

**Office of the
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Press Release:

Centre for Early Childhood Development and Research (CECDR), Jamia Millia Islamia and Save the Children, India organises the 4th International Conference on Early Childhood Development and Emergencies: Way Forward #disasterproofchildhood

New Delhi, November 14th 2018 – The 4th International Conference on Early Childhood Development and Emergencies: Way Forward organised by Centre for Early Childhood Development and Research (CECDR), Jamia Millia Islamia alongwith Save the Children, India was inaugurated today.

The two-day event brings together national and international ECD professionals, last-mile grass-root organisations and practitioners, from UNICEF, NDMA, NIDM, Save the Children, NUEPA, Ambedkar University Delhi and others who would reflect on some key thematic areas under Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Emergencies.

ECD has been defined as “a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children and their parents, caregivers and communities from the prenatal period through children’s entry into school. Its purpose is to uphold children’s rights to develop their full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential” Children during emergencies are a vulnerable group, children in the age group 0 to 8 more so as they are completely dependent on adults for their survival and well-being. ‘Vital physical, socio-emotional and cognitive needs are too often overlooked in humanitarian response leaving children and their families’ farther behind’.

Bidisha Pillai, CEO Save the Children India added, *“Emergency situations exacerbate the problems associated with early childhood development. We need to think hard about the trauma and violence that the child undergoes. We have to start thinking multi-sectoral. While children are at the frontline of the impact of emergencies, they are also in the frontline of the solutions - therefore it's imperative that we also involve them when we look at the way forward.”*

India, because of its unique geographical location and other circumstances is said to be the third worst affected country by natural disasters since 1995. This theme originates from reading about such current affairs in India that highlights that even though we have the national policies and systems in place, the actual response to any emergency is diverse.

“It time to prioritize early childhood years in case of emergencies, also because comprehensive investments in early childhood years is a long term investment to the country. The time is to establish minimum standards of relief for young children in emergencies or affected by them”- said by Mr. Kamal Kishore Member, National Disaster Management Authority

India is not only experiencing natural calamities or disasters but endemic strife and violence that has happened in the past in the areas of North East, Jammu and Kashmir and in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) and has affected childhood and children in many ways. The recent floods in Kerala are an example which left children under the danger of vulnerability and abuse.

‘Protecting children in humanitarian and natural crisis should be the priority by facilitating smooth recovery of young children at the time of emergency. We are proud to partner with Save the Children, India in looking for ways in which we can protect children and strengthen early childhood development’ said Professor Zubair Meenai, Director, CECDR, Jamia Millia Islamia.

This conference is organised in response to contextual and systemic challenges that contribute to low disaster response and management, child protection or right to education. The outcome of the conference will be a draft policy brief highlighting the key issues and recommendations. The aim of this brief will be to evoke advocacy in the area of early childhood development and emergencies.

Follow Centre for Early Childhood Development and Research (CECDR), Jamia Millia Islamia on Facebook (@cecdr.jmi) & Twitter (@CECDR1) for updates on the conference 2018. For further information on the CECDR activities and participation details, please write to us at 4iconecd@gmail.com.

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