PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: January – December 2025

Project Summary Information	
Project Title	Boosting Female Labor Force Participation through Strengthened Urban Care Ecosystem
Project ID	1001526
Project Duration	01st January 2024 – 31st December 2026
Location	India
CPD Outcome and Outputs	**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
Implementing Partner	UNDP
Total Project Budget (USD)	USD 2,558,996
Donors (funding sources)	Gates Foundation
Annual Budget (USD)	USD 1,411,478
Funds received during the reporting period (USD & INR)	USD 500,000
Expenditure recorded for the reporting period (USD)	USD 1,098,098
Expenditure recorded for the total project (USD)	USD 1,440,310
Project Manager name:	Karina Bhasin

Approved by:

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

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 Gates Foundation (GF), 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.

Building on the work done in 2024—particularly our stakeholder engagement that helped surface key gaps and challenges in expanding affordable, accessible, and quality childcare for low-income communities—the project in 2025 focused on laying the groundwork for pilot testing innovative childcare delivery models. This included strengthening our evidence-building and research efforts, developing the skilling courses, and putting in place the efforts for MLE framework to systematically collect data and generate insights. Throughout this phase, we continued meaningful stakeholder engagement across government, local bodies, NGOs, industry associations, and community partners to ensure alignment and shared ownership.

The first user fee–based community childcare centre was launched in Bawana, Delhi, in partnership with Mobile Crèches, to test the viability of neighborhood-based childcare in low-income urban settings. The first workplace-based childcare pilot is in the final stages of operationalization, implemented in collaboration with the women-led ALEAP Industry Association in Hyderabad, and demonstrates the feasibility of co-financed, scalable, and financially viable childcare provision within industrial estates. In parallel, the project established its first care entrepreneurship model (3rd Childcare Pilot) in Uttam Nagar, New Delhi, to support women-led childcare enterprises.

The release of key policy documents—*Design of Financing Instrument for the Care Economy in India and Synthesis of Evidence on Early Childhood Development (ECD) in India*—advanced national efforts to strengthen childcare policy and financing ecosystems, introducing scalable community and industry-based prototypes for affordable, inclusive childcare. Collaboration with the Health Sector Skill Council strengthened market-relevant skilling pathways for the urban care workforce, with NSQF-aligned Qualification Packs developed for childcare workers, Associate-cum-Coordinator, and entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, state outreach was prioritized to build partnership for alignment and ownership of localized childcare models, with discussions underway with state departments and urban local bodies, exploring opportunities to support monitoring & evaluation of similar existing childcare centers.

A virtual side event at CSW69 titled "Innovative Models for Boosting Female Labor Force Participation" was co-hosted by UNDP India, MoHUA, and CIFF. It brought together voices from MoHUA, UN Women, Mobile Creches, and Sesame Workshop India to highlight how care models can be integrated into urban planning and workforce strategies. A virtual consultation with private childcare providers was also convened to gather insights on affordability, operational barriers, and enabling conditions for scale.

Continuous support is being provided to the Ministry of Women and Child Development at both the national and state levels through policy briefs and evidence-based decks that offer recommendations on financing, budgeting, and implementation of childcare reforms. Further, a National Consultation was convened in collaboration with MWCD to bring together government, non-profit, and private sector leaders. The consultation generated practical insights for strengthening the next phase of the PALNA scheme and surfaced key considerations for developing market-responsive, locally grounded childcare models. In addition, the project contributed to state-level dialogues through regional consultations, helping advance conversations on integrating childcare within local systems.

The project's pilot rollouts were delayed due to the NULM mission's transition to NULM 2.0, frequent change in personnel, and constraints in securing public spaces, leading to delays in securing convergence support in identified cities. Despite this, implementation work progressed, with the design of the childcare approach-its service delivery grounded in financial feasibility, sustainability, and long-term integration with public systems.

As the focus during this phase has been on building foundational elements, a key learning has been the importance of continuous, hands-on engagement, particularly as the models and approaches being introduced are novel and require ongoing dialogue. The project has embedded its broader vision in each step, from partner alignment and PPP framing to model testing and convergence so that the pathway to scale is firmly rooted in operational feasibility and positioned for policy uptake in the medium term.

