

URBAN95

Case Study

Transformation of Manoharpura Aanganwadi Center (AWC) into a Young Children and their Caregiver Friendly AWC



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Abbreviations

S/n	Abbreviation	Definition
1	AE	Assistant Engineer
2	ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
3	AWC	Aanganwadi Centre
4	AWW	Aanganwadi Worker
5	VLF	Van Leer Foundation
6	CBW	Capacity Building Workshops
7	CBO	Community Based Organization
8	DD	Deputy Director
9	DFID	Department for International Development
10	EE	Executive Engineer
11	ECD/ECCD	Early Childhood Development/Early Childhood Care & Development
12	ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
13	ICLEI- South Asia	ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, South Asia
14	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
15	MLSU	Mohan Lal Sukhadia University
16	NGO	Non- governmental organizations
17	NQAS	National Quality Assurance Standards
18	O&M	Operation and Maintenance
19	OPD	Outpatient Department
20	PHC	Primary Healthcare Center
21	PMU	Project Management Unit
22	PWD	Public Works Department
23	PMSU	Project Management Steering Unit
24	Q&A	Questions & Answers
25	RUIDP	Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure Development Project
26	SE	Superintending Engineer
27	UMC	Udaipur Municipal Corporation
28	USCL	Udaipur Smart City Ltd.

CASE STUDY

TITLE: Transformation of Aanganwadi Centre (AWC), Manoharpura, into a Young Children and Caregiver-Friendly Centre AWC

Programme: Urban95 Phase-II, Udaipur

Location: AWC, Manoharpura, Udaipur, 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)

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

Introduction:

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

In this context, it was decided to plan and implement set of interventions in the form of semi- permanent project at an AWC that has **high numbers of targeted audience/ users- young children, and pregnant and lactating women.**

AWCs, set up by the government under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and the Ministry of Women Development and Child Welfare, cater to the educational, health and nutritional needs of young children, mostly from underprivileged backgrounds, and to the needs of pregnant and lactating women which includes providing them facilities related to vaccinations, immunization, health check-ups and referral services.

AWCs are successful in reaching out to their targeted audience but are facing challenges such as not being able to reduce the dropout ratio and/ or increase new enrolments of young children due to various reasons, such as lack of 'open/ play spaces' and engaging physical activities including learning and stimulation activities. . Moreover, given the uninspiring atmosphere, caregivers 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 AWCs that have open spaces within their premises with a potential to be transformed into an active 'play area' or 'activity area' where young children can engage themselves and which helps in their physical and mental growth.

Considering the above pointers, the AWC at Manoharpura has been identified as a potential site for implementation of the said semi- permanent project, which aims to transform it into a model Urban95 AWC with integrated and appropriate ITC elements. It would have the potential of becoming a showcase/ demonstration model for city's service providers/ decision makers, enabling them to replicate the same in other AWCs.

Located at the edge of the UMC boundary, within a government-owned premises, and sharing a room with a primary school, the 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 at the back (between the school building's wall and the boundary wall) and playing equipments such as a slide and swings, which, though, have fallen into a state of disrepair.

Implementing agency/ department:

The UMC, in collaboration with the Van Leer Foundation (VLF), and with technical support from the Urban95 PMU (a joint venture between the 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:

The initiative is conceptualized and planned as a example to demonstrate/ showcase to service providers and decision makers the potential of transforming a regular AWC with very limited/ confined spaces into an interactive, engaging, yet safer AWC by using existing infrastructure and surfaces (floors, walls, fencing/ railing, corridors, outside spaces etc.). It will also demonstrate why such measures are important for the physical and mental growth and wellbeing of young children and how it can help in shaping their early childhood years.

The AWC at Manoharpura was selected as an Urban95 Intervention site with the following objectives:

- a) Increasing the overall enrollment in the AWC and reducing the drop-out ratio;
- b) Involving and engaging young children as direct and active beneficiaries by providing a stimulating and active atmosphere;

- c) Making caregivers and service providers aware of the benefits of engaging young children in outdoor play activities for their overall growth and development;
- d) Motivating service providers to adopt interventions such as suitable retrofitting (in existing AWCs) and development of new AWCs to bring in the desired behavioral changes.

