

## CASE STUDY

**TITLE: Transformation of Aanganwadi Centre (AWC), Manoharpura into Young Children and their Care- giver Friendly Centre AWC**

**Programme:** Urban95 Phase-II, Udaipur

**Location:** AWC, Manoharpura, Udaipur in Rajasthan, INDIA

**Reach: 27 enrolled young children of AWC and 25** children from pre- primary school within the same premises (AWC is located within the Government School)

**Funding Source:** Udaipur Municipal Corporation (UMC) and allocated funds from Urban95 Program

**Cost of the intervention:** INR 4,10,000/- (Rs. Four Lacs Ten Thousand)

### Introduction:

As a part of Urban95 program, it was envisaged to test various models through implementation of semi- permanent projects, which are different from each other in ideas, design, scale, in their application and on-ground implementation along with user behaviours around them. It is also envisaged that these projects should have 'demonstration and showcasing opportunities' to service providers/ decision makers of the city and immense 'scalability' and 'replicability' opportunities as well.

It is in this context, it was decided to plan and implement set of interventions in form of semi- permanent project at an AWC, **having high numbers of targeted audience/ users- young children, Pregnant and Lactating Women.**

Setup generally at community level, AWCs are government initiated setup under Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Ministry of Women Development and Child Welfare, catering to the educational and nutritional needs of young children, mostly from poor background and also of Pregnant and Lactating Women in their pre and post pregnancy times, including vaccinations, immunization, health check-up and referral services.

AWCs are successful in reaching out to targeted audiences, but are facing challenges such as not able to stop drop out ration and/ or increase new enrollments of young children due to various reasons, such as lack of 'open/ play spaces' and engaging physical activities, especially for young children to engage with. Moreover, given the subdued atmosphere, care- givers are also not motivated enough to send their young children to AWCs.

Keeping 'open/ play spaces' as the important indicator, it was decided to identify AWC having open space within the premise with the potential to be transformed into an active 'play area' or 'activity area' where young children can engage themselves and which helps in physical, mental growth of the young children.

Considering the above pointers, AWC at Manoharpura has been identified as a potential site for implementation of the said semi- permanent project, aiming at transforming it into an model Urban95 AWC with integration of suitable ITC elements, having potential of projecting the same as showcase/ demonstration model to city's service providers/ decision makers, enabling them to replicate the same in other AWCs as well.

Located at the edge of UMC boundary within a govt. premise, sharing a room within a primary school, AWC, Manoharpura is accessible from a very calm internal road with separate yet connected toilet block (built under Smart City Projects by Udaipur Smart City Ltd.), a playing cum engagement space on the back side (between school building wall and boundary wall) having playing equipments (a slide and swings), however in broken condition.

**Implementing agency/ department:**

Udaipur Municipal Corporation (UMC) in collaboration with the Bernard Ven Leer Foundation (BvLF) with technical support from Urban95 PMU (Joint venture between International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives – Local Governments for Sustainability, South Asia (ICLEI-SA) and Ecorys India Pvt. Ltd.)

**Other agencies/ departments involved:**

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Ministry of Women Development and Child Welfare

**Context:**

Conceptualize and planned as a demonstration/ showcase example to service providers & decision makers on the potential of transforming a regular AWC with very limited/ confined spaces into an interactive, engaging yet safer AWC with use of existing infrastructure and surfaces (floors, walls, fencing/ railing, corridors, outside spaces etc.). It is also aimed to demonstrate that why and how such measures are important for physical and mental growth and wellbeing of young children and helps in shaping their early childhood.

The AWC at Manoharpura was selected as an Urban95 Intervention site with below mentioned objectives

- a) Increasing the overall Enrollment in AWC & Reducing Drop Out Ratio;
- b) Involving & Engaging young Children as Direct & Active Beneficiaries by providing Stimulating & Active Atmosphere;
- c) Making Caregivers & Service Providers aware on the Benefits of Engaging young Children in Outdoor Playing Activities for their Overall Growth & Development;
- d) Motivating Service Providers to adopt such Interventions to bring in desired Behavioral Changes via suitable Retrofitting (in Existing AWCs) and also while developing new AWCs.

