

NEWSLETTER

*HCL-F Supported SOCHARA WASH Project, Bangalore and Chennai
August 2020*



ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

- **IVR CONTENT DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL HEALTH**
- **COMPLETION OF COVID IMPACT ASSESSMENT SURVEY**
- **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS FOR TOILET CONSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS IN BANGALORE AND POLICE CLUBS IN CHENNAI**
- **OBTAINING PERMISSION FOR TOILET CONSTRUCTION FROM GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES**
- **GENERATED AN ORDER OF 10,000 MASKS FOR THE COMMUNITY TAILORS AND THEY EARNED MORE THAN RS 2 LAKHS**
- **MASKS SENT TO HAVERI, TUMKUR, CHENNAI AND DAVANGERE**
- **SUPPORTED COVID TESTING BY BBMP IN PROJECT AREAS**
- **CAPACITY BUILDING OF TEAM THROUGH WEBINARS**
- **DAY TO DAY MONITORING OF COVID-19 SITUATION IN PROJECT AREAS**

FOREWORD

by Gurumurthy- Secretary Coordinator, SOCHARA

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many lessons. Our way of living and working has changed to a new normal. The situation has highlighted our strengths and weaknesses. One of our strengths is being part of a community. The community we work with as a part of HCL-F supported SOCHARA WASH project has demonstrated this in number of ways. This newsletter is about these people who have shown courage and perseverance during these difficult times. They have gone beyond the call of duty and supported their communities. In true sense it has been a community health approach to tackle this emergency.

We have seen efficient inter-sectoral coordination between various departments like health, police, sanitation etc. Individuals and funding agencies like HCL-F have come out in big numbers to support initiatives like dry ration distribution, distribution of essential items like masks, sanitizers, providing help to migrant workers to name a few.

Through this newsletter we recognize the contribution of different stakeholders and hope that we all continue to strive to make our society a better place.

REFLECTION NOTE

By Dr Thelma Narayan, Founding Member and Senior Advisor, SOCHARA

Over eighteen months have gone by! A partnership between SOCHARA, HCL Foundation, communities and local institutions has developed. Mutual trust is growing. The pandemic has tested this, and linkages are wider and stronger. The SOCHARA team moved forward step by step in its engagement with communities. Using a community health approach, the first step was to get to know each other better. This started with regular and frequent visits to the community in Maya Bazaar. While interacting with people at their homes in the different lanes of the locality, the team identified facilities available for water, sanitation and hygiene, and other issues that were important. Visits to local institutions, schools and Primary Health Center created linkages. Over some months friendships developed, with shared understanding of what could be done together. Interns and students on placement with Sochara organised lively health promotion sessions for school students and pourakarmikas on oral health, tobacco cessation, control of vector borne diseases, water and sanitation related health issues, reproductive health etc. We became acutely aware of chronic water shortage, with erratic supply often in the middle of the night. Also the terrible condition of public toilets; with land issues preventing repair. Other issues including alcohol abuse, mental health and safety of girls came up.

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We were however motivated by the enthusiasm of many. School principals and teachers made time for activities; the team built rapport and interns evolved creative sessions undertaking enquiries on health related issues. Partner meetings took place. Community meetings identified important issues they wanted to work on over the next year. During the pandemic and the lock down most households were affected. Distribution of rations, training local tailors for mask making, making liquid soap and community health education were done throughout the session. Community participation in decision making and systematic training a group of community volunteers for health could be undertaken in the days ahead.

COVID CHAMPIONS

Testimonies of some of front line workers who have been actively working to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic situation in HCL-F supported SOCHARA WASH Project Area. They have shown been at the forefront in helping their communities during these unprecedented times.

Compiled By- Mallesh K M and Radhika Kaulgud

"COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging situation for the police force as we had to manage the law and order situation as well as this public health emergency. We were under lot of pressure and had to work day and night during the lock down period. There was a feeling of fear and anxiety as many police personnel tested positive and had to be quarantined. Our family also was worried for us at all times.



