mahita

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES SINCE 1994

2014-2015

Diffusing innovations in community-focused development practices to catalyze change in the rights practices for children & marginalized communities

Annual Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAHITA is a non-profit social development organization working in the state of Telangana in southern India. The Organization was established in 1994 to initiate development interventions in the urban slums of Hyderabad. Mahita is driven by the mission to promote integrated and sustainable solutions for overall development of children and their families

Promoting education among the children especially the girl children, who are out of the school, will be the important tool in bringing changes in the lives of any vulnerable communities and groups. MAHITA believes that "Our future….Children of tomorrow" have the best opportunities when they, their families and communities are educated and empowered.

MAHITA is committed to create opportunities to poor and marginalized with special focus on girls for their development with dignity and respect. Mahita consists of team of social scientists with substantial experience in gender, education, human rights, livelihood and humanitarian work. Mahita strongly believe that the community participation is the essential part of any right based approach and that leads to the social transformation, and this philosophy is implementing the organization in all its programme areas.

In 2014-15, Mahita completed two decades of working to realize the protection and educational rights of children from marginalized communities in urban slums of Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts, and remote tribal areas of Adilabad and Nalgonda districts in Telangana state. The organisation has worked to sensitize the communities and duty bearers about the struggles of children from vulnerable backgrounds through active volunteering in community based organisations. Working especially for the benefit of the girl child in poor and marginalized communities, the organisation has grown both in terms of thematic coverage as well as physical outreach over the years. From working with minorities and migrants in Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts, Mahita has expanded its outreach to include tribal communities in Adilabad and rural farming communities in Nalgonda. The field work, advocacy and networking activities are focused on education and child protection themes but have grown to include issues of women's livelihoods in both rural and urban areas.

At the beginning of the year, the team recognized the need to reflect upon the organisation's growth and evolution, and therefore decided to develop a strategic plan for the next five years that would reflect the consolidated

experience of two decades and would take the organization forward in the future. This Annual Report outlines the Strategic Plan and the organisation's activities, outputs and their outcomes for the financial year of 2014-15.

Mahita has implemented activities in four districts under 9 projects which cover a population of nearly 40,000 and are listed below. Presently our activities cover 30 slums in the old city of Hyderabad, 40 habitations each in Ranga Reddy and Nalgonda districts, and 34 habitations in Adilabad.

In Hyderabad, our activities include providing Secondary Education and Employability for Out-of-School Adolescents in Minority Slums**. The main focus of our activities in Nalgonda and Ranga Reddy districts is on prevention, rescue and rehabilitation of child labour and the strengthening of educational rights. In Adilabad, our focus has expanded from strengthening educational rights to include livelihood support for communities through the NABARD-Tribal Development Fund (TDF) and outreach services through the Childline for children in the district who are in need of care and protection.

There are a total of 18 Mahita Centres in the 4 districts which implement both child-centred and community-centred interventions.The Mahita Centres are the focal point of all interventions for the protection and strengthening of child rights - they host classes for students, vocational training for young women, meetings of the local SHGs, Child Protection Committees and Children's Groups. Some centres host all these activities while activities in the other centres is limited to improving the learning levels of children.

In its endeavor to improve the situation of the child rights, Mahita has been associated with many agencies. Mahita gratefully acknowledges the support extended to it by; ACCENTURE, Aga Khan Foundation, Child Line India Foundation, Charities Aid Foundation-India, DKA Austria, Manos Undias, NABARD, Plan India, Save the Children, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Micro Soft, UNICEF & United Way-Hyderabad.

Ramesh Shekar Reddy
Programme Director

Acknowledgements

We are deeply touched by the generosity of many committed funding organizations individuals and well-wishers who have been a part of our journey towards impacting the lives of many through our intervention.

We are indebted to the communities who allowed us to work with them and for them. They gave us opportunity to look into the issues from close quarters and plan interventions to bring out positive change.

We appreciate the role of volunteers from different walks of life, especially those from information technology sector who were willing to enable other children to learn skills otherwise who are deprived of such privilege.

These efforts would continue relentlessly, moving on and on and on….., towards bringing the positive change in the lives of those people. We look forward for you amplified role in enabling us to more of what we do.

Thank you one and all.

Mahita team

Thematic Area - 1 : Education

Early Child Hood Education:

With the support of Plan India, Mahita initiated under 35 AC Integrated Day Care Services for Children of Migrant Workers living in Urban Slums of Hyderabad in Seri Lingampalli Mandal . The programme titled ECCD' envisaged starting of Play Schools for the children of construction families in the slums and to create awareness on education in the community.
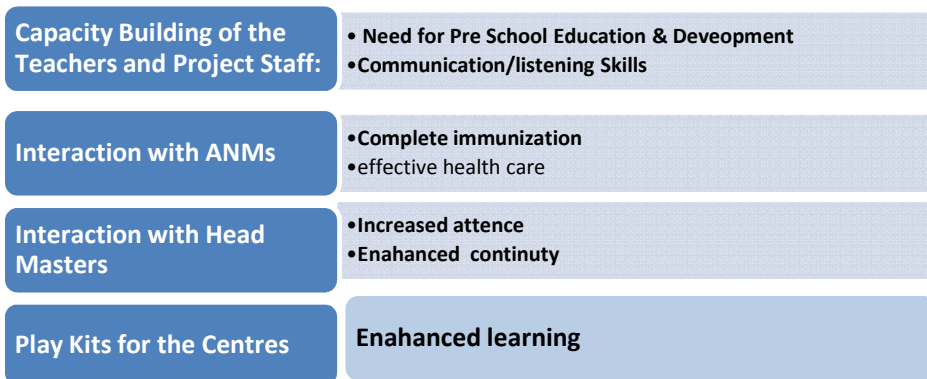

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) is extended in a holistic approach to address every child's development needs. All efforts are focused towards providing and ensuring a natural enjoyable and joyful learning environment for the child with emphasis on the necessary inputs for proper development and growth.