2. Progress Review

a) Narrative Reporting

Output 1: 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.

- A **secondary research study** was published after a synthesis of more than 50 reports, publications, and government surveys. It maps the ECD ecosystem for lower-income households in India, identifying key barriers and enablers. Five key **focus areas** and their **potential pathways** were identified to scale childcare services:
  - Driving investment into the childcare economy:
    - Enhance budgetary allocations through short- and long-term financing.
    - Design PPPs and innovative financing to complement public funding.
    - Offer financial and non-financial incentives to small businesses under the Maternity Benefit Act, 2017.
  - Expanding quality and access:
    - Introduce accreditation systems to benchmark and improve service standards.
    - Expand services for children with disabilities and urban poor households.
    - Integrate care infrastructure into urban planning and development norms.
  - Building a skilled and professional childcare workforce:
    - Customize NSQF-aligned skilling courses for various childcare roles.
    - Ensure decent wages and working conditions for workers.
    - Develop online registries of trained childcare professionals.
  - **Strengthening policies and data systems:**
    - Improve monitoring and enforcement of childcare provisions under key legislations (MB Act, BOWCA, NREGA).
    - Use workplace certification to drive employer accountability for care.
  - **Promoting care as a shared gender responsibility:**

    - Combine grassroots community engagement with top-down policy measures to shift gender norms.

- In parallel, a childcare financing feasibility study has been completed with Dalberg Advisors to explore blended and innovative finance instruments and investment strategies for a scalable, inclusive care economy. It proposes two prototypes — a hyperlocal, community-led model and an industry cluster-based model to help unlock quality, affordable childcare near home and work.

Methodology
This blended-finance landscaping study was undertaken using a mixed-methods approach, combining secondary research with primary stakeholder engagement across the public, private, and philanthropic ecosystems. Over 30 bilateral consultations and one joint consultation were conducted with childcare providers, sector experts, multilateral agencies, philanthropic funders, CSR leaders, and private investors to understand service-delivery models, financing constraints, and pathways to scale. Insights were triangulated with desk reviews of labor force participation data, childcare demand estimates, programme guidelines, and international comparator models to identify scalable childcare solutions for low-income urban women and assess their financing requirements. The following are some takeaways from the assessment:
Key Recommendation Areas

- **Scale blended-finance delivery models:** Prioritize two high-potential models—the industry-cluster aggregated childcare model and the hyper-local community carepreneur model—both of which demonstrate strong potential to combine government support, employer and user contributions, and philanthropic/CSR funding to deliver affordable, quality childcare at scale.
- **De-risk early operations to crowd in capital**: Use targeted blended-finance instruments—such as value guarantees, first-loss capital, and revolving working-capital facilities—to mitigate demand uncertainty and cash-flow gaps during early implementation, enabling the transition from philanthropic pilots to commercially viable operations.
- **Anchor scale through public systems and policies**: Integrate childcare financing into state and municipal budgets and align with skilling, nutrition, and urban infrastructure schemes to provide predictable long-term funding streams that reduce reliance on short-term grants.
- **Strengthen implementation ecosystems:** Leverage partnerships with industry associations, women's SHG federations, and NGO aggregators to support centre rollout, provide training and quality assurance, and enable professional management systems across both workplace-linked and community-based childcare models.

- A Primary research study is ongoing titled: **Barriers & Opportunities to Scaling Non-Government Childcare Provision in Urban Areas for Lower-Income Households",** aimed at identifying and addressing demand and supply side barriers to scaling non-government childcare providers is underway.
  Methodology
  The assessment was conducted using a mixed-methods approach combining secondary research with primary fieldwork across six urban locations—three metro cities (Aurangabad, Chennai, and Delhi) and three non-metro cities (Patna, Kanpur, and Bhubaneswar)—selected to reflect geographic diversity, government priorities, existing UNDP pilots, and variations in women's urban labour force participation. Primary data collection included 35 in-depth interviews with childcare service providers, 10 key informant interviews with sector experts, and 200 semi-structured interviews with parents of children aged 6 months to 6/8 years from low-income communities, equally divided between users (100) and non-users (100) of childcare

services. Findings were triangulated with a comprehensive desk review to strengthen analytical rigor and validity. While data collection is still ongoing, the following are some takeaways from the assessment:

