

PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: January-December 2024

Project Summary Information	
Project Title	Boosting Female Labor Force Participation through Strengthened Urban Care Ecosystem
Project ID	1001526
Project Duration	01-01-2024 - 31-12-2026
Location	India
CPD/UNSDCF/RPD/SP Outputs	UNSDCF Outcome 4: By 2027, people will benefit from and contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth through higher productivity, competitiveness and diversification in economic activities that create decent work, livelihoods and income particularly for youth and women. CPD OUTCOME 2: By 2027, people will benefit from and contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth through higher productivity, competitiveness and diversification in economic activities that create decent work, livelihoods, and income particularly for youth and women. Output 2.2: Women, youth and other vulnerable groups transition into gainful employment and productive economic activities
Gender marker	3
Digitalization Marker ¹	Output partially enabled through digital technology Training and capacity building of care workers and care entrepreneurs to be enabled through digital platforms
Implementing Partner	UNDP
Total budget	USD 2,558,996
Donors (funding sources)	BMGF
Budget (annual budget)	USD 3,99,927
Expenditure recorded for the reporting period	USD 2,99,721
Expenditure recorded for the total project	USD 2,99,721
Project Manager name:	Karina Bhasin

Approved by:

Name and Designation	Signature
Amit Kumar Head, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	DocuSigned by:  9BCA951D4F8D4BC...

¹ Detailed Digital Marker Guidance Note is found [here](#).

1. Executive Summary

The 'Boosting Female Labor Force Participation through Strengthened Urban Care Ecosystem' project, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), is designed to establish scalable and economically viable models of childcare provision. The project focuses on supporting lower-income urban households to enhance women's labor force participation while simultaneously improving child development outcomes. This initiative contributes to CPD Output 2.2, which aims to enable women, youth, and other vulnerable groups to transition into gainful employment and productive economic activities.

The project adopts a multi-faceted approach that includes evidence generation, pilot implementation, and ecosystem engagement to meet its objectives. By identifying and testing diverse childcare models, such as community-based care, aggregated workplace-based solutions, and 'carepreneurship,' it seeks to build scalable childcare solutions. Central to the project is the generation of robust data on how access to childcare impacts women's participation in the urban workforce. Additionally, it incorporates training and capacity-building activities for care workers and potential 'carepreneurs' to enhance the quality and accessibility of childcare services. To ensure sustainability and broader adoption, the project emphasizes partnerships with the public and private sectors, aiming to develop innovative financing mechanisms and advocate for systemic change.

Since the project's approval by the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) in August 2024, a few milestones have been achieved. Formal endorsement by DAY-NULM, MoHUA established it as the anchor government partner, lending crucial institutional support. A national workshop was organized in collaboration with MoHUA, introducing the childcare program to more than eighteen State Urban Livelihoods Missions (SULMs). During the workshop, enabling strategies to foster women-led urban livelihoods were discussed, ensuring alignment with broader urban development goals.

UNDP also facilitated a consultation involving over thirty diverse organizations to explore pathways for enhancing urban childcare infrastructure for low-income households. The consultation marked the soft launch of the Childcare Coalition for Urban India, which UNDP India will anchor. This coalition is envisioned as a platform for collaboration and advocacy, bringing together diverse stakeholders to address urban childcare challenges. At the global level, UNDP joined the Global Alliance for Care, an international platform dedicated to fostering collective action, advocacy, and learning in the care sector. To further knowledge-sharing, UNDP hosted high-impact workshops and a webinar where five national and global experts shared insights on scalable childcare solutions with over eighty participants.

Pilot initiatives for childcare centres are underway, with onboarding of implementation partners (NGO) for, community, workplace-based—was completed in December 2024. These centers will serve as test cases to track the impact of childcare access on women's economic empowerment and child development over three years. By combining micro-level interventions with broader policy and advocacy efforts, the project aims to create a roadmap for scaling effective childcare models that can drive systemic change.

2. Progress Review

a) Key results achieved

Output1: Assessment of the current childcare service landscape and various models targeting urban lower-income households, including feasibility and scale potential, synthesis of the existing research and key partners and enablers in India

- To gain comprehensive insights into academic knowledge gaps in current childcare landscape and data, interviews and knowledge, insights, and experience (KII) sessions have been conducted by the project team with over five experts and institutions across India including World Bank, ILO, UN Women, other UNDP Country Offices and sector experts, practitioners.
- With participation from more than eight MLE expert agencies, a workshop was conducted in Jan 2024 to refine key learning questions in impact framework and understand trade-offs of different evaluation methodologies. The discussion also highlighted need for clear definitions of “childcare services”, “urban poor households” and section of women who will be focused for effective feasibility analysis of different models.