Mahita initiated 10 Play Schools and also extend the support to another 15 Anganwadi Centres for strengthening the process of ECCD in the Centres. After completion of staff recruitment (3 Coordinators 10 teacher and 10 ayas), the team rigorously did the house visits and link the children to AWCs.
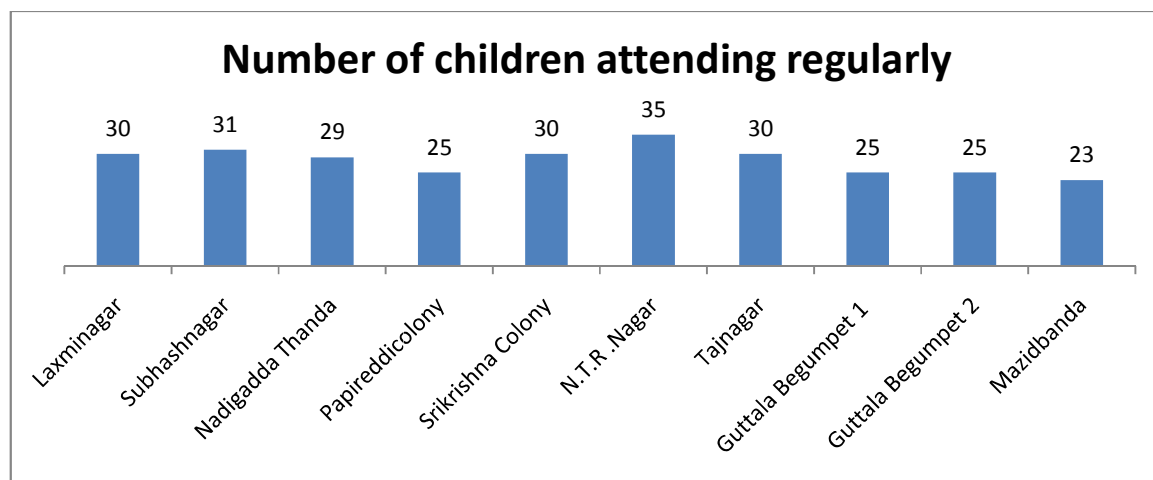
All 10 Centers were started. They also interact with the parents to send their children to the AWCs initiated newly near to their residence. Apart from visiting new centers the team has been visited the existing 15 AWCs running by the WD&CW department. They identified many issues with those AWCs and brought them to the higher officials like CDPO.

Key Processes:

Capacity Building of the Teachers and Project Staff:	• **Need for Pre School Education & Deveopment** • **Communication/listening Skills**
Interaction with ANMs	• **Complete immunization** • effective health care
Interaction with Head Masters	• **Increased attence** • **Enahanced continuity**
Play Kits for the Centres	**Enahanced learning**

Lessons learned:

- In the context of running feeding programme at AWCs, when efforts were made to rope in individual members, as they do not have proper bank accounts.
- For effective functioning of food support for children in AWCs, Mahita need to find a competent and competitive vendor, who can supply the food to the Centers.

Number of children attending regularly

Laxminagar	Subhashnagar	Nadigadda Thanda	Papireddicolony	Srikrishna Colony	N.T.R. Nagar	Tajnagar	Guttala Begumpet 1	Guttala Begumpet 2	Mazidbanda
30	31	29	25	30	35	30	25	25	23

Capacity Building of the Teachers and Project Staff:
Training plays an instrumental role in improving the overall quality of the programme. Two day training program has been conducted for 10 new AWCs staff as well as the other

Anganwadi Teachers on 12ᵗʰ and 13ᵗʰ December.. Ms.Swapna Jyothi Assistant Professor in Child Psychology from Osmania University and CDPO Ms.Lakshmi Bai attended as resource persons. Ms.Swapna Rani, explained various inputs pertaining to the field of Montessori and pre-primary education during the training.

The resource persons have motivated and ensured involvement of participants. Schematically resource persons have elicited functional issues pertaining to their day to day experiences and requirements and finalized programme agenda in a participatory manner.

Major Constraints:

- Place for new centers was not available as community members do not have adequate additional space to run a center.
- Individual members who came forward to provide food for the children through them from Monday to Saturday did not comply with the required parameters of bank account and vouchers and receipts.

Catalysers:

- Interacts with parents of the children and other community members in the purview of centers for their cooperation and
- Seek their cooperation to send their children to the centers regularly and for the smooth functioning of the centers.
- Discussions with ANMs and ensuring immunization for the children attending the new AWCs.
- Regular Interactions with Head Masters of the centers also resulted in effective mobilization of children to the AWCs.

Primary Education for the Children studying in Government Schools

The project is supported by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust Mahita towards Primary Education support through establishment of Community Resource Centres in the slums of the old city primarily which are

7

inhabited by marginalized, backward minority communities.

The Resource Centres offer remedial classes to never enrolled children, school dropouts and slow learners of different schools. Slow learners from government and private schools have been identified with the help of the school management and their learning levels are enhanced by using joyful learning techniques while the other children have been identified by the project team with the help of local stakeholders.

With the support of Tata Education Trust, Mahita continues to play catalyst role mobilizing and empowering children of minority and marginalized communities through Its interventions across 75 government schools in urban slums of Hyderabad.

