

CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE



Providing learning, care and protective environment for children
affected by severe cyclone Fani¹

A joint initiative of



Abbreviations

ASHA:	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWC:	Anganwadi Centre
CFS:	Child Friendly Space
CWC:	Child welfare committee
CBOs:	Community Based Organisations
DRR:	Disaster Risk Reduction
DCPO:	District Child Protection Officer
DCPU:	District Child Protection Units
GP:	Gram Panchayat
GPCPC:	Gram Panchayat Child Protection Committee
IASC:	Inter-Agency Standing Committee Taskforce
INEE:	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
PRI:	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PWD:	Persons with Disabilities
SHG:	Self-Help Group
SMC:	School Management Committee
SNDYP:	Shri Nrusingha Dev Anchalika Yuba Parishad
UNCRC:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VLCPC:	Village Level Child Protection Committee
VDC:	Village Development Committee

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Preface

The severe cyclone Fani, which hit Odisha coast on 3 May 2019, affected 16.5 million people including children in 14 districts. Puri, Khurda, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, and Kendrapara were the worst affected districts. Following the severe cyclone, Aide et Action and UNICEF established 70 numbers of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) inSadar Block of Puri district in order to provide children a safe place to play, to promote their psychosocial well-being and facilitate healing and recovery.

The CFS provided a stimulating and safe environment to children affected by the cyclone. The CFSs were made inclusive to include children of all categories cutting across caste, gender and ethnicity. The local youths were recruited and trained to facilitate the CFS activities—appropriate to age and gender. Children participating in the CFS, were engaged in different types of activities i.e., creative, imaginative, physical and communicative. The Child Friendly Space also included activities that promoted child development, psychosocial well-being and coping skills.

In the aftermath of cyclone Fani, the CFS provided children a platform, where they expressed their feelings, anxiety and fear through the medium of paintings, role play, clay making etc. It also provided them an opportunity to showcase their talents and latent skills before the wider audience. Parents, community members, teachers and PRI members appreciated the CFS interventions, when they witnessed for the first-time children doing rallies to create awareness among the communities on ill-effects of child marriage, alcoholism, safe sanitary and hygienic practices etc.

As part of CFS activities, children prepared child centered DRR plans and shared with the Gram Panchayats for mainstreaming child risks into Gram Panchayat Development Plan. The Gram Panchayats expressed their commitments to carry forward the plans prepared by the children.

The CFS were set up within the existing community infrastructure and with community capacity, evolved into a platform where the community members understood the rights of children and their perspectives on children changed. Community's concern to protect the rights of children became increasingly high.

Key stakeholders like District Child Protection Officer, Child Welfare Committee members, teachers, PRI members etc supported the CFS interventions to help children to come out of the past and move forward to build an environment where children feel safe and protected.

However, all the above-mentioned success and process followed for setting up of CFS will go unnoticed in the absence of any document for future reference. Realizing this, Aide et Action and UNICEF have commissioned the process documentation to capture the process, success, challenges and learning involved in CFS implementation. The document will showcase the entire process of CFS implementation which can be referred and adapted by the Humanitarian agencies and the Government in the event of any future disaster in Odisha and elsewhere in the country.

The process document thus captures the following aspects:

- The process followed to set up CFS in 70 villages, included, identification of volunteers, their training, mobilisation of parents, community.
- Identifying a safe and secured space or infrastructure within the existing community to set up the CFS.
- How various activities of CFS reduced psychosocial issues of children;
- Role played by adolescent girls and boys trained as peer leaders on adolescent wellness and risky behaviour related to child marriage, abuse and trafficking;
- Training & capacity building of members of Pachayati Raj Institutions on child protection issues and frontline workers on their Socio-behavioural communication change;
- Child centric DRR planning carried out in 70 villages and how it will be helpful to reduce the children's vulnerability in the event of any disaster;
- Overall impact of CFS on the children and community.

The following methods were used to compile information for the process document:

- a. Literature review:** Available operation manuals, child protection standards in humanitarian action, guidelines and good practices on CFS were reviewed to understand the operating procedures and standards of CFS. Besides, the monthly reports of Aide et Action on CFS were also reviewed to get a glimpse of CFS activities carried out in the operation villages.
- b. Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** FGDs were conducted with children and adolescents, who participated in the CFS activities to get their perspectives on CFS and how it helped post cyclone Fani.
- c. Interactions:** Interactions made with key stakeholders like District Child Protection Officer, Child Welfare Committee members, Sarpanch and the CFS staff and facilitators, community members to understand the relevance of CFS, its impact on cyclone affected children and the way forward to continue the momentum.

The villages and CFSs were selected randomly for the FGDs with children and adolescents and interactions with Gram Panchayat representatives, CFS staff and facilitators and community members in Sadar block of Puri district.

1.1 Background

Children are the worst affected during disasters due to physical, psychological and social vulnerabilities. Children's dependence on adults and their unique needs for care and protection makes them more vulnerable. During and in the aftermath of a disaster, a child's vulnerability increases profusely due to relocation, separation from family and community, losing parent(s), and losing their home and hearth. The system and structures that normally protect children and support their development are often undermined or damaged. As a result, children are exposed to increased risks or threats like abuse, neglect, trafficking, and child labour and child marriage. In emergency situations, children show many psychological symptoms like withdrawal, fear, anger, sadness and restlessness. After a disaster, the violations of children's rights often increase due to negative coping mechanism of the families, volatile situations and temporary closure of institutions. These violations of child rights include rights to survival, protection, development and participation. Under the above circumstances, children require adequate attention from all concerned to uphold their rights.

The rare summer cyclone 'Fani' which hit Odisha coast on 3 May 2019, affected 16.5 million people including children in over 18,388 villages in 14 districts. Puri, Khurda, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara were the five most affected districts. Although human casualties were relatively low as compared to the Super Cyclone of 1999, the cyclone caused extensive damage to infrastructure and people's assets and their livelihoods. Government of Odisha evacuated close to 1.55 million people to 9,177 shelters including the 879 multipurpose cyclone/flood shelters and other safe shelters i.e., schools and public buildings. Like any other disasters, cyclone had devastating effect on children. The children lost their

houses, witnessed the damage of their school buildings, lost their reading and writing materials, and above all lost safe places to play.