Output 2: Increased availability and uptake of accessible, affordable, and quality childcare services, alleviating the unpaid care burden on urban poor women and unlocking their economic potential.

- Preparatory activities such as consultation with the skilling ecosystem actors and other key stakeholders to understand the existing skilling courses, training curriculum as well as to identify potential partners for the pilot implementation have been carried out.
- Engagements with the Domestic Workers Sector Skill Council (DWSSC), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), industry representatives, NGOs, cluster association members, and women’s associations have provided valuable insights into the availability, gaps, and challenges in childcare training courses, as well as their interest and willingness to collaborate. Building on these discussions, partnership talks with DWSSC and NSDC have been initiated to design and develop certified, tailored curriculum and training programs for caregivers, master trainers, and carepreneurs. The partnership structure and key intervention areas are expected to be finalized by January 2025. Three organizations—Mobile Creches, FXB India Suraksha, and Bal Raksha Bharat—have been identified as potential partners for pilot interventions aimed at establishing over five childcare centers. Following an open Request for Information, recruitment of one partner organization is currently underway, marking notable progress toward launching the pilot phase, by December 2024.
- Initial discussions on converging and leveraging public investments from PALNA, Smart Cities & NULM have been conducted with WCD, GoI, and WCD, Haryana. Areas of collaboration include monitoring and evaluation of government-run centers and capacity building for care workers.
- Field visits to 7 centres of 3 shortlisted partners were conducted across Tughlakabad, Khanpur, Noida, & South Delhi, serving families of construction, domestic & migrant workers – low-income households.

Output 3: Enhanced awareness and capacity of public and private sector key stakeholders and enablers to increase investment in childcare service facilities and support measures for redistributing the burden of unpaid care work, specifically targeting urban lower-income household.

- One of the key achievements during this preparatory and planning phase of the project has been to get the formal endorsement of the DAY-National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India to be the anchor government counterpart for this project. NULM has expressed its keen interest in taking the lead on improving care ecosystem in urban areas, together with MOHUA’s smart city mission.
- UNDP also joined hands with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to co-organize a national workshop in Feb 2024 in Ranchi, India where the childcare program was also introduced to more than 18 State Urban Livelihoods Missions.

- In May 2024, UNDP joined the [Global Alliance for Care](#). With a membership of more than 170 organizations, the Alliance is the first global platform to facilitate and fosters spaces for collective action, advocacy, communication, and learning about care, its recognition as a need, as work, and as a right.
- UNDP, in partnership with the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), organized a roundtable on ‘Urban Childcare Infrastructure, Women's Employment, and Lower-Income Households: Current Trends and Future Strategies’ in October 2024. With over 60 participants representing more than 30 organizations, the consultation brainstormed pathways and strategies to enhance urban childcare infrastructure in India for lower-income households. The consultation also witnessed the soft launch of a Childcare Coalition for Urban India which will be anchored by UNDP India
- As a member of the Global Alliance for Care, in October 2024, UNDP participated as a panelist in the Skills Development in the Care Sector session at the Asia-Pacific Care Forum 2024 in Bangkok. Representing one of India’s leading organizations, UNDP showcased its initiatives and project work on urban care strengthening and skilling ecosystem aimed at advancing women’s economic empowerment.
- In October 2024, to mark the International Day of Care and Support, UNDP hosted a webinar to explore innovative childcare models and strategic frameworks from India and globally. The session convened 7+ international experts, government representatives, CSOs, and private sector practitioners from India, North Macedonia, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom to share scalable solutions. With more than 80 participants, the discussion highlighted actionable strategies to expand access to quality childcare services, fostering collaborations and insights for impactful policy and programmatic interventions.

b) Output progress

Progress reported against each output. Link to the last report submitted, and please mention the status of previously delayed outputs.

[NOTE: Please note that the project has been approved by the Local Project Appraisal Committee as of August 12, 2024. Therefore, annual outputs around the activities, particularly Output 1 and 2 will be reported in August 2025.]