A draft proposal was developed, aimed at behavioural changes and in giving the targeted users a wholesome and memorable experience by transforming the AWC into an easily accessible yet highly interactive, engaging facility by using the existing space.

Summary:

The implemented interventions have been thoughtfully planned and designed not only for transformation of this AWC into an interactive, engaging and playful yet safer and hygienic space, but also one that promoted 'Learning while Playing', facilitating the overall growth and development of young children. The implemented interventions and their related benefits are explained below.

- a) Transforming the school entrance to make it an inviting, pleasant and safer point of entry, to motivate the students (of the AWC and primary school) to attend school daily;
 - Removal/ cleaning of weeds, construction debris, garbage and other material from either side of the entrance;
 - Covering the open drain up to 50m as per the set standards and norms for increased safety of children;
 - Installation of interlocking tiles and bordering them with kerb stones, thus earmarking the entrance space as a dedicated and levelled one;
 - Checking the wiring and other elements of the 'transformer' (located adjacent to the school entrance) and cleaning the surfaces in and around the same for 'increased safety' not only of targeted users, but also of other users (students and teachers of the primary school).
- b) Transformation of the AWC room (a single room within the primary school premises, located at the end of the school building and accessible through an approx. 30m long corridor) by making all available surfaces, i.e. walls, floor and ceiling, into an interactive and engaging spaces to motivate the AWC children to attend school daily and to encourage new enrolments.
 - Painting of integrated shapes such as circles, squares, triangles in yellow, green, red, orange, etc., colours and numbers from 1 to 25' inside a square frame measuring 1.5x1.5 feet on the floor of the AWC, to help young children learn all three elements easily while they sit in a particular box.
 - For example, in a particular week a child sits in a 'yellow circle, numbered 3', and in the next week sits in a red triangle, numbered 17', an interactive, fun and playful way of learning;
 - Installation of an interactive pulley-based 'Solar System' tied to the ceiling and a wall, with which the children can learn about the solar system, the planets,

their colours and sizes as compared to the Sun, and the order in which they orbit around it, etc.;

- Creation of extra 'dedicated storage space' by covering existing wall storage areas with wooden panels/ doors.

c) Imprinting 'Meri Aanganwadi, Sabse Pyari' is the loveliest of all' in the corridor just outside the Aanganwadi room for generating a 'sense of ownership and belonging 'among the AWC children and that this is their space among the other shared spaces.

d) Installation of a shoe stand of appropriate height outside the AWC room, enabling young children to take off their shoes comfortably by sitting on the shoe stand/ platform and to put them away safely beneath it. They can then use the 'low- height wash basin' installed in the corridor leading to the toilet and engagement space at the back, encouraging hygienic practices.

- The low- height wash basin has also been installed for inculcating in them the habit of washing hands before eating their food, keeping 'hygiene as an important practice';
- An interactive floor painting was also done extending from the AWC Room to the wash basin and other engagement spaces for making these trips a playful one.

e) Transformation of the 'corridor leading to the toilet and to the engagement space at the back through a series of interventions.

- Creation of a low- height wash basin as explained above;
- Installation of an interactive and colourful mild steel (MS) railing' with inbuilt/ precast playing elements in form of an abacus, acting as an learning (while they are using it) and sensory element (while they are going to and from the toilet or the engagement space at the back);
- Installation of an interactive shading element that would allow the corridor to be used in all kinds of weather, but also for enabling the children to play with the changing shadows as allowed by its design/ pattern and the sun's position.
- Painting of a colourful snake in a zig-zag pattern with alphabets on the floor for an educational and playful experience;

f) Transformation of the engagement zone at the back with a series of interventions.

