



Annual Report 2016

MCF CRY – Child Participation

Vikasnagar, Dehradun



Over the course of six years, the MCF/CRY partnership on child participation and hygiene and sanitation has dramatically transformed the 16 communities of Vikas Nagar, Dehradun both inside and out.

As of the December 2016 conclusion of the project:

- Sixteen *bal sangathans* (children's groups) across 16 villages have more than 838 active members mobilized and empowered to improve their villages.
- The villages now have 258 new toilets even though not one rupee of project funds was spent on construction.
- Knowledge of and attitudes toward hygiene, sanitation and nutrition are vastly improved, which is clearly evident in the habits and practices of all the residents, not just children.

- Thousands of children – and many adults – have birth registration certificates, after a hard fought battle against government inaction. For the past two years, the birth registration rate in the 0-5 age group is 100 percent.
- Thousands of trees have been planted by the children, with many of the seedlings obtained for them through local government channels.
- Children are now at the forefront of organizing and implementing project activities, taking on increasing responsibilities each year of the project, teaching one another and building their own capacity.
- Community understanding of and support for the anganwadis has improved.

But the most profound change is perhaps the least visible. Through this project, the children of the villages have found a new voice and, for the first time, stepped forward to play an active role in the community and work to make it better.

Governance and civic engagement have improved as the children brought people together to understand and address their collective problems. And this empowerment did not stop at hygiene and sanitation. The children have taken the initiative to prevent child marriages, help drop-outs go back to school, tackled issues of cast and gender discrimination, and become vocal advocates for the environment. They are now invited by their elders to sit in on panchayat meetings and have developed leadership and communication skills and gained a new self-confidence and sense of potential.

As the adults see the tangible results of the children's efforts, they have come to understand how children can be change agents within their communities. The children also exhibited confidence in the orientation of parents and other community members about the Child Rights and Child Participation.

Children's participation is important because it improves the relevance and appropriateness of public and organizational decision making on children's issues by ensuring that those with the direct experience of a situation are able to have their voices heard. Children's participation is a shift in the view of children as beneficiaries of adult interventions towards respect for them as rights holders who are key makers and shapers of their own life and that of their own communities. *Please see page 13 for comments from the adults about the change in the children.*

This report summarizes the work done in 2016, Year 6 of this project.

The Mountain Children's Foundation / CRY Partnership: 2016 Success Stories

Bal Sangathans took the initiative and responsibility for organizing meetings

In 2016, it was decided that the children of four villages (Badawa, Bhud, Pashta and Devthalla) would be given the complete responsibility of organizing the meetings of their *bal sangathans*. This included deciding the issues covered in their meeting. In four villages the children organized their meetings and the main issues were child rights, sanitation, cleanliness of environment and creating comics to illustrate the messages they were trying to communicate to the village¹. Through this process the children developed the sense of working collectively and also learned about planning of their group's activities. The confidence level of children has been increased by participating in such activities and now they are working with more responsibilities.

Attending Panchayat's Open Meetings

For a second year, the children participated in the village panchayat's annual open meeting, a key element of the Panchayati Raj Act where the village leaders discuss issues of concern to the community. This was an important acknowledgement by the adult members of community that the children had earned a place in community decision making and provided a platform for the children to voice their opinions. The children learned about the workings of panchayat, and the panchayat representatives also learned about the issues and concerns of the children. Some of the issues brought to center stage at the panchayat level included the children's request for the building of toilets, the need for clean drinking water in schools, birth registration for the children who were not able to avail of the camps that were held earlier, and space for their *bal sangathan* to meet.

¹ Last year some of the children received training in how to make comics to help inform the community about issues such as child rights, the importance of hygiene, nutrition and more. This year they began training the other children of the group in this art.

Case Study: Build a toilet and water tank in anganwadi center

The children of Unnati Bal Sangathan of village Dobhari raised the issue of building a toilet and a water tank in village's anganwadi center in the village panchayat's open meeting. The panchayat representatives noted this issue and the panchayat constructed a toilet and water tank in February. Now the children of Anganwadi center are using the toilet properly.