Due to cyclone Fani, 5,735 elementary and secondary schools, out of 29,804 elementary and secondary schools were reportedly damaged in 14 affected districts. The main damage was in the Puri district. A total of 2,181 classrooms, out of which 2,098 were from five severely affected districts, were fully damaged and another 7,601 classrooms were partially damaged in elementary and secondary schools across all 14 affected districts¹.

The wrath of cyclone 'Fani' left an indelible impression on children. It was for the first time that children witnessed devastation of such scale, leaving them apprehensive of high-speed winds, clouds or rain. Women's typical responsibilities and routines significantly changed post cyclone. Women supported their husbands to repair houses by salvaging housing materials before the onset of the monsoon season. As a result, parents were unable to take adequate care of their small children. Occupied with rebuilding houses, adults in the villages lost their wage-earning opportunities both in and outside of their villages. It restricted their access to cash, which had its implication on the quantity and variety of food available to children after the cyclone. Overall, parents were not in a position to provide adequate care, timely and enough food to children.

The existing open spaces and play areas for children were filled with uprooted or broken trees caused by the cyclone. The children finding no place for playing or passing their time meaningfully, wandered in the villages watching the repair work of their houses. The young ones were mostly found helping their parents in repairing of houses and sibling care. The vulnerability of children further increased as most of the affected areas were low-lying and flood prone. The damaged school buildings/boundary walls were also not safe and posed a threat to children and school staff.

In the absence of schooling, adequate care and protection of children by the care givers, imminent protection risks such as abuse, child labor, child marriage and trafficking increased in the cyclone affected districts. In the wake of children being engaged in house repairing activities and sibling care; the likelihood of children

1. Cyclone Fani: Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment (May, 2019), Govt. of Odisha, United Nations, Asian Development Bank and the World Bank

dropping out of schools was also increased. The cyclone affected families' coping mechanism increased the burden on children. The families engaged their children in household chores, as male and female adults were engaged in house repairing works. Poor parents resorting to early marriage of their daughters also loomed large in the affected villages. The loss of employment opportunities after the cyclone forced the poor and marginal families to think in terms of passing the burden of girl child by marrying her. With the loss of income from agriculture and other sources, the chances of young children joining the already migrating force at the cost of their education was high.

Key child protection issues/concern post cyclone 'Fani'

- Lack of safe spaces for children as families were residing mainly in shelters and unsafe damaged houses;
- Harmful coping mechanism of families due to livelihood loss increased the chances of child labour, early marriage of girls, trafficking etc;
- In the absence of schooling due to summer vacation, children remained vulnerable to safety and protection issues.

1.2 Need for Child Friendly Space

In the aftermath of cyclone Fani, Aide et Action (India) and UNICEF created the Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) in 156 villages covering 30 GPs of Sadar Block in Puri district to address the immediate protection needs of children and to provide them safe environment. More than 26,000 cyclone affected children were covered by the CFS in the target villages. The CFSs were run for five months from June to October, 2019. 'Child Friendly Space' means safe spaces where communities create nurturing environments in which children can access free and structured play, recreation, leisure and learning activities. Child-friendly spaces (CFSs) provided educational and psychosocial support and other activities to restore a sense of normality and continuity. They are designed and operated in a participatory manner, often using existing spaces in the community and may serve a specific age group of children, or a variety of age ranges². Child Friendly Space is a child right's programming approach that supports children's well-being in the midst of emergencies. The approach has been used widely since 1999 to protect children by providing a safe space with supervised activities, by raising awareness of the risks to children, and mobilizing

communities to begin the process of creating a Protective Environment³. In other words, Child friendly Space (CFS) are interventions used by humanitarian agencies to increase children's access to safe environments and promote their psychosocial well-being.

2. Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) 2012: Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action, Standard 17, Child Friendly Spaces, page 149

3. A Practical Guide for Developing Child Friendly Space: UNICEF

Child Friendly Space (CFS): An overview

02

2.1 Purpose : The CFSs were created by Aide et Action and UNICEF in the worst affected villages of Sadar Block in Puri district with the following objectives:

1. To provide psycho-social care, learning and protective space for young children and adolescents' boys and girls;
2. To strengthen and build capacity of community-based child protection institutions;
3. Develop community-based tracking and create system for sustainable community based child protection mechanisms;
4. Improving access to key child centric entitlements for the community.

2.2 Principles of Child Friendly Space: To have positive effects, the CFS should adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force (IASC) Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education. While establishing CFSs, Aide et Action and UNICEF followed the following six principles, which are the product of inter-agency dialogue and learning from different emergencies.

Principle 1: CFSs are safe and secure for children

Children need immediate support and a safe environment particularly after disasters. The CFS is such arrangement which provides a safe and supportive environment for children at the time of crisis. Safety is therefore, factored into the very design of physical space and operations of the CFS. Following actions were taken while establishing Child Friendly Space to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse:

- CFS Facilitators were made aware on the ill effects of use of violence on children;
- Raised awareness of children, families and the community on ways to protect children;
- Capacity building of CFS Facilitators to identify, talk with and refer to any suspected cases of violence, abuse or exploitation;
- Capacity building of CFS Facilitators on how to identify, talk with and refer to the cases of mental disorder, developmental disability etc in children and adolescents;
- Imparting life skills techniques to children and adolescents for enabling them to protect themselves.

Principle 2: CFS provides a stimulating and supportive environment to children

Usually children need stimulation and play on a regular basis to develop in a healthy manner. In a stressful environment, particularly after a disaster, children also need psychosocial support through their participation in an engaging and supportive environment. The supportive environment includes three key elements such as a) a wide range of appropriate activities b) conducive environment to facilitate activities, and d) encouraging and supportive staff to facilitate the activities. Aide et Action and UNICEF thus tried to create a stimulating environment in the CFS to help children in the following manner:

- To provide healing environment for children;
- To promotes useful life skills;
- To reduces the impact of cyclone by providing structured play and recreation activities;
- To help children return to normalcy by bringing the daily routine back into their lives;
- To provide psychosocial support to reduce the psychological and social impact of the cyclone on children;
- To encourage positive socialization of children with peers.

