

## Concept Note

### *Early Childhood Development Programme for Children Belonging to Marginalised Families*

#### **Context**

UNESCO defines early childhood education and care as the “holistic development of a child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing”. A child’s earliest years present a window of opportunity to address inequality and improve outcomes later in life. Academic evidence from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), shows that students who participated in **early childhood development (ECD)** for more than one year achieved higher scores in standardized mathematics tests at age 15. Access to ECD further limits the development of competence gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children.

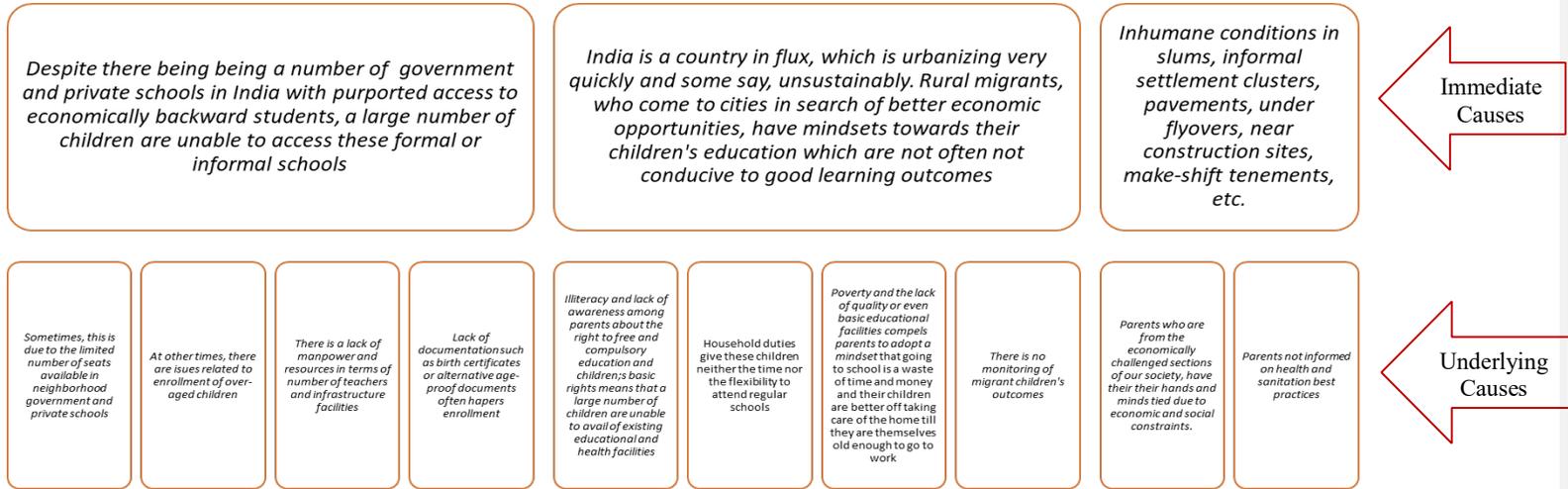
Improved cognitive development, better schooling outcomes and increased lifelong productivity are just some of the potential benefits from ECD programs. When paired with proper nutrition, the returns from investments in children’s early education can be leveraged to reduce intergenerational transfer of poverty, improve gender outcomes, as well as translate into better health and fewer illnesses, preparing the child to become a productive citizen.

According to Census 2011 data, there are 164.48 million children of 0-6 years of age in India. The **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2010** guarantees children their right to quality elementary education. ECD is not recognized as a compulsory provision by RTE, but RTE urges states to provide free pre-school education for children above three years. Despite the recognition of the importance of ECD by the Government of India, the **challenges in implementation remain**. There are still substantial numbers of children not enrolled in preschools. Even in elementary education, while there is a significant rise in enrolments, the dropout rate continues to be a matter of concern, with dropouts being highest in the first two grades of elementary schooling. Learning assessments also show that literacy skills are poor in early primary grades. This points to the urgency of helping children, particularly from first generation families, and developing adequate school readiness through a good quality ECD programme, thus enabling them to make a smooth transition.