Enhancing quality of education among the children has been vital component. Establishment and strengthening of 10 Child Resource Centers (CRCs) catered to different educational needs of 75 Government Schools reaching out to 13760 pupils including Boys 6767 and Girls 6993 and enhance the learning levels of the children

Key Processes:

- *Establishment of Children resource centers:*
  Resource centers are aimed at enhancing the quality of education among children. Mahita has established and engaged in strengthening the efforts of 10 Child Resource Centers (CRCs). The Resource Centers serves as a point of solution to the different educational needs of 75 Government Schools having 13760 students including 6767 Boys and 6993 Girls and enhance the learning levels among the children.

- *Mobilizing children in to groups through the concept of Child Clubs:*
  76 Child Clubs (CC) are formed with having 1225 members comprising 653 boys and 572 girls. Child Clubs are aimed for providing continuous training on the issues related to children, education and their rights to all the members of the Child Clubs to help them to raise their voices about their concerns and issues.

  The information provided to the children on rights through continuous trainings helped them in recognize issues and understand the existing problems at schools and communities where they live in. Many child club members have been interact with other children in the schools to motivate them towards their concerns and raising issues.

Accelerators:

- *Child learning assessment:*

Child learning assessment plays essential role in evaluating the child development. At MAHITA, our endeavor is to ensure blossoming of every child in a unique way. Teachers play an instrumental role in assessing the grades of the children. Monthly tests and assessments are conducted to evaluate the child's ability. by the assessment tool. Grading of the children is updated in the grading book regular basis . Child grading records are placed all the resources centers.

- *Enhanced learning through Library:*
  Child libraries have served as an additional source of impact. Libraries at the resource centers have enhance the learning curve of the children. This intervention is intended to ensure overall development of children through reading various books provided in at the libraries in the centers.

  Library has been an additional learning aspect for the children; the library provided at resource centers have served as a triggers to enhance imagination and perceive things in a more detailed and vivid manner.

Case study I :
Shahana Begum – A Role Model to other girls in the community

Shahana Begum aged about 22 years belongs to muslim minority community residing at Bhavaninagar. She studied up to SSC. She is physically challenged.

Her father due to terminal sickness, since five years he is not able to take care of his family responsibility and it has rested on the shoulders of the mother.

Shahana's mother is engaged in bangle making and earns a meager income of 50 to 60 rupees daily and struggles too hard to meet the expenses of the entire family.
While she was studying 7th standard, she took part in the rally conducted by Mahita in the project area. Shahana's parents have advised her to discontinue education and start to earn to support her mother in meeting family needs. Shahana is very fond of education and she wanted to continue education. At this crucial juncture, she is

reminded of Mahita Resource center and it's support for educational needs of children from marginalized communities.

Shahana reached out to Mahita Resource Center which is Shahana. With the support of Resource Centre she has been able to complete the education up to SSC. After that due to health problem she was unable to go for higher education.

At present she is working with International Islamic Private School. Shahana is happy about supporting her family. She appreciates the support of Mahita resource center team and ecstatic to stand as a role model in the community to inspire many other girls who are in grim conditions.

Secondary Education for the Adolescents

Secondary Education for the Adolescents focuses more on out-of-school adolescents and youth and strives to enhance of their employability after they complete secondary certification.

Towards realizing this goal, remedial classes are offered at the Resource centers. The project reached out to 5,000 adolescents and youth of which, 3,200 out-of-school adolescents (15-18 year age group) are offered educational support and development of non-cognitive skills. Similarly, another 1,800 children, between 17-23 years of age, who have already completed secondary certification are imparted vocational education and skills.

> *Mohd Layeeq Ahmed of natraj Nagar, Asif Nagar Mandal, Hyderabad says:*
>
> *I come from a traditional family where boys are not given any chance to go for higher education and they usually carry their father's profession. My father is an auto driver and earns meagre income, but I don't support him in his profession. I wanted to become an engineer.*
>
> *Thank you for the Mahita/AKF project sponsored* **Fundamental Course Material** *enabling us to pursue education in order to achieve our dreams"*

Key Processes:

The major processes carried out during the reporting period are:

- Establishment and functioning of 4 Resource Centers
- 4 Satellite Centers with ensuring adequate monitoring systems in place
- Networking and relationship building with community members and government official
- Teacher capacity building, development of foundation course curriculum; Life Skills training and vocational courses.

What worked so well?

- Capacity building of teachers on the Life Skills curriculum has been particularly successful and has provided teachers with the confidence required to positively impact on adolescents.

- Continuous efforts made by the project team proved fruitful in negotiating with the government officials and seek their buy-in of the project activities.

- Interventions with parents and community members through formation of Resource and Satellite Centre Committees have helped to motivate and mobilize the local community towards the development of their younger generation. This also helped in promoting community ownership of the Resource and Satellite Centers.

- In the past one year, there have been improvements in adolescents' and community members' attitudes towards education and there are visible changes in the interest being placed on their adolescent children's lives.

- Another major visible impact in the past 6 months is the large number of girls who have opted for secondary education and vocational skill training. For the first time, Mahita has started the Co-Educational Resource Centres with Adolescent Boys and Girls attending the same classes, irrespective of facing many obstacles from the community.

- Practical and activity-based methods of "doing & learning focused on constant capacity building skills horning of teachers at the centre level, which includes sensitization on soft skills, Child behaviour and learning abilities, child friendly teaching methodologies and tools.

- Life Skill training programs have created lot of impact among the adolescents and the academic support extended with the support of subject specialist teachers are also created good impact for changing the class room environment.

- The project has facilitated the development and publication of a Workbook for Secondary Education for the benefit of the children attending the Centre. The workbook is a unique initiative and has received a lot of appreciation from the Department of School Education as well as others agencies for adopting this methodology. But the Project Team had to work harder in order to mobilize the TOSS examination fees for the students, amounting to around Rs. 4.00 lakh, from various sources.

Rafia Begum of Sarwar Nagar says with zest :

I'm a 17 year old and I dropped out of Madarsa and joined in GHS Moazam shahi in 8th grade.

