

REASSURED BY THE POWER OF GRASSROOT NETWORK

 **Admin**

 **Jun 2020 Stories-Jun2020**



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The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus has resulted in devastating consequences for economies, business, and communities across the globe. In India particularly, it is safe to say that the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown has tested our existing systems and policies, emerging as a much larger humanitarian crisis than merely a health one.

When I started EdelGive Foundation in 2008, we were committed to supporting organisations that were executing meaningful and need-based work. Today, 12 years later, and amid a global pandemic, being reassured by the power of our grassroots network, our goal was to make sure these organisations stayed afloat, safe, and continued relief work with minimum disruption. In the initial stages of the lockdown, most of our NGOs were focussing their attention on awareness building within their communities. With the extension of the lockdown and the mass migration of workers back to their villages, their difficulties started to increase. Lack of funds, access to basic technology (internet, access, mobile services etc.) salary cuts, lay-offs, inability to source basic supplies for daily sustenance emerged as challenges for them to sustain.

Through it all, the partner organisations that I am associated with, stepped up to the challenge, adapting their systems, teams, and operations with great flexibility to address the crisis through innovative ways.

| Partner Organisation | State | Support |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Mann Deshi Foundation | Maharashtra | Using community radio station as a medium of outreach and awareness on the existing global health crisis |
| Kshamtalaya | Udaipur, New Delhi | Holding career workshops, and providing ration kits to marginalized daily wage and migrant communities |
| Medha | Lucknow | Using technology and webinars to connect with students, helping them pursue internships and jobs |
| Shaheen and CORO | Different parts of India | Provide mental health relief to survivors through a helpline |
| AALI | Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand | Provide mental health relief to survivors through a helpline and support them with Legal aid |
| Jan Sahas | Madhya Pradesh | Mental health and domestic violence assistance for migrant workers Released a detailed report titled the 'Voices of the Invisible Citizens' on the impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers |
| Vnutti | Karnataka | Creation of market linkage access for rural agricultural produce to consumers in cities |
| Pragati Koraput | Odisha | Creation of localised market linkage access for agricultural produce to consumers in collaboration with the district administration |
| Utthan | Gujarat | People-to-People solidarity model – purchasing agricultural produce from farmers to be distributed locally to ensure food security |
| Ibtada | Alwar, Rajasthan | Distribution of donations from 'Grain Bank' by women SHGs, to vulnerable families |





Ibtada supports 'Grain Bank' by women SHGs



Jan Sahas distributing foodgrains and PPE kits to migrant communities





Mann Deshi Foundation's Tarang Vahini radio relaying COVID-19 related government advisories

The need of the hour is strengthening and building capacities of these stellar organisations and their programmes. Even as we begin to 'unlock', we are far from where we need to be to stabilise our economies and build safe communities. I believe our grassroots network has the agency to bring us there. Strengthening their ecosystem and building a sustainable environment for them to do the work they need to, will go a long way towards social change.

 

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