- Installation of a 'low- height MS gate' virtually segregating the space at the back for AWC children and primary schoolchildren. This has been done so that there are dedicated playing zones for both groups.;
- Refurbishing and shifting of existing playing equipment (one two-seater swing and a slide) meant for older children of the primary school and installation of new low-level play equipment (two slides) on either side of the gate for both groups;
- Creation of levels and ramps not only for multi-purpose utilization of space, but also for allowing AWC children to engage in a variety of outdoor play activities,

involving physical movement and the senses, such as 'a sense of balance', which are important for their physical and mental growth;

- Thoughtfully designed and interactive walls painted with visually appealing messages about maintaining hygiene, keeping the COVID-19 pandemic in mind, including the importance of having a daily bath for young children and their caregivers.;
- Installation of an interactive shading element that would allow the corridor to be used in all kinds of weather, and also allow young children to engage with the changing shadows as allowed by its design/ pattern and the sun's position;
- Installation of a new wash basin as a permanent concrete fixture to prevent theft and/ or vandalism.

The semi-permanent project of AWC was inaugurated by the young children from AWC and pre- primary children in the presence of Mrs. Kirti Rathod, Deputy Director, ICDS, Mrs. Ragini Damor, Deputy Commissioner, UMC, Mr. Bhanwarlal Gameti, the Ward Councilor, Mrs. Jaya Veerwal, Lady Supervisor (LS), ICDS, along with UMC engineers, was a wonderful moment filled with the laughter and happy faces of children and everyone else.

All staff of the AWC and the primary school, as well as 12- 15 staff from nearby AWCs, caregivers of the AWC children, and staff of the Urban95 Project Monitoring and Steering Unit (PMSU), and Project Management Unit (PMU) attended the event.

The attendees were briefed about all ITC interventions and the thought behind doing so, while being taken around. All the interventions were well appreciated by everyone, including the Deputy Director, ICDS and Deputy Commissioner, UMC. The deputy Director, ICDS, has given the assurance that some of the ITC interventions would be replicated in all other AWCs, specifically the floor painting in the classroom and other spaces and also the 'solar system' model.

Key steps involved:

- a) Site Identification and Finalization- Identification and finalization of an appropriate AWC with a large number of enrolled children, but with a dull and uninspiring atmosphere. This would provide the team the opportunity to use as much of the existing infrastructure (floor, walls, ceiling, railings, etc.) as possible and project it as a 'demonstration/ showcase model' to service providers/ decision makers;
- b) Mapping the Existing Situation and Stakeholders Engagement (Pre)- Site analysis, study of available and missing ITC Neighbourhood (ITCN) indicators along with engagement of the concerned stakeholders (UMC, DD ICDS, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), ICDS, AWC staff, primary school principal, VLF) and users to map their needs and aspirations for conceptualizing and planning 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 the existing infrastructure and its impact on the behaviour of the target users and coming up with solutions to negate the same. Moreover, the proposed design proposal was conceptualized to have simpler and easy-to-implement and yet impactful solutions keeping in mind its scalability and replicability by the concerned service providers/ decision makers;

d) Stakeholders Engagement- The proposed plan, its elements and components etc. was discussed with the concerned stakeholders (UMC, DD, DPM, AWC Staff, VLF) for their consent, approval and support in taking up on-ground implementation activities;

e) Preparation and Finalization of the Bill of Quantities (BOQ) and Estimates - The BoQ and estimates were prepared, enabling the UMC to float the tender for selection of a suitable agency/ contractor for on- ground execution;

f) Approval in Project Steering Committee (PSC)- The PSC's approval of the design proposal and costing was then sought, as per the program mandate;

g) Tendering and Selection of Contractor - After receiving the PSC's approval, a tender was floated by the UMC for finalization of the contractor, followed by the issue of a work order to the finalized contractor as per all mandatory processes and protocols;

h) Monitoring of on-ground Activities by the PMU - The on-site work was continuously monitored by the PMU in coordination with the UMC to check for any discrepancy vis-à-vis the design proposal;

i) Project inauguration by stakeholders - Finalization of day, date and time with the Commissioner, UMC for inauguration of the project for better city- level visibility of the project and the Urban95 Program. The process includes listing of potential stakeholders (government and non- government), invitations to the concerned government officials and non-government agencies through various means such as emails, WhatsApp messages and phone calls;

j) Media Coverage and Engagement - Print and social media were also involved at various stages (before, during and after the implementation/ inauguration) for greater city- level visibility of the project and the program;

k) Photo and video documentation of the different stages of project implementation was ensured;

