



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

ABOUT MAHITA

MAHITA's dedication to creating an economically and socially just society that respects local cultural values and practices is highly commendable. The organization's focus on gender equality, education, human rights, livelihoods, and humanitarian work reflects its commitment to holistic development. Since its registration in 1994, MAHITA has made a significant impact in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Over the past 27 years, MAHITA has played a pivotal role in empowering marginalized communities, particularly children. Through its community interventions, MAHITA has brought about positive changes in the lives of marginalized individuals. The micro-entrepreneurship programs implemented by MAHITA have empowered numerous women, enabling them to start their own businesses. Skill-building and education initiatives, strengthening of WASH Facilities in State run schools by MAHITA have been instrumental in promotion of quality education, promoting dignity, self-esteem, and poverty reduction. MAHITA actively collaborates with various NGOs in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Child protection and development have always been at the core of MAHITA's efforts, and it has undertaken numerous projects in this realm, along with youth skill development initiatives. Mahita is a dynamic agency, driven by a deep commitment to act as a catalyst for positive change. Our core mission revolves around empowering individuals and communities, enabling them to unleash their potential and attain holistic development. Central to our efforts is a strong focus on nurturing the overall growth of children, while also ensuring their protection from exploitation and abuse.

GOVERNANCE, STAFF AND CERTIFICATIONS:

MAHITA is governed by an esteemed management board comprising 8 members and guided by 3 Executive Committee Members and experts who provide valuable leadership and mentorship. The organization is supported by a dedicated team of 70 full-time staff members and 25 volunteers who contribute at various levels.

To ensure transparency and accountability, MAHITA is registered under 80G and 12A of the Income Tax Department, and it holds FCRA certification from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Additionally, the organization is compliant with PF, ESI Registration, TDS, and Service Tax regulations.

MAHITA upholds a strong commitment to ethical practices and has implemented various policies, including Financial Policy, HR Policy, Child Protection Policy, Policy against Sexual Harassment at the workplace, Procurement and Selection Policy, and Gender Policy, to foster a safe and conducive working environment.

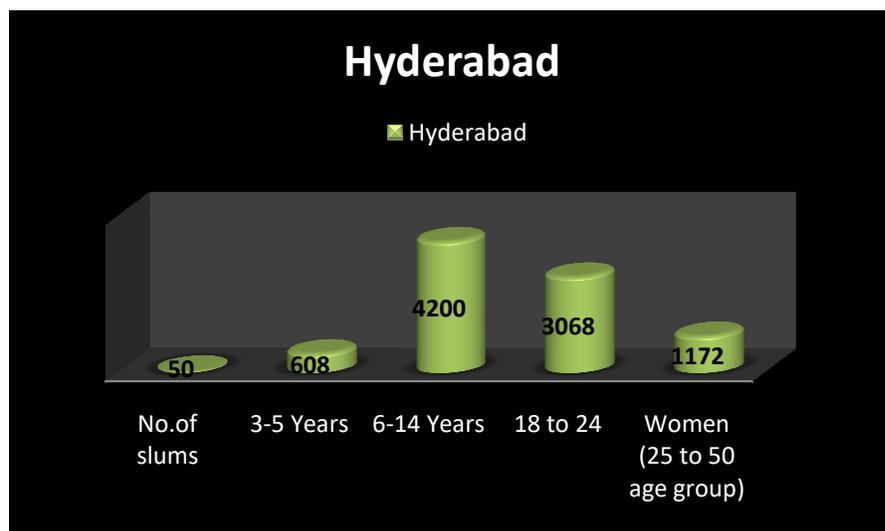
With a steadfast dedication to its mission, MAHITA continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of vulnerable communities, paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

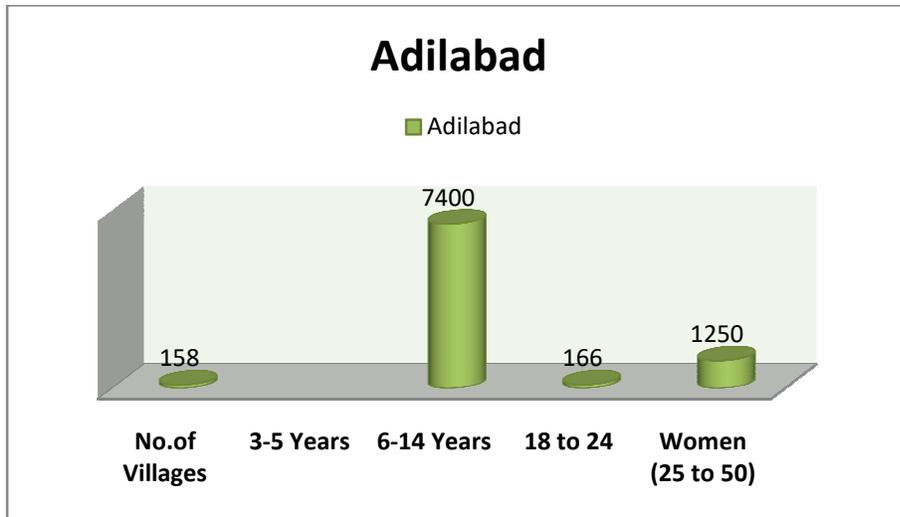
Mahita, a distinguished non-profit social development organization, has been making remarkable strides in empowering communities and championing child rights in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, southern India, for over 28 years. Despite the challenges posed by shrinking funding and a changing development scenario, Mahita's dedication and professionalism have garnered the trust of numerous INGOs and CSR partners, enabling them to reach unreached communities effectively. In the year 2022-23, Mahita made significant strides in improving the lives of vulnerable communities, particularly in urban slums and rural tribal areas.

Key Achievements in 2022-23:

In urban slums, Mahita reached out to 50 communities, providing essential support to 608 children aged 3-5 years through various initiatives such as Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programs, improved Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, and access to play materials. Additionally, the organization ensured that these children received nutritional food and access to essential health services. Furthermore, Mahita extended its reach to 4200 children in 20 government schools for provided the educational kit, facilitated for various training programs, facilitating interventions to enhance their educational experience.