Case Study: Construction of cement road to school

The children of Lahar Bal Sangathan of village Papadiyan participated in their village panchayat's open meeting where they raised several concerns pertaining to the children of village. One notable issue was about the unconstructed road from the main road to the junior high school in Papadiyan. The panchayat representatives listened to the problem of the children and followed up by getting the road to the school constructed. This indicates that the children are creating awareness on children's issues in their community as well as changing the behavior of their community members and panchayats through their advocacy.

Tree plantation in 16 villages



The children of *bal sangathans* have taken on tree plantation as a personal and village mission. To encourage the planting and nurture of trees, the children decided that any home with a healthy tree in the garden will earn two extra points in the Healthy Home Survey that is conducted in the village. In addition, the children have asked their villages' pradhan for fruit bearing

trees to plant and the pradhan of villages have made efforts to obtain over 1381 trees under the Government's "**Harela**" program for the community and the children. In Langha village, the children have planted 400 peach trees and 100 apple trees. In Bhud village panchayat 200 peach trees have been planted. In Papadiyan village

panchayat 400 peach trees and 100 apple trees of have been planted. Thus, more than 1300 trees have been planted in 2016 as a result of the children's activism and coordination with their panchayat representatives.

Celebrating Janamashtami – Dungakhet

The children of Prateek Bal Sangathan of village Dungakhet decided to celebrate



Shree Krishna Janamashtami. The women of village also participated with the children for the preparation of Janamashtami festival. This year as a part of the *Prasad*, the children and women prepared kheer made of *jhangora* - a locally produced grain instead of rice bought from the market. This was a direct result of awareness

among the community and the children about the nutritional values of locally produce grain, fruit and vegetables through the nutrition *melas* conducted as part of the MCF/CRY partnership.

Children visit the anganwadi center in village Dhore Ki Dandi



The children of Vikas Bal Sangathan in village Dhore Ki Dandi decided in their monthly meeting to visit their village's anganwadi center. The objective of this visit was to learn about the eligibility for the services provided by the ICDS Department through Anganwadi center. During this

visit the children asked the anganwadi worker questions regarding the services of anganwadi center. The Anganwadi worker told the children about the importance of

growth charts and how the chart is filled out. She also told the children about the nutritional values of the food prepared in anganwadi center and nutrition's impact on young children. Through this visit the children learned more about the six services anganwadi centers provide, the nutritional value of the food offered there, and the nutrition needs of young children. Following this anganwadi visit, children of all 16 *bal sangathans* began to visit the anganwadi centers in their village, which increased the coordination between anganwadi workers and bal sangathan members and overall community support for the anganwadis.

The Mountain Children's Foundation/CRY: Activities

Bal Sangathans meetings

Each Bal Sangathan in 16 villages has a monthly meeting where the children gather to plan activities that have to take place during the month. A total of 176 *bal sangathan* meetings were organized in 16 villages. In these meetings 2,549 boys, 3,029 girls (total participants 5,578) participated. In these meetings the children discussed child rights, child participation, nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, healthy-home and healthy-school surveys. The children also divided their roles and responsibilities according to their interests. Through monthly meetings, the children learned about planning for *bal sangathan* activities with more responsibility and also built the capacity to take decisions collectively. Along with these monthly meetings, the children also meet informally with their facilitators when they need to plan something or when they want to talk about specific issues. The minutes of meetings are written in a register that is maintained by the members of the *bal sangathan*. Through these activities, the children of the *bal sangathan* have strengthened their identity at village level as well as among the Panchayat representatives.

Small Group Meetings with Adults

The facilitators of MCF talk to the parents and other community members through door-to-door and small-group discussions about the program. Through these 699 meetings, the facilitators learned about what the parents and concerned adults understood from the children and what the children shared with them. It also enabled



facilitators to clear up any misconceptions the parents and other community members had regarding the program. The community members learned about the work done by the *bal sangathans* and its impact on the children and their community. The feedbacks and suggestions of community members helped the facilitators make effective plans for future activities. The coordination between parents and facilitators has increased each year and they now exchange information easily.

Meetings on child rights with parents and other community members

To strengthen the understanding of parents and other community members about child rights, MCF/CRY organized meetings in which the children of the *bal sangathans* also participated. A total of 16 meetings were organized in which 147 boys, 215 girls, 29 men and 345 women (total 736 individuals) participated. The facilitators used pictorial books in these meetings to explain child rights to the adult members of community and the children helped them to understand the nuances and details of child rights. The panchayat representatives also learned about child rights and panchayat's role in ensuring child rights at community level. Through these meetings the coordination between the children of *bal sangathans* and community members increased.

