



U-Respect Foundation's Covid-19 Relief initiative during the lockdown.

U-Respect's Immediate Covid-19 relief measures for affected under-privileged population

U-Respect Foundation is garnering support in providing essential supplies towards relief & rehabilitation to urban, rural and tribal communities. Towards this, we have so far carried out two initiatives –

1. U Respect through their volunteers identified about 250 migrant families who needed ration support. These families are located in Varsova, Mumbai and they consist mainly of migrant labour from Andhra Pradesh. U Respect discussed this issue with Balaji over the telephone and together we tried their best to provide dry rations to this community. However, later we realized that they are living in a containment zone with many not having ration cards. Only option left was to bring cooked food to these desperate families. At this moment Balaji was able to speak to his government and business contacts in Mumbai and all working together were able to bring to the attention of local Tehsildar, who promptly took action and initiated supply of cooked food on 24th April 2020. The food supply continues till date. While U Respected coordinated the effort on ground Balaji coordinated with government and corporate contacts and was constant source of motivation. The story reflects what empathy seeking people irrespective of their location and affiliation can achieve during the moments of crisis.

U respect wishes to thank Mr. Sudhir Rathod, Government of Maharashtra, Mr. Sachin Bhalerao, Tehsiladar, Andheri(W), Mrs. Dhanashri Hosurkar, coordinating the food point and supply, Mr. Dev Bhattacharya, and Balaji Singh for their quick support.

2. U-Respect Foundation provided food supplies to most vulnerable 100 migrant families in a settlement of daily wage-earning laborers in a Mumbai suburb. Most of these families were from North India, but they also included people from other districts within the state of Maharashtra. Widows, watchmen with currently no jobs, drivers, contract daily wage masons, plumbers, painters were the profile of the target families affected by the current lock down restrictions due to the pandemic. Our team along with volunteers from partner organization VSP, provided dry rations and sanitation material for one month. Distribution was done post online training, keeping COVID-19 protocols in mind. This initiative was possible due to the support of Foundation for Ecological Security.

Way forward

A detailed plan for building resilient individuals and communities in the Mumbai and Thane district areas is underway, with the customary leveraging of technology. This is supported by a tech-driven educational campaign, through effective videos in the local language on COVID-19 prevention and care. Mask use is ensured in the project area. E-driven and close collaboration with the government and area task force, along with total adherence to safety requirements of field personnel is the way forward. End-of-line delivery focuses on the most needy and vulnerable. Communication is the key to educating a substantially ignorant populace, and also in de-stigmatizing the disease among the educated and the aware,



Case stories:

1. Name: Sarala Yadav, Occupation: House help,

Sarla is about 38 years old with three children aged 16, 12 and 8. She lost her husband about 4 years ago, and works hard to make ends meet. She usually works as a house help in four houses, in a residential colony which is about 2 kms from her place of residence. However, since the lockdown, she has not been going to work, making it very difficult to feed her family of four. When we listed her as one of the beneficiaries of the monthly food package, she had tears in her eyes and said that this is indeed god-sent...that she was praying for such a miracle...and kept thanking our volunteers for this gesture.

2. Name: Manhar Chaubey, Occupation: Auto driver

Since the lockdown, Manhar's work as an auto driver has completely stopped. He rides a rented auto, and has to pay a certain amount to the owner of the auto. Now, forget paying the owner, he has no income even to pay the Rs. 5,500 room rent. He stays with his family of 6, parents, (father being blind), wife and two children aged 7 and 4 years. He is the sole earning member of the family. 'Hard times have befallen us...' he keeps saying. He is feeling insecure both with regard to his room as well as his work, with the owners of the room and the auto threatening him to pay up at least some amount. 'Where will I get the money?', he laments. 'We live month by month,

with no savings in the bank'. "Why don't they understand our plight?". When our team reached his place to list him as one of the beneficiaries of the food supplies package, he was visibly relieved and happy. He thanked the team members and kept blessing them. According to Mahesh, our volunteer, "it was very sad to see his state. But we were happy to be able to reach out to him during these challenging times".