Moreover, the organization played a crucial role in empowering young women, reaching out to 3068 of them and providing future skills courses, which in turn led to meaningful employment opportunities. Awareness meetings conducted in all 50 slums helped 1172 women and men gain valuable insights into capacity-building programs, enabling them to improve their livelihoods.



In rural and tribal areas, Mahita's efforts spanned across 158 villages, impacting 7400 children aged 6-14 years. The interventions focused on enrolling child laborers, addressing school dropouts, and establishing child clubs within schools and communities. Additionally, Mahita facilitated 166 young girls and boys' enrollment into the Open School system, offering them a chance to resume their education while working in fields. The organization's support also extended to empowering 140 women to start their own micro-enterprises through financial literacy and capacity-building programs.

Overall, Mahita's endeavors in 2022-23 demonstrated a deep commitment to fostering positive change in communities, enhancing access to education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, and overall well-being. The impact of these programs has been widely recognized, and Mahita has gained increased visibility and support from various stakeholders.

Mahita extends heartfelt gratitude to its partners, donors, and volunteers for their invaluable contributions in making these initiatives possible. Donor partners like Ajim Premji Foundation, Plan India, BENEVITY, HSBC Software India Ltd, Charities Aid Foundation, Mobile Creche, DKA Austria, Manos Unidas, UNICEF, and others have played a crucial role in supporting the interventions. The dedication of numerous volunteers has also been instrumental in driving the organization's mission forward.

As Mahita continues on its journey towards positive social transformation, it remains confident in achieving even greater milestones and creating lasting change in the lives of the people it serves. With collective efforts, Mahita will continue to empower individuals, uplift communities, and contribute to a more equitable and prosperous society.

Ramesh Sekhar Reddy
Program Director

MAHITA ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS THROUGH STRENGTHENING OF COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

Mahita, with the support of the Azim Premji Foundation, has undertaken a comprehensive project in Adilabad, aiming to protect and promote child rights in 135 villages and 91 government schools across five Mandals in the district. The interventions have taken a holistic approach, addressing issues like exploitation, lack of education, exclusion, and other social challenges hindering the progress of children and young people.

One of the significant achievements of this project is the mobilization of children and young people, resulting in the formation of 91 active children's groups in various schools with membership of above 2500 children. These groups have been educated on critical issues affecting their families and themselves, such as child marriage, education, child labor, and ways to address these problems with the help of Mahita and other stakeholders. The efforts successfully motivated and mainstreamed 400 working and dropout children in formal schools and ensuring their continuation of the schools rather than work fields.

To ensure sustained engagement, Mahita aims to strengthen this intervention by conducting more consultations and seeking feedback from key actors and communities. The focus is on moving beyond merely imparting information to children and linking it to their daily environment, fostering child participation and empowerment.

The involvement of local councils, like Gondand Kolam Tribal Associations, has been crucial. These councils, established in the 1930s, hold significant authority among the people. After being oriented on child rights, they have taken decisive actions, such as imposing fines on parents for not sending their children to school and preventing child marriages. They also address issues like manipulating a child's age on Aadhar Cards to protect their rights effectively.

Recognizing the essential role of Gram Panchayats in safeguarding children's welfare, 150 members were oriented on child rights and pledged to implement and protect children's rights as community representatives. This has resulted in some Gram Panchayats offering their offices to support children availing various interventions, and they have also actively advocated for beneficiaries' schemes.

Moreover, Mahita's involvement in the Mandal convergence meeting has led to concrete actions, like the establishment of a counter for issuing monthly bus passes to residents and children in the village. These initiatives have saved time and money for the community.

Efforts have been made to support children who have completed SSC in distance education through Mithra Knowledge Centers, established in all the Mandal headquarters. This year, we have successfully linked 166 dropouts to 10th Class distance education school system. Dialogue and negotiation with the education department have resulted in the successful establishment of these centers. Additionally, Mahita, in collaboration with the department, has identified dropouts and encouraged them to complete their education by providing financial support.

Furthermore, Mahita's participation in monitoring the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) program has enabled advocacy and feedback, enhancing the quality of education. The project has also focused on training and capacity building of teachers on child protection policy to establish Safe School Policies.

Mahita is hopeful that these efforts will lead to the development of child-friendly Safe Schools and expects official guidelines to cover all schools in the district. By strengthening community structures, empowering children, and collaborating with various stakeholders, Mahita's project in Adilabad is making significant strides in protecting and promoting child rights in the region.



On the occasion of National Girl Child Day conducted by Mahita in collaboration with women and child welfare department, the posters to protect and respect the girl child were released by the Honorable District Collector Mrs. Siktha Patnaik Garu, Additional Collector, District Welfare Officer, District Education Officer, Child Welfare committee Chairperson and other district officials.

బాలల హక్కుల పరిరక్షణ అందరి బాధ్యత

పాఠశాల విద్యాశాఖ రీజనల్ జాయింట్ డైరెక్టర్ సత్యనారాయణరెడ్డి

భీంపూర్ కేజీచీలో బాలల హక్కుల వారోత్సవాలు

మాట్లాడుతున్న అధిక్షాసనారాయణరెడ్డి

ఆదిలాబాద్ లోన్, నవంబర్ 17 : బాలల హక్కుల పరిరక్షణ అందరి బాధ్యత అని పాఠశాల విద్యాశాఖ రీజనల్ జాయింట్ డైరెక్టర్ ఆర్డీ సత్యనారాయణరెడ్డి అన్నారు. పట్టణంలోని కేజీ చీటీ (బీంపూర్)లో మహిళ సంస్థ, పాఠశాల విద్యాశాఖ, జిల్లా బాలల పరిరక్షణ కమిటీ, జిల్లా చైల్డ్ వెల్ఫేర్ కమిటీ సంయుక్తంగా గురువారం నిర్వహించిన బాలల హక్కుల వారోత్సవాల్లో జిల్లా విద్యాశాఖ అధికారి ప్రతీతితో కలిసి ఆయన పాల్గొన్నారు. ఈ సందర్భంగా డైరెక్టర్ సత్యనారాయణ మాట్లాడుతూ.. అంతర్జాతీయ బాలల హక్కుల ఒప్పందం ప్రకారం హక్కులన్నింటినీ పొందగలిగినప్పుడే బాలల సంపూర్ణ వికాసం కలుగుతుందన్నారు. యూఎన్ఎస్ఐఆర్ ప్రకారం బాలల హక్కులు కాపాడబడాలని, బాలల సంపూర్ణ వికాసం కోసం ఈ హక్కులను అందించాలని పేర్కొన్నారు. బాలల హక్కుల కోసం ఉన్న చట్టాలు వ్యవస్థల గురించి, లైంగిక వేదింపుల చట్టం, పీవోసీఎస్వో చట్టం గురించి వివరించారు.

