

COVID-19 Response Newsletter



From the Executive Director's Desk

There was no time to lose. Our cadre of community management committees (CMCs) and helpdesk members were on the ground, present in their areas, and had for many years played a community empowerment role. They sprang into action as soon as the lockdown began, helping people meet their needs for essentials such as food, healthcare and hygiene kits. Across the cities of New Delhi, Ajmer, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Pune, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Sambalpur and Bhubaneswar, to name a few, we were ready with supplies of essential items. CMCs and helpdesks started training communities on social distancing, strengthening prevention and, reducing risk since many of them live in congested neighbourhoods and were extremely vulnerable. At the same time, we did what we have done for two decades – connecting people to their entitlements. This time, too, we assessed people's needs, conducted rapid surveys, and even while responding ourselves, informed authorities of the needs of people on the ground so that government support could be directed there. We anticipate prolonged need for our interventions, and have launched an appeal for fundraising. Do read the stories below and visit [our website](#) to learn more about our work.

Courage and hope in Delhi



New Delhi: Job losses have not deterred people from doing what they can to keep themselves and their communities safe from coronavirus. Members of CMCs and other forums created by CFAR are working with the people in their neighbourhoods to help them and are also gathering intelligence for sharing with the authorities. While CMC members have identified and are supporting vulnerable persons, such as old people, persons with disability, they are also motivating others in this time of crisis.

Savitri Devi from of Mazdoor Kalyan Camp 1, Okhla, said she was educated about safety measures to prevent Coronavirus infection by a CMC member. “We purchased Dettol soaps and I insist that the entire family washes hands six times a day,” she said. Other CMC members have helped clean up their neighbourhoods with fewer sanitation staff coming in. [Read more here](#)

Helpdesks educate and help vulnerable people in Bhubaneswar



Bhubaneswar: Until recently, Pavasini Nayak, a helpdesk member from Eshaneswar Basti, Ward 14, was busy connecting people to their entitlements such as pensions, citizenship documents, ration cards and health cards. Now, she is educating people on coronavirus. Her main messages are about washing of hands and social distancing. Using a microphone, she has reached out to around 280 households in her area several times. Other helpdesk members, Tiki Nayak and Sukanti Sahoo of Jokhalandi, have done wall paintings on the prevention measures against the virus. Their messages have reached nearly 300 households and 1,200 members of their community.

[Read more about our helpdesks in Bhubaneswar](#)

Women or warriors?



Pune: Even when they are overwhelmed by their own difficulties, these women are performing a number of tasks to keep others safe. Hundreds of women (supported by men) who are part of our community-based projects are playing a role in keeping people safe and helping them tide over the problems following the lockdown. They include around 185 members of CMCs, 500 members of the Mahila Arogya Samiti (Women's Wellness Committee), 125 helpdesk members, apart from around 10 ASHAs who are part of CFAR's community engagement work. One such worker is Smita Sonde, a resident of Vishrantwadi, Pune. Smita, 35, suffers from breast cancer while her husband is a diabetic and suffers from tuberculosis. Smita is currently engaged with the helpdesk as she informs people "how to keep social distance, wash hands and avoid getting infected." Smita's chemotherapy had to be postponed while the family is short of essential food items, but she continues to be of service to others.

[Read more about the courageous workers in Pune](#)

CMC members show the way in Jaipur



Jaipur: They may be down, but they are not out. Their social profile will not make heads turn – domestic workers, ragpickers, transgenders and daily-wagers – but their determination to make a difference will. In a city locked down by coronavirus, they are continuing to do what they did – educating community members about sanitation, keeping their areas clean, helping them to be safe from coronavirus infection. Pooja, a contract worker with the Jaipur Nagar Nigam, is one of few who has the right to move around in the city to keep it clean. Apart from cleaning the area assigned to her, she also sweeps areas in her neighbourhood.

[Read more about CMC members and their work in Jaipur](#)

ART drugs delivered to people living with HIV



Chennai: CFAR reached out to communities in Tamil Nadu – Chennai, Coimbatore and Tiruvallur – with food, rations and anti-retroviral drugs as the lockdown began. The HIV-affected persons would have been without their medicine with the lockdown in place as they usually get their medicine from the government for one month at a time. As a special provision, the government decided to provide three months of ART drugs, but the problem was how they would get it. “People living with HIV usually have low immunity and need to be protected from infections, and with COVID-19 pandemic raging, they would have been exposed if they had travelled to health facilities themselves,” said CFAR’s Daniel. The drugs were delivered using auto-rickshaws by CFAR representatives to 224 persons in Kunrathur, Madhuravayol, Vyasarpadai, Avadi, Tondiarpet, Sriperambadur, Tambaram, Chromepet,

Perambaur areas of Chennai.

CFAR also responded with cooked food and dry ration to ensure transgenders and other marginalised communities and Chennai, Tiruvallur and Coimbatore. We reached out to 132 families in Coimbatore and around 300 families in Tiruvallur.

[Read more about our COVID-19 campaign here.](#)

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.

As on April 11, 2020

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

Total Reach: 416 HHs - Grocery for one month

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

Settlements: 20

Cities: 3 - Delhi, Bhubaneswar, Coimbatore

Facilitated door to door delivery of food relief

Total Reach: 84,174 HHs

Relief type - Cooked food, dry ration, grocery, mid-day meal coupon, ART medicines

Settlements: 390

Cities: 10 - Ajmer, Bhubaneswar, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Sambalpur, Thiruvallur





For more information
Centre for Advocacy and Research