Principle 3: CFS are built on existing structures and capacities within a community

It has been experienced that externally driven projects/programmes have limited or no sustainability at all. The effectiveness of post disaster recovery and reconstruction programme depends on how well it is built on the existing capacities and structures of the communities. The sustainability of the interventions, therefore, calls for the effective use of available resources, services, and daily routines of families. Besides, community structures for supporting and protecting children are disrupted in an emergency. CFS helps families and communities re-establish or strengthen mechanisms for children's care and protection. The principle therefore adhered to while establishing CFS in the target villages.

Principle 4: CFS uses participatory approach for the design and implementation

Meaningful participation gives voice to different categories of children. Participation of children in the CFS process including planning, implementation and monitoring, contribute towards improving programme quality, equity and sustainability. Active participation of the community on the other hand brings in ownership into the programme. Adhering to this principle, Aide et Action and UNICEF adopted the following key strategies:

- Engaged positively with children to listen to them and value their views;
- Treated children with respect and encouraged their participation including children with disability or other special needs;
- Organized community events on special occasions to demonstrate the skill of children.

Principle 5: CFS supports for integrated services and programmes

It is essential that the CFS activities and programme should be integrated as much as possible. The three important sectors of a CFS are education, protection and health. However, CFS is not limited to these sectors and should converge with other sectors; which are essential to address the immediate and long-term needs of children affected by disasters. A coordinated approach is therefore needed to ensure integration of services for children participating in the CFSs. Following steps were adopted by Aide et Action and UNICEF while establishing CFS in the target villages:

- Using a rights-based approach to ensure the rights to survival, development, participation and protection of children
- Referral system to ensure children in the CFS have access to relevant basic services such as education, health and nutrition;
- Providing information about health, sanitation and hygiene.

Principle 6: CFSs are inclusive and non-discriminatory

All **children should** have the opportunity to participate in the CFS, regardless of their gender, age, ethnic background or if they have a disability. It is important to reach out to vulnerable children who may not otherwise participate in the CFS. Adhering to this principle, Aide et Action and UNICEF took steps to include vulnerable children such as children with disabilities, girls, orphans, children of single parent and children of excluded community etc into the CFS. Steps were also taken to reach out and include the children residing in different hamlets of the target villages. Following strategies were adopted in the CFS to make it inclusive:

- Organizing activities to meet the specific needs of girls and boys of different ages;
- Reach out to and include children with disabilities, working children, out of school children, minority and other vulnerable children;
- Location of CFS sites in public buildings and community places to ensure equal access of children of all categories;
- Training of female and male CFS facilitators on child friendly and participatory approaches to make the CFS vibrant;
- The children were engaged in centre based activities while the adolescents were engaged in organizing events to mark special days and rallies around environment protection, sanitation and outdoor play;
- Special care taken to include the children with special needs into the CFS.

Setting up Child Friendly Space: Key Actions

03

3.1 Assessment

An initial assessment is essential to establish a CFS, to locate the site and design the CFS activities. Before starting the Child Friendly Space (CFS), Aideet Action identified the most vulnerable cyclone ravaged villages with the support of local partner in Sadar block of Puri district. It also conducted the assessment to determine whether CFSs are needed and contextually appropriate. The implications of the cyclone on children's rights were also assessed to understand the appropriateness of creating CFS in the identified villages. The villages for CFS were selected based on the following criteria:

- The village is severely affected
- The community members are enthusiastic to set up CFS
- No schools or ongoing activities for children are available
- Community (cyclone shelters, youth clubs, or school space) is available for CFS activities
- The community members are willing to support CFS activities

Number of CFS

Block	GP	Outreach Village	Number of Child Friendly Space
PuriSadar	11	122	70

Identification of children and adolescents

Identification of children and adolescents is most important to visualize the total number of participants of the CFS. It also helps planning the sessions according to children's age and the number of staff and volunteers required to run the CFS. The cluster coordinators and the volunteers recruited by Aide et Action conducted door-to-door survey to identify the children (6-10 years) and adolescents (11-18 years). Interaction with the parents at the time of survey helped to understand their problems and to share the objectives of CFS..

Understanding the Daily Routines of Children and Families

After a disaster, the routine of children changes drastically because their families struggle to cope with the new situation. Therefore, understanding the daily routines of children and their families is essential in planning the CFS activities. Aide et Action and its local partner SNDAYP tried to understand the daily routines of the children in the affected villages.

3.2 Site selection

Identification of a suitable location is a key step in establishing a Child Friendly Space. Aide et Action and its local partners SNDAYP therefore, mapped the existing facilities and infrastructure including schools and community centers to set up the proposed CFS structures. The community members including boys and girls of the village were involved in the mapping process. School buildings and community centers like cyclone shelters, youth clubs were identified having potable water sources; toilets etc to run the CFSs. Accessibility and convenience of the community were thus considered as key considerations for selecting a CFS sites.

Criteria for selecting CFS sites:-

- Accessible to children and their families
- Availability of water and toilet facilities
- Location convenient and accessible for other service providers
- Size adequate for the number of identified number of children
- The community agreed to the selected location

3.3 Selecting Partners

Selection of a partner to implement CFS is very important. Aideet Action selected a local partner—Shri Nrusingha Dev Anchalika Yuba Parishad(SANDAYP)⁴ to implement CFS activities in Sadar block of Puri district based on the following considerations:

- Strong community presence
- Extensive field-based expertise
- Specialised knowledge and skills
- Ability to adapt to the local situations
- Long-term commitment to the locality

3.4 Selection and orientation of volunteers

As CFS runs for a temporary period till normalcy prevails, it requires a fair amount of understanding of the location and knowledge of the government services by the facilitators. It is therefore important to identify CFS facilitators with the right kind of attitude to run the CFS effectively. The facilitators were selected through a joint screening process by Aide et Action and its local partner—SNDAYP. Following key things were considered while selecting CFS facilitators: -

- Engagement of local women having a qualification of minimum matriculation or +2. In case of non availability of women facilitators male facilitators were also considered;
- Preference given to candidate(s) of village where CFS was to be opened;
- Candidates having basic understanding on how to deal with children's protection concerns and the actions to address those;
- Basic minimum understanding on different child care services provided by the government at Anganwadi centers and other services like education, healthcare and protection;
- Knowledge about the location of nearest government child care institutions;

⁴ SNDAYP is a non-governmental social development organization established in 1994 by a handful of energetic and enthusiastic youth at the village level. The organisation seeks to positively change and uplift the lives of the most marginalized and oppressed section of the society by advocating for equity, health, peace, education and dignity of life for the disadvantaged including women and children in Odisha.