బాలల సంరక్షణ అందరి బాధ్యత

ఎదులాపురం, న్యూస్టుడే : బాలల సంరక్షణ ప్రతి ఒక్కరి బాధ్యత అని మండల స్థాయి బాలల రక్షణ కమిటీ చైర్మన్(ఎంపీపీ ఆధ్వర్యం) రమేష్ సూచించారు. మహిళ స్వచ్ఛంద సంస్థ, జిల్లా బాలల పరిరక్షణ విభాగం ఆధ్వర్యంలో మంగళవారం మండల స్థాయి సమీక్ష ఏర్పాటు చేశారు. డీసీ పీఓ రాజేంద్రప్రసాద్, చైల్డ్ లైన్ కోఆర్డినేటర్ తిరుపతి, సీడబ్ల్యూసీ సభ్యులు సమీక్షిల్లా ఖాన్, దశరథ్, డేవిడ్, శైలజ, మహితా కోఆర్డినేటర్ శ్రీకాంత్, ఆదిలాబాద్ గ్రామీణ మండలంలోని ఆశ్రమ పాఠశాలల ప్రధానోపాధ్యాయులు, వివిధ గ్రామాల సర్పంచిలు పాల్గొన్నారు.



CASE STUDY# CHILD PROTECTION THROUGH RAI COMMITTEE

Towards strengthening the Community structures, Mahita interacted with RAI Committee Members and discussed about the importance of the child protection issues. After several meetings with the Committee, finally they have agreed to address the issues related to Child Protection in their areas.

In one of the committees in Linguguda Village of Adilabad Rural Mandal, the committee took a crucial resolution to include discussions on child protection in their regular committee meetings. To deter negligence towards education, they decided to impose a fine of Rs. 1000/- on families who fail to send their children to school. Additionally, the committee took a firm stance against child marriages and decided to penalize any occurrence of such practices in their villages with a hefty Rs. 10,000 Penalty.



Mr. Balaram, the chief secretary of the committee expressed his gratitude, acknowledged the impact of Mahita's efforts in raising awareness about child rights and protection. The NGO's interventions have facilitated a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by children in society, and they have successfully empowered and strengthened the Rai committee members to actively participate in resolving these issues within the community and village.

By collaborating with the Rai committee, Mahita has taken a significant step towards safeguarding the rights and well-being of children in the region, ensuring a brighter and more secure future for them.

BUILDING LIVES AT BUILDING SITES MOBILE CRECHE CENTER FOR THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

In recent years, the outskirts of Hyderabad have experienced rapid urbanization, particularly around the Outer Ring Road, which connects the Shamshabad Airport to different parts of the city. This Ring Road has emerged as a significant commercial zone, with numerous corporate, commercial, and residential constructions taking place. As a result, there has been an increasing demand for cheap, low-skilled labor in the construction and related industries, leading to an influx of migrant laborers into the city. Unfortunately, the local labor force is often not interested in these jobs due to their minimal pay, low status, and dangerous working conditions.

The labor force employed in the building and construction industry in Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts is largely composed of migrants from various parts of India. When these migrant laborers are employed by contractors, they are often given contracts with minimal facilities, and the education of their children is overlooked. Many times, the entire family is engaged in construction work, leaving young children to fend for themselves without access to basic rights such as Early Childhood Education, Nutrition, and Healthcare, as these services are not available at the labor construction sites.

To address these prevalent vulnerabilities, a project was initiated by Mahita with the support from Mobile Creche in Gopannapalli Thanda, Gachibowli. The objective of the programme is to provide Nutrition, Education, Health & Hygiene and Protection to the children of Migrant Construction Families in construction sites by setting up Centre for the children in the age group of 7 months - 5 years and transit educational centers for 6-12 years of age group.

The program has been designed to be child-centric, employing a Teaching and Learning Method (TLM) approach, which has proven to be pivotal in engaging children in learning and helping them cope with their inherent challenges. The play way approach of the TLM ensures that children remain physically active and experience well-rounded physical, social, and cognitive development.

The outcomes of the program have been promising:

- Nutritious food is provided to 88 children placed in the mobile crèche centers safely during their parents' working hours at the worksite.
- Children actively participate in pre-school activities at learning centers.
- Nutrition levels among the children have improved through the utilization of dry ration.
- Teachers conduct growth monitoring and counseling for parents of malnourished children.

This program is making a positive impact on the lives of migrant laborer families, ensuring that their children receive essential care and education while their parents are working. By addressing these crucial needs, the project is striving to create a better future for these young children and break the cycle of poverty and deprivation.



CASE STUDY:

Title: Child is keen and enthusiastic in learning activities

Child Meethu aged 5 years studying in Balwadi of honor homes Mobile crèche centre partner run by Mahita. His father Danish and Mother migrated for the livelihood hailing from Sonali village of Chhattisgarh state working as Labour in construction site.

Meethu's sister named Geethu is also studying in the same centre. Initially he used to cry for coming to the centre and doesn't mingle and play with other children in the balwadi. He was not willing to come and study in the centre and doesn't participate in growth development activities conducted by the teacher.

At present, the child started coming to the centre regularly, wearing cloths neatly, participating in centre activities regularly. Singing songs and interaction with the teacher on their assigned activities. The parents of Meethu are very happy for sending the children to centre.



