



Child Friendly Spaces

A Practical Planning, Designing & Operationalization guide for Assam



सत्यमेव जयते

Foreword

Disasters undermine the key pillars of child rights; not only are the children most vulnerable to deaths and injury caused by disasters and conflicts but their well-being is jeopardized by the ensuing trauma, triggered by chaos, and the sudden loss of familiar environment. Age, coupled with physical and psychological immaturity make them dependent on the adult population, thereby compounding their vulnerability. Their exposure to disasters and conflicts has a severe impact on their physical and mental health, besides heightening their behavioral health disorders and contributing to their long-term learning deficits.

In Assam, the situation is precarious, given the state's location in a multi-hazard prone zone which renders a significant impact upon its population. The state is prone to floods, earthquake, storms and landslides among natural hazards besides having record in outbreak of ethnic conflicts. These shocks and stresses disproportionately affect children who remain the worst affected as many essential services impacting their health, nutrition, education, and social well-being are disrupted and they are further exposed to new risks amounting to abuse and exploitation.

The multiple risks emerging in the post disaster context, particularly for children, makes it imperative to set up an environment of care and protection for children which would inculcate positive coping strategies and facilitate speedy recovery. Establishing a safe environment would prevent a child from resorting to negative coping strategies or become victims of violence and abuse. Child Friendly Spaces for Children in emergencies" was developed by ASDMA with technical support of UNICEF, Assam for implementation under Nssp, 2016. "Prepare design of child friendly spaces for emergencies in advance" is an action point to be taken up at the District level by the DDMA under the Nssp, 2016. To address all issues of children in emergencies, a detailed guideline is necessary to bring CFS in Assam at par with UN Standards and give a structured platform for engagement/participation of various stakeholders in CFS.

I am happy to present this guideline. It is designed to assist Disaster Management Staff and partners, in establishing and operating Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in an emergency. This guide would specifically help rescue workers and staff in building CFS within temporary/permanent relief camps setup across the state. Besides dealing with Assam Specific Scenarios, it will guide users on low cost and effective material use for CFS construction. The Guidelines stand for a vision of India where all children and their teachers, and other stakeholders in the school community are safe from any kind of preventable risks due to natural hazards that may threaten their well-being during the pursuit of education. The guidelines also actively promote that educational continuity is maintained / resumed even in the immediate aftermath of a disaster so that children are physically, mentally and emotionally secure within their schools.


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Acknowledgement

On behalf of Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), I would like to thank UNICEF for the technical support towards drafting of Child Friendly Spaces manual. I would like to thank all key stakeholders who have actively contributed towards this manual. Child Friendly Spaces would provide children with protected environments in which they participate in organized activities to play, socialize, learn, and express themselves as they rebuild lives. This manual from ASDMA will guide emergency response personnel and implementing partners in the rapid implementation of effective Child Friendly Spaces for children and immediately after an emergency such as natural disasters or situation of armed conflict.

Let us work together to address all issues of children in emergencies, where children affected by natural disasters or armed conflict can be provided with a safe environment, with integrated programming including play, recreation, education, health, and psychosocial support can be delivered and/or information about services/supports are provided.

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