After joining the school, I realized that the atmosphere of the school is not protective for me hence I dropped out of even that school and remained idle at home for 2 years.

Through AKF project I got the opportunity to continue my education from July onwards.

Here the atmosphere is safe and I am delighted to have the sense of protection.

I want to pursue higher studies to become a software engineer in future.

Challenges:

- There are some challenges with regards to attendance regularity in the centres and continued efforts are needed to create more buy in among community members for the project goals.
- Overcoming initial inhibitions of adolescents posed greater set of challenges. Mapping educational needs to be further explored through enhanced engagement of resource centers.
- Assessment of adolescent's ability to comprehend and understand through Activity-based methods of "doing & learning"
- The strong experience and base of Mahita in building linkages between the government and community has been taken forward to
- Creating an effective community based management structure for effective follow up of the interventions of the project.

Education for the Tribal Children in Adilabad

Ensure quality education in an enabling child friendly environment as mandated in the Right to Education Act, 2009 for children in 34 Schools in villages and habitations across 17 villages of Narnoor mandal, Adilabad district.

Focus laid on the following four categories of people through this intervention:

- Children in the age group of 3-14 years
- School Management Committee Members /Parents
- Teachers, Teacher's associations and academic support providers
- Government Officials/PRIs

Imparting quality education is a major concern across rural plane and it is even distant dream for tribal children. Mahita, with the support of Save the Children and BVULGARI engaged in relentlessly striving to bridge this gap.

Mahita's great efforts were successful across 34 government schools in Narnoor mandal of Adilabad district. Hard work has resulted in bringing various stake holders like teachers, Anganwadi workers, SMC members, parents and other community members together on to a common platform.

Even though the 17 project villages are located in remote area, committed project team could able to bring the communities together for productive outcomes. The planned activities like resource centres, 34 reading corners, were successfully implemented resulting in increased learning levels among children by enhancing of numeroucy and literacy skills.

Coverage:

The team efforts and regular follow up coupled with active engagement of community members have resulted in increased coverage of 130% with reaching out to 3405 members against 2617 planned direct beneficiary coverage.

		Expected (in the whole implementation period)			Achieved (in the whole implementation period)		
		Male	Female	TOT	Male	Female	TOT
Direct	Children 3-5 years	240	270	510	265	305	570
	Children 6-18 years	470	530	1000	590	744	1434
	TOT children			1510	855	1049	1904
	Parents			670			783
	Teachers	50	35	85	75	10	85

Anganwadi Workers	0	17	17	0	34	34
SMC members	100	235	335	154	445	599
TOT Adults			1107			1501

Similarly in the context of indirect beneficiaries including Children, Community members, Teachers, SMC members and PRI members the coverage registered 105.5% coverage reaching out to 6177 individuals against the planned coverage of 5852

Key Processes:

- Reading Corners to illuminate interest among children towards reading and writing skills. 30 Reading corners were established and all the reading corners are being used by the students successfully. All of them were maintained well by the children committees.
- Teachers Felicitation Day program was organized which has filled teacher's with lot of encouragement and spirit of their role and responsibilities in providing child friendly atmosphere and education for children in which they are working. The program held at Mandal Resource Center
- Academic Support to Children with learning difficulties and continuous engagement of education Volunteer in extending the required support.
- The resource center is creating significant impact in improving learning levels among the children and also ensuring quality of teaching learning practices by teachers
- Continuous & Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) is an excellent model to assess children learning levels. The teachers in the schools in our project area are lacking knowledge about this and many of them are untrained.

Challenges:

- Active participation of the parents especially the mothers to strengthen the Early Childhood Education of the children.
- As the project area is remote and difficult to access. Lack of proper transportation facilities and also the mindset of the community members
- Continued community participation and support to sustain the project outcomes, effective engagement of School Management Committees.
- Continuous & Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) is an excellent model to assess children learning levels. Majority of the teachers in the schools are lacking required knowledge about evaluation models

Child Labour Project in Ranga Reddy and Nalgonda Districts:

Ranga Reddy district lies in close proximity to the capital city of Hyderabad and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) At least 40% of Ranga Reddy district is within the urban agglomeration of Hyderabad and hence serves as a "pull factor" to a large number of labour migrant families from neighboring districts and states as well.

Rain-fed agriculture is the main source of livelihood and child labour is found in the project area, Children are engaged in hazardous work such as rag picking, dump yards, stone breaking, cement manufacturing, domestic / agricultural labour, hotels and shops & establishments, brick kilns, factories, and cotton picking. The goal of this HDF supported child labour project to strengthen the prosecution, protection and prevention services for children at risk of or subjected to labour or trafficking for labour in the state of Telangana. It is estimated that more than 6,000 children who are either out-of-school in Ranga Reddy project area who are vulnerable to trafficking or employed as child labour,

Key Processes:

- The project also provides training for vocational skills and self-employment as livelihood enhancers for the children's families to compensate for the loss of the income from their children being withdrawn from work.

- Families are supported in selecting the choice of livelihood options such as vegetable and coconut vending, sales ventures of "fancy items" and saris, tailoring, vegetable cultivation, snack food carts (Mirchi Bandis) and goat rearing.

What worked well?

- The project has witnessed active participation from local NGOs and community and youth in the identification of child labour, and also legally employed workers/ VTL Children.
- The Child Clubs and CLVC's have been instrumental in helping the Project team to motivate the children and parents towards school enrolment and continuing their education.

Challenges faced:

- It has been found that children between 12 – 14 years are continuing their education while working part-time as milk and newspaper delivery boys,

while girls continue to work as Domestic Servants, or assisting their parents in family petty businesses without discontinuing their schools.

- Ensuring at least 2-3 initial parent counselling sessions in order to motivate them. Issues of safety and security for girls also compel parents to withdraw their daughters from school if they have to travel long distances.