GIRLS EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

The "Girls Empowerment through Education" project, which commenced in November 2020, successfully completed its three-year duration on March 31, 2023. The primary objective of the project was to empower girl children through education in 20 Government schools and 15 Anganwadi Centres located in Patancheru Block, Sangareddy district, Telangana. The project was a collaborative effort between Mahita and Plan India, with support from Sandvik Mining and Rock Technology India Private Limited. The project has had a remarkable impact on both the children and the schools. Several achievements stand out:

The project's impact was not only limited to academic achievements but also extended for improving the school infrastructure, creating a child-friendly atmosphere at Anganwadi centres, providing WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) and MHM (Menstrual Hygiene Management) facilities for girls, offering life skills training, career counseling services, and organizing recreational activities such as summer camps and sports events for girls. All of these initiatives provided ample opportunities for all children, especially girls, to showcase their learnings and innovations.

Overall, the "Girls Empowerment through Education" project has been a resounding success, and the collaborative efforts of Mahita, Plan India, and Sandvik Mining and Rock Technology India Private Limited have made a significant difference in the lives of these young girls, enabling them to pursue education and achieve their full potential.

The impact of the project was substantial, with noteworthy outcomes in various areas:

- **Education Mainstreaming:** Approximately 1250 out-of-school children were successfully integrated into formal schools through various interventions.
- **Education Kits:** The project provided education kits to 3500 children, ensuring they had the necessary tools to enhance their learning experience.
- **Infrastructure Improvement:** Schools benefited from renovation of WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities, contributing to a conducive learning environment.
- **Remedial Education:** Effective remedial education programs were conducted for out-of-school children, aiding in their educational development.
- **Child-Friendly Atmosphere:** 15 Anganwadi Centres were transformed into child-friendly spaces, fostering a positive learning environment.
- **Focus on Girls' Needs:** Special attention was given to girls' requirements, including access to WASH and MHM (Menstrual Hygiene Management) facilities, promoting gender equality.
- **Holistic Education:** The project emphasized STEM education, life skills training, career counseling services, and extracurricular activities like summer camps and sports, providing ample opportunities for all children, particularly girls, to showcase their learning and innovation.

Key Achievements in 2022-2023

- Identified and provided supplementary learning support to 500 out-of-school girls across 20 locations.
- Enrolled 500 girls into regular schools after receiving the supplementary learning support.
- A total of 1358 children (1294 girls and 64 boys) were enrolled in schools since the project's commencement.
- Conducted school enrollment drives in all 20 schools, involving 2448 individuals, including students, teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, parents, community leaders, and Self-Help Group (SHG) members.
- Successfully enrolled 120 children (68 girls and 52 boys) from Anganwadi centres into regular schools.
- Conducted 351 reading and writing activities, involving 3266 children (1773 girls and 1493 boys) across 20 schools.
- Conducted 352 Mathematics and Science activities, involving 3188 children (1763 girls and 1425 boys) across 20 schools.
- Organized capacity-building training on stimulation activities for Anganwadi children, parents, and primary caregivers in 15 centres, benefiting 992 parents.
- Conducted menstrual hygiene management sessions for adolescent girls in 16 schools, with the participation of 2046 girls.
- Conducted STEM activities in 5 High schools, engaging 1683 students (911 girls and 972 boys) in these activities.
- Celebrated various special days, including National Sports Day, International Girl Child Day, National Education Day, and National Children's Day, to create awareness and empower the children.
- Distributed educational kits to 3500 girl children across 20 schools.

In conclusion, the "Girls Empowerment through Education" project achieved its intended goals by systematically addressing the challenges and demonstrating resilience even during difficult times. The positive impact it created among the children and schools in Patancheru Block stands as a testament to the power of education in transforming lives and promoting gender equality.





CASE STUDY

Md. Farhana Begum, 13 years old from Rudraram, Patancheru Mandal, Sangareddy district, hailing from a middle-class family with her father Ahmed Ali, mother Irfana Begum, and two siblings, an older brother, and a younger sister. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, Farhana was unable to attend school and had to discontinue her education during grade 7 when the lockdown was imposed. She had a strong desire to continue her studies, but her parents, who are themselves uneducated, were unable to provide her with the necessary support due to their poor financial background.

Thankfully, Farhana shared her situation with the project staff of Mahita, and the front-line workers got involved to understand the reasons behind her discontinuation of studies. They engaged in conversations with her parents, offering motivation and explaining the project's motto, which focuses on providing remedial classes to children and facilitating their re-enrollment in schools after the remedial teaching process.



After conducting a survey, Farhana was encouraged to join the remedial classes initiated by Mahita and Plan India under the GEE project. Initially, she was assessed by the remedial teacher in subjects such as Telugu, Hindi, English, Social Studies, and Mathematics. The assessment revealed that she struggled with writing basic level questions. Therefore, the remedial classes focused on teaching her fundamentals, including varnamaala (alphabet), two-letter words, name identification through pictures in Telugu, alphabets, writing small words, reading small sentences in English, basic numbers, and arithmetic operations in

Mathematics. Similarly, she was taught varnamaala in Hindi and reading of small words in Hindi, along with basic information based on Social Studies.

To further enhance her learning, Farhana received daily practice worksheets and engaged in reading and writing paragraphs regularly. Her progress was monitored through three-level assessment sheets, and she successfully completed all the levels. Remarkably, she displayed a tremendous improvement in her reading and writing skills during her time in the remedial classes.

As a result of her hard work and dedication, Farhana was enrolled in Grade 8 at Rudraram ZPHS, which brought immense joy to her and her parents, who were delighted to witness the significant academic transformation in their child. Farhana herself expressed happiness for rejoining school with improved knowledge and the essential educational support she received through the GEE project.

Economic Empowerment Through livelihood Skill Training to Youth for enhancing the Family Income

The project "Economic Empowerment through Livelihood Skill Training to Youth for Enhancing Family Income" was launched in May 2022 in Hyderabad, in collaboration with HSBC Software Development India. The primary goal was to provide livelihood skill training to young women from the most deprived families, aiming to create economic empowerment, secure employment, and develop leadership and communication skills. The targeted beneficiaries were youth aged 18-35 years from disadvantaged communities living in the slums of Hyderabad.

