

COVID-19 Response Newsletter



From the Executive Director's Desk

People in their homes, unable to move out, unable to work and unable to feed their families and it is the same situation, in basti after basti.

The past month-and-a-half has been unlike any other time in the past few decades we have been working on the ground. Even in the best of times they were struggling but now the situation is far worse with no income and almost no food and many bereft of hope about their future. We continued to extend support to them. CFAR teams supported by determined community volunteers in every slum and city reached out cooked food, dry ration and a month's supply of grocery to those who need it most – the migrants, elderly and persons with disabilities, transgender persons, single women, ragpickers, domestic workers and construction workers among others. Our community leaders managing help desks and community management committees in Ajmer, Ananthapuram, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Madurai, Pune, Sambalpur, and Guntur reached out to nearly 2,50,759 HHs or approximately 12,53,795 people in these weeks.

We were supported by innumerable individual donors and organizations. The latter included OXFAM India, Seeds India, India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF), Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF), YARDI, Naveen Foundation, Mishaal Foundation, Plan India Mumbai, Sewa Delhi, Tupaia Centre, Diyaghar Hasirudala, Tata Consultancy Services and many more whom we would like to express our gratitude to. In partnership with the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights and McKS Food for Hungry Foundation, we have been able to provide milk and cornflakes to 695 children below six years in Delhi.

With the lockdown continuing in different ways and even with the permission to work being given by the administration, many informal workers are finding there are no jobs to go back to. Domestic workers, drivers, and other employment available to people are getting scarcer. The pandemic continues to pose life-threatening challenges and extreme state of distress for the poor. For CFAR, it will mean continuing with our COVID 19 relief work until communities can get on with their lives as before.

Read this newsletter to get glimpses of our work and the people who are making a difference.

Akhila Sivadas

Executive Director

Reaching the Unreached: Relief Updates from Across Cities

At the outset, we want to once again salute the hundreds of intrepid community volunteers and CFAR team across cities for leaving no stone unturned to connect with communities and households living in far-flung areas with food packets, medicines and other essential goods.

One poignant moment today (Sunday, 10 May) was when youth volunteers from Satark Yuva Sanghthana reached out to scores of stranded migrant workers, walking back home on the NH 28 highway with food and water. Clearly this is a small gesture but a strong reminder of the huge humanitarian work we need to mount to mitigate the crippling effects of the protracted lockdown in the wake of the pandemic on the migrant workers.





Hunger Helpline: City Administration Collaborates with Sahaya Single Window in Ajmer



Ajmer: In these trying times of lockdown and no work the major source of relief was the Hunger Helpline set up to address this need. The helpline was launched on March 24, at the start of the lockdown and has been helping the most-needy and vulnerable people get two square meals a day.

The Hunger Helpline was started by the Ajmer Administration, and is managed by the Ajmer Municipal Corporation in collaboration with Akshaya Patra. Chaired by Ajmer's

Municipal Commissioner Ms. Chinmaya Gopal, other members include United Ajmer and MTTV India.

CFAR has been nominated as a task force member to aid the district administration in facilitating direct access of marginalised groups through the Sahaya Single Window (set up by CFAR). On a daily level, 120 Help-desk volunteers support the distribution of 400-600 food packets across 28 settlements.

These community volunteers do everything from readying the list and ensuring the delivery to socially vulnerable groups including single women, widows, people living with HIV, persons with disability, those affected with tuberculosis and other chronic ailments, beedi rollers, and migrant labour.

Basanti Devi an elderly resident of Nagfani slum told us, “I walk slowly and it is difficult to walk down from the slum to the roadside to get something to eat. Thanks to the volunteers of Sahaya Single Window and Help-desk who get me cooked food daily and also provided dry ration kits.”

Making Ends Meet: Testimony of a Migrant

Ajmer: Dilip, a migrant worker in Ajmer, shares his travails and tribulations with us....

Dilip, from Saleha village in Chhattisgarh, came to Ajmer district two years ago along with his family to work at Vishwakarma brick kiln on Ladpura village road, 25 km from Ajmer city. He and his wife both work at the brick kiln and live in a brick house next to the kiln. Together, the couple make 900-1000 bricks a day for which they are paid Rs.160 each. Both also receive a weekly allowance of Rs. 300.