Output statement	Indicator Name	Baseline Value	Annual Target	End of the project target	Status: On-track/ off-track / complete (with actuals achieved against annual target)	Narrative/Description of status	Means of verification and comments to substantiate the selected response ²

² Means of verification will require evidence, links, reference, photos, transcripts from exit interviews, feedback surveys, call center reports, phone verification, etc. All methods and means used to collect and report on the results should be described, and links prepared for future

Output 1. Assessment of the current care service landscape and various models targeting urban lower income households including feasibility and scale potential, synthesis of the existing research and key partners and enablers in India	Indicator 1: Number of viable and scalable childcare models available for adoption by the public and private sector institutional actors	0	0	2	On-track (0)	To be started in 2025	
Output 2. Increased availability and uptake of accessible, affordable, and quality childcare services, alleviating the unpaid care burden on urban poor women and unlocking their economic potential.	Indicator 1 : % of parents using childcare services in pilot locations confirm at least two out of the following three statements: • Fully satisfied with the quality of childcare services (staff, food and supplements, safety, and hygiene) • Fully satisfied with the wellbeing and earning outcomes of their child • Willingness to pay increased full amount for childcare services	0	0	85%	On-track (0)	To be started in 2025	

reference, spot checking, and verification by independent teams when necessary. It also means that the same expectation will apply when third-party monitors are used.

If the data source involved meetings, then details of meeting participants and matters discussed and agreed actions should be documented as part of the evidence/data source.

	Indicator 2: % of women accessing childcare services in pilot locations who confirm change in time spent on paid work or in search of paid work	0	0	75%	On-track (0)	To be started in 2025	
	Indicator 3: % of childcare workers or carepreneurs trained under the project who report an income change	0	0	50%	On-track (0)	To be started in 2025	
Output3. Enhanced awareness and capacity of public and private sector key stakeholders and enablers to increase investment for childcare service facilities and support measures for redistributing the burden of unpaid care work specifically targeting urban lower income household.	Indicator 1: Number of stakeholders and enablers sensitized on childcare importance, financing mechanisms and implementation roadmap of adoption, replication, and financing	0	40	100	Complete (40)	5 consultations organized so far – MLE Consultation (Jan 2024), NULM-UNDP National Workshop on Urban livelihood strategies for women (Feb 2024), Consultation on strengthening urban childcare economy (Oct 24), Webinar on local and global childcare models for scale up (Nov 24), skilling consultation (Dec 2024); Learning and insights note from Care Consultation (Oct 2024)	UNDP India website and social media handles of UNDP

						published on UNDP website	
	% of stakeholders confirming their interest and willingness to incorporate recommended measures and allocate increased investment on creation of affordable and accessible urban care infrastructure targeted at urban poor.	0	0	25%	On-track (0)	To be started in 2025	

3. Communications, visibility, and partnerships

1. Consultation on “Urban Childcare Infrastructure, Women's Employment, and Lower-Income Households: Current Trends and Future Strategies” (Oct 2024) – [UNDP social media](#)
 2. Webinar on “Empowering Women through Strengthened Childcare Systems: Global Insights and Local Successes” (Oct 2024) - [UNDP social media](#)
 3. National workshop organized by UNDP in partnership with Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) on enabling strategies (including care) to foster women-led urban livelihoods (Feb 2024)– [PIB Report by NULM](#)
 4. Asia Pacific Care Forum organized by Global Alliance of Care (Oct 2024)– [UN Women website](#)
 5. Skilling consultation (Dec 2024) – [UNDP India LINKEDIN](#)

4. Project risks and mitigation measures

Risk 1: Delays in government engagement and collaboration processes extended the timeline for LPAC approval to August 2024, resulting in a setback for planned 2024 activities.

Action taken: To address this, proactive engagement strategies, such as regular follow-ups and early alignment meetings with government stakeholders, have been implemented. A dedicated point of Contact (POC) has been assigned.

The risk register is attached as an annex to the report.

5. Lessons Learned

Not applicable as the project is in a very nascent stage

6. Way Forward

Planned Activities for 2025:

a) Building on the insights gained from the skilling consultation, the project will collaborate with one of the Sector Skill Councils (SSC) to introduce three new NSQF-aligned and certified job roles. These roles will include tailored curricula designed to develop a skilled care workforce for the urban childcare ecosystem.

b) Launch 5-6 community-based and workplace-integrated childcare centers across five different locations, creating accessible childcare solutions for urban areas.

c) Design and develop a Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation (MLE) tool and framework, integrating it to systematically collect data and evidence to assess the impact of the childcare centers. This framework will also be provided to government-supported childcare centers for broader adoption.

d) Provide technical support to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and state governments in the focus areas to enhance the effective implementation of their broader urban care projects.

e) Establish the "Urban Childcare Coalition," a platform to foster cross-learning, collaboration, and collective action. This coalition will engage 25-30 identified stakeholders, including government agencies, CBOs/NGOs, UN agencies, multilateral organizations, investors, and others, to catalyze increased investment and drive coordinated efforts in the urban care sector.