A draft proposal was developed, aimed at transforming the behaviours and more so the experience of its targeted users while using this facility into a wholesome and memorable one by transforming the same into an easily accessible yet highly

interactive, engaging facility with utilization of existing spaces into an 'active playing and engaging spaces'.

### **Summary:**

The Implemented interventions are thoughtfully planned & designed not only for transformation of this AWC into an interactive, engaging and playful yet safer and hygienic AWC but also the one promoting 'Learning while Playing', facilitating the overall growth and development of young children. The Implemented interventions and the related benefits are as explained below

- a) Safety and other measures at school entrance for transforming this into only an inviting and pleasant entrance but also the safer one, motivating students (AWC and Primary school as well) to attend the school daily
  - Removal/ cleaning of weeds, construction debris, garbage and other material from wither side of entrance;
  - Covering the open drain upto 50M as per the set standard & norms for increased safety of children;
  - Installation of interlocking tiles and covering of the same from corners using Kerb stone, earmarking the entrance space as an dedicated and levelled one;
  - Checking the wiring and other elements of 'transformer' (located just adjacent to the school entrance) & cleaning the surfaces in & around the same as 'increased safety' not only of targeted users but also of other users (students and teachers of primary school) as well.
- b) Transformation of AWC room (single room within the primary school premises, located at the end of the school building and accessible via approx. 30M long corridor) using all the available surfaces, i.e. Walls, floor and ceiling into an interactive and engaging room/ space motivating AWC children to attend the school daily and moreover motivating new enrolments as well.
  - Floor Painting in AWC room with integration of 'Shapes- circle, square, triangle, Color- yellow, green, red, orange etc. and Numbers- from 1 to 25' into a single painting (within a square box- 1.5 x 1.5 feet square box in form of floor painting), enabling young children to learn all the three elements easily while they take a seat in a particular box.
  - For example in a particular week a children is seating in 'yellow coloured circular shape having, numbered 3' while next week (s)he is seating at 'red coloured triangle shape, numbered 17', an interactive, fun and playful way of learning;
  - Installation of an interactive pulley based 'Solar System' tied to the ceiling and one of the wall, wherein children are able to learn about the solar system and its various features such as planets colours & size w.r.t 'Sun' and also the order they are settled around Sun- the nearest and farthest planet from sun etc.;

- Creation of extra 'dedicated storage space' by covering of existing wall storages by wooden panels/ doors'.
- c) Imprinting 'Meri Aanganwadi, Sabse Pyari' translating into 'My Aanganwadi is the best & lovely among all' in the approach corridor just outside the Aanganwadi Room for generating the 'sense of ownership' and 'sense of belonging' within AWC children and also that this is there pace in the otherwise all other shared spaces.
- d) Creation of 'Low- heighted Shoe Stand' outside the AWC room, enabling young children to take out their shoes comfortably by sitting at the shoe stand/ platform and hoard them safely beneath it. Moreover they can then just use the 'low-heighted wash basin' created in the 'Corridor Leading to Toilet and Back Side Engagement Space', leading to 'hygienic practice' among them
- The low- heighted wash basin has also been created for inculcating the habit of washing hands before eating their food, keeping 'hygiene as an important background';
  - An interactive floor painting was also done starting from AWC Room and leading to the wash basin & other engagement spaces for making these journeys a playful one.
- e) Transformation of the 'Corridor Leading to Toilet and Back Side Engagement Space' by series of interventions.
- Creation of 'Low- heighted was basin' as explained above:
  - Installation of 'Interactive & Colourful Mild Steel (MS) Railing' with inbuilt/ precast playing elements in form of 'Abacus', acting as an learning (while they are using it) and sensory element (while they are passing by it to toilet or back- side engagement space');
  - Installation of 'Interactive Shading Element' not only for weathering protection for making this corridor 'all weather usable corridor' but also for changing shadows of its design/ pattern with the sun direction, enabling young children to engage with the shadows as well;
  - Floor Painting in form of 'Colourful and zig- zag Snake' with Alphabets within it for learning yet playful experience;
- f) Transformation of the 'Back- side Engagement Zone' by series of interventions.
- Installation of a 'low- heighted MS gate' virtually segregating the back side space for AWC children and primary school children. This has been done especially for the reason that this segregation provides a dedicated playing zones to both the groups, i.e. to AWC children and primary school children as well;
  - Refurbishing and shifting of existing playing equipments (1 two seater swing & 1 Slide) meant for bigger children of the primary school and Installation of new low heighted playing equipments (2 slides) on either side of gate for both the group to engage with their respective playing equipments as per their comfort;