When asked why they came all the way to Ajmer, Dilip narrated the struggles and hardships they faced back home. “Although there are many factories and industries in Chhattisgarh where we can work, I chose to come to the city because I had to raise money to pay the lawyer fighting our land dispute case in court. If I had stayed back in my village or had got a job nearby, I would have been forced to borrow money from a moneylender at a high interest rate. I did this for my marriage and it took me years to repay.”

On April 23, Dilip and his family along with 880 families of migrant workers (350 from brick kilns, 350 from limestone industry, 180 from marble and power loom industry) in Ajmer got a month’s supply of grocery with support of Sahaya Single Window of CFAR. The single window is also facilitating the registration of these migrant workers.

Thus far in Ajmer, 70,504 households in 28 settlements have been provided food relief and financial assistance.

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Care and Support for Elderly: Teeja Devi Gets Her Pension After 13 Months



Jaipur: Teeja Devi, a resident of Swami Basti, Sindhi Camp, is not able to move around. She had not got her pension for the last 13 months as she was not able to complete the required paper work. Then both COVID-19 and lockdown happened and she was feeling truly helpless. “I am old and with my aching bones, how could I run around to collect alms? Our relatives ignore us. It is not their fault. How long can they continue to support us? The government also does not give me any pension as I do not have proper documents. We sit here every day and some kind-hearted person helps us with food on which our survival is based.”

The CFAR team reached out to her and made sure that she got cooked meals twice a day. She was also provided dry ration and vegetables. CFAR also helped her with all the paper work and documentation she had to attach to get her pension. She has started receiving pension in her account.

Nafisa Distributes Free Masks to Reduce Harm

Jaipur: Nafisa Begum, 37, is a single mother who lives with her daughter in Shakti Colony. She is a member of the Community Management Committee and the Single Window Forum set up by CFAR. Nafisa’s husband left her 10 years ago. She has been struggling since then to make a living and educate her daughter.

Despite these hardships, in these difficult times when people are preoccupied with their own problems, she decided to help the most vulnerable people of her own settlement. “I was trained by CFAR team to strengthen prevention, so I decided to share this learning with my neighbours. They did not have masks so I decided to stitch some for them”.

Nafisa has distributed 150 masks which she has made on her own. Now she is making masks from the cloth collected from other families for free distribution to the needy.

In Jaipur, 28,795 households in 22 settlements have been reached with cooked food and dry rations.

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Ranaram Renders Selfless Service to the Poor



Jodhpur: Ranaram (30) has been associated with CFAR for over a year now. He works as a Field Supervisor in Jodhpur and is an enthusiastic worker with a never say die attitude.

On day one of the lockdown in Jodhpur Ranaram began to make calls to members of Misaal Sanitation Committees (set up by CFAR) to inform them about simple steps to reduce the risk of infection. He shared, “I told them to wash their hands and to keep themselves reminded asked them to recite the phrase, Corona se na rona, haath dhona, haath dhona in their mind. This worked for many. We also with support of Mr Sushil, Sanitary Inspector Ward 13 ensured waste collection and fumigation in 12 settlements of the ward to protect the people”.

To help the marginalised poor occupational groups of Bhils, construction workers, daily wage workers involved in stone quarrying, mining, cutting marble, bangle making, and wool rolling, he began identifying most vulnerable households and presented the list to the Jodhpur Municipal Corporation. As a result, regular cooked food packets began to be supplied twice a day, in six settlements of ward no 13. He also enlisted names of 97 households with elderly, persons with disability, pregnant and ill members, who had no ration cards and helped them to secure dry ration kits with support of a local philanthropist.

With support of the local health care centre and ASHA Sahyogini Ranaram reached out to 38 individuals who displayed symptoms of Coronavirus infection and facilitated sample collection and testing.

He is now enumerating these households to secure financial assistance of Rs 2500 from the

state government under the COVID 19 response scheme for daily wage workers

On May 10, Ranaram was felicitated by Shri Sushil Ghosh, Sanitary Inspector Ward 13, and other community leaders from the neighbouring settlements for his tireless support to the community to mitigate the risks of the pandemic

“We reach out to the community in normal times. We have to support them in this difficult time also. There are many days to day challenges the poor are facing and I feel it is my duty to support them.”

Guddi Devi Feeds the Hungry



Jodhpur: Guddi Devi, 30, lives in Baiji Ka Talab, and is a role model for many women in Jodhpur. Given her extraordinary ability to lead from the front, Guddi Devi did not wait for the government or CSOs to support her in helping the daily wage workers, thela walas and poor tenants living in the settlement.

