

ASHA FOR EDUCATION

COVID-19 FUNDRAISER IMPACT NEWSLETTER

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ashanet.org

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Introduction

GENERAL IMPACT AND STEPS MOVING FORWARD

Asha for Education is a fully volunteer-run 501(c)(3) non-profit whose mission is to catalyze socio-economic change in India through the education of underprivileged children. Asha was founded at the University of California, Berkeley in 1991, and has since grown to over 50 chapters worldwide, working towards creating meaningful change through fundraisers, awareness events, and collaboration with project partners.

Padmanava Sen, Director of Asha Central Projects Team, provides an overview of Asha's COVID-19 relief efforts:

What did Asha's support mainly concentrate on?

Asha for Education has provided dry rations, such as rice, in rural communities. In special cases, hygiene items and emergency medical supplies are also provided.

Our liaison with the local government.

Dry rations have been provided to stranded migrant communities who did not have local ration card and could not avail food supplies. Also, dry rations have been provided to the cases in which the rations provided by Government were not sufficient. Also, due to non-operational public transport, the supply chain has been broken, leading to a shortage of ration supplies in rural communities. Hence, rural Asha partners have to be more proactive in relief. Asha partners have worked with the government as well as local police departments in considering social distancing measures. In some cases, they offered their own facilities for emergency preparedness.

How and why were government measures alone inadequate?

The migrant workers in many areas did not have savings, any stock of food or cooking facilities to survive such long lock down periods. Also, daily wages have stopped from day 1 of lock-down. In rural communities, the supply chain caused shortages and in some cases, shortage of state funds have hindered the procurement from Central Government food storage facilities.

Where is help needed in the long run?

In the long run, depending on the COVID-19 spread across India, gaps in food distribution need to be taken up by Government bodies. One nation one ration card principle should be effectively followed. The supply chain should be recovered. Awareness campaigns for hygiene, social distancing and actual facts about COVID-19 should be used to reduce panic and atrocity against people infected with the virus. The migrant workers who have returned must be effectively integrated in rural economy. The reverse migration can be utilized effectively in strengthening rural economy using their existing skills.

Our Impact

THE NUMBERS

Projects Supported:

- Asha Darshan Trust
- Asha Mumbai Center
- Ashray Akruti
- Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha
- Bharathi Trust
- Bharathi Trust - Senchiamma School
- Borderless World Foundation
- Champa Mahila Society
- Chehak Trust
- Chhotanagpur Adivasi Harijan Uthan Samiti
- Digambarpur Angikar
- Ganjam District Orthopaedically Handicapped Welfare Association
- Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti
- India Sponsorship Committee
- Institute of Social Work
- Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti
- Joint Operation for Social Help - COVID-19 Relief
- Kumarappa Institute of Gram Swaraj
- Mandra Lions Club
- Mukti
- Muskaan
- Parivaar Education Society
- Pnuema Trust
- Pnuema Trust - Home for children
- Rawa Academy of Art Music and Dance - Adruta Childrens Home
- Rural Development Trust
- Sabuj Sangha
- Sankalp Ek Prayas Society Bhilai
- Sirisha Rehabilitation Center
- Sivasri Charitable Trust - Sikshana
- Society for Women in Rural Development Etasha Society
- Vijay Foundation Trust - Aarti Home

Chapters Involved:

Athens
Atlanta
Austin
Bangalore
Chennai
Chicago
Cornell
Danbury
Kansas City
Madison
Mumbai
San Diego
San Francisco
Seattle
Silicon Valley
Stanford
UIUC

Our Impact:

\$127,965 Disbursed

17 Chapters

38 Projects

Ranked on [Charity Navigator](#) as a top 6 nonprofit organization for COVID-19 "Relief Supplies: Community Support & Services"

Chapter Impact

ASHA MUMBAI

Dr. Smita Puniyani, [Asha Mumbai](#) Coordinator, describes her chapter's relief efforts:

What COVID-19 relief actions has Asha Mumbai undertaken?

As soon as the lockdown was announced in India, we began thinking about the immediate fall out for Asha Mumbai children and families. Some parents told us that they had groceries only for two or three days and did not know what to expect. Looking at this worsening situation we made the decision to cater to the whole community, stretching beyond families associated with our educational activities. We have so far provided 20000+ meals and 1200+ grocery kits.