- Lack of awareness of children rights is not restricted to parents and community alone and even teachers and duty bearers need to be sensitized on Children's rights which require awareness and sensitization campaigns to educate them and eventually form the CLVCs.

- Three major insights can be identified so far from this project. Enrolment and retention of child labourers in schools will succeed only if there is an additional source of income / employment for the family which has to give up the income earned by child labour. A minimum support income of Rs. 5,000/- for migrant labour families

- Poverty and migration increases the number of dysfunctional, disturbed or single parent families and results in increased number of children living with caretakers.

- Children especially those in the high school age group, are entering the work force to cope with such family situations and the early adolescent age group will be the primary focus of the project.

Child Labour Project - Plan India

Nalgonda is located towards the south-east of Hyderabad district and is rapidly urbanizing with the growth of the GHMC region. Migrant laborers working in hazardous industries such as brick kilns and chemical factories are a common sight along with child workers who are also employed in agriculture, domestic work and petty businesses.

With the support of PLAN India, Mahita has intervened in 40 habitations each in Nalgonda and Ranga Reddy districts. The project areas were chosen for their 'high risk' characteristics with regard to children's rights and protection. It is estimated 7,500 out-of-school or working children. The project started with the goal of reaching at least 700 children in the first year in each of the districts.

What worked well?

- Interface with community and schools by using platforms such as public events, in order to identify the vulnerable children.

- Formation of Child Forums and Child Labour Vigilance Committees (CLVCs).

- Effective rescues of child laborers, convergent action was conducted with various Departments like the DCPU, Police, Child Line, NGOs, Women and Child Welfare Department, the Labour Department, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, etc

Challenges faced:

- Effective rehabilitation
- Cooperation and coordination with the legal processes followed by the Child Welfare Committee and
- Establishing linkages with various NGOs who are running the Shelter Homes.

Case study

Pooja is 12 years old. She lost her parents around 4 years back because of they being HIV infected. Since then, she has been staying with her maternal aunt. Her uncle is differently abled and cannot work. He stays at home. Not able to afford Pooja's education,

Her maternal aunt engaged her in cotton fields along with her. Often she moved from field to field in search of work and travelled nearly 10 kms from her village. She also supported her aunt in the household chores. Whenever she asked her aunt to send her to school, she always refused saying that they cannot afford it. Moreover, she has to help in contributing to the family income. Many times Pooja cried but aunt somehow convinced her and took her to work.

When Plan-Mahita team intervened in August 2013, they learned about Pooja's situation and told Pooja's aunt about importance of education. She finally agreed to put Pooja in school. Pooja's aunty is provided with a livelihood support where she now owns a fridge used for selling cool drinks and milk.

Her maternal uncle takes care of the business at home. The income from this livelihood unit was invested to repair and make one of the old flour mills functional that her maternal uncle owned but wasn't operational. This fetches them additional income.

Pooja is a happy girl and is regular to school. She enjoys her time with friends. Now she is an active member of child forum and has made an effort in bringing three girls to join the school. Pooja desires to continue her study. Her aunty said that she would always make an effort to ensure that Pooja continues her education.

Nazima Begum

"I am very much interested in education but my family situation did not allow me to pursue education.

As I met Mahita team through my neighbor and know about vocational centers they run for the girls like me.

I felt very happy to get an opportunity to join in tailoring and also pursue higher education through APOSS. With the help of counseling by Mahita team I became very confident and bold".

Now, I will finish the course.

Livelihood Skills for Adolescents:

This project is supported by the Charity Aid Foundation. The project (CAF) focuses on young women in the age group of 14-25 years from marginalized/backward communities (Muslim minority) with the least education and employment opportunities.

Majority of the families living in the project area slums falls below the line of poverty and are employed in various unorganized sectors. About 30-35% of the population is below the age of 18 years. Girls in minority communities are very vulnerable due to restrictive social and cultural practices. Early marriages are a common phenomenon and most of the girls are compelled to assist mothers in house hold chores, and take care of their siblings, apart from engaging in home-based piece rate job works.