#### **Where We Come In**

Sunaayy Foundation is a Non-Profit Organization that was founded in May 2009 in the Vasant Kunj Area of New Delhi, India. Sunaayy adopts an issues-based approach to focus on a **critical development challenge**, an issue that we aspire to tackle in the medium to long-term, namely – *Addressing the poor education, health, hygiene and nourishment outcomes of children from underprivileged and marginalized households.*

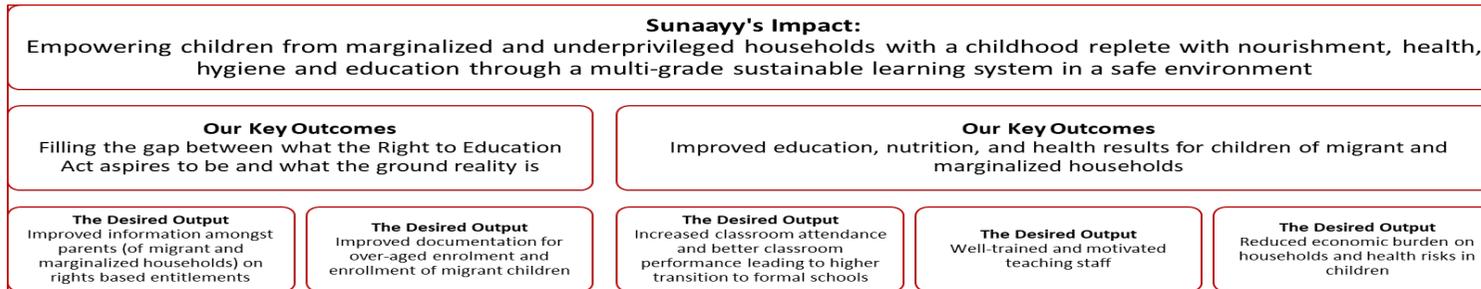
We have developed a **problem tree** to help us understand why this development challenge persists and the shape it takes in the contexts that we work in. We found **immediate causes** that were the proximate or nearest triggers of our critical development challenge, offering the most direct explanation for why it exists, as well as **underlying causes** related to the choices made by people in response to the immediate causes, as well as policies, laws and regulations.



## Our Strategy for Intervention

Sunaayy Foundation, with its extensive experience of 10 years in ECD, intends to intervene with a **cluster-based strategy**. A cluster can be defined as a JJ cluster or slum or similar place with high concentration of marginalized families, who cannot provide for early childhood development. The key is to create model cases in the clusters and then disseminate the cases for replication by a larger number of community-based organizations for improved outreach and impact. Sunaayy would address each of the challenges through soft and hard interventions involving workshops for sensitization, establishment of pre-school centers (make-shift with smart classes) and providing linkage with formal educational institutes.

Sunaayy has charted out a **solutions pathway** which is a map of a sequence of positive changes and interventions that would address the causes behind the critical development challenge, and in so doing have articulated out programme **Theory of Change**. This is an articulation of our service delivery model:



### Activities Under Each of Our Desired Outputs

*Improved information amongst parents (of migrant and marginalized households) on rights-based entitlements:*

- Disseminating information about the importance of sending children to school
- Improving awareness of their children's Right to Free and Compulsory Education
- Urging parents to send their children to government schools or Sunaayy centers to start with

*Improved documentation for over-aged enrolment and enrolment of migrant children:*

