



On Our Way to being Self-Reliant

Our work with communities across cities in India, be it with self-help groups formed under DAY-NULM or with slum development committees under the MISAAL program has reinforced our belief that strong community platforms can lead to transformative, positive impacts for entire communities.

This month we bring to you such stories from across our programs.

Training Sanitation Workers in Bhubaneswar



Image 1-4: The UMC city coordinators training the sanitation workers to stay safe, especially in the Covid-19 situation. The sanitation workers listen intently, and ask questions to make sure they understand everything.

The need for WASH training has intensified during the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. UMC supported training of about 3000 sanitation workers in Bhubaneswar that was conducted by UNICEF and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation. The main objective of this training was to understand WASH related activities, improve knowledge on infection prevention, and social mobilisation to build resilience against the spread of Covid-19. Each training session was for 2 hours. 105 such sessions were conducted across 17 days where a total of 2976 sanitation workers were trained. UMC's posters for safety of sanitation workers were widely used in the training. The posters are available in 10 languages. You can download these at <https://bit.ly/31r1n0y> or at www.u-learn.in

A Turning Point for the Thakor Samaj MISAAL Samiti in Dariyapur, Ahmedabad





Image 5-8: The UMC team helping the MISAAL Samiti reach the right people to solve their issues. The Samiti now draws a map to help the officials better understand the problem at hand. This has helped them get their complaints resolved faster than before, like the refurbishment of the pavement, which was resolved within a week.

The MISAAL program is helping form Settlement improvement Committees (MSC) in slums - these are similar to Residential Welfare Associations (RWA) that look after overall improvement of a settlement. UMC along with its community partners, SAATH and CFAR, are training Samitis on various aspects like identifying their settlement issues, communicating with relevant officials, advocacy, etc.

The Thakor Samaj MISAAL Samiti, in Pathan ni chali, Dariyapur, Ahmedabad formed in December, 2019 has 8 active members -- 4 male, 4 female. So far, they have learned to write complaint letters, understand the governing structure of AMC so as to reach out to relevant officers, importance of cleanliness and maintenance of AMC assets within their settlements, and hygiene especially during COVID-19.

In fact they have come up with a unique strategy to help resolve the issue faster. They now attach a map pinpointing the location of the issue in their settlement which helps the ULB officials in resolving the complaint quickly. For instance, their complaints regarding refurbishment of pavement were resolved within a week, whereas a sewer cleaning related complaint was resolved in a day. This is a great win for MISAAL and the community. They have found a way to approach their issues and go to the right person to get them solved. The committee has made 6 complaints to the AMC so far for varied reasons.

Settlement Improvement Committees make their Improvement Plans in Jodhpur

A critical component of MISAAL is to empower the samitis to take a holistic approach to improve the settlements because provision of services in slums is typically patchy. The Settlement Improvement Planning approach helps them to identify issues across the settlement. These range from an immediate redressal of issues to aspirational demands of the community.

In Jodhpur, currently nearly 26 communities are preparing SIPs. Keeping the social distancing norms in mind, the SIPs are being prepared with 5-8 MSC members taking part rather than all of them. The key concerns of sanitation are discussed and the ways to address them are being put forward to the MSC members.

Here are some accounts from the MSC members who participated in the process.



“We realized the importance of being a part of this group. We have not only learnt to fill applications but also about the efforts to be taken to follow up with the officials. I personally understood that if there is a will there will be a way. This especially happened when we started to have online sessions to get training. It gave us the idea to place an online complaint which we would have never done if there was no COVID”

Ms. Shakuntala, a member of MSC Govardhan Talab



“I initially felt that we won’t be able to achieve anything by becoming part of this group. Today after knowing the procedures to approach the Municipality we were able to resolve a lot of unresolved issues like regularised waste collection where the sanitation workers are visiting our settlements regularly.”

Ms. Seema, a member of MSC Govardhan Talab

What these accounts show is how much the community and its leaders are learning due to the support that is provided to them. They are taking charge in order to get their issues resolved. UMC is hopeful of completing the entire process of SIP preparation including social mapping in the coming weeks so that these can be shared with the urban local bodies for further discussion and action.

Jodhpur & Porbandar Taking a Step Towards Better PT/CTs to Sustain ODF+ Status

The Jodhpur Municipal Corporation (JMC) and Porbandar Municipality have adopted standard operating procedures (SOP) for operations and management (O&M) of public and community toilets (PT/ CT) prepared by UMC as a part of the MISAAL program. JMC and Porbandar Municipality have issued notices to append the SOP in the existing PT/ CT O&M contracts. The local governments have further intimated the PT/CT operators to adopt the SOP with immediate effect. BUMC would now support both cities to train local government officials and supervisory staff to periodically monitor the PT/CTs as per the SOP. The acceptance of the SOP by the cities will help set a precedent in the state and give a boost towards scaling up the activity in other cities as well.

You can use the following links to look at our SOP. We have it in English as well as Hindi.

SOP in English: https://umcasia.org/assets/SOP-for-OM-of-PT-CTs_English_UMC.pdf

SOP in Hindi: https://umcasia.org/assets/Updated-Hindi-SOP_130820.pdf

In case of any further questions please write to us at info@umcasia.org

UMC Supports Implementation of the PM SVANidhi Scheme

UMC helped create training videos to support urban local bodies and street vendors to understand the modalities of implementing and accessing the PM SVANidhi benefits (this is a Central Sector Scheme completely funded by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)).

The scheme facilitates the vendors to get a working capital loan of up to INR 10,000 without any collateral. This was further incentivized for regular payment with a 7% interest subsidy and a cashback of up to INR 1200 per year for digital transactions. The scheme was extended to all street vendors vending in the urban areas or those coming from the surrounding development/peri-urban/rural areas and vending within the geographical limits of the ULBs.

You can look at our videos using the following links:

Capacity building for ULB functionaries:

<https://youtu.be/72vlgTRtGg0>

Creating awareness for street vendors:

<https://youtu.be/1tTKqLJ-eYA>

PPT for capacity building of street vendors:

<https://youtu.be/kUr1WWRzyWo>

PPT for capacity building of all stakeholders:

<https://youtu.be/hJtQQXgJrcw>

We are thankful to the Govt. of India, Govt. of Gujarat, Govt. of Odisha, Govt. of Rajasthan, Govt. of Telengana, local governments, our funding partners- BMGF and USAID and our community engagement partners for their continued support.