- Creation of Levels and ramps not only for multi- utilization of space but also for providing AWC children to engage in variety of outdoor playing activities, enabling activating and/ or improvising series of body movements & senses such as 'balancing', important for physical & mental growth of young children;
- Thoughtfully designed yet interactive wall painting passing on the 'hygiene message' in visually rich manner keeping COVID-19 backdrop in mind, enabling young children and their care- givers to pass on the message of 'Daily Bath' and importance of the same;
- Installation of 'Interactive Shading Element' not only for weathering protection for making this corridor 'all weather usable corridor' but also for changing shadows of its design/ pattern with the sun direction, enabling young children to engage with the shadows as well;
- Installation of new wash basin and set it in a permanent concrete fixture to save it from theft and/ or vandalism.

Inaugurated by AWC and pre- primary children in presence of Mrs. Kirti Rathod, Dy. Director, ICDS and Mrs. Ragini Damor, Dy. Commissioner, UMC, Mr. Bhanwarlal Gameti, the Ward Councilor, Mrs. Jaya Verawal, Lady Supervisor (LS), ICDS along with UMC Engineers it turned out as a wonderful moment filled with children laughter and happy faces all around.

Other inauguration attendees were entire AWC and Primary school staff and other 12- 15 staff from nearby AWCs, care- givers of the AWC children, Urban95 Project Monitoring & Steering Unit (PMSU), Project Management Unit (PMU).

With the inauguration, the attendees were given the brief of all the ITC interventions and the thoughts behind doing so while taking them through these spaces. All the interventions were very well appreciated by DD, ICDS, Dy. Commissioner, UMC and other present. DD, ICDS has given the assurance of replicating some ITC interventions in all the other AWCs, specifically the floor painting within the class room and other spaces and also the solar system.

**Key steps involved:**

- a) Site Identification & Finalization- Identification and finalization of an appropriate AWC with high numbers of enrolled children with dull and mundane atmosphere, giving the team the opportunity to use as much existing infrastructure (Floor, walls, ceiling, railings etc.) as possible and project this as an 'demonstration/ showcase model' to the service providers/ decision makers;
- b) Mapping Existing Situation & Stakeholders Engagement (Pre)- Site analysis, study of available and missing ITC Neighbourhood (ITCN) indicators along with concerned stakeholders engagement (UMC, DD, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), AWC Staff, Primary School Principal, BvLF) and users to map their needs and aspirations for conceptualizing and plan the proposal accordingly;
- c) Conceptualizing and Developing the Design Proposal- The AWC design proposal was conceptualized and envisaged to be developed by taking cognizance of

existing infrastructural situation and subsequent behavioural impact of the same to targeted users and come up with design solutions to negate the same.

Moreover the design proposal was also conceptualized with simpler and easy to implement yet impactful design solutions keeping in mind the 'scalability' and 'replicability' of the same by the concerned service providers/ decision makers;