- Willingness in interacting and caring for young children, adolescents and other stakeholders.

Training and Orientation

The selected volunteers were provided a 2-days training course in 4 batches. During the two days of training, the volunteers were oriented on the following key aspects related to CFS:

- Child Friendly Space and its needs in the context of disaster
- Engagement with key stakeholders such as children, adolescent, School Management Committee (SMC), Mothers Committee, Child Protection Committee members, SHGs, CBOs etc
- Psycho-social counseling to disaster affected children and adolescent
- Government entitlements for children and families

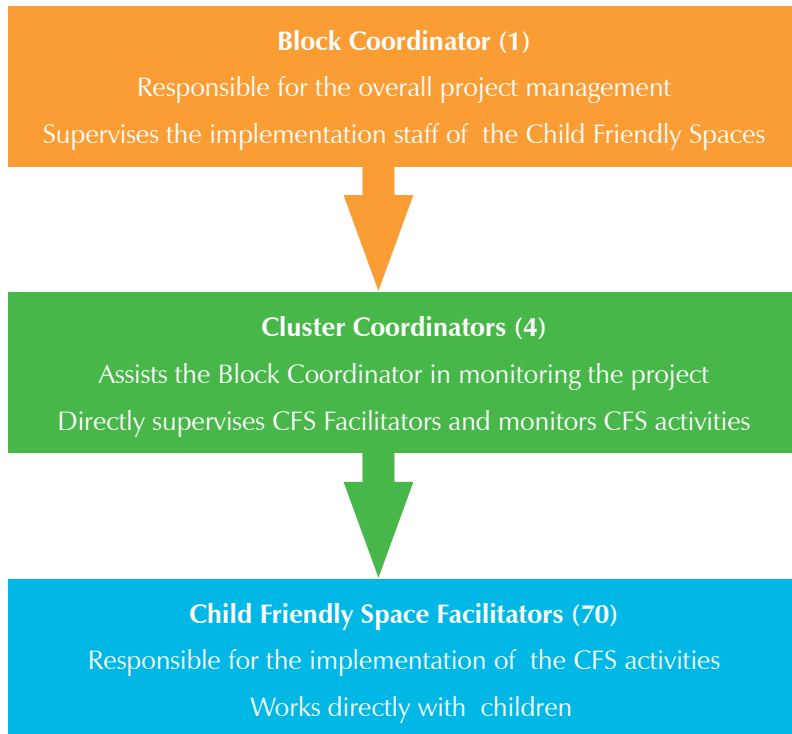
The CFS Cluster Coordinators were provided a 3-days training on Psychosocial Counseling by National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), organized by UNICEF Odisha. The training was then provided in a cascade mode to the CFS facilitators to train them on the skill of how to release the mental stress of children affected by the cyclone Fani.



Training-cum-orientation to CFS facilitators

3.5 The Staffing pattern of CFS

The Block Coordinator, Cluster Coordinators and the CFS Facilitators were recruited locally by Aide et Action and its local partners to run the CFS in target villages. The staffing pattern of CFS and responsibilities of each staff is given below:



3.6 Planning and collaboration with different actors

Coordination with the government, PRIs and other humanitarian actors is critical for opening and running the CFS. Keeping this in view, Aide et Action and its local partner engaged with the PRIs, District Child Protection Unit, Child Welfare Committee to mobilize their support to run the CFS effectively. In most of the cases, the Gram Panchayats offered the space to run CFS centers.

Implementing CFS: Key activities, challenges and impact

04

4.1 Development of schedule and curriculum

CFS offers a wide-range of appropriate services and activities. The CFS incorporate a range of core activities such as education, life skills, arts, play, recreation, sports etc. The selection of activities should therefore be based on the needs of children. Aide et Action and its local partners designed the schedule and programme curriculum of CFS based on the need and age of the children. The CFSs were opened for 7 days in a week (Monday-Sunday). However, the time schedule followed from Monday to Friday was after school hour i.e, 4:30-6:30 PM and 3:30-5:30 PM on Saturday and Sunday. The target groups for the CFS were 6-12 years age children and 13-18 years adolescents. The children and adolescents were encouraged to socialise with other children and engaged in activities, such as role-playing, art, singing, dancing and story-telling. These activities enabled them to express their feelings.

Additional family burdens or responsibilities may be placed on the adolescent boys and girls post disaster situations. In the aftermath of disaster, adolescents are confronted with increased risks, such as sexual exploitation, and harmful labour. Therefore, the programme curriculum included topics to aware and educate them on protection rights and different structures and mechanisms. The adolescents were also given the responsibilities to organise public events to aware the communities on different social and environmental issues.

The daily schedule of the CFS was broadly divided into three main parts: a) opening activities, b) main activities, and c) closing activities.

Daily CFS Activities

Open Activities	Main Activities	Closing Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming the children • Setting up the environment where children feel safe and happy to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play, singing and dancing, paper cuttings, drawings • Other fun activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming together to reflect on the day • Thanks giving to children for their participation

4.2 Play and learning materials in CFS

Different play and learning materials were identified in participation with the children and provided in each CFS. Following aspects were considered while identifying play and learning materials for the CFS:

- Materials for both girls and boys
- Age-appropriate materials
- Low cost materials that can be replenished by the community

In addition to the learning materials, following sports materials were also provided in each CFS center.