Asha Mumbai began an informal local campaign for educating people about the pandemic with involvement of children. We later offered medical help which included initial assessment and preliminary protocol treatments, test recommendations for the needy. This work is being done through my own clinic and other doctors we know.

We are paying attention to other smaller needs too. For example, Or we have distributed sanitary napkins with help of an organization by name "Red is now Green"

What did you do differently from other efforts?

We started very early; our work began within 4-5 days of the lockdown announcement. We started calling people, collected data, prepared excel sheets. One has to be strategic in big decisions and precise in small everyday operations. Our team managed that well. We allied with organizations to share the workload and unlocked their resources by creating a platform. For example, Crisil Foundation in Powai used their office canteen resources to cook meals and converted it into community kitchen in partnership with us. Our understanding of the local dynamics and having a long term relationship of trust with the communities helped us in almost all locations. Our informal medical help and campaigns instilled confidence among people, we can proudly say Asha's Corona Relief impact is felt by communities.

How does your work go ahead from this point?

First, we have to ensure adequate groceries supplies. The livelihoods in Mumbai have become uncertain and not all people from slums have gone back to their native places. I hope the government helps with rations and providing information in transparent ways.

Second, we have oriented our children to physical distancing, sanitization and masks etc. But we will have to reorganize classes to maintain these practices when they open. We have already begun experiments of virtual education. Why should only privileged children have more and real access to online education?

Third, we also want to start some livelihood programs for communities. Our slums have a large number of domestic workers residing and serving the condominium households. They will not get easy entry in high rise apartments now. We want to engage them in some everyday services entrepreneurial activity.

Fourth, We want to extend more medical help and create corona related awareness. We need to counsel people about real risks and unreal fears and give them confidence to deal with the situation. We will require groceries for survival, gadgets for education, community medical facilities (Like initial treatment and counseling) and a vehicle for patient care and growing outreach will help a lot.

Chapter Impact

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHTS

Asha Austin is raising funds for COVID-19 Relief towards both immediate short-term relief and near-term commitments to project partners in 2020-21. They anticipate an increase of 30k USD in disbursements and are currently having a shortfall of 60k USD in our fundraising. 3 of their project partners are currently involved in active relief efforts. After having touched base with the other 5 project partners, all educational institutions have been closed down with staff/teacher salaries continuing to be paid. Children living in residential homes have moved back to their families. Project partners anticipate their fundraising for the year towards operational needs to be impacted with most of their donors lowering their donation amounts or not donating for the year along with companies/foundations focusing on COVID19 and CSR for PM-CARES.



Above: Team Asha - Austin Chapter

Below: Asha Silicon Valley Chapter



Asha Silicon Valley: The impending and far reaching impact of COVID-19 dawned upon our chapter when we had to indefinitely postpone our annual running event Spring Run early in March. We started having conversations with our project partners about how best to be prepared for the outbreak in India. From the get go, we communicated to our partners that none of Asha SV supported employees [teachers, drivers, administrators, community organizers, wardens, etc.] should lose their job or pay. However, it was clear that we had a bigger role to play here, to help alleviate the pain that thousands of fellow citizens were going through. We primarily focused on victims that the state and central governments were not able to reach. This included stranded laborers and immigrants without ration cards, transgenders, and orphans. We disbursed over \$100,000 in the month of April alone, over 2X our average monthly disbursement. With a renewed sense of purpose, we quickly formed an informal task force to focus on fundraising. We actively reached out to our volunteers to help start fundraisers in their respective companies and kept track of the progress. We helped them with curated media content from the projects we were assisting to promote the cause among their colleagues. Across the last 3 months, we raised \$70,000 for our chapter. We also partnered with Asha Austin to hold a joint fundraiser raising \$100,000. Broadly speaking, the relative success SV has had with raising funds for COVID relief can attributed to our four step approach; timing, content, relentless persuasion, and closure. The importance of our ability to be agile and respond to a crisis like this has never been more apparent. While we certainly could not help everyone, we are happy to have actively supported 1400 families and held various awareness campaigns through our project partners.