Courses Offered: Four distinct courses were initiated in the centers, namely:

- IT Training
- Beautician and Well-Being
- Retail Marketing
- Tailoring & Maggam work

Project Outcomes: During the period from May 2022 to 31st March 2023, the project successfully trained 591 youth from the most disadvantaged urban communities. Among these beneficiaries, 391 individuals (70%) were successfully placed in different companies, experiencing increased income and an improved quality of life. The employed candidates demonstrated enthusiasm and happiness upon receiving their salaries and shared their success with their families.

Empowering Young Women: The project's key objective was to empower young women by promoting their economic participation. Many of these girls belonged to the poorest of the poor families, struggling with a single source of income. Employment for these girls became a valuable source of additional income for their families. Implemented by Mahita, the project aimed to uplift youth from low-income families, providing them with opportunities for financial betterment and a brighter future. In addition to vocational courses, life skills and communication training significantly contributed to the candidates' ability to face job interviews confidently. The project not only developed vocational skills but also boosted the participants' confidence and mobility.

Impact of Job-Oriented Courses: The trained youth acknowledged the importance of job-oriented courses, which led to decent employment opportunities. The awareness meetings at the community level, Job Melas, and Mock Interviews generated considerable interest in the significance of vocational courses, highlighting how they create stable employment and improve the economic status of families. The online Volunteering activities of HSBC Software India Limited Hyderabad employees had a positive impact on the youth, boosting their self-confidence for attending interviews. Mock Interviews conducted at the end of the course played a crucial role in instilling necessary confidence and preparing the participants for real-life interviews.

The "Economic Empowerment through Livelihood Skill Training" project successfully transformed the lives of young women from deprived families in Hyderabad. By providing job-oriented courses and comprehensive training, it not only improved their economic conditions but also enhanced their confidence and employability. The collaborative efforts of Mahita and HSBC Software India Limited played a vital role in creating a brighter and more promising future for these young individuals and their families.

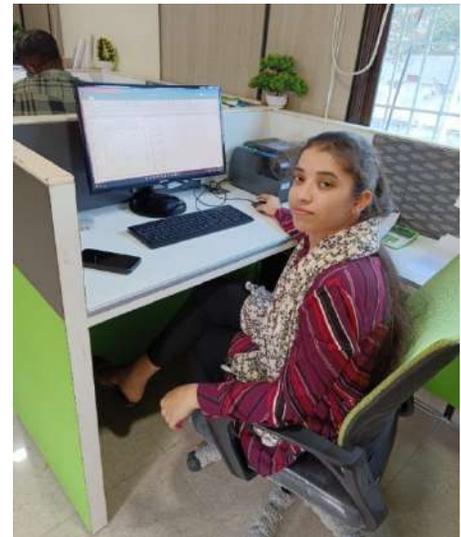




CASE STUDY:

Anusha (Name changed) is 20 years old; she completed her Intermediate in 2019 and discontinued her education and started searching for job. Her family consists of 6 members, her father is a private employee and his salary is insufficient to feed the family and to provide proper education to his children. She started searching jobs after her intermediate, but couldn't find any job because of lack of skills and confidence. She wasted 3 years in finding in jobs.

In Dec 2022, she came to know from her friend that Mahita is providing free courses in different fields. She came to the institute and took details and joined IT Course at Mailardevpally centre.



She has joined the classes from January 2023 and completed her 3 months course and she was very focused on her training and used to attend the classes regularly and learnt MS Office, Internet concepts along with life skills training. She used to attend HR visits and exposure visits during the course through which she was able to crack the interview easily.

Presently, she is working for Doyle Asia Pvt. Ltd as computer operator with a salary of Rs.15000/- per month. Now she is able to support her family and is very confident in communicating without any fear.

Anusha says "I was unable to find job for 3 years, but after getting trained in IT Course for 3 months at Mahita, I'm confident enough to work in professional environment. I am very thankful to HSBC and Mahita for providing employment related training to the youth and providing placement".

ENVISIONING THE LEARNING SPACE IN STEM

Mahita, in collaboration with CAF India and Micron Technology Inc., aims to enhance the efforts of the Telangana Government in promoting STEM education for girls in schools. The project's primary goal is to encourage girls to pursue science and technology streams, challenging societal stereotypes. To achieve this, three STEM Labs have been established in Government Girls Schools located in the Adilabad District of Telangana. These labs will provide students with the necessary resources and hands-on experiences to foster their interest in science and technology subjects. Additionally, the project aims to facilitate Whole School Transformation by creating a STEM-enriched learning environment, empowering both students and teachers to embrace STEM education.

As part of the program to support girls' higher education, 30 deserving students have been selected to receive scholarships, amounting to Rs. 15,000 per student. The selection process involved considering various factors, including the socio-economic background of the parents, the students' interest in continuing their education, and obtaining consent from parents to ensure their daughters' educational journey. To ensure proper utilization of the funds, the scholarship amounts will be deposited directly into the students' bank accounts, which will be monitored by the respective Head Masters.

The expected outcomes of the program include the sustainable operation of the three STEM Labs, providing a practical and technology-driven learning environment in the schools. Around 650 students from these three Government schools will benefit from the STEM education project, sparking their curiosity and interest in STEM subjects. The distribution of scholarships totaling Rs. 4.50 lakhs to the 30 selected students were formally conducted by the District Collector.

With the implementation of STEM Education, the project aims to witness a significant improvement in school attendance, particularly among girls, further promoting their involvement in science and technology fields.



Overall, the intervention by Mahita, supported by CAF India and Micron Technology Inc., seeks to empower girls with educational opportunities and inspire them to pursue careers in Science and Technology, thus breaking societal stereotypes and fostering a more inclusive and progressive society.



Empowering young girls through providing Employable Skills for enhancing the Family Income in 15 slums of Hyderabad City

Mahita with the support of DKA Austria has initiated the project to economically uplift the population of adolescent girls and young women in the old city of Hyderabad. The project targets adolescent girls and young women and provides them skills in any one of the following fields:

- a. Computer
- b. Tailoring/Fashion Designing/Jute bag-making and
- c. Beautician /Mehendi.

This initiative focuses on providing vocational training in various fields, including computer skills, tailoring/fashion designing/jute bag-making, and beautician/mehndi art.