Materials Provided in CFS	
Sl. No	Items
1	Tarpaulin
2	Drawing Sheet
3	Sketch Pen
4	Colour Paper
5	Permanent Marker
6	Cello Tap
7	Double Side Tap
8	Zinc Paper
9	Gum
10	White Paper
11	Poster Colour
12	Crayon Wax
13	Fevicol
14	First Aid Box
15	Scissor
16	Tag
17	Prime Kit

List of Sports Materials

Sl. No	Items	Quantity	Per CFS
1	Volley Ball	70	1 Pc
2	Volley ball net	41	1 Pc
3	Ring Ball	350	5 Pcs
4	Soft ball	140	2 Pcs
5	Skipping Rope	350	5 Pcs
6	Ludoo	70	1 Pc

4.3 Child Friendly Space Activities

Children need different types of play such as creative, imaginative, physical and communicative. The Child Friendly Space activities therefore included creative activities, life skills education games, sports, and activities that promote child development, psychosocial well-being and coping skills. Keeping this in mind, Aide et Action and its local partner designed the following CFS activities.

Creative: In order to help children express their feelings and ideas; paintings, drawings, yoga etc were facilitated by CFS facilitators. Total 700 number of children (Both boys and girls) across all CFS centres participated in the Yoga classes. Due to yoga classes, children came to know about the positive effects of yoga for physical wellness and to release mental stress.



Children doing paper works at CFS

The children in CFS also performed song and dance. Total 2400 number of children across all CFS performed dance and song activities in their respective CFS.

These activities helped children to refresh their mind and physical performance contributed towards their better health. Being inspired by other children, children with special needs also participated in the song and dance performance. In some CFSs, children invited dance teachers (available in their villages) to teach them dance. The parents were pleased to see their children dancing. After seeing the performance, parents could realise the potential of their children.

More than 1800 numbers of children participated in drawing activities in the CFSs. The children sketched different drawings and filled those with colours of their choice. That's not all! Children pasted the drawings in the wall magazines for the community members to view those. The joy of parents knew no bound after seeing the drawings of their children featured in the wall magazine.

Origami became a popular activity in the CFS. About 1200 numbers of children learnt and practiced different origami art in the CFSs. Children decorated CFS with their paper folding designs of different size and shapes. Community members including parents were happy to see the beautiful paper art prepared by their children and it even raised demands in the community to decorate individual houses.

Imaginative: Role plays were also facilitated in the CFS to develop creative skill among children and to release their stress through fun. Role Play on Child marriage and Plantation was organised in the CFSs. About 400 number of children from 10 CFS performed role plays in their respective villages on the topic of Child marriage and importance of tree. Through the role play, children could understand the ill-effects of child marriage, benefits of planting trees, institutional mechanism and structures available for protection of children. Children were also able to communicate these messages to the larger society.

Physical: Sports like volleyball and other outdoor games were also played by children in the CFS. Sports helped developing self-confidence and team spirit among children. About 2500 numbers of children from different CFSs participated in different games and sports activities. Through games and sports, children could understand the spirit of game and relate it with their lives. They learnt about resilience and building back better.

Subhashree Maharana a thirteen-year-old deaf & mute child felt the intensity of the cyclone with its wind flow. She got very scared. With a fall of a coconut tree on her house it got completely damaged. All her books and notebooks got spoiled after getting wet. She was mostly staying at home. With the opening of CFS, she started coming to the CFS regularly. She was apprehensive that other children will make fun of her. But amazed to see that children were very cooperative and trying to interact with her in sign language. I learnt that sign language is also taught to children at the CFS which made me more comfortable and after attending CFS, I received a joyful learning and play environment which wiped out my worries and brought smile in my face says Subhashree

Communicative: Storytelling, conversation time etc in the CFS helped children express their feeling in words. These activities also allowed children to open up and discuss issues that are important to them. The communicative activities in the CFS also helped the children to voice their concerns before others.

Making CFS inclusive: In order to make the Child Friendly Spaces, special attention was given to the inclusion of children with special needs who needed special consideration in order to participate in CFS activities. There were nearly 145 differently able children especially deaf & mute, children with locomotor challenges and intellectual & development disability who attended the CFS. Sign languages were taught to all children so that they can interact with the deaf & mute children. Children were also sensitised on how to interact with a special child when they meet in their daily life.

Cultural, life skills and public awareness activities

Cultural: In the CFS, children observed important days such as Independence Day and celebrated RakshaBandhan, Janmashtami etc. Different events were also organized by the children like debate competitions on issues of relevance, role plays on social issues. All these events helped bringing unity amongst children cutting across caste, creed and religious lines. It also noticeably increased self-respect and respect for others (peers, family, and community) within the children.



Life Skill Training to Children

Life Skills: The adolescent boys and girls were oriented on the issues of child rights, child marriage, abuse, trafficking, good/bad touch, and government entitlements etc to strengthen their life skills. Total six number of such trainings were organised with the following objectives:

- To enhance the knowledge and skill of adolescents on the issues of child rights and its violations;
- To aware the adolescents on key child protection laws and government entitlements.

The District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) members of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Puri district were the resource persons in the above-mentioned

trainings. As a result of the training programme, children became aware on different issues related to child marriage, abuse, trafficking etc. They also came to know about child rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and key child protection laws enacted by the Government.

Participants’ Details

No. of participants	Male	Female
309	120	234

Registration and Attendance Records

Registration and attendance records are important in relation to the care of children, as well as for monitoring purposes. The CFS facilitators registered every child who attended CFS and also recorded their attendance on a daily basis.

Public Awareness: Different public rallies were organized by children in the target villages. The purpose was to raise public awareness on environmental issues, ill-effects of child marriage, alcoholism, good health & hygienic practices, traffic rules etc.



Awareness rally by Children

Child-centered Disaster Risk Reduction Planning

An orientation programme on child-centered disaster risk reduction planning was organised for the CFS Facilitators. A child-centered disaster risk reduction plan is a list of activities prepared by children to reduce the impact of disaster on children. It also identified actions by different stakeholders before, during and after disasters. Total 70 number of CFS facilitators attended the orientation programme to facilitate the planning process by and with the children.