Meetings with Gram Pradhans, Ward members and other stake holders

Meetings were organized on child rights and child participation with pradhans, anganwadi workers, ASHA workers and ward members at the community level. The participants were given information about child rights; moreover they get information about the right to participation and its effect on the children. The participants were divided into small groups for discussion on what they understand about child rights and child participation.

In these meetings the participants also talked about how to strengthen the *mata samiti* formed to support the anganwadi. The panchayat representative learned about the work as well as the responsibilities of the *mata samiti*. They also understood the panchayat's role in supporting the anganwadi center.

Meetings with Mata Samiti members – individually and at the anganwadi centers

The MCF/CRY field staff gathered information about the members of *mata samitis* in the communities and met with them about the role of the *mata samiti* in supporting the proper functioning of an anganwadi center. With this discussion, the members of *mata samitis* learned about their responsibilities and gained a better understanding of the services provided by anganwadi centers and the benefits to the community. A total of 13 *mata samitis* were strengthened

On the 5th of each month, the government of Uttarakhand state celebrates “Weight Day” in all anganwadi centers. On this day the mothers and other care givers come to anganwadi center with their children to measure their weight and growth. The children's growth charts are also filled out by anganwadi workers. Through this process, the mothers get information about their children's health and growth. The mothers are also provided Take Home Ration (THR). Take Home Ration is not provided to anyone else except the mother in the 13 anganwadis. This ensures that the mothers come with their children to the anganwadi centers. The role of facilitators is very important in this process as they inform the community members and help them access the Anganwadi center and its services to new mothers and

young children. People who earlier did not come to anganwadi center are now coming with their children.

Nutrition melas to increase understanding of nutrition and change eating behavior



The children of *bal sangathans* organized nutrition *melas* in each of the 16 villages. The objective of nutrition melas is to improve community's nutritional practices while motivating children and other participants to make positive. With the help of the nutrition posters and charts they produced for the project, the children discussed locally

consumed foods and their nutritional values and explained the role of nutrition in the healthy development of children. The children and adult community members also learned about the benefits of nutrient-rich foods. The children also performed a small play on nutrition and the importance of a healthy diet. The children supported by their facilitator also conduct a quiz. The participants were divided into two groups and questions are asked on nutrition. The quiz generated a lot of excitement as, often, the grandmothers and mothers were also involved and it was exciting to see children pass on information about nutrition to them. During the nutrition mela the anganwadi workers also informed the community members about the importance of growth chart and how to fill it out properly.

Healthy Home Surveys



As part of the MCF/CRY Hygiene and Sanitation campaign, the children of each Bal Sangathan conducted a **Healthy Home Survey** to generate awareness of healthy practices in their community. The children's focus on hygiene and sanitation has made a tremendous impact over the past 6 years by generating awareness of these issues. Because of the overlay

of competition (the homes deemed most healthy receive an award) and the energy of the children, this effort has resulted in significant changes in individual and community behavior.

The members of *bal sangathans* decided a day for the survey during their meetings. The children then formed small teams of 3 to 4 children that fanned through each village to survey homes. At each home, the children asked questions based on the healthy home survey format, which they had made. They scored each home based on the responses to the questions. On the next day, the members of the *balsangathan* shared their findings with the community members and also discussed what they have seen during the survey. Then they announced and awarded certificates to the families who ranked first, second and third. The entire community got involved in this activity, including the pradhan, panchayat and ward members, and other village leaders, which enabled the children to then bring issues of hygiene and sanitation forward in panchayat meetings. A total of 556 boys, 666 girls, 39 men and 291 women participated in the Healthy Home Surveys conducted in 16 villages.

The Healthy Home Survey has been conducted from 2012 onwards and the changes in the attitude and practice of not just the children but their community as well are amazing. *An analysis and a comparison with 2012 analysis can be seen in Annex 1.*

Healthy School Survey



The children of the *bal sangathans* also undertook Healthy School Surveys to ensure the cleanliness and healthy practices in the school. In the Healthy School Survey the children surveyed every classroom of the school and also checked the cleanliness of the toilets and the kitchen which included hygiene practices of the *bhojanmata* who cooks the mid-day meal in school.