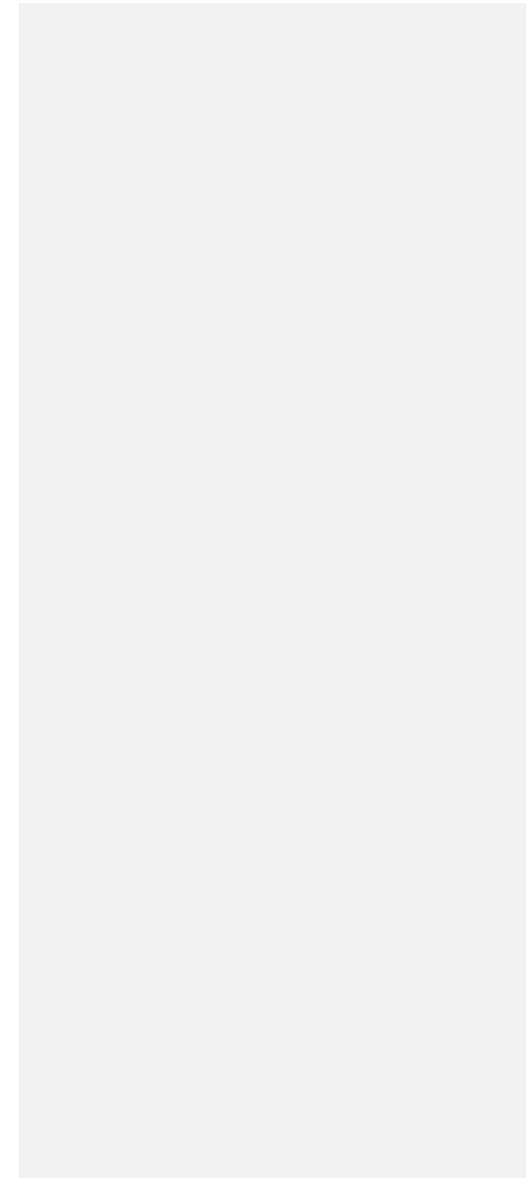
- Fostering a dialogue with local school authorities to ensure that no child is turned away due to absence of birth certificates
- Help households with alternative age of proof documentation

*Increased classroom attendance and better classroom performance leading to higher transition to formal schools:*

- Outdoor centers with outreach to out-of-school children and first-generation learners who would otherwise slip into illegal child labour, drug addiction or other vices
- New teaching methods - storytelling, puppet shows, and interactive activities to improve student engagement and participation in class
- Using innovative techniques to improve child's socio-economic awareness, subsequently children influence their families to send their siblings to Sunaayy centres
- Curriculum that focuses on Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) to increase discipline and self-confidence amongst children
- Set-up virtual learning centers and SMART classrooms for remote skilled teaching delivery
- Set-up mobile education units in areas where centers cannot be established
- Mentoring both parents and students for entrance exams and interviews

*Well-trained and motivated teaching staff:*

- Recruitment of teachers from within the same locality as the children to invoke a sense of responsibility, attachment, bonding, and nurturing qualities



- Teacher training and mentorship programs to promote interactive learning, efficient classroom management, improved curriculum and better program delivery
- Teacher training, not only for better education delivery, but also to make them capable for student and parent counselling on several issues like gender discrimination, substance abuse, child labor, etc.

*Reduced economic burden on households and health risks in children:*

- Provision of freshly cooked and nutritious breakfast and lunch for each student, which also acts as a behavioral stimulus to maintain regular attendance.
- Distribution of freshly cooked hot food and warm blankets
- Curriculum includes best practices in health, sanitation, and guidelines to prevent communicable and non-communicable diseases
- Conducting workshops at regular intervals on topics such as – health and safety, anti-substance abuse, gender and social equality, vaccinations, and medical check-ups
- Pre-school day-care centers provide mothers with the choice of working to increase family incomes

## More About Us

### Our Work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Sc4BingxMQ>

### Media Coverage:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Sc4BingxMQ>

<https://yourstory.com/socialstory/2020/01/richa-prasant-empowerment-children-delhi-sunaayy-foundation>

<http://businessnewsthisweek.com/business/sunaayy-foundation-expanded-its-wings-to-city-of-joy-kolkata/>

<https://yourstory.com/socialstory/2020/03/sunaayy-ngo-underprivileged-women-children-empowerment>

<https://www.asianage.com/life/more-features/211119/to-maam-with-love.html>

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/202753/delhi-woman-donates-food-clothes-migrant-labourers-child-care-inspiring-india/>

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2020/feb/16/from-roadside-kids-to-role-models-2103979.amp>