The project aims to promote and facilitate equal opportunities for girl children and young women and mothers to enhance opportunities for their livelihoods and development.
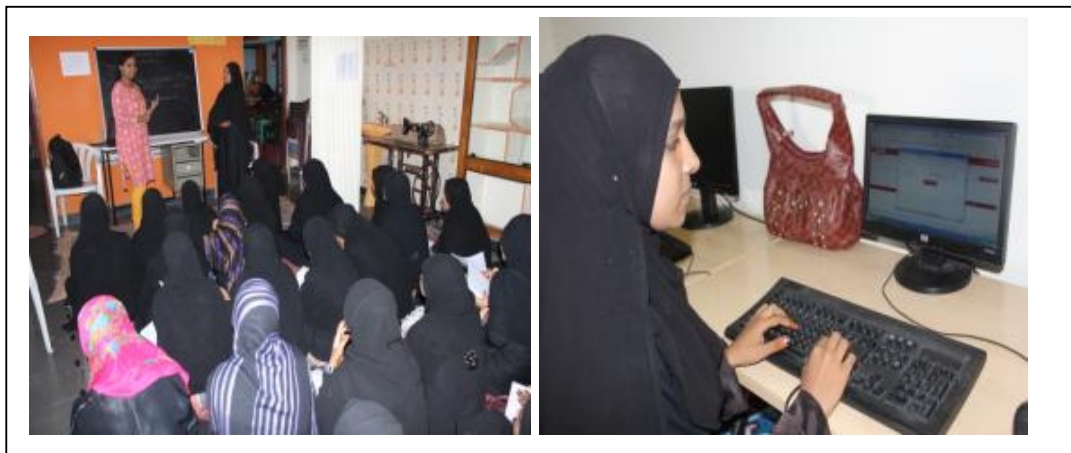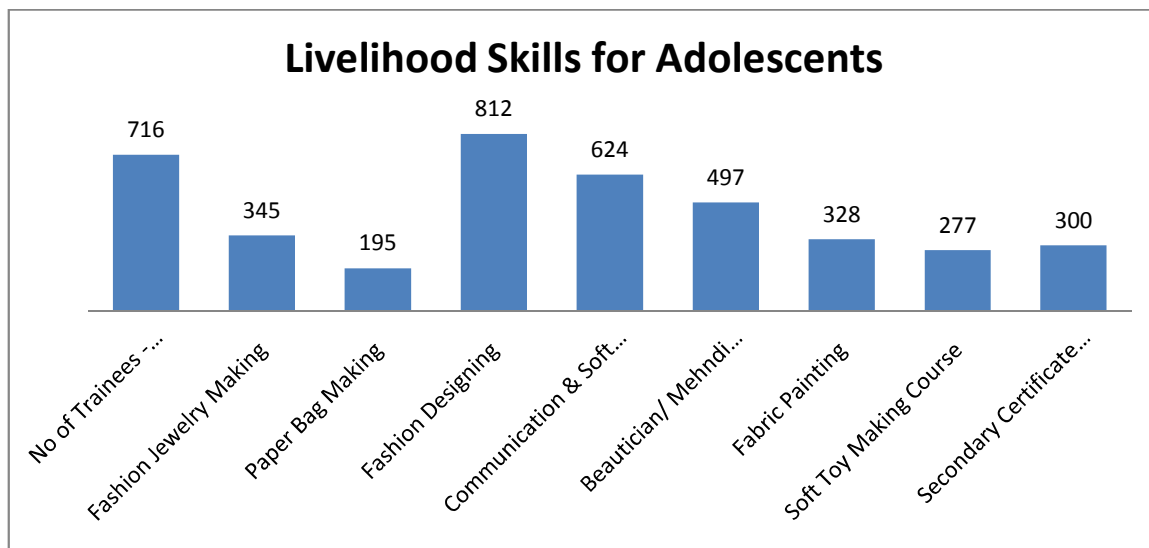
The Resource Centre comprises of a 13 member team who train the enrolled women and girls in one of the 8 skills that are offered along with the secondary certification course.

Achievements:

The promise of enhanced livelihood skills with secondary certification proved to be a catalyst in changing the mindsets of parents and the community. The project was also successful in enrolling 4,094 children for skill building and secondary certification program.

Challenges:

- slow paced progress in learning among some children,
- unsatisfactory results in placements for some jobs or
- Low levels of retention in jobs Vis-à-vis project targets.

Livelihood Skills for Adolescents

Category	Value
No of Trainees - ...	716
Fashion Jewelry Making	345
Paper Bag Making	195
Fashion Designing	812
Communication & Soft...	624
Beautician/ Mehndi...	497
Fabric Painting	328
Soft Toy Making Course	277
Secondary Certificate...	300

Success Story:

"Earning while learning" – Farhath Jahan from Ramachandra nagar

Farhath Jahan aged 18 years a resident of Ramchandra Nagar, Charminar Mandal, Hyderabad. She has completed her 10th standard in the year 2012. Farhath lost her father 4 years ago and mother aged 45 years is a house wife. Farhath has one elder brother who completed his Intermediate and could not study further due to the family financial problems.

Farhath Jahan explains ,"The program team of Mahita visited our house during a survey, and explained me about the Vocational centre run by Mahita with the support of CAF India. My mother explained to the program team about the family situation and the plight they are going through with meager income. Farhath along with her mother started a small business of garland making at home, which they did for 2 years. In the meantime, Farhath's brother completed his intermediate and took up a job as a sales person in a furniture shop.

Mahita program team encouraged and guided me to enroll myself in beautician course; which transformed my life completely" shared Farhath Jahan.

"I enrolled myself in beautician course at Mahita vocational centre in September, 2013. Before joining the centre, I was shy and did not speak to any one at the centre, the staff helped me to understand how important communication is if I need to take

this course as profession. This helped me a lot and I started speaking to everyone and now am able to communicate very well and gained confidence that I can earn my living".

Farhath completed her beautician course in the month of January 2014 and she goes to houses in the community to apply mehndi, hair styles etc. Now her income is Rs. 1500/- per month. With the encouragement from Mahita team she has enrolled in distance education to complete her education, she is preparing for her Intermediate 1st year. She is indeed very glad for the chance that Mahita has given to her to learn the course and to support her family.

Farhath has gained a lot of confidence and aims to continue to work and also her further education. Her life changed as she joined beautician course after being motivated; now she earns and is also continuing her studies in Intermediate and would like to study further also.