They also checked the cleanliness of each child such as clean hair, trimmed nails, clean and washed clothes, etc. The teachers were very supportive of the survey. The students also used the Sarar tool (good habits and bad habits) during this survey to generate information about hygiene and sanitation in their schools. These surveys resulted in more hygienically cooked mid-day meals, clean drinking water in schools and toilets in schools kept clean. There are dustbins receptacles in every class for the garbage disposal. A total of 10 Healthy School surveys were organized in which 312 boys, 319 girls, 48 men and 49 women participated.

Other Activities

Pabam Day Celebration



The 16 *bal sangathans* of decided to celebrate 21st of May, or PABAM Day (the anniversary of the MCF), with festivities in their village. They planned activities such as decorating their meeting places, making handmade cards,

buying cakes and arranging refreshments for the celebration of PABAM Day. The children also invited MCF/CRY facilitators to attend. The day was marked by lots of games, dancing and joy and laughter.

Alumni Meet of Bal Sangathans



On 22 May 2016 an alumni meeting was held in Dungakhet, Vikasnagar. Children from all 16 villages participated along with former members (alumni) of the village *bal sangathans* and MCF team members. This program connected alumni members and new members of *bal sangathans* to strengthen the participation in the children's groups.

The children of *bal sangathans* organized a presentation of charts, in which they have made charts on their various activities such as the Healthy Home Survey, sanitation work in villages, food and nutrition, anganwadi visit and nutrition mela. The object of the presentation was to inform the alumni about the activities of their *bal sangathans* to encourage the alumni to remain engaged in their *bal sangathans*. Some alumni members of Bal Sangathans also shared their experiences of participating in the *bal sangathan* and how the knowledge and skills they gained are helping them even later on in college and life. There were a total of 41 boys, 87 girls along with 16 men and 8 women at the meet.

MCF/CRY: Impacts of Program in 2016

- Births of 87 children (48 boys and 39 girls) were registered.
- Forty new toilets were constructed in the 16 villages.

- A total 33 children (15 boys and 18 girls) were identified as malnourished of which two girls have already come out of the malnourished category. Two boys and one girl are found severely malnourished and are getting extra nutrition
- Accounts were opened for 10 girls under the Sukanya Dhan Yojana, a scheme in which the parents save Rs 1000/- in the name of their daughter. This account gets a higher interest rate than normal and only the young girl can access the account on maturity once she turns 18.
- Thirteen girls have accessed the Nanda Devi Kanya Dhan Yojana where a Fixed deposit of Rs 15000/- is made in the girl's name. This scheme is only for families that are below poverty line and where neither of the parents is in a government Job.
- Ninety Women have accessed the IGMSY Scheme. Under this scheme Rs 3000/- are given to the pregnant woman before delivery and the second installment of Rs 3000/- is release after the child is born.

Comments from Parents/Adults in the village

- **Guddi Devi of Village Badawa** said that the children asked us if adults can buy mobile phones and TV then why they can't make toilets for themselves. By understanding the importance of hygiene we have made toilets without being dependent on village pradhan.
- **Sarita Devi of Village Dobhari** said that now the children are bringing up issues related to the community at panchayat level meetings, the panchayat has also started working on those issues, such as boundary wall of Dobhari anganwadi. The confidence levels of the children have increased as they are working for the welfare of the whole community.
- **Vinita Tomar of Village Pipalsaars** said that with the help of the *bal sangathan*, the children have developed the ability to talk, to think and to make a decision of their own. Only then they have organized Kirtana and celebrated *Janamashtami* in the village.