- d) Stakeholders Engagement- The proposed plan, its elements and components etc. was discussed with concerned stakeholders (UMC, DD, DPM, AWC Staff, BvLF) for their consent, approval and support in taking up on- ground implementation activities;
- e) Preparation & Finalization of Bill of Quantities (BOQ) and Estimates- BoQ and estimates were prepared, enabling UMC to float the tender for selection of suitable agency/ contractor for on- ground execution of the same;
- f) Approval in Project Steering Committee (PSC)- the design proposal and costing were then taken for approval in PSC as per the program mandate;
- g) Tendering and Selection of Contractor- After PSC approval, tender was floated by UMC for finalization of contractor followed with the work order to the finalized contractor, following all the mandatory process and protocols;
- h) Monitoring of on- ground Activities by PMU- The on- site work was continuously monitored by PMU in coordination with UMC to check for any discrepancy on the on- ground works vis-à-vis the design proposal;
- i) Inauguration of the same by stakeholders- Finalization of day, date & time with Commissioner, UMC for inauguration of the project for city- level visibility to the project and Urban95 Program as well. The process includes listing of potential stakeholders (government & and non- government), invitations to concerned government officials & non- government agencies via various means- mails, WhatsApp message and calls to potential invitees;
- j) Media Coverage & Engagement- Print and Social Media was also involved and engaged at various stages (pre, during and post implementation/ inauguration) for city- level visibility of the project and Program;
- k) Photo and video documentation during different stages of project implementation for documentation purpose;

**Challenges overcome by the organising team:**

1. Able to complete the intervention on time and as envisaged even after lot of design inputs and ideas from AWC staff and primary school principal (during implementation stage) even after finalization of same from their side before going into on- site implementation;

However, few ideas were integrated during on- site execution and turned out to be value addition, while most of these would have diluted the overall design objectives. Still the team has handled the situations in a way that all were still kept involved, engaged and on- board even after most of their demands (design inputs) were not met.

2. Able to guide and handhold contractor on integration of Interactive game (Abacus) within the newly installed railing as it was for 1<sup>st</sup> time that contractor was executing such elements, as the team realized that even after lot of discussions, contractor looks clueless, but once completed, this came out as an very interactive element for young children to engage with while they are in Aanganwadi.

**What worked well?**

1. Appreciation of the intervention by all the concerned departments (UMC, ICDS) and assurance by DD of replicating few design interventions in all other AWCs of Udaipur;
2. Support from school principal in all the intervention activities (specially in segregation of back- side space & allowing the school store room for Aanganwadi as well) even though initially she was very reluctant in the ideas but after lot of convincing from the team she not only agreed but had appreciated the intervention once completed.

**What didn't work well/ scope for improvement:**

The implementation got delayed due to unforeseen situation at UMC, in form of engineers strike for more than a month.

The Aanganwadi being the only room in the primary school and is the last room of the school, accessible via a long corridor in dilapidated condition were excluded from retrofitting/ maintenance as including these component would have huge cost implications but would have improvised the overall built environment of entire school premises.

**Top three recommendations for Replication:**

- 1) Be in continuous touch with the concerned department and officials as well as the follow up for the assurance given during the inauguration, specifically of the replication of few design elements in all the other AWCs;
- 2) Identification of such AWCs in coordination with DD and CDPO and handholding of the service providers in taking up suitable retrofitting in such AWCs;
- 3) Coordination and follow up with ICDS and moreover Public Works Department (PWD), the agency responsible for developing such facilities for inclusion of ITC

friendly elements in their manuals, enabling them to implement the same while developing or retrofitting such facilities;

**Thoughts from key leaders and dignitaries:**

**Mrs. Kirti Rathod, Deputy Director, ICDS**

*“Congratulations to the entire Urban95 team for implementing such intervention with simpler yet impactful elements. Really liked all the interventions and the thoughts and planning behind them. I'm sure these interventions will not only motivate the current students to attend Aanganwadi daily but will also help in increasing the enrolment.*

*We'll make sure to replicate few of these elements, especially the floor painting and interactive solar system in Aanganwadi room and floor games in all the AWCs under my jurisdiction in coordination with UMC.”*

**Mrs. Ragini Damor, Deputy Commissioner, UMC**

*“A big congratulation to Urban95 team again, as this also has come up very beautifully as the recently inaugurated PHC. We can only imagine that when as an adult if we are feeling so much attracted to all these interventions, then for young children and their care- givers it would feel like wonder.*

*Moreover, it is my belief and I can see also that young children will learn more from these paintings and games than just reading about the same. For example the 'hygiene story' has lot of potential for young children to keep themselves clean rather than we taught them to do so.”*