Project Spotlight

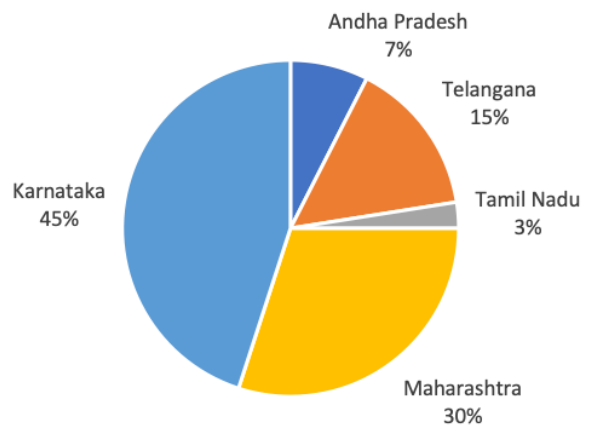
SIKSHANA FOUNDATION

Along with the rest of the world, India is facing perhaps the biggest challenge in its history due to the outbreak of Coronavirus across the country. Countless people have lost their livelihoods due to the current situation. The worst affected are daily wage laborers, freelance electricians, plumbers, rikshawallas, small vendors etc. who cannot get paid due to non-availability of work. They are facing a huge challenge to support their families.

[Sikshana](#) in association with [Asha for Education, Seattle](#) has come forward to help such needy families by providing necessary groceries across various locations in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra.

Sikshana mentors have purchased groceries which includes basic necessities like rice, daal, salt, cooking oil, spices and vegetables and made kits for families in need. Over 100 families have received grocery kits, helping them survive through this difficult time. Currently, 203 families are being supported by our efforts.

State-Wise Disbursement of Asha Funds Sent to Sikshana



Project Spotlight

CHAMPA MAHILA SOCIETY

"After the declaration of lock-down due to Covid-19, people had to face some problems. Jetty boats stopped running and it became difficult to reach the remote islands with help. People have no work outside, so they have no food at home and are starving. The widow mothers of tiger victim families are suffering greatly with their children. Even the children of our schools are suffering along with their family members. Their families are suffering and in need food with no major govt. help for them."

Funds from Asha for Education through the [Seattle](#) chapter are helping support 302 families in partnership with the [Champa Mahila Society](#), a women's and children's nonprofit in West Bengal. The organization has bought and distributed groceries and dry food such as rice, lentils, potato, oil, salt, soy beans, pumpkin, ladyfinger, and other sanitation and hygiene necessities, such as soap and face masks.

Other than food, the volunteers and crèche mothers are also making home visits to help make the rural people aware of the Covid-19 pandemic by providing tutorials regarding cleaning, and using masks and soaps.



Above: Ramesh Chandra Mandal (from North 24 Paraganas) is a fisherman who came for work in Sunderbans and could not return home due to the lock-down. He resorted to living in his boat in the river alone without food. C.M.S. sent him a kit with food for 15 days.

Below: Tapas Sikdar came home from Gaighata after the declaration of the lock-down but the villagers did not allow him to stay in his own home due to fear of COVID. He was forced to stay in the open fields on a wooden bed without any food. CMS has sent all necessary food materials for him until he is allowed to go back to his home.



Project Spotlight

DIGAMBARPUR ANGIKAR

In partnership with Asha for Education ([Cornell](#) and [San Francisco](#) chapters), [Digambarpur Angikar](#) [DA], supported by its community volunteers, has reached out with dry rations and groceries to families and children who need it most. A total of 390 poor families were supported through these efforts. These families live in the Patharpratima Block in the South 24 Parganas District of West Bengal, which is an interior & unnerved, resource poor location with a history of high migration and vulnerable households. All these households are also being supported long term through a DA & Asha for Education ongoing Education project.

DA has worked towards a number of long-term community initiatives in addition to distributing food kits. They have built a community surveillance system, based on the formation and strengthening of local community groups to ensure engagement and help make community members accountable in the fight against the COVID pandemic .

Communities supported:

- Disabled, senior citizens, economically poor, women headed families
- Male family members that were not able to return back home from migrant work due to the lock-down
- Marginal farmers and families that are dependent on seasonal migration
- Migrant workers, construction laborers, rickshaw van pullers, street vendors, domestic servants, and other daily wage works that are out of work due to the lock-down.



