

NURTURING NEIGHBOURHOODS CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT CITIES TO DEVELOP, PILOT & SCALE SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE OF YOUNG CHILDREN, CAREGIVERS/FAMILIES

Relevant for: null | Topic: Urbanization, their problems and their remedies incl. Migration & Smart Cities

Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs launched three initiatives, namely, the Nurturing Neighborhoods Challenge focusing on shaping cities for young children and their families; the Data Maturity Assessment Framework to evaluate data ecosystems of cities; and an on-line training programme for City Data Officers (CDOs) of 100 Smart Cities in an event organized here today. Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, MoHUA, senior officials from the Ministry and other stakeholders also participated in the event.

The Nurturing Neighborhoods Challenge, a 3-year initiative, will support cities to develop, pilot, and scale solutions that enhance the quality of life of young children, their caregivers and families in the public realm. The challenge is conducted with the support of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, Netherlands with technical support from WRI India. Through the challenge, selected cities will receive technical assistance and capacity-building to reimagine parks and open spaces; improve access to early childhood facilities; adapt public spaces with early childhood-oriented amenities; and create accessible, safe, walkable streets for young children and families. The challenge will be open to all Smart Cities, other cities with more than five lakh population, and capitals of States and UTs.

“The urban environment shapes a young child’s health and development, particularly in the crucial and vulnerable first five years of life. During the first 1,000 days of a child’s life, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second. By enhancing the primary public domain of young children and their families to be safer and more stimulating for early childhood, the Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge can help lay the foundation for more robust social and economic development outcomes in Indian cities for decades to come.”

“Families are challenged by inadequate public transport, as well as food, healthcare and childcare ‘deserts’. Thoughtful urban planning and design can play a major role in addressing such challenges and in giving children a good start in life. This includes Walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods that cater to the basics a young family needs within 15 minutes on foot; lively, green public spaces close to home that offer amenities for caregivers while allowing small children to explore safely; safe transport routes and transit systems that make it easy, affordable and enjoyable for families with young children to travel; and healthy environments with safe levels of air quality and low noise pollution; and lastly a vibrant community life that supports family well-being.”

-Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (Independent Charge)

“For a city to be responsive to all people, it needs to consciously address the needs of the most vulnerable groups. Incorporating an early childhood lens in city planning will support more holistic, people-oriented urban development.”

-Shri Durga Shankar Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)

“We believe that neighbourhoods friendly for infants, toddlers, and their parents and other caregivers is a sustainable and inclusive way to think about cities, with a focus on core infrastructure and better quality of life for its youngest residents, and ultimately all people. A focus on public spaces, mobility, access to services for young children, and other similar aspects supports their health and well-being. Cities that work for very young children are likely to work for all. We are grateful to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for launching this important initiative and look forward to the collaboration with World Resources Institute India and the participating cities.”

- Rushda Majeed, India Representative, Bernard van Leer Foundation

The Data Maturity Assessment Framework (DMAF) - cycle-2 will support cities in the creation of 'culture of data' under the DataSmart Cities initiative of the smart cities Mission. The core objective of this framework is to enable cities to assess their own data maturity with respect to a standardized framework covering aspects of enabling policies, governance structures, data management, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement at the city level. This is expected to play an enabling role in democratizing the data culture for open- innovation, collaboration, co-creation and academic research. The assessment for this cycle has been expanded to include cities other than Smart Cities.

“Part of our Hon’ble Prime Minister’s Digital India Campaign is to ensure the government’s services are made available to citizens more efficiently by leveraging data and digital technologies. The DataSmart Cities Initiative launched by the Smart Cities Mission is a step in that direction. By harnessing the combinatorial powers of data and technology, the initiative aims to foster evidence-based planning and institutionalize a robust mechanism for performance management.”

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“Cities around the world are becoming increasingly data driven across its value chain from policy formulation, choice of projects, project design and implementation and service delivery. If leveraged effectively, data can make considerable difference to quality of life of its citizens and enable city administration to deliver more with fewer resources. Data-driven functioning will ensure a move towards outcome based planning and governance. Data is increasingly being viewed as a key ingredient in improving city services, as well as an opportunity for innovation and co-creation.”

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Under the CDO Training Programme, MoHUA has partnered with Tata Trusts to launch a six-week guided e-learning course called 'Enabling Data Driven Decision Making in Urban Local Bodies'. Specially designed for City Data Officers (CDOs) appointed in the 100 Smart Cities, this practice-based digital course will expose CDOs to basic and advanced tools for data collection, analysis and visualization. CDOs will also be enabled to understand principles of effective data-driven governance and show how to create actionable data policy frameworks using a use-case approach to enable practical learning and application.

“The Ministry is committed to the continuous capacity building of the City Data Officers (CDOs) through hands-on assessments, on-line learning modules and expert support from partner networks. By doing so, MoHUA is not just creating digital leadership within Urban Local Bodies, but also building capacity of the country’s urban data ecosystem at large.

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"The training is developed by Tata Trusts to maximize relevance for the participating ULB officials, with concepts ranging from the basics of data driven governance, tools pertaining to data use and technology for municipalities, demonstration of use cases in Health and Education sectors and change management principles and practices to bring about data driven transformations."

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"Since 2016, Tata Trusts, through its Data Driven Governance (DDG) portfolio, has actively worked towards establishing the need and relevance of data reliant decision making for urban and rural local governments. Our efforts in this training programme hope to build a cadre of enabled and efficient resources within the structure, such that, civilians and the administration can truly benefit from the accountability, systemic advances and digitization of government services that come along with residing in SMART cities".

-Dr. Poornima Dore, Head- Data Driven Governance, Tata Trusts

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