**Impact statement:**

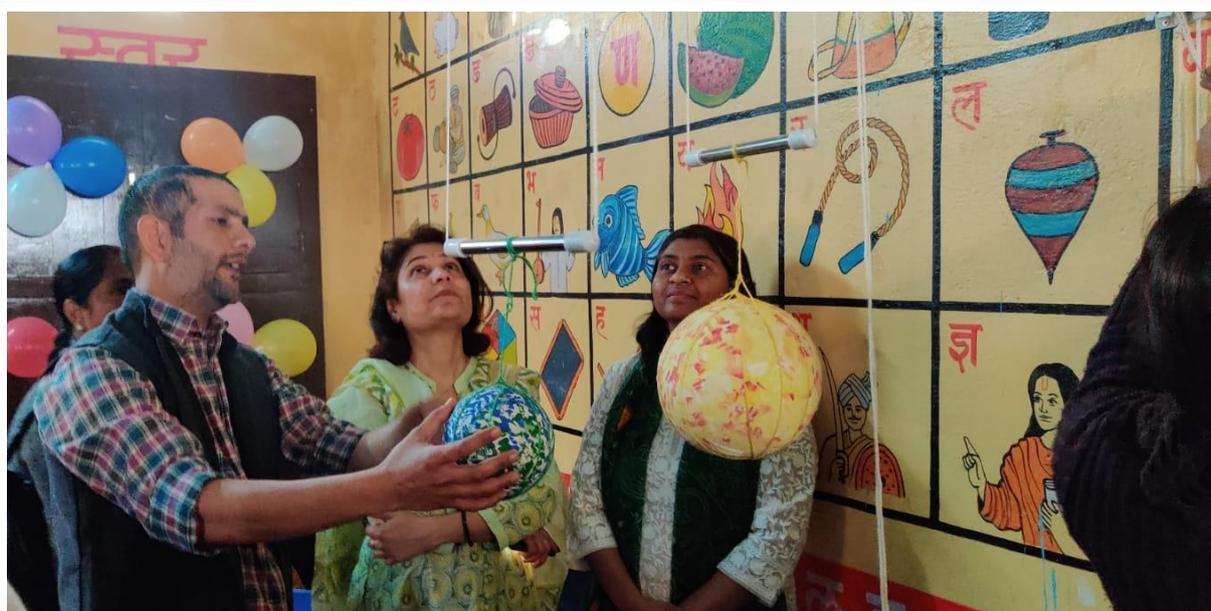
Transformation of an AWC into an vibrant, lively, interactive and engaging yet safer ITC destination wherein young children has ample opportunities of engaging in multiple interactive yet informative activities, making their daily visit a memorable one.

**Pictures:**



**AWC Inauguration by young children in Presence of**

- Mrs. Kirti Rathod, Dy. Director, ICDS Mrs. Ragini Damor, Dy. Commissioner, UMC, Mrs. Jaya Verawal, CDPO, ICDS
- Entire AWC staff and Teachers of Pre- primary School
- Urban95 PMSU and PMU



Interactive Pulley based Solar System Connected to Ceiling and Wall



Interactive Floor Painting- An interactive way for learning 'Colours, Shapes and Numbers'



Newly Installed Low- Heighted Wash Basin near to Aanganwadi Room & newly built 'Shoe Stand cum Platform' for Inculcating Hygiene practice among AWC Children



Newly Installed Interactive & Colourful MS Railings with inbuilt Games (Abacus), Promoting 'Learning while Playing' in the side Corridor Leading to Back- side Engagement Zone



Back- side Engagement Zone with Age- Appropriate Playing Equipments and Interactive Wall Painting narrating 'Hygienic Story'



Entrance to Aanganwadi Room with the Text (Meri Angwanwadi Sabse Pyari- My Anaganwadi is the best) for inculcating 'Sense of Belonging' among AWC Children. Also visible is Floor Games & Low-Heighted Shoe Stand cum Seating Platform in the left corner.



Interactive Floor Painting in the Corridor Leading to Back- side Engagement Zone, Promoting 'Learning while Playing' and Fun Way of Moving around, enabling Children to Spend more Time in Outdoor Engagement Activities