Priority actions for the project and other teams before the next reporting cycle.

Issue/observation	Action to be taken	Responsible	Timeline
Building understanding and awareness among private sector stakeholders for the Childcare centers and facilities to increase FLFPR.	A set of consultations with industry associations and the private sector is planned for 2025 to discuss challenges, needs, and partnership opportunities to pilot aggregated workplace-based model.	Project Manager	June 2025

▪ The uptake of existing skill courses is low, with many courses available in the market that have varying elements. Identifying and building targeted partnerships, & customized training and curricula can bridge this gap.	Defining and developing the TOR and onboarding the agency/partner to deliver (tailored) certified curriculum and courses for caregivers, carepreneurs and master trainers.	Project Manager	June 2025
▪ Community based, and aggregated workplace model to be established	Roll out for 5 centers	Project Manager	June 2025
▪ Evidence generation and data collection is central to this project, to track, monitor and evaluate the impact of the interventions. This will help define and design timely strategic interventions.	Selection and onboarding of the MLE partner/Agency.	Project Manager	June 2025

7. Annexures

Provide links to the sources of evidence.

1. Consultation on “Urban Childcare Infrastructure, Women's Employment, and Lower-Income Households: Current Trends and Future Strategies” (Oct 2024) – [UNDP social media](#)
2. Webinar on “Empowering Women through Strengthened Childcare Systems: Global Insights and Local Successes” (Oct 2024) - [UNDP social media](#)
3. National workshop organized by UNDP in partnership with Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) on enabling strategies (including care) to foster women-led urban livelihoods (Feb 2024)– [PIB Report by NULM](#)
4. Asia Pacific Care Forum organized by Global Alliance of Care (Oct 2024)– [UN Women website](#)

RISK REGISTER

#	Event	Cause	Impact(s)	Risk Category and Sub-category (including Risk Appetite)	Impact, Likelihood & Risk Level	Risk Valid From/To	Risk Owner	Risk Treatment	Treatment Owner
							(individual accountable for managing the risk)		
1	Target community is unwilling use the services of pilot childcare centers rolled out as part of the project.	Lack of trust and lower community acceptance for using piloted childcare services.	Low enrolment and underutilization of childcare centers, effecting the sustainability of the centre.	Reputational	P=2 I=4	1 st Jan 2024 to 31 st Dec 2026	Head, SIG Unit	Stakeholder consultation and validation before pilot rollout combined with regular community sensitization and awareness activities to educate and engage with the target communities. Regular feedback loops to adapt strategies.	Project Manager
2	Lack of coordination among different implementation agencies/partners.	Different implementation methodologies due to different demographic needs, and different domain experience within the childcare focused projects/areas of work	Delays and inefficiencies in project implementation.	Organizational	P=2 I=3	1 st Jan 2024 to 31 st Dec 2026	Head, SIG Unit	Establishment of a structured and well-defined coordination mechanism with agreed roles, responsibilities, and communication plans. Regular meeting and breifing between the partners to adhere and align on new/modified implementation strategies and goals.	Project Manager
3	Quality standards under achieved as planned in adherence to established and provided guidelines for the pilot childcare	The implementing agencies could not meet the standards as defined and planned despite regular audits.	Health and safety risks for children; reputational damage.	Social and Environmental	P=2 I=3	1 st Jan 2024 to 31 st Dec 2026	Head, SIG Unit	Proper due diligence at the time of partner engagement along with regular monitoring will ensure that this risk	Project Manager

	centers (e.g., safety, hygiene, food safety).							is identified and mitigated in time. Development of SOP and capacity building of care workers and carepreneurs is planned to ensure quality care services.	
4	Issues with data and monitoring accuracy.	Less credibility and different data collection methods as per suggestion. Low efforts in the integration of provided designed MLE framework in their existing data collection and monitoring strategy. Lack of coordination between field investigators and agencies on the understanding of tools and indicators of data collections	Inaccurate impact assessment and poor decision-making with respect project interventions.	Organizational	P=2 I=4	1st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2026	Head, SIG Unit	Implementation and integration of a robust MLE system with onboarding of a dedicated MLE partner from project inception. Routine data quality checks and validation mechanisms.	Project Manager
5	Limited engagement/involvement of government authorities and private sectors in the project intervention	Low interest & lack of willingness from government and private sector stakeholders due to low alignment with their own priorities.	Limited sustainability and scaling potential for the childcare model.	Strategic	P=2 I=4	1st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2026	Head, SIG Unit	Continuous engagement strategy with key stakeholders, regular dissemination of pilot results, and showcasing impact through targeted communication efforts.	Project Manager