The partnership between Mahita and DKA Austria has successfully completed the implementation of the second-year project, and the outcomes have been remarkably positive. The vocational training programs have empowered young girls, enabling them to contribute to their family income and improve their overall well-being. The project has witnessed inspiring success stories, and it is evident that the intervention has positively influenced the perception of girl children in the community.

One of the main targets of the project was to provide vocational training to at least 400 young girls. Remarkably, the project surpassed its goal by reaching out to 434 girls who have received training in various skills. Among them, 134 girls have successfully completed their computer training courses, while 153 girls have completed the much-in-demand tailoring course, engaging in job works with contractors and vendors. Additionally, 147 girls have successfully completed the beautician training course, offering them ample employment opportunities and potential for starting their own enterprises.

The project's impact goes beyond providing skills training; it has also helped the girls secure job placements through regular updates on job availability and interactions with potential employers. However, some challenges were faced, such as convincing the parents of these girls to allow them to work in job placements that might be far from their homes. Ensuring the safety of the girls became a priority in such cases.





Internal capacity building of staff remains an ongoing process, conducted informally and formally. Various community interventions, including Mobile Campaigns and WASH initiatives during the COVID pandemic, have also been successful in promoting good personal hygiene practices among the communities.

The project has significantly benefited the girls, fostered financial independence and boosted their self-confidence. Many of them now actively participate in family decision-making, especially in economic matters. Moreover, families have shown a positive shift in attitudes towards girls' employment, inspiring other female family members to seek productive work or employment opportunities themselves.

In addition to employment and livelihood skills, the girls also receive life skills training, providing them with a competitive edge in securing better jobs and increasing their mobility. The project has not only

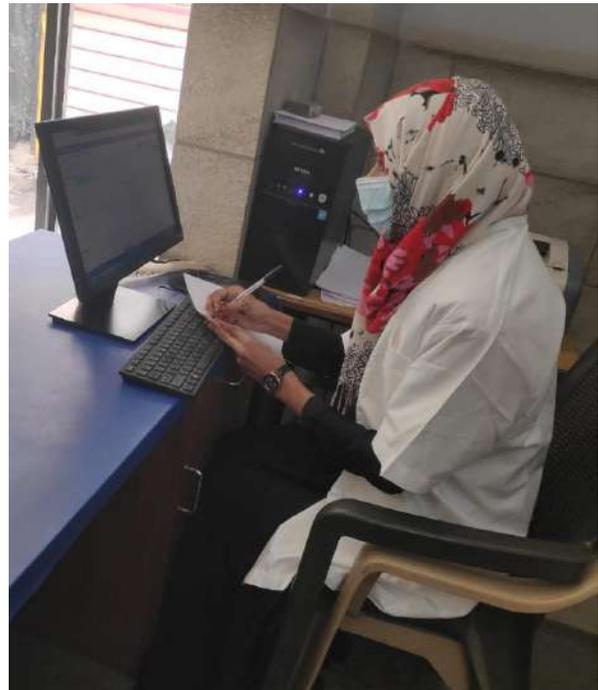
improved their economic freedom but has also led to a reduction in child marriages among minority communities in the slums, as the girls gain more control over their futures.

Overall, the collaboration between Mahita and DKA Austria has brought about tangible positive changes in the lives of young girls and women, empowering them to break socio-economic barriers and create a brighter future for themselves and their families

CASE STUDY:

Nazneen is a 19-year-old student who completed her Intermediate education and enrolled in a vocational training center. She comes from a family of six members, where her father works as a Mechanic, and her mother is a homemaker. Her father is the sole breadwinner, and her elder brother works in a furniture shop, though not on a regular basis. Her two younger siblings are studying in a Government School.

Nazneen was introduced to the Mahita vocational center by one of her friends. Accompanied by her mother, she decided to join the computer course offered at the center. After visiting the training center, her mother was highly satisfied with the quality of education and appreciated the commendable work by Mahita.



Upon completing her training, Nazneen began her job search and successfully secured a position as a receptionist at Al-Noor Diagnostic Centre, earning INR 10500 per month. Her motivation to work was to alleviate some of the financial burdens that her father carried in supporting the family and managing the monthly expenses, including the rent.

Now, Nazneen feels a sense of pride as she contributes to her family's well-being and supports her father. Her efforts have earned her recognition within the family, where she is given equal importance in decision-making alongside her brother. She expresses her gratitude to DKA & Mahita for providing her with the opportunity to receive free skill training.

ENHANCING THE BARGAINING CAPACITIES OF WOMEN COLLECTIVES TO INCREASE THEIR FAMILY INCOME LEVELS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Mahita, with the support of Manos Unidas, successfully implementing a transformative project in the tribal areas of Adilabad aimed at empowering vulnerable communities, particularly 150 women in 15 tribal villages, to overcome COVID-19 challenges and restore lost livelihoods through micro-enterprise units.

Despite initial challenges posed by the pandemic and various restrictions, the interventions in the 15 target villages have yielded remarkable outcomes. A significant achievement of the project was the creation of sustainable livelihood opportunities for women who had lost their means of sustenance during the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this, Mahita organized intensive skill-building training sessions for 150 identified women members, collaborating with the local Krishi Vigyan Kendra to empower them with skills related to livestock and other livelihood-related businesses. These training programs were conducted at both the Mandal and District levels.

Over the course of two years, the project successfully provided matching grants to 100 women members who initiated their micro-enterprises, such as goat rearing, kitchen gardens, and grocery stores. In the second year, the support extended to another 50 women members, ultimately reaching a total of 150 women members in the project's duration.

Financial literacy was another crucial aspect targeted by the project. Through various formal and informal training sessions, 450 women were equipped with essential financial skills for sustainable livelihoods.

The program also played a pivotal role in facilitating community members' access to their entitlements and government schemes. By organizing numerous interface meetings with communities and government departments, Mahita enhanced their awareness and understanding of various programs and schemes. As a result, 55 members were successfully linked to different government initiatives during the project's two-year span.