Key Recommendation Areas

- Quality & Design Norms: The assessment highlighted the need for standardized childcare design templates aligned with ICTN norms to ensure that childcare spaces are safe, welcoming, and developmentally appropriate. The use of locally available, low-cost play materials and structured caregiver–child interaction modules was identified as a practical pathway to improving service quality while maintaining affordability.
- Governance & Partnerships: The findings underscore the importance of strengthened multi-departmental coordination among the Departments of Women and Child Development, Housing and Urban Affairs, and Labour to support integrated urban childcare oversight. Scaling delivery through women-led models—including SHG and federation-managed centres with NGO technical support—emerged as a promising approach for enhancing service coverage, professional management, and community ownership.
- Financing & Sustainability: Promote hybrid funding models combining user fees (capped at ~30%), government support (space, nutrition, utilities), and donor/CSR financing for training and technical assistance, alongside enabling city-level childcare funding through Urban Local Bodies and district discretionary funds.
- Infrastructure & Space: Integrate childcare into urban planning codes and Smart Cities missions and encourage co-location with Primary Health Centres and Anganwadi centres to reduce set-up costs, improve space access, and optimize public infrastructure use.
- Workforce Development: Institutionalize childcare worker skilling under the National Skills Qualifications Framework with ongoing continuous professional development and mentoring and formally recognize care work as a profession with fair wages and clear career progression pathways.

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

Childcare Pilots

- A community-based childcare center has been launched in Bawana, Delhi, in collaboration with Mobile Creches. The model operates on a user-fee basis, aiming to balance affordability with sustainability through local engagement. Early insights show that as enrolment stabilizes and resources are utilized more efficiently, per-child costs decline and fee recovery improves, guiding planning for sustainable, financially viable operations. In parallel, the project established its first care entrepreneurship model in Uttam Nagar, New Delhi, to support women-led childcare enterprises.
- A co-financed, scalable, and financially viable workplace-based childcare service center within an industrial area in Hyderabad is in final stages to be established in partnership with ALEAP industrial association. The center will provide affordable and accessible quality childcare services for lower-income households, thereby benefiting both employees and industries.
- A Public Private Partnership led Childcare service centre in Shaheed Nagar locality of Bhubaneshwar is also in the final stages and will be established in partnership with the Bhubaneshwar Municipal Corporation (BMC). BMC has provided space for the creche facility and is also renovating it to ensure it is child friendly. BMC will also support the identification of local SHG groups for running the childcare center.

Skilling the Childcare Workforce

- Three new NSQF aligned, qualification packs in Early Child Development Services (Childcare Workers, Associate cum Coordinator, and Care Entrepreneurs), were developed in partnership with the Health Sector Skill Council. The courses are approved in the 44th NSQC meeting dated 7 October 2025. These are now available in the public domain on the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH).

Output 3: Enhanced awareness and capacity of public and private sector stakeholders to invest in childcare facilities and support redistribution of unpaid care work

- UNDP India hosted a CSW69 virtual side event - *"Innovative Models for Boosting Female Labor Force Participation"*- with MoHUA and CIFF, showcasing care economy models and strategies to integrate care into urban planning, engage male caregivers, and support informal women workers.
- A virtual consultation with 7+ private childcare providers, operating in urban and per-urban areas, was held to assess scalable, affordable models for urban low-income communities. Providers shared operational insights and expressed interest in public-private collaboration to address financing and service delivery gaps.
- A multi-stakeholder consultation was organized to validate emerging findings and facilitate dialogue among government, industry, philanthropy, and service-delivery partners on priority blended-finance models for scale.
- A National Consultation was organized at the end of the year to convene government, non-profit, and private sector experts and generate practical insights for strengthening the PALNA scheme's next phase.