“When the lockdown began on March 22, my mother-in-law and I met the pujari of the temple in Baiji ka Talab. We requested him to use the donation and the chadawa for providing food twice a day to 25 daily wage labourers, vendors, destitute and needy families living in the basti, for 21 days” she said.

Guddi also went door to door to collect donation and seek support of women to cook food, many of whom came forward to help. They all took turns to cook daily. Some of them served food, while others worked with the Sanitation Inspector to get the settlement sanitized and collect waste regularly. A team also worked to reach out to local philanthropists and individuals for cash donation and contributions in kind including

flour, rice, pulses, and oil.

Realizing the urgency, the Jodhpur Nagar Nigam got into the act of distributing food relief. Guddi Devi with the support of CFAR was able to get Nagar Nigam to provide 40 food packets (twice a day) for distributing daily to families in need.

In Jodhpur, dry ration and cooked food relief has been provided to 4236 households across 14 settlements.

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Helping Migrants in Chandragiri Village



Ananthapuram: The lockdown has been difficult for migrants who have neither livelihood nor resource to government support systems. On April 15, CFAR received information regarding a group of 8 migrant labourers from Jharkhand who were stuck due to the lockdown at Chandragiri village in Ananthapur district of Andhra Pradesh. They needed immediate help as they were running out of food.

These daily wage labourers were working and living near KIA Motors manufacturing plant, situated 80 km away from Ananthapur city. CFAR team member contacted Manish Kumar, one of the group members who shared, “We came here from Jharkhand to earn a living. Our work here is the only source of our income and our families are dependent on us. This pandemic and lockdown have drowned all our hopes and earnings. We are left with nothing, and from the past few days we have been waiting for help and food. We have no work, no money, no food. No one has come forward to help us.”

CFAR team contacted all authorities including Ms. Sreedevi, Village Revenue Officer. They

were alerted about the condition of the workers. Ms. Sreedevi was shocked because in her records, there were no migrant workers in her area that were without support from the administration. Sreedevi assumed that since these workers were associated with KIA Motors they would be looked after by the company and provided dry rations. CFAR team managed to convince her that these workers cannot be denied their basic rights. Soon after that, Ms. Sreedevi visited the village, interacted with the workers, and found that none of them had any ration card and, hence, it was not possible to provide ration to them from the Public Distribution System. However, she and her team mobilized resources and arranged both dry ration and vegetables. Ms. Sreedevi assured CFAR that she would continue the support and also follow up with their needs from time to time.

After getting support for three days, CFAR team was able to secure month's grocery kit from Rural Development Trust.

In Ananthapuram, 18 households in five settlements have been provided dry ration kits.

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Reaching Out to Key Populations with Food and Healthcare Services



Guntur: Shehnaz, Ayesha and Baji Bee, who have been associated with CFAR since 2011, assisted PLHIVs to secure the monthly ART medicines and others needing TB medicines. Together with CFAR team, they also distributed dry ration to migrant workers from Bihar, who were stranded in the outskirts of Guntur on their way back home from Chennai and Bengaluru.

“Sex workers and PLHIV, even in normal times are struggling to get included in many programs for the vulnerable groups. And now due to this pandemic and lockdown they have been further marginalised and with many of them not possessing any kind of ration card, we got in touch with some the NGOs and organizations for food relief at the very least,” stated Ayesha

In Guntur, 444 households across 26 settlements with key population have been provided ART, TB medicines and grocery.

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Supporting Daily Wage Workers in Pune



Pune: Sharada Shinde lives with her son and two grandsons. She had to leave her work to look after her grandsons. Her son is the only earning member of the family. He worked as a daily wage worker and managed to meet the daily needs of the family. Now due to lockdown, he is not able to go to work. “We have just been eating only rice for the last few days. Some people distributed dry ration in our settlement but we did not get. We are happy that we got one-month food grains and grocery,” she said.

The members of Sahaya Single Window and Help Desk prepared a list of 2354 families consisting of around 9416 family members who are in immediate need of food support from 27 urban settlements. All 2354 households were provided food relief.

In Pune, the Sahaya Single Window has reached out to 8825 households in 27 settlements with grocery kits and cooked food.

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COVID Relief support for sex workers and transgender in Madurai



Madurai: Sex workers, transgender and people living with HIV are facing a huge backlash in these trying times. With their livelihood at stake right now, for them survival has also become a challenge with each passing day.

