Child Friendly Space as a Social and Environmental Catalyst

Bangladesh is one of the countries most vulnerable due to climate change, regularly being subjected to natural hazards including cyclones, floods, soil salinity, waterlogging, tidal surges and droughts. While these hazards are taken into account and attempts are made to tackle them, the children are often overlooked causing physical and mental implications that are long-lasting and traumatic. We chose our site in Shyamnagar Upazila of Satkhira District as one of the highest affected regions of Bangladesh. Our site is located in Gabura Union; in a small village on the southeast called Parshemari. Gabura Union is highly affected by cyclones, tidal surges, waterlogging and soil salinity. We recognized children as the most vulnerable during climate crisis and our goal was to achieve environmental and social resilience through a Child Friendly Space, enriching the community around it.

We located our Child Friendly Space (CFS) in “Paschim Para”, a small community on the East of Parshemari. The community is mostly based on shrimp cultivation and hence, it is a landscape full of “ghers”, scant arable land and limited vegetation. The children here are facing a lack of proper spaces to help them grow and develop, let alone deal with the trauma of natural hazards that they face yearly. Their fears lie with water, dark thunderclouds and the disasters taking away their homes and possessions. Our goal with the CFS was to design a space which is interactive, playful and can eventually become a possession of the children that they will never have to lose. At the same time, the CFS will act as a refuge center during hazardous times, and also bring the community together through agriculture, gardening, learning centers and being a multifunctional space for various activities. It will be a hub where children and the community can engage in agricultural practices, where the structure itself is sustaining both the lives of it’s users but also the landscape around it.

Our design is therefore going to serve the community both during and after climate crisis and also act an unit that provides food security for the community around it. It is socially responsive and it is a catalyst to bring positive changes to both children and the community.
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A study done by UNICEF portraying the different implications on children and the community, during crisis situations in Shyamnagar district, Bangladesh.

We see an overview of the crisis faced by children through a timeline divided into 3 basic stages of their lives: Infant/Young children, Primary School girls and boys, and Adolescents.
Design Strategies:

- Tidal inundation and cyclone-responsive architectonic scheme (tidal surge and water clogging)
- Edible landscape as the platform for the EFA
- Architecture as identity generator
- A flexible architectural scheme which will help to create an intimate space/emotion
- Creating an impactful relationship with water edge

Form Generation:

- Concept of the Granary (Storage)
- Colpata on west side of
- Ground Floor Plan
- First Floor Plan
- Second Floor Plan
- Tin
- Brick wall
- Concrete columns
- Concrete Floor slabs
Child Friendly Space acting as a Social Infrastructure

Our design is a multi-functional unit that acts as a social and environmental catalyst. Through various design interventions, we tried to create a structure that hosts facilities to serve the community both during and after crisis.

Rain water harvest

Vegetation on fenestration

Existing paddy field also works as a playground after after harvesting season

Plinth acting as night school for the elderly

Intimate attic space for children

Interactive spaces for Children

Modular and interactive storage units that are also partition walls

Intimate attic space for children

Open Multipurpose as a space for shelter during crisis. The partitions can be arranged to make separate rooms.

Ground floor plinth can act as a shelter for livestock when tidal surge causes waterlogging
Child Friendly Space, together with its interactive features and also community functions, is therefore a catalyst for social growth. Our design is made to sustain the normal life of its inhabitants as well as provide support as crisis shelter. It also ensures food security for the community by allowing for farming and gardening.

Connection with the water body that was pre-existing on our site is well integrated with our design to help children overcome their fear of water, that is rooted from their past experiences during crisis.