"Meri zindagi badla gayi jab se Mahita shamil hue; Mein abhi kush ho ke mein kamathi hou aur apni paddiye puri kar rahi hu says Farhath" (My life has changed from the time I joined Mahita. Am happy that am earning and also continuing my education)
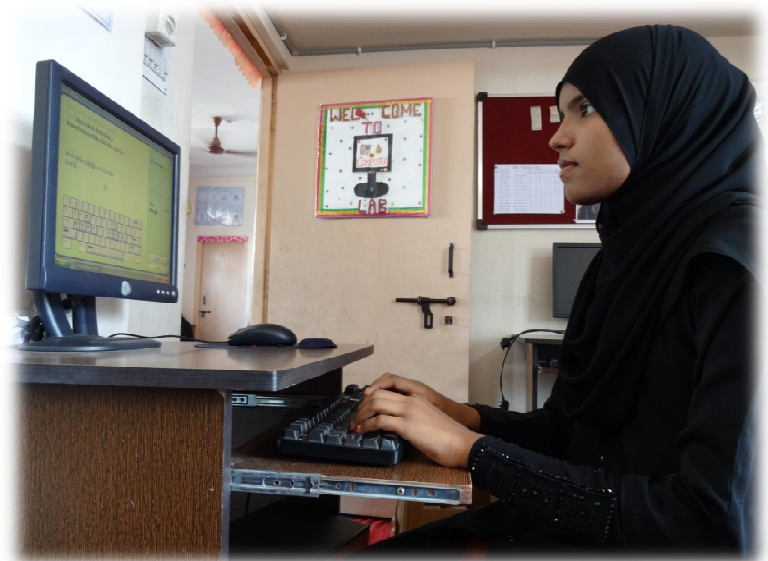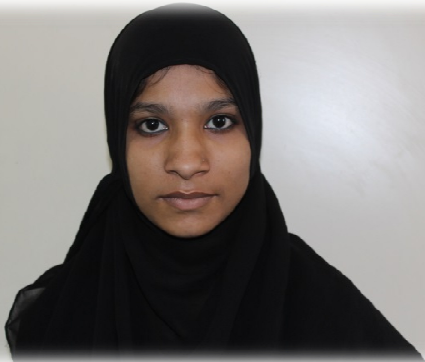
1098 Services in Adilabad

Child Line Foundation India is supporting Mahita to implement children's helpline project in a wider outreach through the CHILDLINE 1098 telephone number in Adilabad.

The project team successfully formed 36 ward level Child Protection Committees in Adilabad town. The timely response of the CHILDLINE team to complaints lodged about child marriages is appreciated by the District Collector during the annual District Review Meeting. However, the shortage of skilled staff continue to hinder the Childline's operations as the remuneration paid to staff is quite low and there is also a need to update the capacities of the staff.

The project has received support and encouragement from line departments like police, revenue, ICDS, ICPS, DLSA, SSA, Education department, Railway, RTC, & NGOs, Youth groups, volunteers, the KGBVs and print and electronic media as well. However, functional support from labor department regarding resolving child labor cases is not encouraging. Awareness among stakeholders is also needs to be improved.

The future plan of children helpline is to focus more on creating awareness among stakeholders about the child related schemes, programs and building a team of committed volunteers across the district in order to serve the needy children. Strengthening of ward level child protection committees will be emphasized and capacity building for volunteers and stakeholders through training programs.

Economic Enhancement of Tribal Farmers:

"Maathota", project is implemented in Narnoor mandal of Adilabad district. The project is designed for ensuring Economic Enhancement of Tribal Farmers through improving the livelihoods of vulnerable tribal families through promotion of Wadis (Orchards).

A total of 500 acres of plantation were completed during the financial year. Beneficiaries were imparted trainings on livelihoods through the plantations. Village Development Councils(VDC) to protect and ensure growth of the plantation were also formed in all the 17 villages. These VDCs have been registered under the Societies Registration Act as "Maathota

Committee". These Maathota groups across all the villages were able to establish bank linkages through the project team's intervention and facilitation.

The notable achievement of this project has been a reduction in out-migration in the mandal.

Advocacy and Lobbying & Volunteers

Alliance for Child Rights:

Alliance for Child Rights (ACR) was formed on 29th May as (APACR), 1999 towards respond effectively to advocacy on child rights in the State of united Andhra Pradesh. It has emerged in response to the voices commonly shared by several activists, NGOs, Networks, Community Based Organizations to respond to the situation violating the rights of children and to undertake micro to macro level Advocacy.

Since June 2014 onwards APACR has been changed its existence as ACR and two state Alliances also placed in two states. ACR has demonstrating diverse, dynamic partner NGOs and strong structure at State and Regional Level and are committed to excellence and

democratic decision making process. After evolves from the initial impetus, ACR emerged a strong NGO consortium that involves a strong passion, interest on child rights advocacy and strengthening of civil society movement in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Alliance for Child Rights (ACR) aims to ensure a safe and friendly environment for all children through partnering with and promoting child rights coalitions and civil society organizations in order to generate public discourse, collective advocacy and strengthening accountability for child rights in Andhra Pradesh.

Approach and strategy:

The project approach is based on the problem analysis of each thematic area. The project adopted advocacy as a key strategy. A comprehensive, inclusive and convergent advocacy strategy is adopted to ensure engage all stakeholders at all levels – youth, children, communities, NGO's, schools, and administrative units.

ACR State Secretariat is located in Mahita, is the implementer and the executor of the project. Technical staff and consultants will provide the research and documentation support which will help to develop an accurate database, status reports and research studies on child issues, acts and schemes being implemented across the state.

Thematic areas:
- Prevention of Child Marriages
- Implementation of Right to Education Act
- Nutrition status of the children
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Model Child Friendly District
- Urban Youth

What worked well?

- **Research studies and database:** various reports, studies on issues of Child marriages, Right to Education, Nutrition and Rapid Impact Assessments helped to understand the issue from close quarters and enabled to work with government department .

- **Capacity building** of officials through regional consultations on child marriages gave excellent result in orienting the CMPOs on the Act and GO.Ms.13 across the two states. Regional consultations with Teachers, officials from RVM/SSA

- **Collaboration with departments and research institutions**

Constant interaction of ACR with Women and Child Welfare Department and ICPS evolved a conducive and collaborative environment for organizing the Regional consultation on Early Marriage.

The district consultations developed a strong linkage between the NGOs and government officials for discussing better service delivery systems for the children in the two states.

Collaboration with RVM/SSA and ITDA: The Three regional stock taking exercises on RTE and consultations with ITDA officials paved the way for strong alliances. Collaboration with CESS helped to develop good data base and carry out qualitative research on policy implementation

- **Focus on urban youth:** consultations at regional level and also state level consultations held with Urban Youth and Young adolescent girls and boys helped to understand issues coherently.