- **Mala Devi of Village Pashta** said that after attending the *balsangathan's* meetings she has seen a change in her behavior as before that she easily got angry with her children on small issues but now she tries to understand them as calmly as possible.
- **Manoj Kumar of Village Dobhari** said that after becoming members of the *bal sangathan*, the children have developed a sense of responsibility. They are taking care of plants they have grown, including and giving water and fertilizer.
- **School Teacher of GPS Toli, Sarita Devi** said that now the children are wearing clean clothes in school. They have made a dustbin and they burn the garbage. The students also take care of the *balsangathan's* tree which they planted, and after eating lunch, they all pour water in the tree's roots.
- **School Teacher of GPS Mallawala, Mr. Gulab Singh** said that since the children did the Healthy School Survey in school, they are maintaining hygiene. Before this survey, he and other teachers used to trim children's nails in school, but now the children have clean teeth and nails.
- **The anganwadi worker of Village Dhore Ki Dandi, Ms. Savitri** said that she is pleased that the children visited the anganwadi center and the way they were asking her about issues related to ICDS services, the change can be seen in the children after they have joined the *bal sangathan*.
- **Rajendra Singh of Village Barkot** said that now the children are more focused on sanitation and hygiene. Before being a member of *bal sangathans* my daughter used to disposed the garbage of our house in a nearby drain, but now we have a dustbin at our home. This change happened after my daughter is become a member of *bal sangathans*.
- **Mrs. Neema Devi, Bhojan mata in GPS Bhood** said that now the children are focused on sanitation. All the children in school wash their hands with soap before eating and also using dustbins in school. This change happened to the children after they are attending *bal sangathan* meetings.
- **Mrs. Aruna Devi, principal of GPS Papadiyan** said that after going to meetings of *bal sangathans* there is cleanliness in village as well as in school. The children are using dustbins and toilets, which they are keeping clean.

- **Mr. Mohan Singh of Village Devthalla** said that through their participation in the *bal sangathans*, the children learned about new schemes that are also beneficial to their families.
- **Mr. Ratansingh of Village Pasoli** said that through the *bal sangathans* the children have made their own identity. The children discuss about sanitation, nutrition, tree plantation and village pradhan and ward members are also discussing the issues related to the children.
- **Mrs. Sheetal Devi of Village Dungakhets** said that, with the help of children, people are using toilets in the village and also focused on hygiene. Before this the adults did not like to pay attention what children told them, but now they are listening to the children and also helping them to carry out different activities.
- **Mr. Kalamsingh of Village Langha** said that tree plantation happened before in village but no one takes care of trees. But now the children have planted trees and are also taking on the responsibility to take care of them. This is the reason the trees are in good condition.
- **Mrs. Vimla Devi of Village Sorna** said that the surveys which children did about sanitation have increased awareness not only in the children but among adults as well. Now our children keep food and drinking water covered.
- **Mr. Sanjay Kumar of Village Tikari** said that the children learned about their rights after becoming *bal sangathan* members. If the rights of a child are violated, then all members of *bal sangathans* strive to ensure the child rights are protected.

Conclusion

This project has effected a significant, visible, and hopefully lasting change in the children and their communities. The impact is notable for the substantial examples of how the concepts of child rights, cooperation, civic engagement, and the significance of health and sanitation, birth registration, and education have taken

place in all 16 target villages. The work accomplished in 2016 helps to further consolidate these gains, though the work is far from done.

Since 2011, the MCF/CRY partnership has worked to increase child participation and engage children to improve their communities through aggregate action by creating *bal sangathans* at the village level. Each year the children learned new concepts of hygiene, sanitation, child rights, child participation, birth registration, nutrition, early childhood development, governance, civic engagement, and more. At the same time, they built their own capacity by developing leadership and communication skills, learning how to work together, and seeing the impact of their activities on the community as a whole.

In 2016, the children stepped up even more with regards to planning and completing activities themselves, which is an indicator of their sense of ownership and the effort to improve their communities.

And the impact on the villages continues to be transformative. The children's focus on hygiene and sanitation has had an immense effect on community awareness and attitude towards these issues. The Healthy Home surveys and Healthy School Surveys took these key issues out of the academic realm and made them part of daily life. The nutrition *melas* organized by the children, have educated not just the children but also the larger community about the nutritional value of some local and traditional produce. In some cases the children have even gone back to eating traditional food with more enthusiasm as they now understand the food content and its importance.

Over these past six years, the MCF/CRY project has created a platform for the children from which they have made insightful and meaningful change in their own and their community's lifestyle and mind-set.

