

Concept Note: Capacity Building on child-friendly spaces

Background

Gujarat, with its long coastline and exposure to the Thar Desert, is very vulnerable to a variety of natural and anthropogenic hazards such as cyclones, floods, and heatwaves. A UNICEF-CEEW study in 2024 identified 12 districts as very high-risk and 7 districts as high-risk for climate change vulnerabilities. 19 out of Gujarat's 33 districts are exposed likely to experience a rise in extreme weather occurrences which can be attributed to climate change. During disasters, children face profound psychological, emotional, and physical risks, including sudden loss, disruption of routines, and frightening experiences. They are also highly susceptible to protection risks such as sexual abuse, violence, trafficking, and child marriages. Certain groups, including children without parental care, and children with disabilities, become even more vulnerable.

Recognising these vulnerabilities, Gujarat has made significant strides in disaster management, such as having over 70 multi-purpose cyclone shelters (MPCS) in 11 districts. Considering the increasing occurrences of extreme climatic events and the need for shelters, Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) in these spaces (both MPCS and temporary shelters such as schools) have become the need of the hour. CFS are specifically designed spaces that aim to ensure children's and youth's safety, security, and well-being by creating a safe space for play, socialization, learning, and self-expression. The spaces also function as essential focal points for the delivery of different services and assistance to children and women.

The importance of CFS is supported by various national policies, including the Disaster Management Act (2005), National Policy for Children (2012), National Education Policy (2020), and particularly the National Guidelines on Temporary Shelters for Disaster-Affected Families (2019), which specifically recommend designated areas for breastfeeding mothers and menstrual hygiene management.

District Project Officers (DPOs) and Mamlatdars play a pivotal role as GSDMA focal points at the district level and are instrumental in leading pre-monsoon preparedness meetings and coordinating disaster response. Equipping these key personnel with the knowledge and skills to effectively establish and manage CFS is therefore crucial for safeguarding the rights and well-being of children during emergencies in Gujarat's most vulnerable coastal districts.

Objectives:

- Enhance understanding of vulnerabilities of children
- Knowledge on CFS principles and components
- Stakeholder management for emergency preparedness and response coordination
- Detail understanding of O&M of MPCS

Programme curriculum and Methodology:

The training will be interactive, utilizing a blend of presentations, case studies and group exercises. This will include:

Understanding Vulnerabilities: Detailed sessions on the psychosocial impact of disasters on children, protection risks, and the specific needs of different age groups and vulnerable children.

CFS Design and Setup: Practical guidance on selecting suitable locations, space planning (e.g., 3-4 sq m per child, separate areas for age groups), safety and security measures (childproofing, lighting, ventilation, fire safety), and essential equipment.

Health, Nutrition, and WASH in CFS: In-depth modules on ensuring nutritionally balanced and age-appropriate food (e.g., 1700 Kcal/day for children, 2400 Kcal for women), promoting breastfeeding (including setting up lactation rooms with specific amenities), managing menstrual hygiene, and ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

Protection and Referral Mechanisms: Training on identifying children in need of care and protection, family tracing, alternative care options, prevention of GBV, and referral pathways to specialized services.

Coordination and Community Engagement: Emphasizing the DDMA and CSMMC's role in multi-stakeholder coordination, engaging community members (including children and adolescents) in planning and management, and working with NGOs.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Transition: Guidance on maintaining daily attendance records, incident reporting, activity logs, display boards, and developing phase-out or transition plans for CFS.

Upon completion of this training, DPOs and Mamlatdars in coastal districts of Gujarat will be able to:

Incorporate Child-Friendly Principles: Integrate child protection and well-being considerations into all aspects of district-level disaster preparedness plans and pre-monsoon reviews.

Effectively Establish and Manage CFS: Possess the practical knowledge and skills to set up and oversee functional, safe, and inclusive Child-Friendly Spaces in both MPCs and temporary shelters, adhering to national and international best practices.

Ensure Essential Services in Shelters: Guarantee the provision of critical services for children and women within shelters, including appropriate nutrition, health care, breastfeeding support, menstrual hygiene management, and psychosocial support.

Strengthen Inter-Departmental Coordination: Facilitate seamless collaboration among all relevant line departments (Health, Education, WCD, Social Justice, WASH) to ensure a holistic approach to child protection in emergencies.

Enhance Community Resilience: Empower local communities and frontline workers to actively participate in the planning and management of child-friendly initiatives, fostering greater resilience at the grassroots level.

This targeted capacity building initiative will significantly strengthen Gujarat's capacity to protect its most vulnerable population – children – during emergencies, ensuring their safety, dignity, and continued development even in the face of adversity. This aligns directly with the state's commitment to comprehensive disaster management.

"Child Friendly Spaces and MPCS for emergency response"

Date: 13/03/2026

Venue: Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM),
B/h PDEU Koba-Gandinagar Highway, Raysan, Gujarat- 382007

The objective of the workshop include:

- Enhance understanding of vulnerabilities of children
- Knowledge on CFS principles and components
- Stakeholder management for emergency preparedness and response coordination
- Detailed understanding of O&M of MPCS

Timing	Session
09:00- 10:00	Registration & Breakfast
10:00-10:30	Inaugural session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO, GSDMA • Chief UNICEF Gujarat • GIDM
10:30 – 10:45	Objectives of the workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF Gujarat
10:45 – 11:00	High Tea
11:00 –12:30	Introduction to Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS), CFS Design and Setup- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Definition and purpose of CFS ➤ National policies supporting CFS (Disaster Management Act 2005, National Policy for Children 2012, etc.) ➤ Key principles (safety, security, well-being, play, socialization, learning, self-expression) ➤ Safety and security measures (childproofing, lighting, ventilation, fire safety) ➤ Ensuring nutritionally balanced and age-appropriate food, managing menstrual hygiene, Promoting breastfeeding ➤ Essential equipment Facilitator: DRR Expert
12:30- 13:30	Lunch

13:30 – 15:30	<p>O&M of MPCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP) and the role of MPCS in Gujarat ➤ Pre-cyclone, during and post cyclone operations ➤ Maintenance of MPCS ➤ Development of utilisation plan ➤ M&E of utilisation plan ➤ Case Studies <p>Facilitator: UNNATI</p>
15:30 – 15:45	Tea
15:45 – 17:00	<p>Utilisation of MPCS and Emergency Preparedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of utilisation plan ➤ M&E of utilisation plan ➤ Case Studies ➤ Group Work <p>Facilitator: UNNATI</p>
17:00 – 17:30	<p>Conclusion & Valedictory session</p> <p>Facilitator: GIDM & UNICEF Gujarat</p>
17:30	End