“We have received the Relief Kits given by Angikar--- Apart from all those essential dry food items- the soap and mask both are using by my kid in this time---I was so impressed to see this item inside the bag----- I was really surprise to understood their level of thinking for this COVID-19 suffering HHs [households] – salute to DA & Asha for Education for their all support to us.”
Trina Sardar, Mother of Trishan Sardar Dk.Durgapur, Patharpratima, South 24 PGS, West Bengal.

Relief Kit:	
Item	Quantity
Soap	2 Pcs
Mask	1 pc
Rice	10 Kg
Pulse	2 Kg
Mustard Oil	1 Liter
Soyabean	500 Gram
Spices	3 packet
Salt	1 Kg
Potato	4 Kg
Onion	1 Kg
Muri	1 kg

Partner Perspective

NANDLAL MASTER

Just west of the cultural heart of India near Varanasi are large populations of Dalits and other lower castes: saree weavers, vegetable vendors, construction laborers, rickshaw drivers, etc. Asha Fellow and former weaver, [Nandlal Master](#) has been working in this area since 1994. Starting in 1999 he mobilized locals into awareness of their rights and needs and appropriate govt representation. His team has set up women's self help groups, transformed the way people think of and spend on marriages etc. Since the lockdown began, Nandlal has mobilized ~35 volunteers to identify the worst affected people across 40 villages and provide them relief:

- Distributing provisions for a week
- Educating on COVID-19 related hygiene and self-care, and Govt. helplines and resources through flyers and pamphlets
- Involving politicians to educate people with their credibility.
- Providing mobile banking for villagers
- Written to CM Yogi Adityanath to suggest potential resources for future situations in case community transmission begins.
- Helping out case by case with those who live alone or those who need medical care, driving them to hospitals and arranging for their care.

What sets this project apart for Asha is the thoughtful and optimal way that needs are being identified and met:

- They consult with the local Sarpanch and maintain lists of people to facilitate applying for identification documents when Govt. offices re-open.
- Volunteers partner with the police to prevent crowding and set up queues for only those with tokens.



Fellowships and Collaboration

PROJECT PARTNERS

Fellowship: Siddamma in Tamil Nadu is working towards supporting 1034 families in 39 villages. These families do not have ration cards, and therefore are not receiving supplies from the government, this project is providing these families with 10 kgs of rice each. Siddamma is a grassroots activist who has worked extensively with tribal communities. Her work is multi-faceted - she has coordinated many motivational centers that makes learning fun and helps children integrate into the mainstream, and is working on creating a community resource center to document community based knowledge and provide a base for communities to test eco-friendly alternatives in agriculture, pottery, dairy, herbs and energy. She has also worked with the youth and organizing people and making them aware of their rights, e.g. understanding that laws exist for the people to earn minimum wages. Asha for Education has been supporting Siddamma since 2004.



NIRMAAN Hyderabad in Telangana has recieved funds from **Asha Madison**, and has provided rations and Hygiene kits to about 1935 families from the states of Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. They have also donated 160 Isolation beds to Nature Cure Hospital in Begumpet and 1032 PPE kits to health care workers in Government Hospitals in Hyderabad. Women volunteers with MIRMAAN have produced over 19,000 masks, and donated 9000 masks to Anganwadi workers in Telangana. In addition to donating PPE, they have also provided 49,248 GOMO Dal Crunchies - nutritional snacks to children in various districts of Telangana and Pune with the support of Anganwadi staff. They are currently working towards donating 10 ventilators to Gandhi hospital, in addition to one that they have already sent to the hospital.

CONTACT US

Address (for mailing donations):

Asha for Education
PO Box 398080
San Francisco, CA 94139-8080

Get Involved:

Contact your [local chapter](#) for information on meetings and fundraising events, or find out how to start a new chapter by emailing secretary@ashanet.org.

Team Asha:

Team Asha is an endurance training program facilitated by Asha for Education that gives the chance to individuals of all ages to discover the magical benefits of physical activities like running and biking while helping to raise funds for projects supported by Asha in India. Visit the [Team Asha website](#) to learn more.

Donate to Asha:

1. Make a [tax-deductible donation](#) online or send us a check by mail.
2. [Donate stock](#). Please email treasury@ashanet.org for details.
3. Double your donation if your company matches donations.

[COVID-19 Relief Fundraiser Page](#)

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