Furthermore, the project focused on creating COVID-19 awareness within the communities. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials were distributed, mobile van campaigns were conducted, and village-level meetings were organized to promote personal hygiene and the importance of COVID-19 vaccination. These concerted efforts led to all 15 villages achieving 100% COVID-19 vaccination coverage in the first year.

In conclusion, Mahita's project, with the support of Manos Unidas, not only uplifted the livelihoods of women in the target villages but also contributed significantly to community development and health awareness amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic. Through empowering women and fostering financial literacy, the project has left a positive and sustainable impact on the lives of those in the tribal areas of Adilabad.



CASE STUDY

Ms. GedamPushpalatha is a beneficiary who tragically lost her husband due to liver disease in 2016. Since then, she has been working as a daily wage laborer in Adilabad Rural Mandal to provide for her family. With two children to care for and educate, she has been facing financial hardships, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown when work opportunities became scarcer. Additionally, the closure of schools forced her children to attend online classes, but they lacked the necessary resources like a smartphone or TV to participate.



In this challenging situation, Manos Unidas and Mahita intervened and identified Pushpalatha's children, ensuring their enrollment in school. To empower her further, they provided training and support, resulting in her starting a mini grocery store. With this new venture, Pushpalatha can earn additional income in addition to her daily labor work, which significantly helps her struggling family. She is now able to financially support her family and continue her children's education.

Pushpalatha expressed her gratitude towards Manos Unidas and Mahita for not only enabling her children's education but also for guiding her towards a path of micro-entrepreneurship, leading to an increase in her family's income. The interventions have made a positive impact on their lives, and they are grateful for the support received.

Engaging Young Peoples for the Entitlements – Building the Voices of the Most Marginalised in TS and AP

The Alliance for Child Rights (ACR), a consortium of 200 Non-Governmental Organizations working in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, spearheaded by Mahita, has been at the forefront of addressing the challenges faced by vulnerable communities, particularly children, during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the support of UNICEF, ACR launched a comprehensive project spanning 11 districts, aiming to engage young people, disseminate study findings, interact with media, and intensify campaigns on child rights.

The pandemic's intergenerational and long-term effects have exacerbated issues like education, nutrition, health, and child rights, leaving vulnerable sections unable to access essential services they once relied upon. Among the worst affected are the internally displaced communities from Chhattisgarh, who migrated to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to escape political conflict. Tragically, these communities are now at the mercy of state officials, facing severe deprivation of basic services. A government study reveals alarming rates of anemia and acute malnutrition among pregnant women and children in these IDP communities.

In response to these pressing issues, ACR launched a strategic project with UNICEF's backing, focusing on empowering young people and amplifying the voices of the most marginalized. The project's interventions included virtual meetings, state-level consultations, and interactions with media to sensitize stakeholders about child rights and entitlements. Crucially, children actively participated in district-level meetings, leading to positive outcomes and resolutions regarding their issues.

To reach the internally displaced children in tribal areas, ACR utilized Bultoo Radio, a powerful platform to broadcast their voices and challenges. Training, surveys, and awareness programs were conducted through the radio, garnering attention to the plight of these vulnerable children and their communities.

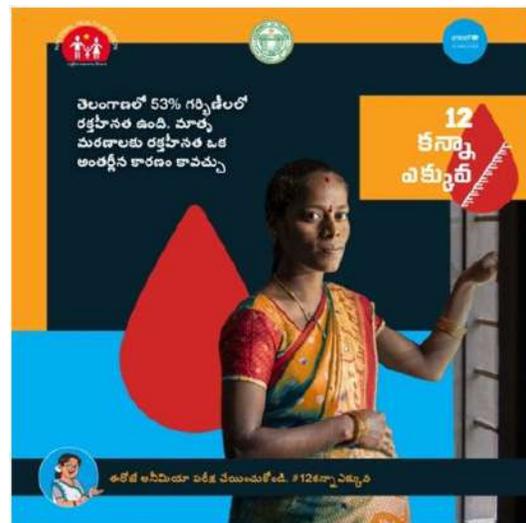


ACR's ambitious two-month campaign involved children actively engaging in various events, discussions, and awareness initiatives. Notably, they assumed influential roles in Gram Panchayats and government offices, further strengthening their impact on policymaking.

Special events, like the blue lighting of Charminar and the launch of the Geethamma Program, boosted awareness and engagement on child rights. The campaign also culminated in state-level meetings and the submission of a charter of demands to policymakers and administration officials.

The Campaign showcases ACR's impactful efforts in empowering vulnerable communities and children in both states. Through collaborative initiatives and campaigns, the project has amplified the voices of marginalized groups, raised awareness about child rights, and engaged stakeholders to improve the well-being and entitlements of children in the region.

ACR's resolute dedication to addressing the challenges brought about by the pandemic and its impact on vulnerable children is commendable. The project's emphasis on empowering young people and amplifying their voices has resulted in positive changes, bringing attention to the urgent need for better access to education, healthcare, and nutrition. By collaboratively working with UNICEF and partner NGOs, ACR continues to drive impactful change in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, paving the way for a brighter and more equitable future for all children.





CASE STUDY-1:

Megana, a 10th-grade student studying at ZPHS, Motakonduru in the Aregudem village of Bhongir district, Telangana, was appointed as the headmaster of her school on the occasion of National Girl Child Day. In this new role, she conducted a review meeting with teachers to ensure the delivery of quality education.



During the meeting, Megana discussed the need for a new school building to replace the old one, which had been damaged. She passed a resolution in the School Management Committee (SMC) to prioritize the construction of the new building. To make this happen, she promptly informed the relevant officers from various departments, including the planning officers of the MANA URU – MANA BADI program, and asked them to proceed with the necessary steps at the Mandal level.

Megana also addressed the issue of toilet cleanliness and suggested the possibility of hiring scavengers to maintain the school's sanitation facilities.

Case Study 2:

On the other hand, Rizwana, a 10th-grade student at Muthyalapadu High School in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, was appointed as the Gram Panchayat Secretary of Muthyalapadu Gram Panchayat on National Girl Child Day. As part of her responsibilities, she took important initiatives to benefit her community.