“We identified 52 most vulnerable sex worker, PLHIV and transgender households and with support of MSJE and Sri Lakshmi Pengal Munnetra Sangam, a Community Based Organisation of sex workers provided them with a month ration kit”, shared Rani.

The CBO is now seeking support of the government to facilitate social security schemes and also ensuring regular ART treatment for these families.

Thus far, 1672 households in 22 settlements were reached out to with ART medicine and food kits.

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Rakesh Makkar: Breaking Gender Stereotype



Bhubaneswar: Rakesh Kumar Makkar has been staying in Ward no 18 in Baliapata, since 2002. He shares with us his journey as a member of the Community Management

Committee....

“In 2018, an organisation, named CFAR reached, out to us in Baliapata. CFAR, through community meetings, has enlightened us on issues related to water and sanitation. We formed Community Management Committee with the objective of understanding the needs of the community and addressing them. All the priorities of the community are taken through the Single Window Forum Members to the Single Window and then linked with the Department for final resolutions. In the present context we are all actively working to prepare the community to stop the virus and helping some with dry ration and providing cooked food and hygiene kits to those who need them the most.”

Single Window Forum and Community Management Committee Members Extend Support for Healthcare and Sanitation Workers.

Bhubaneswar: Single Window Forum and Community Management Committee members have been a pillar of strength for the healthcare workers residing in Nirankari Nagar.

In the time of growing fear of the pandemic and the stigma against healthcare providers, they have stood out by fearlessly reaching out to the healthcare providers working in hospitals designated for COVID-19 patients and even cooking for them. Speaking about this Laxmipriya Lenka said that “in the beginning we were afraid of the nurse who was staying in Nirankari Nagar but soon realized that even if she tests negative, the risk of contracting the virus continues and yet she and other health workers risk their lives to saves others. We are making sure that everyone respects and supports her.”

In another instance the electrician working in the same clinic was taken to hospital by Bidulata Das member of Community Management Committee, formed with the support of CFAR. Reinforcing their support, Prasant Swain said that “We respect all people working in hospitals and involved in caregiving as this is a very trying time and they are the ones who are most exposed to the risk.”

In Bhubaneswar, across 117 settlements, 54,606 households have been provided food relief and financial assistance.

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Shehanaz Builds Knowledge in the Community



Sambalpur: Shehanaz Begum, a resident of Dhanibandh settlement in Sambalpur, Odisha, is an outreach worker with CFAR.

“We have been reaching out to community in different settlements and telling them about government schemes as well giving information on how to protect oneself from COVID-19. Shehanaz Begum is distributing 50 masks on daily basis in Rashtrapati Colony Gobintola, Sakhipada and Dhanupalli and while distributing them she also disseminates information on how to use the mask and why it is important to use the mask. Through her own efforts she distributed puffed rice, biscuits and jaggery to 75 elderly and children living in Rashtrapati Colony. She is one of the many champions from Sambalpur who is doing her bit to fight COVID-19.

Supported by nine team members, Shehanaz, has trained 730 elderly, persons with disability, single women and girls across 22 settlements on the precautions they must take to stop the virus.

In Sambalpur, 135 households in nine settlements have been provided relief.

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Health Check-up for Pourakarmikas and Construction Workers



Bengaluru: They are the unsung heroes of the COVID 19 along with other workers who are providing essential services with little protection. Sanitation workers are at the forefront in the fight against the epidemic and need as much protection as others who are providing essential services. CFAR and Single Window team in Karnataka helped organise health camps for pourakarmikas – sanitation workers –in collaboration with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, National Health Mission and the local Primary Health Centre at Magadi Road.

Parvathi, from Magadi Cross Road, shared “In my ward, we are 120 workers and none of us have been identified with any health problems. The Single Window team, CFAR, has distributed dry ration in my locality and I have also received a kit.”

The Single Window team also coordinated with ASHA workers to ensure doorstep health check-up for construction workers by the Health team.

Nethravathi Connects Poor to Institutional Support Systems

Bengaluru: “I live in Nayandahalli slum where hundreds of migrant construction workers live in small huts without any basic facilities. These families have been living in the locality for more than 25 years and the entire slum is depending upon the daily wages, and they go to different parts of Bengaluru for the work.