The following are some takeaways from the consultations:

Key Recommendation Areas

- **Opportunity to close the childcare financing gap through blended funding:** With only 25–30% of costs recoverable via user fees, viable scale will require combining public financing (space, rent waivers, nutrition, training subsidies), employer and industry contributions, and catalytic CSR/philanthropy support through structured blended-finance models.
- **Unlock public land and infrastructure for service delivery:** Address space constraints by enabling childcare centres in unused or shared public assets, including Anganwadi centres, schools, community halls, EWS housing blocks, and industrial-estate facilities—supported by flexible zoning regulations and co-location policies integrated into urban planning frameworks.
- **Strengthen the childcare workforce pipeline:** Update and roll out NSQF-aligned childcare skilling pathways with modular entry routes, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for informal caregivers, and continuous professional development to build a stable, skilled workforce with fair remuneration and career progression.
- **Mobilize employer participation through incentives and pooling**: Encourage SMEs to meet childcare obligations under the MBA via pooled childcare facilities, tax and finance incentives, and cross-subsidised subscription models, supported by BRSR reporting requirements and industry associations as anchors.
- **Institutionalize data systems for planning and accountability**: Establish a national childcare registry and digital mapping platform, paired with a light-touch ratings-and-incentives system to improve service visibility and quality without heavy accreditation burdens, enabling better financing targeting, compliance monitoring, and municipal planning.

b) **Indicator and Expenditure Reporting**

Output statement	Indicator Name	Baseline Value	End of the project target	Actuals achieved against target for the indicator	Evidence [1]	Budget as per AWP (USD)	Actual Expenditure (USD)	Remarks (if any)
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	2	2	Primary survey : early findings on barriers to non govt childcare provisioning India: Landscape study on ECD ecosystem Innovative Financing study	5,40,000	7,82,459	
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	0	85%	0	ALEAP industry cluster creche agreement Blog on Bawana childcare center	4,65,000	157282	

	amount for childcare services							
	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	75%	0	TOR signed for carepreneur model			
	Indicator 3: % of childcare workers or carepreneurs trained under the project who report an income change	0	50%	0	Qualification packs for the 3 childcare roles SIDH Portal listing of QPs			

Output 3. 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	100	100	*UNDP social media*, *Project Webpage*, *UNDP Social Media*, Blog on Bawana childcare center) Support to WCD	69,500	0	
	Indicator 2: *% 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	25%	0	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	
Monitoring and Evaluation Cost							0	
Project Management Cost							263751	
Total AWP Budget and Actual Expenditure (USD)						1411478	1143492	

3. Challenges encountered, project risks and mitigation measures

Project challenges & issues noted:

Challenge 1: **Delays in community-based childcare pilots due to space and administrative constraints**
Securing government space in dense urban areas faced prolonged approvals, leadership changes within ULBs, and competing community demands, delaying pilot operationalization despite policy convergence.
Action taken: Engagement with state governments and municipalities was intensified to streamline approvals and explore use of existing public, community, and non-government spaces.

Challenge 2: **Quality concerns in initial research delivery** posed a risk to the credibility and usefulness of the landscape analysis. The initial agency's output was not aligned with project objectives, leading to delays.
Action taken: In response, a new agency has been onboarded to undertake the primary research (to be completed by Jan 2026), while the **secondary research**—conducted in-house— has been published in June 2025. Strengthened quality assurance measures have been instituted to prevent recurrence.

Challenge 3: **Delays in inter-agency partnership with UN Women-** Updates to inter-agency partnership procedures introduced new requirements around fund flow, reporting, and operational protocols. These changes necessitated additional rounds of coordination and alignment between teams at HQ and the Country Office, which led to some delays in the planned timeline for launching the Innovation Challenge.
Action taken: To address this, several detailed discussions and clarifications were conducted between HQ and CO teams to ensure mutual understanding of the updated norms and processes. These efforts helped establish clear roles, responsibilities, and reporting mechanisms. As a result, the partnership has now been fully formalized, and an agency appointed by UN Women has been successfully onboarded. This sets a strong foundation for the smooth implementation of the Innovation Challenge going forward.

Challenge 4: Slow rollout of the industry-cluster childcare pilots due to limited private-sector traction
Outreach to industry associations revealed the hesitation to commit to the cost-share, sustainability concerns due to low user fees, space and access constraints, and limited confidence in business returns from childcare investments.
Action taken: Regular conversations with industry associations helped build understanding of the objectives, benefits, and long-term value of investing in workplace-linked childcare. These discussions helped shape the conversation and strengthen the business case for employers and advancing blended-finance models with CSR and philanthropic partners.