But we believe there is yet much more work to be done. The children are just beginning to realize their true potential. The adults – too long marginalized and disempowered – are just waking up to the fact that communities can change and improve their circumstances from within. Even as the children are taking on more initiative in organizing activities and working with village leaders to spark change,

they still rely on project facilitators for guidance, information. MCF will continue to support these children to the best of our ability so they can continue along the path this project has opened up for them. *(Please see Annex 2 for some letters we received from the children when we announced the project was wrapping up.)*

Annex 1

Analysis of Healthy Home Survey 2016

As part of the MCF/CRY Hygiene and Sanitation campaign, the children conducted a Healthy Home Survey to build awareness of healthy/hygienic practices. It also serves as a way to measure whether there has been any change in people's behavior as a result of this campaign.

The survey is a simple format that the children take to each home and give points against each activity. The children then tabulate each format and the winners are selected based on the highest number of points. The children developed the questions themselves and the homes surveyed were primarily those of their own families, but they also surveyed other homes if the families were willing.

This analysis compares the Healthy Home Survey conducted by the children in 2012 and now again in 2016. The children surveyed 494 homes in 2012. The number rose to 647 homes surveyed in 2016. (Because of this increase in the population surveyed, this analysis uses percentages rather than actual counts.)

The comparison reveals the following changes in the hygiene and sanitation practices in the community over the past five years:

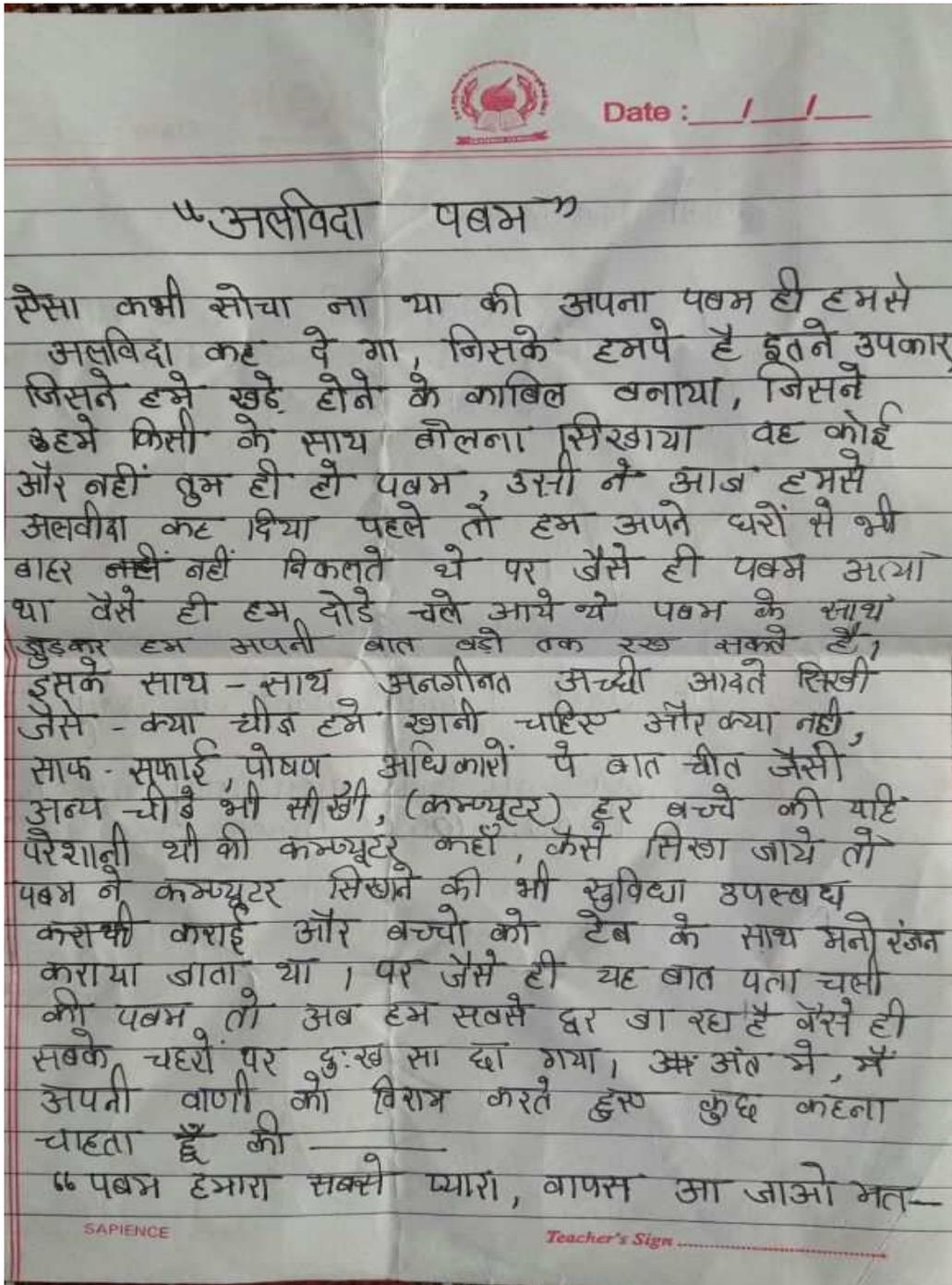
- The percentage of people who cut their nails has increased from 59% in 2012 to 98% in 2016.
- Those who regularly wash their hair have risen from 72% to 99%.