After the orientation, a core team consisting of four children was constituted in each village. The core teams so constituted were conferred with the following key responsibilities:

- a. To record the proceedings at the time of plan preparation
- b. To draw the social map along with the children and community
- c. To note down the information shared by the children and villagers
- d. To observe the involvement of participants.

Children, youth, women, elderly, PwDs and representatives of other vulnerable groups participated in the planning process. The CFS facilitators initiated the discussions and planning process in each village. Children shared their experiences, expressed their needs and concerns during the planning process. Social Maps were prepared by the children; wherein they identified hazardous places, households (women, elderly headed) and children (orphan, single parent, children with disability). The DRR assessment analyzed vulnerability of children living in unsafe houses, unsafe school, anganwadi and play area, houses having infants, children, expectant mothers, aged people, and persons with disability who might need special care during & after cyclone. Children of these CFS centers with the support of community members discussed plans to reach out vulnerable households in case of any natural disasters and urged the communities to advocate with the government for safe housing and child friendly infrastructure, portable water, hygiene and special relief for children and women.

“We have identified a range of factors including disability, age, gender, social status and steps to protect children and utilise their energy and knowledge to engage in DRR” Says Sruti Jena from Dhiasahi, Talajangha GP of Puri district. Sruti is one of the children who was involved in the process of Child centric disaster Risk Reduction



Children preparing the Social Map at CFS



Children explaining the Child-centered DRR plan at Rahangiria cyclone shelter CFS

plan is a part of the CFS activities where children are preparing their DRR Plan for their village.

4.4 Coordination meeting with stakeholders at block level

A Block level consultation meeting was conducted at Sadar block on 21st October 2019 with GPCPC, SHG and PRIs. The purpose of the consultation was

- To aware stakeholders on the need of Child Friendly Space
- To share the child-centred DRR plans prepared by children
- The ways and means of continuing CFS beyond the project period

Children shared the child-centred DRR plans with the stakeholders. The Panchayat representatives appreciated the initiatives of children and assured them all supports to include child-centred DRR plans in the Gram Panchayat Plans. The Sarpanch also assured full support for the continuity of CFS beyond the project period i.e., October 2019.

Participants' Details

No of participants	Male	Female
58	15	43

“I am very happy that the children of my Panchayat have enhanced their skill after attending CFS” Says Prasant kumar Mishra ,Sarpanch , BirabalabhadraPur GP of Puri district. He was invited to the district level conversation with the children on disaster and child protection organized by Aide et Action on 26th October 2019. The children shared the CFS activities and also shared the child-centered DRR Plan prepared by them. Looking at Children’s enthusiasm, he gave his commitment to continue CFS in his panchayat with Panchayat contingency fund.

“CFS is a very good platform for children; which offers place for them to be themselves, to be creative, to learn, to play and to grow together. Now it is our responsibility as panchayat representatives to continue this child friendly space in our panchayats.”added Prasant Kumar Mishra.

4.5 Panchayat level sensitization Meetings

Panchayat level sensitization meetings were organised to address child rights issues. Total 13 numbers of Gram Panchayats of PuriSadar block i.e, Biraharikrishnapur, Balipada, Kerindipur, Birapratappur, Ganganarayanpur, Birabalabhadrapur, Chandanpur, Biranaraasinghapur, Malatipatpur, Talajangha, Samanga, Sasandamodarpur and Chalisbatia were covered in the sensitization meetings. Officials from District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) and members of Child Welfare Committee (CWC) facilitated the meetings through interactive discussions. They sensitised the participants on child rights, child protection laws and government schemes meant for children. They also highlighted the roles of Village Level Child Protection Committee (VLCPC), Self-help Groups (SHGs) and School Management Committee (SMC) in addressing Child rights issues.

Participants’ details

No of participants	Male	Female
284	110	174



Frontline workers training

4.6 Orientation to Frontline workers

The frontline workers like ASHA, AWC, school teachers were oriented on Social Behavior Change Communication and innovative communication methodology in 11 GPs of Puri Sadar block. The purpose of the orientation was to ensure that relevant stakeholders understand their roles for protecting children. This orientation programme at Gram Panchayat level helped changing the behavior of frontline works and community members towards children.

No of participants	Male	Female
311	49	262

4.7 Capturing stories on coping mechanism by children using smart phone and social media

Aide et Action and its local partner have orientated children on how to capture real life incidences and stories around them, in their smart phone. Around 50 children and facilitators attended this orientation. Children were taught how to identify a real life incident and shape it into a story, and capture it in their Smart phone. During Fani, many families underwent through lots of difficulties. Many houses were damaged, people's valuables were buried underneath debris, children had no food and their books were spoiled due to rains. There were so much of devastation around, but people did not lose any hope. Everyone including children toiled hard

to cope and return back to their normalcy. In the CFS children were taught different technique that captured stories depicting people’s coping mechanism aftermath of cyclone Fani by using smart phones and social media.

4.8 Conversation with children on disaster and child protection

A district level conversation with children on disaster and child protection was organized on 26th October at Sanskruti Bhawan, Puri. The objective of the conversation was listening to children affected by disaster, their concerns and ideas for developing child centered disaster risk reduction policy and programme in Odisha. Children shared their experiences of cyclone Fani and how it affected them. They also shared their involvement in the Child Friendly Space (CFS) and how it helped them to come out of the fear psychosis caused by the cyclone. Children also presented the social map indicating vulnerable places, households and children and the child-centered DRR plans before key stakeholders present in the workshop.

The one-day conversation was attended by children of CFS, Commissioner, OSCPCR, member of CWC, PRI members, DCPO, District Emergency Officer, representatives of UNICEF and Aide et Action, SHG members, Childline, NGOs and key government functionaries.