<u>Anticipated Risk in the next reporting period:</u>
Risk 1: Limited coordination among different agencies
Proposed action: The project will actively reinforce the agreed coordination mechanisms, including regular joint meetings, clear role definitions, and timely information sharing across all agencies to ensure alignment and smooth implementation.

Risk 2: Lack of community acceptance and lower uptake of childcare services
Proposed action: Stakeholder consultation and validation before pilot roll out combined with regular community sensitization and awareness to educate and engage with the target communities is planned to create awareness and demand. This will help promote understanding, acceptance, and adoption of new childcare practices, and will also help the programme to course correct based on evidence, if needed.

4. **Social and Environmental Standards (SES) Reporting (Applicable for moderate, substantial, and high-risk projects)**
   As per the updated SESP (2025), Care is a low-risk project.

5. **Communications and visibility**

Visibility and Communications

- **CSW69 Side Event (March 2025)**: UNDP India, in collaboration with **MoHUA** and **CIFF**, hosted a side event on boosting female labor force participation through innovative models, as part of the UN Women-associated CSW69 side events. The session convened over **40 stakeholders** from government, industry, and civil society. (Source: *UNDP social media*)
- **National Private Sector Consultation (May 2025)**: A virtual convening of **private childcare providers** was held to share best practices and co-develop insights on designing **scalable, quality, and sustainable childcare services**. (Source: *Project Webpage)*
- **Multi-stakeholder consultation (July 2025)** : A workshop to brainstorm and design a high-potential prototype for a financing instrument that can attract new investment into the childcare ecosystem and strengthen service provision for working women in low-income communities. (Source: *UNDP Social Media*)
- **Bawana childcare center (Nov 25) :** A blog capturing early insights from the centre was published, highlighting key learnings on its nutrition practices, financing model, and community engagement. (Source: Blog on Bawana childcare center)

6. Partnerships

- **Genesis Analytics**: Partnered with UNDP to conduct primary research on "Understanding Barriers and Opportunities to Scaling Non-Government Childcare Provision in Urban Areas for Lower-Income Households." The landscape assessment focused on constraints to scale-up and identified pathways for strengthening affordable childcare delivery outside government systems.
- **Health Sector Skill Council (HSSC)**: Onboarded to support the rollout of NSQF-aligned childcare skilling. The partnership will inform the development and validation of three nationally certified job roles—**crèche manager, crèche worker, and care entrepreneur**—aimed at professionalizing and expanding the childcare workforce.
- **Dalberg Advisors**: Engaged as a technical partner for designing a blended and innovative financing model to strengthen India's urban care economy. The study focuses on identifying financing gaps and recommending instruments to support inclusive, scalable, and high-quality childcare models for low-income urban communities.
- **ALEAP**: UNDP aims to establish a co-financed, scalable, and financially viable workplace-based childcare service center within an industrial area or estate. Developed in partnership with ALEAP, Hyderabad, the center will provide affordable and accessible quality childcare services for lower-income households.

7. Lessons Learned and Way Forward

Lessons learned

- Early sensitization of industrial associations is critical to build awareness and ownership around childcare service models, particularly from a PPP perspective. Tailored engagement helps clarify roles, benefits, and areas of co-investment.
- Ongoing information sharing and engagement with government partners at the central and state levels, and development organizations, and other care-ecosystem stakeholders are essential. Regularly sharing early evidence, insights, and use cases with these stakeholders will help build collective understanding and support the integration of user fee–based PPP models within urban childcare programming. Demonstrating early evidence and use cases can help advocate for integration of user fee-based PPP models into urban childcare programming.
- Private not for profit childcare service providers remain key actors albeit limited in the ecosystem. *UNDP's study across six cities found that despite outreach to 150+ childcare*

providers, only 23 non-private centres could be identified online — most visible listings belong to commercial preschools for middle-income families. Targeted outreach and inclusion in consultations help ensure their perspectives are integrated into model design, while also opening pathways for collaboration and innovation.

