

# **Transforming Childhoods of 300 Children through one Child Resource Centre in a Slum in M-East Neighbourhood of Mumbai**

**Implemented by Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) India**  
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## **Background**

YUVA (Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action) as a thirty year old organisation that aims to address the impacts of urbanisation on the poor in India, with a specific focus on Mumbai city.

Mumbai (earlier known as Bombay) is one of the nerve-centres of urbanisation in the world – UN’s World Urbanisation Prospects for 2014 has ranked Mumbai as the 5<sup>th</sup> largest agglomeration with 21 million inhabitants. Although being the financial capital of the country and a leading contributor to GDP, this is also a city where poverty and affluence co-exist in close proximity. 42% of Greater Mumbai’s<sup>1</sup> population live in slums (Census 2011). In this context, the protection need of children (29% of city’s population as per 2011 Census) in sheer numbers itself is staggering.

Large infrastructure development projects in the city have led to the relocation of informal (slum, pavement) settlements. About 65% of Mumbai’s infrastructure development induced resettlement has also taken place in the neighbourhood of ‘M-East’<sup>2</sup>. Situated on the eastern side of the city, 77.5%<sup>3</sup> of the population lives in slum settlements and it has the lowest human development indicators amongst all areas of Mumbai<sup>4</sup>. The city’s largest dumping ground is situated in this ward, precipitating environmental hazards.

YUVA it has been working with the rehabilitated communities in M-East since 2005.

## **Objective**

The project aims to set up and run a model Child Resource Centre in one urban poor settlement (slum) in M-East neighbourhood, Mumbai. It is a drop-in hub-centre for children and youth to enhance access to services of education, protection, recreation and health.

## **Concept**

Children’s experience of poverty is multidimensional and differs from those of adults. They are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than adults. After studying and analysing the unsafe spaces for children in M-East neighbourhood, strategic steps are being taken to make it a more habitable space for the children and community. Lack of play spaces for children is an issue, apart from transforming unclean open spaces. The resettled communities have struggled to make

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<sup>1</sup>Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation accounts for 68% of the population in Mumbai Agglomeration (as per Provisional Census 2011)

<sup>2</sup>Nainan, Navtej, “Building Boomers and Fragmentation of Space”. Economic & Political Weekly (May 24, 2008):29

<sup>3</sup>Mumbai Human Development Report, 2009

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

the areas their home and make a new life with few opportunities available. They have also struggled to create a more secure future for their children, a future that would be different from their own present, one in which education will play a critical role.

The purpose of the Child Resource Centre (CRC) is to address vulnerabilities to dropping out from school, sexual abuse, substance abuse, trafficking and antisocial behavior. The Child Resource Centre functions as:

- An **information dissemination** space on schemes, issues faced by young people, substance abuse, etc.
- An **alternative recreation** space that positively channelises young energies
- A **learning / education** space for out-of-school children and those attending school irregularly – serving as a means of transforming them into regular school attendees.
- A **services** space that can provide psycho-social counselling, substance abuse support, legal, health, referral services.
- A space for relevant **vocational, and life skills training** such as self-defence for girls.
- A space that **monitors child protection violations** in the community and possesses mechanisms for constant communication of data to the legal system, etc.

Some of the activities of the CRC also include library, digital learning, educational games and sports for development.