing up issues related to the community at panchayat-level meetings, the panchayat has also started working on those issues, such as boundary wall of Dobhari anganwadi. The confidence levels of the children have increased as they are working for the welfare of the whole community."

Smt. Sarita Devi, School Teacher, GPS Toli: "Now the children come to school in neat and clean uniforms. They have made a dustbin and they burn the garbage. The students also take care of the tree which they have planted, they never forget to water the tree."

Mr. Gulab Singh, School Teacher, GPS Mallawala: "Since the children did the Healthy School Survey in school, they are maintaining hygiene. Before this survey, the teachers used to trim children's nails in school, but now the children have clean teeth and nails."

Smt. Geeta Devi of Village Bijar: "We got information about six services provided by anganwadi centers through the meetings of the mata samiti. We were told to send our young children to the anganwadi center so that we can benefit from the services provided through it."

Smt. Kavita Devi of Village Farkhet: "Children get lots of information from MCF. Children receive PABAM magazine every month, we like to see the names of our children in the magazine."

Smt. Puspa Devi, Anganwadi Worker, Village Bijar: "The training conducted by MCF on ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Pre-School Education) was commendable. Such trainings should be held from time to time."