Way forward

- Rollout of 3-4 project based childcare centres, with a parallel focus on developing and implementing PPP-based childcare service models to enable scale and sustainability.
- Project will continue providing technical support to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, MWCD and state governments in the focus areas to enhance the effective implementation of their broader urban care projects.
- Conduct baseline and midline surveys with support of MEL partner to systematically collect data and evidence to assess the impact of the childcare centres on female workforce participation, child development and intra-household outcomes. This framework will also be provided to government-supported childcare centres for broader adoption.
- Establishing the Urban Childcare coalition

8. Annexures

Evidence	Link
Website page of the project	UNDP website.
Assessment of the current care service landscape and various models targeting urban lower income households	India - Landscape study - A Synthesis of ECD Evidence_UNDP_FINAL_Compr.pdf - All Documents Presentation by NULM officials as they visited the center.
UNDP India, in collaboration with MoHUA and CIFF, organized a panel discussion on '**Innovative Models for Boosting Female Labor Force Participation'(Mar 2025)** as part of CSW69 Side Event (UN Women Assn.), with 40+ participants.	UNDP social media
CSW69 Side Event (March 2025)	(1) Post | LinkedIn
National Private Sector Consultation (May 2025)	Boosting Female Labour Force Participation through Strengthening Urban Care Ecosystem | United Nations Development Programme
Workshop to design a high-potential prototype for a financing instrument that can attract new investment into the childcare ecosystem	*UNDP Social Media*
A blog capturing early insights from UNDP's childcare centre in Bawana, Delhi published, highlighting key learnings on its nutrition practices, financing model, and community engagement.	Blog on Bawana childcare center
WCD-UNDP National consultation on Expanding Access to Affordable and Quality Childcare in India	Agenda and Letter of invitation

RISK REGISTER

#	Event	Cause	Impact(s)	Risk Category and Sub-category	Impact, Likelihood & Risk Level	Risk Valid From/To	Risk Owner	Risk Treatment	Treatment Owner
1	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	**1st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2026**	Head, SIG Unit	• Establishment of a structured and well-defined coordination mechanism with agreed roles, responsibilities, and communication plans. Regular meeting and briefing between the partners to adhere and align on new/modified implementation strategies and goals.	Project Manager
2	Duty bearers may not consistently achieve the agreed quality standards for the pilot childcare centres and associated training programmes.	This risk may arise due to limited specialized expertise among implementing partners in translating quality standards into practice, challenges in monitoring and supervision across multiple centres, and operational	Failure to consistently implement quality standards may reduce the effectiveness of the pilot in achieving intended childcare and training outcomes,	Social and Environmental	P=3 I=1	**1st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2026**	Head, SIG Unit	• Rigorous partner selection and due diligence will be undertaken to ensure implementing partners have the institutional capacity and prior experience to deliver quality childcare and training services. • Standardized quality frameworks (SOPs) covering child safety, hygiene, nutrition, caregiving practices, record-keeping, and centre management will be enforced across all pilot centres. • Statutory and policy compliance will be ensured, including adherence to POCSO, PALNA, and Maternity Benefit Act standards. • Quality-assured training programmes will be delivered with refresher sessions and on-site	Project Manager

		constraints affecting adherence to SOPs and training protocols.	compromise child well-being and workforce preparedness, and create reputational risks for the programme.					mentoring to strengthen practical application of standards. • To ensure gender-inclusive language and gender sensitisation within the training, UN Women is included as part of the advisory committee for the childcare workers' training component only. Their engagement supports the integration of gender-sensitive perspectives within the training, helping ensure that trained childcare workers contribute to inclusive and gender-responsive childcare services.	
3	Issues with data and monitoring accuracy.	Less credibility and different data collection methods as per suggested. 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 to 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
4	Limited engagement/involvement of government authorities and private sectors in	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