During the lockdown, Nethravathi, who is a member of the Single Window Forum, set up by CFAR helped more than 400 households in her locality by getting support from various donors. She has listed 140 households who were without BPL ration card and linked them to the Department of Food and Civil Supplies so that they could get for dry ration. “I enumerated 140 houses eligible for Rs.1,000 as financial assistance through Building and

Other Construction Workers Welfare Board, and the Labour Department, and also registered 38 new construction workers for the construction workers welfare card”.



Thus far, Nethravathi along with 44 help-desk and Single Window members have supported 1800 construction workers for securing financial assistance and food relief.

Overall, in Bengaluru, 73,429 households in 58 settlements have been reached out with food relief and financial assistance.

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Enabling Social Justice at the Doorstep through District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), East



Delhi: “There is so much more we all need to do as a part of the COVID 19 response. This is just a small beginning. Organisations like DLSA do not know how to reach the people directly. We, therefore, work with NGOs and CBOs and help them in enabling the poor to

access their rights and entitlements. This time we would like to help unorganised migrant workers engaged in construction work to secure the benefit of financial assistance of Rs 5000 declared by the Delhi government,” stated Mr. Pawan Kumar, Secretary, DLSA, East. To reach the vulnerable groups DLSA East, mandated nine paralegal volunteers (PLVs) to reach out to unorganised workers, street vendors, sex workers and destitute and link them with the community kitchens set up by the Delhi government. The PLVs soon began to distribute dry ration, hygiene kits, helping them in filling e-coupons and register and renew the registration of 120 construction workers for Labour Card.

Women Stop Sale of Liquor



Delhi: “We, women, not only need dry ration, milk and grocery during this difficult time, we also need peace of mind and harmony at home and in our basti. With men queuing up from 4 am to buy home brewed liquor, drunken brawls and abuses searing early mornings, we decided it was high time that we took matters in our hands and thus our struggle to stop the sale of liquor began...” says Kamlesh.

“While we women from the Community Management Committee (set up by CFAR) made our own efforts, we would like to place on record and acknowledge the support and trust which the two police officials, Mukhtar Ahmad, Beat Officer and Ashvani Mongra, Head Constable placed in us. They not only believed us but also helped us complete the documentation formalities. They also assured all residents that in case they faced any problem, the police were just a call away. They are regularly visiting the camp and even assisting us in distribution of dry food kits,” added Mukesh.

Heera Performs Her Roles with Great Elan

Delhi: Heera, 36, wears many hats. She is a Swachha Grahni and an ASHA worker in addition to a paralegal volunteer and a self-help group member.

Then, as the COVID 19 pandemic began and poor and vulnerable families with no regular income and daily jobs approached her for food relief, she with the help of other members of the Community Management Committee began to make lists of those who needed grocery

and food grains. “We worked closely with other members in the community and delivered grocery kits to the most vulnerable, including families with elderly, persons with disability, young children and ill family members.”

The team helped Ram, who is physically disabled, get a gas cylinder and dry ration so that he could cook his own food and have two square meals a day. “My colleague Surekha and I are also distributing half -litre milk packets and cornflakes every two days to 22 families with infants. I have also counselled many women and mediated fights as the men are at home and are stressed because they do not have jobs,” she added.



Across 71 settlements in Delhi, relief has been provided to 7723 households.

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Relief Update

As part of our relief work during COVID-19 pandemic, we have reached out to marginalized, hidden and most vulnerable population groups in our communities.

A) Organized purchase/packaging of grocery and facilitated door to door delivery of food relief

Total Reach: 1207 HHs – Grocery for one month

Relief type: Dry ration, Hygiene (Gloves, masks for transgender)

Cities: 11- Ajmer, Ananthapur, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Guntur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kolkata, Pune, Sambalpur

B) Facilitated door to door delivery of food relief, ration and medicines

Total Reach: 2,50,759 HHs or approximately 12,53,795 people

Settlements: 403

Cities: 14 – Ajmer, Anantapur, Bhubaneswar, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore,

Relief Type	HHs Reached
Dry Food	28649
Cooked Food	115029
Hunger Helpline	33117
Mid-day Meal Coupon	3459
Antodaya Ration	44337
Grocery Kit	828
ART Medicine	1600
Milk	2722
Cornflakes	600
Financial Assistance	19664
Hygiene Kits	754
Total	250759

C) Facilitated door to door delivery of milk for children 0-6 yrs

Settlements: 13

Children: 695

Packets-2722

Milk; 600 cornflakes

Facilitated by 31 Community Management Committee members in Delhi

For more information

Centre for Advocacy and Research