Challenges overcome by the organising team:

1. They were able to complete the intervention on time and as envisaged, even after receiving several design inputs and ideas from the AWC staff and primary school principal (during the implementation stage) and after finalization of the same from their side before commencing the on-site implementation;
2. A few ideas were integrated during the on-site execution, which added value, but most of the inputs would have diluted the overall design objectives. Still, the team handled the situation in a way that all were kept involved, engaged and on-board even after most of their demands (design inputs) were not met.
3. They were able to guide and handhold the contractor on the integration of the interactive game (abacus) with the newly installed railing. The team had realized that even after a lot of discussion, the contractor had looked clueless as he had never worked with such elements before. Once completed, the game emerged as a very interactive element for young children to engage with in the AWC.

What worked well?

1. All concerned departments (UMC, ICDS) appreciated the intervention, and Deputy Director, ICDS gave assurance of replicating some of the design interventions in all other AWCs of Udaipur;
2. The school principal extended support in all activities (specially the segregation of the space at the back and in allowing the school storeroom to be used for the AWC as well), even though initially she was very reluctant and it took a lot of effort by the team to convince her. She appreciated the intervention, after it was completed.

What didn't work well/ scope for improvement:

1. The implementation got delayed due to the unforeseen situation at UMC, in form of engineers' strike at the UMC that lasted for more than a month.
2. The AWC being in the only room in the primary school and the last room of the school, is accessible via a long-dilapidated corridor, which was excluded from retrofitting/ maintenance because of the huge cost implications, but it would have improved the overall environment of the school premises.

Top three recommendations for replication:

1. Be in constant touch with the concerned department and officials and follow up on the assurance given during the inauguration, specifically regarding the replication of some design elements in all other AWCs;
2. Identify the AWCs where the replication can be done, in coordination with DD and CDPO, ICDS and handhold service providers in taking up suitable retrofitting in such AWCs;
3. Coordinate and follow up with ICDS and the 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 interventions 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 the Aanganwadi daily but will also help in increasing the enrolment.

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

Mrs. Ragini Damor, Deputy Commissioner, UMC

"A big congratulation to the Urban95 team again, as this also has come up very beautifully as the recently inaugurated PHC. We can only imagine that, if as adults we are feeling so much attracted to all these interventions, then for young children and their caregivers 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 a lot of potential for young children to keep themselves clean rather than if we taught them to do so."

Impact statement:

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

Pictures:



Figure 1 AWC Inauguration by Ms. Kirti Rathod, DD-ICDS, Ms. Ragini Damor, Deputy Commissioner UMC and others



Figure 2 (A, B) Interactive Pulley based Solar System Connected to Ceiling and Wall



Figure 3 Interactive floor painting: An interactive way of learning about colors, shapes, and numbers.



Figure 4 The newly installed low-level wash basin near the Aanganwadi room and new shoe stand-cum-platform' for inculcating hygienic habits among AWC children.



Figure 5 The newly installed interactive and colourful MS railings with an integrated abacus game, promoting 'learning while playing' in the corridor leading to the engagement zone at the back.



Figure 6 The engagement zone at the back with age-appropriate play equipment and interactive wall painting narrating a 'Hygienic Story'.



Figure 7 The floor at the entrance of Aanganwadi room has a painted message that says 'Meri Aanganwadi Sabse Pyari' (My Aanganwadi is the best) for inculcating a sense of belonging among the AWC children. Also, visible are painted floor games the low-level shoe.



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