	the project intervention								
5.	There is a risk that pilot childcare services may experience limited community acceptance and lower-than-anticipated uptake, particularly among intended and marginalized beneficiary households.	This risk may arise due to limited awareness of childcare as an accessible and beneficial service, low trust in formal childcare arrangements, prevailing socio-cultural norms around caregiving and women's participation in paid work, and limited opportunities for marginalized women to meaningfully engage in the design and decision-making processes related to the pilots.	These factors may constrain the ability of rights-holders to understand, claim, and utilize childcare services, resulting in de facto restrictions in the availability and access to childcare for women from low-income and marginalized communities. This may undermine efforts to reduce unpaid care burdens and enable women's participation in paid work, while also limiting uptake of pilot interventions, weakening the evidence base for learning and scale-up, and constraining the	Social and Environmental	P=3 I=2	**1st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2026**	Head, SIG Unit	• Stakeholder consultations and validation will be carried out before the pilot rollout to co-design services in alignment with community needs and expectations. • Regular community sensitization and awareness activities will be implemented to educate households about the benefits of childcare services and reduce hesitancy in adoption. • Culturally appropriate communication materials (posters, pamphlets, audio-visual content) will be developed to address misconceptions, improve understanding, and ensure inclusivity.	Project Manager

			project's ability to demonstrate inclusive and sustainable childcare models for policy adoption.						
6.	There is a risk that project interventions may unintentionally reinforce traditional gender norms by positioning childcare primarily as women's responsibility, without sufficient engagement of men and other household decision-makers.	This risk may arise if training curricula, communication materials, and outreach strategies focus predominantly on women as caregivers and service providers, without explicitly addressing the redistribution of unpaid care work or promoting men's shared responsibility in childcare. Limited engagement of men, employers, and community leaders in awareness and behavior-change efforts may further perpetuate existing socio-cultural norms	This could adversely affect gender equality by reinforcing unequal care burdens on women, increasing time poverty, and limiting the intended transformative impact of the project on women's participation in paid work. Such outcomes may weaken progress toward shifting social norms around shared caregiving, reduce the sustainability of childcare uptake, and constrain broader	Social and Environmental	P=2 I=2	**1st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2026**	Head, SIG Unit	• Gender-transformative approaches will be integrated across training curricula, communication materials, and outreach activities to explicitly challenge norms that position childcare as women's responsibility alone. • Awareness-raising workshops and targeted nudge campaigns will be designed and implemented to actively engage men, boys, employers, and community leaders, promoting shared responsibility for unpaid care work, including childcare. • Public communication and behaviour-change campaigns will be rolled out to shift social perceptions and normalize men's participation in childcare and domestic care responsibilities. • Monitoring and feedback mechanisms will be used to assess changes in attitudes and practices related to unpaid care work, and campaign strategies will be adapted based on evidence and learning.	Project Manager

		that associate care work solely with women.	empowerment outcomes for women and girls.						
7.	Pilot childcare centres may fail to consistently meet prescribed quality standards related to child safety, hygiene, nutrition, and care practices. Environmental conditions such as poor air quality, lack of heating, or inadequate sanitation could compromise the health and well-being of children and care staff	Constraints in infrastructure, environmental conditions (e.g., harsh winters, poor air quality in Delhi NCR), and operational challenges in maintaining hygiene, safety, and nutrition standards may lead to non-compliance with established childcare quality benchmarks.	Substandard conditions could negatively affect child health, increase susceptibility to communicable and non-communicable diseases, and compromise overall well-being. Poor service quality may reduce the effectiveness of the pilot, weaken evidence for scale-up, and undermine community confidence in childcare services.	Social and Environmental	P=4 I=2	**1st Jan 2024 to 31st Dec 2026**	Head, SIG Unit	• Comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) covering child safety, hygiene, nutrition, caregiving practices, record-keeping, and centre management will be enforced across all pilot centres to ensure consistency and minimum service standards. SOPs will be rigorously applied and monitored, with adherence regularly checked through audits and supervisory visits to promptly identify and address any gaps. • All childcare centres will comply with applicable statutory and policy frameworks, including the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, minimum standards prescribed under PALNA, and relevant provisions of the Maternity Benefit Act. Centres will be supported to meet, and where feasible exceed, these benchmarks through structured oversight, capacity-building, and regular review of compliance with statutory and policy requirements. • Structured, certified training programmes, refresher sessions, and on-site mentoring will be provided to care workers and care entrepreneurs to strengthen practical application of quality standards in childcare delivery.	Project Manager