

HYDERABAD TEMPORARY LEARNING CENTRE HIGHLIGHTS



2022 FLOODS: CONTEXT

In 2022, Pakistan experienced one of the most destructive floods in its history, affecting around 33 million people and displacing nearly 8 million people across the country. Rural Sindh was the worst-hit with close to 70% of total damages and losses, followed by Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab.

Children in emergencies are among the most vulnerable. Traumatic experiences of displacement, disruption and protection risks can have drastic lifelong impact not only on children's education but also their mental health and wellbeing. Children's education opportunities were particularly affected - according to a report conducted by the Government of Pakistan in October 2022, at least 6,225 educational institutions were fully damaged, whereas 10,980 are reportedly partially damaged, affecting some 2.6 million enrolled students, of which over 1 million were estimated to be girls.

Our mantra:

**HAPPY MEMORIES BUILD RESILIENCE
for children in difficult circumstances.**



Picture: Morning shift at the Temporary Learning Center

THE COMMUNITY

Cities for Children, recognizing the urgent need for safe, playful learning spaces for children affected by the floods, partnered with the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) to set up a learning center in a temporary urban settlement in Hyderabad where displaced communities took refuge. Children in the community had been affected by local school closures, and there were a high number of children who were or were at risk of being out-of-school. There was a high incidence of child labour, with street-connected children in the community mostly recycling trash to provide financial respite to their families who have been caught in long-term cycles of debt.

Additional community challenges included the high prevalence of domestic violence; substance misuse, even in young children; lack of identity documents to enable access to public services like health and education; and health and hygiene issues with crippling lack of access to clean water. Families from the Hindu minority community often faced even higher vulnerability.

OUR RESPONSE

CITIES FOR CHILDREN AND SPARC SET UP A CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACE FOR ~100 CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 AND 12, FROM OCTOBER 2022 TILL MARCH 2023. THE AIM OF THIS CENTRE WAS TO PROVIDE A SAFE HAVEN IN WHICH CHILDREN COULD LEARN AND PLAY, AND CREATE A BRIDGE TO FORMAL SCHOOLS.

ABOUT 80 CHILDREN WOULD ATTEND THE CENTRE IN TWO SHIFTS EVERY DAY, SUPPORTED BY TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS WHO BUILT STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS, TO ENSURE THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ISSUES WERE ADDRESSED AND THEY WERE INVESTED IN A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE CHILDREN.

SCHOOL READINESS

One key objective of the Temporary Learning Center was to prepare children to begin formal school when a semblance of normalcy returned after the floods. This involved navigating several challenges:

- encouraging parents to enroll their children in schools rather than earning income;
- ensuring that children have the necessary identity documentation to enroll;
- provide them with an enriching experience to bolster crucial literacy, numeracy, and behavioral (socioemotional) skills needed to enter schools.



Picture: Products of a mud play session from Partners in Learning content, to build creativity and motor skills

Cities for Children also shared and adapted some of its flagship Partners in Learning curriculum for the teaching staff. This oriented teachers around the importance and impact of adding play to learning, especially in times of crisis. Through play, stories, games, and through precious friendships forged along the way, children associated positive experiences with learning.



Picture: Storybooks to build vocabulary

PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE

To address prevailing child protection risks, we partnered with Oxford University and trained staff and community volunteers to deliver parenting sessions. WHO-endorsed Parenting for Lifelong Health content was combined with CfC resources to reach over 80 caregivers, training them on how to support their children without violence, in difficult times.

Twice a week, there were snacks - some provided by corporate donor Hilal Foods, and healthy fruit from CfC. **Saturdays were Play Days - essential for children's happiness and mental health!**

DURING OUR MONITORING VISIT, CHILDREN REPORTED THAT THEY:

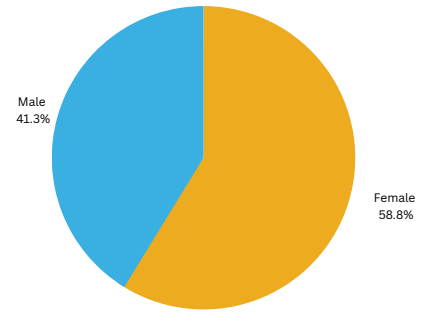
- Feel **EMPOWERED** in that space
- Feel **SAFE** from violence
- Feel like they can **PLAY** there like they cant elsewhere
- Meet their **FRIENDS** and talk there (otherwise an issue for girls)
- Had a chance to **LEARN MANNERS**, not to fight or curse and how to meet people.
- Had a **ROUTINE**, got up in the morning, knew they have to go. All parents said they get up themselves and go themselves because they wanted to.
- Enjoyed **CREATIVITY** and colouring



FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS - MARCH 2023

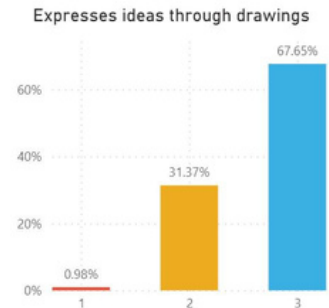
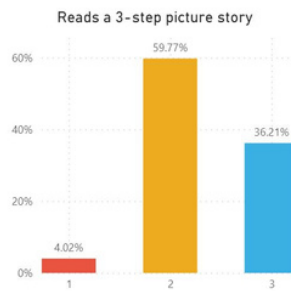
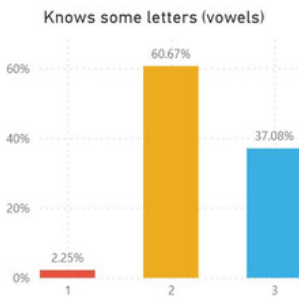
At the end of March, an endline assessment was conducted to ensure that children had the requisite skills to transition to mainstream schools. There was a wide variation in ages, but the assessment was just to look at foundational skills particularly at the early years level. A baseline and endline comparison was not valid for this space, as it operated as a drop-in facility, there had been changes in the mobile community and there had been variation in attendance of children.

About 80 children were surveyed at the endline, in order to get a picture of the work needed at the early years level and for older children. In each of the domains of literacy, numeracy and socioemotional skills, they were placed at three levels: 1 - doesn't know; 2 - knows a little; 3 - knows it well.



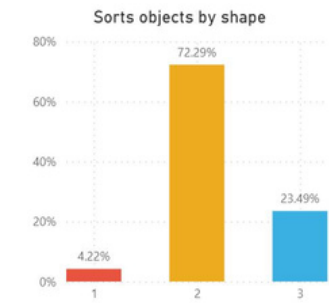
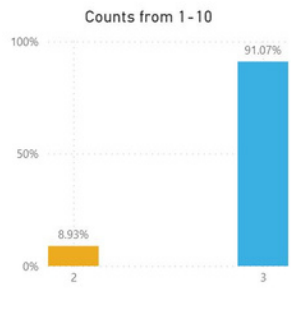
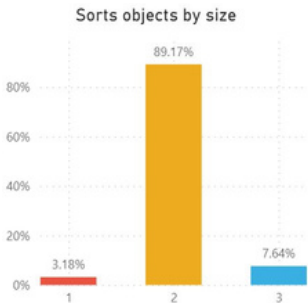
1. Early Literacy and Language

Overall Average score: 2.19 out of 3



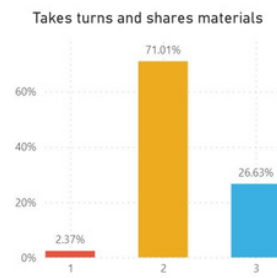
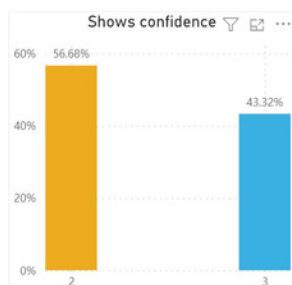
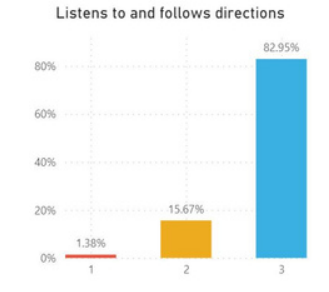
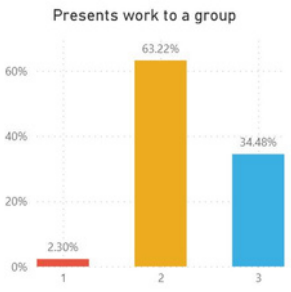
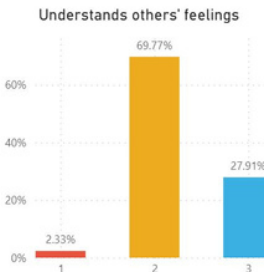
3. Numeracy

Overall Average: 2.31



3. Socioemotional Skills

Overall Average Score: 2.31 out of 3



STEPS TOWARDS SCHOOL

Endline survey results were positive overall, but showed variation in skills across age groups with children at different stages needing further support. A number of additional measures are being taken to ensure that all steps in the admission process are completed and that students are able to not only enter school but to do so with confidence in their abilities.

- In early March, an enrollment drive and motivation session was conducted in the community with parents to discuss the importance of their children entering schools, their ability to do well there, and what was required from parents to get this done. There was an incredible responses from parents who pledged to ensure school admission for their children.
- One critical obstacle to school enrollment is that most students do not have **identity documents** in terms of birth certificates, B-forms and parental CNICs which are a requirement for admission. The SPARC team is actively working with relevant local authorities to solve this.
- **Crash courses** are being conducted for basic literacy and numeracy to enable their admissions into Grade 1.
- A key obstacle that children and their parents reported was the inability to acquire necessary stationery, bags, books, and uniforms. We hope to ensure that each child can enter school with heads held high.

"During the past few months, I have seen parents' opinion on education drastically shift. Previously, they did not value schooling and thought that their children would do the same jobs as them. However, after their children's engagement with the center, parents come to us ask us how to get their children enrolled in government schools."

Excerpt from a focus group discussion with the TLC teachers



Picture: An early years student during a literacy crash course lesson at SPARC [March 2023]