Participants’ List

No of participants	Male	Female
240	93	147



Conversation with Children on DRR and Child Protection in Puri

Children's experience and views on cyclone 'Fani'

- We came to know about the cyclone 'Fani' from Television
- We hadn't seen such type of cyclone before
- Our families couldn't anticipate the intensity of the cyclone and took it like any other cyclone witnessed before
- Before the cyclone, life was normal but after it life came to a stand still
- Our books, study materials and houses damaged in the cyclone
- We couldn't get food on the day of the cyclone and managed with coconut water
- The asbestos sheet of the damaged houses were flying in the open
- Our household items like utensils, cloth, sarees, blankets, bed etc were buried under the debris of damaged houses
- We couldn't contact our near and dear through mobile phone
- We were disturbed psychologically after seeing such a devastation around us
- The adolescent girls suffered a lot during cyclone Fani but we couldn't express our sufferings before others including our parents. Although we were shifted to shelters alongwith our family members but didn't feel safe and protected there.

4.9 Monitoring of CFS

A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was developed and integrated into the CFS implementation. The CFSs were monitored on a regular basis by Aide et Action, local partner and the CFS staff to identify gaps in community mobilization, quality of activities, safety, adequacy of supplies, logistic support etc. The Cluster Coordinators and the Block Coordinators continuously monitored the day-to-day activities of the CFS to ensure its effective functioning. The basic monitoring system included the following the areas:

- **Attendance:** To track the number of children attending a CFS each day.
- **Activities:** To keep a record of the type of activities conducted in a CFS each day. The activity planning worksheet of the CFS was monitored to track the activities implemented and the changes made.
- **Referrals:** To record the number of children referred to other services and

details information about the services to which referrals were being made for necessary follow-up actions.

- **CFS quality standards:** To assess the extent to which CFS is meeting quality standards.

4.10 Challenges

Following are some of the key challenges faced while setting up the CFS and in course of implementation of CFS activities:

- At the beginning, the community members were not willing to spare the community hall to set up CFS. The education authorities including the teachers were also not interested to provide space in the school premise for establishing the CFS. When the PRIs were involved and the teachers and community members understood the functions of CFS through community meetings, they extended their wholehearted support.
- At the outset, parents were not sending their children to CFS because of the tuition. After they realized the importance of CFS for their children, they requested the teachers to change the tuition time to 6 PM in the evening.
- The adolescent girls were regularly attending the CFS at the beginning. But later on the parents opposed their adolescent girls coming to the CFS and dancing. In due course, when the parents saw their daughters performing in different events and displayed their latent skills and talents, they realized the relevance of the CFS.
- Initially, it was challenging for the facilitators to manage so many children and that too of different age groups. Later on, the facilitators grouped the children according to their ages and managed with activities designed for different age groups.

4.11 Impact of CFS

The CFS helped children and the community members in a number of ways. The key impacts of CFS on the lives of children and community members are summarized in paragraphs below.

i. Children enjoyed and could express their feelings in safe and protected environment: CFS provided safe space for children in the aftermath of cyclone Fani. They could play, sing, dance and express their feelings without fear. CFS provided children a sense of safety and it brought back the daily routine in their lives. By participating in the CFS, children could pass their time meaningfully.

“The children would have been neglected by their parents after the cyclone Fani. Their parents might have forced them to take up negative coping mechanism such as child labour, early marriage and trafficking. But the CFS created by Aide et Action post cyclone Fani kept the children engaged and provided them a safe and joyful environment. The children participating in the CFS, could articulate their issues and learn about child rights”—

District Child Protection Officer, Puri.

ii. Children could get back to normalcy by participating in CFS: CFS helped children in a significant way to get back to normal life following the cyclone Fani. Children were afraid after the cyclone, experiencing behavior changes or crying when it rained, but with time, CFS helped them to return back to their normal selves. The stimulating environment in the CFS helped children’s psychosocial recovery. The structured activities of the CFS provided children the much needed psychosocial support. In CFS, children could release their mental stress, anxiety and developed a sense of resilience. The CFs activities enabled children to express their feelings, try new things, making friends and to realize that they are not alone. The children participating in the CFS thus learnt the skill to cope with the challenges in the recovery phase.

“The school remained close for one month. The road was cut off and restricted the mobility of villagers. Electricity was not there so nobody could watch the television”. The space used by children in the village was filled with broken trees and other remnants. The children were sitting idle at home and adolescents were helping their parents to repair the houses. The devastation of the cyclone Fani was looming large in children and their families. At that juncture, the CFS helped erasing the fear from children’s mind and brought the daily routine back into the lives of children.”

Sarpanch, Chandanpur GP.

iii. Children developed knowledge and understanding on child rights and protection structures: The topics related to child rights, protection issues (abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation) and structures were discussed regularly in the CFS. It raised the awareness among children on child rights as enshrined in UNCRC and the protection issues in particular. The children are in a position to assert their rights and protect the most vulnerable children both in normal circumstances and in disaster situations.

iv. Children's participation increased in activities relevant for their lives: The CFS provided a platform to children where they actively participated in different activities and showcased their latent skills and talents before the communities. The children could realize the strength of association to claim for their rights. Children of all categories, regardless of age, gender, caste, ethnicity came together in a single platform which instilled a sense of unity among the children. The children also developed a caring attitude for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. They also participated in the preparation of child-centered DRR plans and identified hazardous places, vulnerable households (women, elderly headed) and children in difficult circumstances such as orphan, single parent, children with disability. They shared these plans with Gram Panchayats to seek their commitment to include their plan into the Gram Panchayat Development Plan.

"CFS won't die, it will live in our memory for ever. Due to CFS, we returned back to our normalcy. It is where, we could dance, sing and act together. If CFS continues, we will be able to express our latent skill and talents before others."—

Mrutunjayee Mallick, Dolagobindapur

iv. Community capacity enhanced to address child protection issues: The CFS raised the awareness of community members on child protection issues through a series of community meetings and interactions. As a result, community members understood the protection needs of children in the aftermath of natural disaster like cyclone. They also learnt to respect the views of children and their attitude towards children changed. They accepted children as change agents and believed that if given a chance, children could play a critical role to bring about positive social behaviour and practice change in the society. This strengthens the foundation towards building a protective environment for children before, during and after disasters.

