

# **People's Cultural Centre (PECUC) in collaboration with UNICEF Creating a protective environment for children & young persons in Covid-19 Pandemic situation**

## **Introduction**

COVID-19 is a global pandemic which threatens children and their rights in countries around the world and exposes them to potentially massive disruption to their healthcare, education, access to basic needs and services like food, protection and social interaction with family members, teachers, peers and communities. The impacts have been felt differently among different population and groups. The current trends indicate that children appear to be increasingly affected more day by day in COVID-19 & it is predicted to be more in third wave. COVID-19 heightened risks of child abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, psychological stress and negative impacts on development through separation from primary caregivers, limited access to community support, disruption in family income and social connections, fear and anxiety caused by a pandemic and the increase of children's exposure to and experiencing domestic violence and linked against children in the home, community & institutions.

The levels of stress have been exponentially higher among vulnerable families. For children who are deprived of parental care in Child Care Institutions or in alternative care, children in observation homes, children living in the streets or children's migrants and on the move, school closure since March 2020 for example, the situation will be particularly challenging. The mental health and psychosocial impact of quarantine, isolation, stigmatization, and separation from caregivers, loss of routine, connections and education can take a devastating psychological toll on children. Additionally, when parents and caregivers are away from the children, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand the situation of children particularly Children in Child Care Institutions.

The purpose of this project is to provide children and adolescents, young persons a continuous engagement with various skills, techniques, psychosocial counselling and about prevention and protection to enable them to understand what is COVID-19 and how it can be prevented, help them manage related stress, fear and anxiety, and recognize the increased risk of violence, which can help them to stay safe. At the same time, the project will support children, their families, caregivers, for immediate counselling & referral services through the help desk. The project intends to support care leavers with psycho socio support along with career counselling & soft skill education which can help them in future life. One of the main purposes of this project to develop a cadre at the community level who can provide psycho-social support to children in need of care & protect. The project will also come out with overall situation analysis of children by publishing a citizen report on status of child rights in the state which will enable the key duty bearers to understand the priorities for children & act on the emerging issues. Further, this report shall also be incorporated in the larger National level NGO report for submission to UNCRC committee.

## **Project Output**

Children and Adolescents in CCIs and Communities receives mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), life skills education, information on EVAC and linked with referral services in aftermath of COVID19 situation.

## **Target population/ group(s) :**

- Children in need of care & protection during Covid 19 pandemic
- Children, Adolescents & Care leavers in CCI
- Community level volunteers -SATHI [ to be identified]
- SAKHI SAHELI
- CSOs & Child Protection functionaries

- Child protection work force

## Activities

**A] Activity 1 - Setting up State level Child Help Desk for reaching out to the children through Telecommunication Technology & Call Management Solutions in need of care & protection, psycho social support during & Post COVID 19 situations**

### Implementation Plan

- Help desk setup with one Programme Officer & one counsellor as full time staff & a group of expert advisers to advise
- Setting up Child Help Desk with tele communication technology and call management solution with tollfree no
- Counselling ,referral ,information related to services in COVID 19 situation ,linkages shall be provided to children their parents & guardians.
- The Help desk will work in close coordination with Odisha State Child Protection Society

**B] Activity -2 - Mental health & Psychosocial support to the Children at the community level through empowering a group of Community Level Volunteers**

### Implementation Plan

- Creating community level volunteers to provide pshycho social support to children at the time of need .
- Atleast 50 volunteers named as SAATHI shall be identified in each district of Odisha in cooperation with Partner NGOs & provided with trainings
- 10000 SAKHI SAHELI of different villages in the state shall be oriented to provide pshycho social support to peers at the time of need,
- State level engagement with SAATHIS & SAKHI SAHELI on regular basis
- Content development & production of audio materials for community radio
- Mapping ,adaptation & translation of Resource materials,
- IEC development-Designing of Posters on EVAC,Animation videos on Child protection,Video process documentation of the initiative

**C] Activity -3 - Mental Health & psychosocial support to the children at Child Care Institutions in Odisha**

### Implementation Plan

- Engagement with children of CCIs
- Providing pshycho social support to children in CCIs

**D] Activity -4 - Care leavers and adolescents in CCIs capacitated & empowered with 21st century skill and career counselling under Yuwaah**

### Implementation Plan

- Engagement with Care Leavers and Adolescents in CCIs
  - Orientation to adolescents & care leavers on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
  - Career counselling to care leavers .

**E] Activity -5 -State level platform for GO - NGO coordination & convergence under OSCPCR for ending violence against children during & post COVID19 situations established**

### Implementation Plan

- Quarterly meeting of different related depts of Govt , statutory bodies & NGOs working for children under leadership of OSCPCR – discussion on various issues relating to ending violence against children – coordinated actions -sharing of learnings & experiences .

**F] Activity no -6 - An advocacy note on situation of children during & post Covid 19 situation including recommendations and best practices of Government and NGOs developed and shared with Government**

#### **Implementation Plan**

- A study on situation of children during & post covid 19 situation shall be done
- Compilation of best practices of Govt & NGOs
- Development of an advocacy note & sharing with key stakeholders .