- **Bala panchayats in 18 villages:** Children from 18 villages and schools were benefited through Bala Panchayats in articulating their voices and rights to raise their issues and concerns.

- **Citizen Report:** Development of citizen report for two states helped to understand critical concerns at micro, meso and macro levels across two states.

Challenges Faced

Due to bands for state bifurcation in both Andhra and Telangana regions there was some delay happened in carrying out some of the programs in time. Due to 2014 Elections of the Parliament and State Assembly availability of officials to conduct district level meetings and consultation with ITDA is also became tough task.

Insensitivity of the government officials is another important issue which obstructs to organize district level consultations in some districts. Few district PDs of ICDS wing not willing their CDPOs to attend district level consultation with ICDS Functionaries and other line departments to discuss about the service delivery systems at AWCs in the district.

Convergence efforts among various departments always a big challenge and need to put more focus. There were lot of gaps and misconceptions among the various departments and they are not coming forward to sit together and discuss about children issues.

Volunteers
Accenture volunteers Report

Accenture representative Mr. Rajan Kumar Shah visited Mahita office to discuss about the volunteering Accenture team who would like to spend time at the centre every Saturday (weekly).

Volunteers from Accenture would come to centers and teach the students in English / Mathematics / Computers / Personality development and life skills. Mr. Rajan and Ms. Darshan visited Karwan centre on 4th Jan 2014. Brain storming sessions conducted at the centre to know the strengths, weakness and identify required gaps that would enable them to take support of other employees from Accenture as on required.

After a thorough assessment and discussion both the parties Mahita and Accenture felt to design a curriculum which will help the students in realizing the goals.

Content of Curriculum:

1. Simple English with grammar
2. Practice of spoken English (Communication skills)
3. Personality development (Soft Skills)

4. Simple Arithmetic
5. Basic and advance computer knowledge

Many volunteers also shared their experiences to encourage and motivate the students to continue their education, their vocational skills to earn their livelihood and be independent. Experience sharing of Accenture volunteers helped to boost morale and confidence among the students at the centers.

Strategic Framework: 2015 - 2020

The strategic objective for 2015-2020, in support of the Millennium Development Goals and in line with Mahita's mission, is to generate collaborative action and learning aimed at improving and expanding community-focused practices for marginalized families in the State of Telangana. The first two decades have established a solid base of experience and expertise to set higher standards and facilitate the team members' ability to meet those standards. Mahita's staff and Working Groups will advance the field of community-focused Child Rights Interventions in Education and Livelihoods, and Community Mobilization and Advocacy and Networking. Across Mahita's programmes - gender is the common thread, with children at the heart and girls at the core of our concern.

The major thematic / focus areas will be the guiding principles of the organization. These interventions have been adopted with the objective of ensuring active participation of all stakeholders in view of protecting the best interests of the children through effective implementation of children's programs and policies. There are five organisational priorities, namely, good governance, networking and information sharing, organizational development

facilitation, policy engagement and advocacy and institutional capacity building and sustainability.

Good governance
Mahita will make every effort to promote good governance among the member NGOs to inculcate their legitimacy in undertaking social accountability initiatives. The organisation will play a more active role in empowering member organisations in a bid to promote good democratic governance. Addition, deliberate efforts will be made to enhance community competence through community motivation and mobilisation.

Networking and Information sharing
Mahita embraces a continuous learning process in its organizational growth, and its engagement with networking and policy advocacy on child rights across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana is an asset to promote networking and information sharing between member organisations, strategic partners and with like-minded organisations at the local and state levels. A number of networking and information sharing models will be tested and adopted accordingly to add value to the work of its members in influencing social policy and making a significant contribution to children's education and poverty reduction.

Organisational Development and Management
Mahita will facilitate Organisation Development and management interventions with a view to improving the performance, effectiveness and sustainability of Civil Society Organisations. Specifically the organisation will facilitate demand driven interventions geared towards improving such organisational aspects as structures, systems and procedures, financial operational manuals, mainstreaming gender, and, monitoring and evaluation systems.

Policy Engagement and Advocacy

The organisation will make deliberate efforts to establish and strengthen cooperation between government and civil society organisations to targeted constituency building, strategic influencing and cross learning for effective contribution to social development processes and influencing social policy for development of children in the State. Where necessary the organisation will undertake action research to support advocacy initiatives through networking with NGOs, CBOs and

other like minded organisations in the State. The organisation will develop and strengthen good and strategic working relations with research and higher learning institutions both to influence research agenda and to keep abreast of relevant research findings for advocacy.

Institutional capacity building and sustainability
Capacity to deliver in the above key results areas will depend, to a very great extent, on the capacity and sustainability of the organisation. To realise this, Mahita will make deliberate efforts to improve its performance and effectiveness. This will be attained by undergoing regular self assessment and organisational development processes. The organisation will build a culture of learning and establish good working climate to maximise delivery potential of the priceless human resources. Mahita will recruit and maintain qualified, experienced and competent personnel.

Monitoring and Evaluation
Monitoring and Evaluation will be one of the core organizational and programmatic functions of Mahita. To gauge holistic performance, the organization will make use of a variety of indicators in each project. Such markers of progress will entail qualitative, quantitative, process and impact indicators. The Monitoring and Evaluation system will entail a data collection system that is timely, reliable and flexible enough and modular to allow indicator information to be part of the same database.

Mahita has given the responsibility for each project for one individual and experienced coordinator. The Coordinators will provide overall technical oversight in monitoring and evaluation. The organization will adopt participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for shared accountability and learning. Both physical and financial progress reports will be prepared, shared and documented for institutional learning and adaptive programme cycle management.