In spite of the challenges we were at the front lines and doing our duty. We set up a help desk outside our police station to lodge complaints for the convenience of the public. We also conducted many COVID-19 awareness programs for the public. Stress management programs were introduced by the police department to support us to manage stress and anxiety along with other morale boosting activities. Many people and organizations have supported us by providing masks, sanitizers etc. and appreciated our efforts during these difficult times. But nevertheless, this situation has been a challenging period and we are doing our best." - Ms Jahida, Police Sub-Inspector, Viveknagara Police Station, Bangalore.



" I have been doing tailoring for last 25 years and supported my family especially my daughters and managed to give them good education. But getting work in this COVID situation has been difficult and in addition my husband has been unemployed in this period. But I did not lose heart and continued to support my family by stitching masks, making liquid soap and artificial jewelry. We were provided training by SOCHARA for the same and now they support by getting orders for us. I have stitched more than 1000 masks till now and this has provided me with much needed income.

I help my community members by spreading awareness and urging them to use mask and maintain hand hygiene. I have been selling masks and liquid soap to my community members too. I am happy that I can help my community members as well as support my family in these difficult times. " - Vijay Laxmi, Community Tailor, Mayabazar, Bangalore.

" We are facing many challenges like shortage of manpower, resistance by the public to testing/quarantine /isolation. I am working for 6 months without any leave even on government holidays and have no family life. There is a lot of pressure on us which adds to our stress. But the important point is that I work for self satisfaction and my family is very supportive. They provide me with the energy to continue working with complete dedication.



At the PHC level we conduct surveys of containment zones, Ill and SARI cases identification and testing, contact tracing of positive patients, shifting COVID positive cases to the hospital, conducting tests and creating awareness regarding COVID-19.

We are getting support from NGOs and individuals also. Many of them help us in activities like testing and contact tracing. SOCHARA has provided us with masks, gloves, sanitizers and soaps. But we need cooperation of the general public in following all the precautions like wearing mask, physical distancing and maintaining hand hygiene." - Dr Tejaswini SB, Medical Officer, Chamrajpet PHC, Bangalore



" We are supporting the communities we work with from the beginning of the lock down by providing dry ration and all other help which they needed. It was a challenge to reach them during the lock down but we managed to do it. Our families were worried for us but we took all care and reached our people.

After the lock down was lifted we conducted COVID-19 awareness programs for the community as well as the sanitation workers. We showed them the method to prepare liquid soap and encouraged them to make it and use it. We identified tailors in the community and get them orders to stitch masks. We helped them by procuring the materials for mask making and thus helped them to earn income in these difficult times.

We have supported BBMP to conduct testing and we do day to day monitoring of the COVID situation in the areas we work in. We take all the precautions when we go to the field and encourage the community members to follow all the rules. Our organization has been very supportive to us during this period also." - Jyothi, Rajani, Prema, Field Coordinators, SOCHARA

"One of the responsibilities of BBMP is to ensure health and safety of people. COVID-19 situation is a huge challenge as our work has increased ten-fold as we have to check if people are wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing along with the routine duties.

Sanitation workers are at risk as they are on the front line. It is our responsibility that they are provided with all the safety gear. Masks, gloves, sanitizers and soaps were provided to them for their safety. We check their temperature and oxygen levels daily. Many NGOs came to support us by providing contact less thermometers, masks, sanitizers, soaps etc. Dry ration was distributed to sanitation workers with support from temple association, NGOs and the area corporator. COVID-19 awareness programs for the sanitation workers were organized by SOCHARA. These were useful for them as they had lot of misinformation about COVID-19." - Chidanand, BBMP Health Inspector



"I am a sanitation worker and have many health problems. During COVID situation I take care by following personal hygiene practices like hand wash etc. The COVID awareness programs conducted by NGOs have been very useful for us. Also, we are given masks, gloves, sanitizers and soaps by organizations which helped to keep us safe. Dry ration given to us has supported our families as income was less because some of our family members had no work." - Govindamma, BBMP Sanitation Worker

"COVID awareness programs conducted for us by NGOs were useful as they were very informative and used simple language. I use mask at all times and maintain hand hygiene as we are at risk of getting infection. We were given demonstration of liquid soap making by SOCHARA and I made many bottles of liquid soap. I even taught my friends to make liquid soap at home and encouraged them to use it frequently." - Sangeetha, BBMP Sanitation Worker



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