Rosalin, a girl of 13 years lives with her family of four sisters and one brother in Rahangiria village of Biraharekrushnapur GP in Puri district. The family was living in very poor condition because Rosalin's father was not staying with them. Her mother is the sole breadwinner in the family and they managed to live in a mud and thatched house. At the time of cyclone Fani, the family took shelter in a cyclone shelter. When they returned home after the cyclone, they found their house collapsed. They became helpless and starved for three days. Finding no way out, Rosalin's mother sold their cow and maintained the family by doing wage labour. After seeing all this, Rosalin was depressed and didn't feel like talking to anyone including her friends. ***"I was so depressed after the cyclone FANI. It was so devastating and I had never seen such cyclone in my life. After coming to the CFS, I am happier as I am ventilating my sorrows and participating in different activities."***

Says Rosalin

Lessons Learned 05

In course of implementation of CFS in Sadar Block of Puri district, the following key lessons were learnt. These lessons can be used while establishing CFS in the aftermath of disasters by Humanitarian Agencies in Odisha and elsewhere.

5.1 Community involvement: As part of the CFS project, Aide et Action, UNICEF and the local partner reached out to parents, PRI representatives, local leaders, SHGs, education providers etc for their active involvement and support. Due to active support and involvement of the community members, the CFS sites could be mobilized and the parents sent their children regularly to the CFS. The community members also supported in different CFS activities.

5.2 Engagement with key stakeholders: Aide et Action and its local partner's engagement with District Child Protection Unit and Child Welfare Committee, provided resource person support to conduct training programmes for CFS staff and facilitators, PRI representatives and adolescents.

5.3 Mainstreaming child protection in CFS: Mainstreaming child protection in CFS is critical for understanding minimum standards for child protection. Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for staff implementing CFS is also equally important to seek the commitment of staff engaged in the CFS activities. Complaints mechanism should be established redress grievances of children and a clear cut response mechanism should be established to respond to child protection risks.

5.4 Adolescent Age groups: Although, it is challenging to adjust activities in the CFS for different age groups, the adolescents (13-18 years) in particular need proper attention. Their needs should be mapped out and addressed in the

CFS in the aftermath of emergency. Activities for adolescents in Child Friendly Spaces should suit to their needs and preferences.

5.5 Engagement of local youths as CFS facilitators: Engagement of local youths as CFS facilitators was quite effective. The local youths were well acquainted with the local situations and protection issues faced by children before, during and after cyclone Fani. The engagement of local youths also helped in mobilizing the communities for running the CFS effectively. The facilitators' training on different aspects of CFS, helped creating a resource pool at community level for similar type of interventions in the event of any future disaster.

The Child friendly Space (CFS) established by Aide et Action and UNICEF increased children's access to safe environment and promoted their psychosocial well-being. However, the CFS need to complement the wider work in child protection as the state of Odisha is vulnerable to various natural disasters due to its unique geo-climatic conditions. The coastal part of the State is frequented by cyclone, flood, tidal surge, whereas drought is the common phenomena in south and west Odisha. All past disasters have affected the poor and socially weaker sections the most. However, the experience of past disaster suggests that disaster causes far reaching psychosocial impact on children and adolescent owing to their age, capacity and specific needs. Cyclone Fani bears testimony to the fact that how disaster has devastating effect on children. A long-term intervention is required to reduce the impact of disasters on children.

i) Development of child-centered risk informed GP development plan: Gram Panchayat (GP) as an institution of local self-governance can play a distinct role in due to its close proximity to the community. The GP can play an important role to mainstream child-centered disaster risk into its development planning. This necessitates that the GP development plan need to be informed on child related risks in the context of a disaster. The initiatives taken up by the children of CFS to develop child-centered DRR plan is a step in the right direction. The children need to share the plan with the Gram Panchayats to mainstream the child related risks into the development plan for providing children a safe and protected environment before, during and after disasters.

ii) Strengthening community capacities to address child protection issues: The CFS complement wider work in child protection. They are part of a community-

based child protection strategy that supports the community to organise child protection committees, raise awareness of community on child protection issues, and develop referral pathways for children and families in need of extra protection. Therefore, community based child protection mechanism should be strengthened to provide the necessary support to children both in normal and disaster situations. The community based child protection mechanism will also provide the interface between the children and Gram Panchayat level Child Protection Committee.

iii) Promotion of children's collective: The CFS should be transitioned into children's collective. The children should get a platform to voice their concerns and participate in the decision making process having implications on their lives. Children's knowledge and understanding on child rights issues, institutional structures & mechanism and their association will make the duty bearers accountable to their responsibilities towards children. The children's collective will also ensure interface between children and duty bearers responsible for protecting the rights of children at community level. For instance post Fani, the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Purihas been conducting a survey to identify orphan and single parent children to provide them sponsorship and to link them with other schemes of the government. In this regard, children and their collective can play a vital role in providing information, because they have already identified the vulnerable children through the Social Maps prepared in the villages where CFS were established.

Thus, a rights-based framework will be established at community level, wherein the children will be able claim their rights from the duty bearers and will hold the duty bearers accountable to fulfill their responsibilities towards the children both in normal and emergency situations.

iv) Transition Strategies: The CFS played a very important role in providing a space for children to play and for their psychosocial recovery in the aftermath of cyclone Fani. However, CFS could meet the immediate or medium term needs of the affected children. It is necessary to have a transition strategy in consultation with the PRIs, and service providers like teachers, AWWs and the District Child Protection Unit for a smooth transition and handing over the CFS. As the operational villages are prone to flood, cyclone and tidal surge, it is imperative that the Gram Panchayats, schools and local NGO take preparatory measures to respond quickly

and efficiently using CFS in the aftermath of any disaster. Pre-positioning capacity is therefore required for the GPs and schools to provide a safe and protected place for children after any disaster. This includes a dossier of trained volunteers, list of CFS materials, operation manual to run CFS, child protection needs of children and adolescents, list of suitable locations to establish CFS etc to quick start the CFS.

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