Rizwana released a poster on preventing child marriages to raise awareness about this important issue. She also visited the Anganwadi Centre to monitor the quality of nutrition being provided to the children there. During her visit to the local primary school, she assessed the existing facilities and identified areas for improvement.

Furthermore, Rizwana discussed the possibility of developing parks in the Gram Panchayat surroundings with the Sarpanch, aiming to create recreational spaces for children. She emphasized the need for raising awareness about child rights, especially for girls, to empower them to protect themselves.

Both Megana and Rizwana, as young leaders, are setting a great example by taking proactive steps to address various challenges and create positive changes in their respective communities. Their dedication and efforts to improve education, health, and overall well-being are commendable, and their actions serve as an inspiration for others.

SKILL BUILDING TO YOUTH

The Youth Economic Empowerment Project continuing in partnership with the Give Online Foundation and ACCENTURE, aiming to create employment opportunities for young men and women from underprivileged communities through Job Oriented Vocational Training based on the principles of Decent Work (JOVT). The project's goal was to empower 300 young people aged between 18 and 35, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, in Hyderabad.

The majority of the beneficiaries, especially girls, belong to the poorest of the poor/BPL families, where a single source of income makes it challenging to make ends meet. Despite these circumstances, these girls have earned the respect and admiration not only from their family members but also from their neighbors and friends.

The project targeted unemployed youth residing in 20 slums across 6 mandals in Hyderabad District. It offered three job-oriented vocational training programs based on the needs identified through assessments conducted with the unemployed youth. These programs included IT/ITES (Tally, Basic Computers), Beauty and Wellness, and Retail Store Management. Additionally, life skills and soft skills training were provided to all candidates.

For IT/ITES training, considering the current job situation, candidates were offered training covering fundamental computer skills, such as typing, MS-Office, Microsoft, Tally solutions, and web technologies. In total, 135 candidates (35 men and 100 women) successfully completed this training.

The Beauty & Wellness course catered to females with a passion for beautifying themselves and sharing their skills with clients. A total of 90 female candidates underwent training in this program. Tailoring & Fashion Designing course to females which will help the young women to establish their own business/self units. A total of 75 female candidates completed their training.

The project yielded numerous positive outcomes and impacts. Trainees experienced improved career prospects, and parents' attitudes towards girls' employment underwent a positive transformation. The participants gained greater financial security and economic independence, along with improved budgeting skills and enhanced self-esteem. Moreover, the project helped break family stereotypes, promoting gender equality and empowering girls to pursue meaningful careers.



Overall, the interventions delivered highly favorable results, contributing to the economic empowerment and upliftment of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Hyderabad.



VST Industries CSR Plan Community Needs Assessment & Project Identification Exercise

Background: As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility planning, VST Industries Hyderabad commissioned Mahita, to carry out a systematic **Community Needs Assessment**. Thereby build a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced primarily by the VST tobacco farmers to enable VST Industries develop its CSR strategy and make informed CSR project decisions.

Study Methodology: Accordingly, a **rapid sample study** was undertaken by Mahita in randomly selected **15% VST Industries villages** (44/292) from across 10 mandals/ taluks of **10 districts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka states**. Mahita carried out the study along with 7 local NGOs with 7 days of **primary data** collection.

Livelihoods & Agriculture: Tobacco is the primary crop for more than 60% of the farmers and an equal proportion is dependent on groundwater for irrigation, in an already water stressed situation. Due to low access to credit services, including weak management of women Self Help Groups for savings and credit services, farmers are under the stranglehold of local money lenders demanding high rates of interest. Inadequate tobacco warehouses for crop storage, lack of minimum support prices, weak marketing linkages resulting in low incomes is pushing children from these vulnerable households into child labour and early marriage of girls.

Health, Water, Sanitation & Hygiene: **Open Defecation** continues to be practiced in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Telangana with nearly **40% reporting absence of a toilet at home**. Non-availability of running water is rated to be a major factor apart from behavioural change. The health officials highlighted prevalence of **anaemia among women** and a **general lack of personal hygiene**. Women tobacco farmers suffer from skin rashes, itching, headache and other respiratory related issues.

Education: Non-availability of running water in school toilets, absence of Menstrual Hygiene Management facilities, poor quality of education, non-availability of teachers, nearly half school day power cuts and the pressure to supplement meagre family incomes are strong **push and pull factors for children to be out of school** and doing **child labour** and forced into **child marriage**. **Almost 20% girls never attended school, 70% of these from Karnataka alone, around 10% boys dropped out of school.**

Energy: While 80% farmers use electric motor pumps to extract ground water for irrigation, **95% farmers face interrupted power supply** including one fourth having only 3-10 hours of power supply daily. **More than 1/3 schools face regular power cuts for half the school day.**

WAY FORWARD.....

Mahita is embarking on an ambitious endeavor to expand its activities and enhance operational efficiency by harnessing relevant technologies. The primary goal is to empower each program team to utilize technology for data monitoring, reporting, and assessment, which will help extend Mahita's reach to more tribal villages in Adilabad.

One of the key focuses will be on economic empowerment projects, with a special emphasis on empowering youth, especially young women. Mahita aims to build the confidence of these young women, provide them with greater mobility, and enhance their life skills. Through vocational training and improved livelihood opportunities, Mahita aims to facilitate meaningful employment for women and young girls, leading to their economic empowerment. The successful model currently implemented in urban slums will be replicated in other areas of Hyderabad.

In the realm of education, Mahita is committed to creating safe schools and implementing Child Protection Policies. The organization will scale up its outreach efforts and conduct capacity-building programs for teachers and children, addressing critical child protection issues. Advocacy will also play a crucial role, engaging with the Education Department, Women and Child Welfare Department, and other relevant authorities.

As a highly accredited organization, Mahita is well-positioned to take a leadership role in advocating for child protection policies. It will collaborate with other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in both states, leveraging the network called the Alliance for Child Rights. The activities of this network will be streamlined and further strengthened in the coming years.

In these uncertain times, Mahita is deeply grateful for the overwhelming generosity and support received from its staff, donors, Board Members, associates, advisors, and volunteers. This encouragement has humbled the organization and fueled its determination to continue making a positive impact in the lives of vulnerable children and communities.



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