

Construction sites now have childcare centres [IN] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

With the support of builders, Mumbai Mobile Crèches provides support to children of construction workers

Working mums have never had it easy, and the situation is even worse for construction workers who are expected to put in more than eight-hour shifts. This situation saw the birth of Mumbai Mobile Crèches, an NGO that runs day-centres for the city's workers. And the facilities and child-care offered are quite up to date. Recently, a six-member delegation arrived from the UK, to provide support and advice.

As of now, the crèche has a comprehensive day-care programme, which includes health, education and nutrition. The children are divided into three groups: Crèche, which caters to children up to three years; Balvadi, which has three- to six-year-olds; and Non Formal Education (NFE), which minds children from ages six to 12. General manager, Neeta Khajuria, is proud of seeing this dream become a reality. "No other NGO in India cooks food and serves it there and then," she claims.

In order to safeguard the health of the children, the NGO has enlisted the service of the city's medical community. A doctor comes in every week so that the children can undergo regular health checkups at the day-care centres.

Currently, Mumbai Mobile Crèches reaches out to 4,800 children every year. The new slogan of this NGO is '10 by 10'. Their hope is that by 2010, they will be able to reach out to 10,000 children.

The NGO has 20 day-care centres at various construction sites across Mumbai and Thane. The builder provides them with a room at their construction site for running the centre. Each of these centres is open from 8.45am to 4.45pm, Monday to Saturday.

Dipti Nazareth, who has a five-year-old daughter, said, "These crèches are very helpful. At least the children will be in good hands and will not waste time by running around construction sites. They will use their time constructively." Apart from running day-care centres, the NGO runs a teacher training programme and a community centre.

Builders, too, have chipped in to make the project a success. Mumbai Mobile Crèches receives funds from individual donors, corporate houses, builders and the state government.

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- reprinted from the Daily, News and Analysis

Region: Asia ^[2]

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