- Those who brush their teeth regularly increased from 67% to 99%.
- Those who wear slippers while going to the toilet rose from 41% to 97%.
- Those using soap to wash their hands after going to the toilet rose from 61% to 99%.
- Family members washing their hands before eating has risen from 44% to 98%.
- Children bathing within an interval of two days rose from 65% to 99%.
- Children wearing clean clothes rose from 63% to 97%.
- Homes getting water from safe sources rose from 59% to 98% *in 2015 and remained the same in 2016 as well.*
- Households that kept their drinking water covered in rose from 72% to 98%.
- Use of a ladle for removing water from the water container (rather than dipping a glass directly into the water) rose from 29% to 90%. *Some homes have RO and filters but the children did not count them.*
- Washing hands with soap before cooking rose from 22% to 98%.
- Washing hands with soap before serving food rose from 23% to 97%.
- Keeping food covered rose from 75% to 96%.
- The use of dustbins to dispose of rubbish rose from 39% to 83%.
- Presence and use of a dustbin in the house rose from 3% to 91%.
- Homes having neat and tidy bedrooms rose from 66% to 99%.
- Homes having clean and tidy kitchens rose from 60% to 98%.
- Homes having clean areas in front (angans) rose from 53% to 97%.
- Homes with toilets rose from 77% to 88%.
- Families that actually use the toilet for its intended purpose (rather than as a store room, for example) rose from 64% to 89%. (In some cases, families use toilets that belong to other homes – they belong to one family but have separate houses.)
- Availability of water in the toilet (first measured in 2013) rose from 61% to 88%.
- Homes having clean toilets rose from 5% to 86%.
- Homes where the cattle are housed away from the family residence rose from 57% to 80%.

- Homes where the cow dung is stored far away from the residence rose from 61% to 80%.
- Homes with a clean path to the main road rose from 39% to 96%.
- Families ensuring the main road near their homes are clean rose from 5% to 95%.

Annex 2

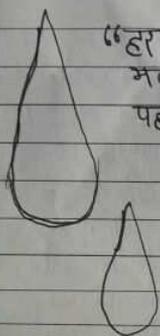
Farewell letters from Vikas Nagar



Date: / /

इसको दिल हमारा”

“हर एक औरत पर है नाम लड़कियां
 भल जा, वापस आ जा लेकर अपनी
 पहचान दोबारा”



At last I only want to say that
 “We all miss you very much
 Please come back for us”

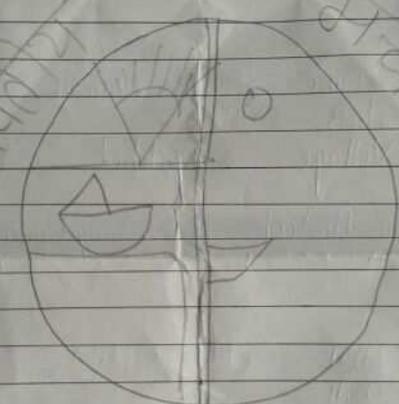
Miss you



SAPIENCE Teacher's Sign

Date: / /

पवनचिह्न बाल



मे आपसे ~~सब~~ सच प्रश्न करना चाहता हूँ
 की आप ~~सब~~ हमसे डर होकर खुश है या
 दुःखी

हो / ना

* Please tell the answer with great honesty
 and also discuss this question with all
 staff of Pabam than give the answer.

SAPIENCE Teacher's Sign