



Pune is one of the cities most affected by COVID-19. Low-income communities are one of the most impacted segments during this time. We are in close touch with many of the affected communities through our Sustainable Livelihoods - Lighthouse program and the Digital Empowerment Program. Many of our youth and students have been proactively reaching out to us for help.



In end-March, we conducted a large scale listening exercise with 200+ families across over 30 communities. The top 3 concerns raised by communities were: Food (groceries, vegetables and LPG), Finances (lack of money) and Uncertainty (normalcy of life and livelihood). Accordingly, we have undertaken the following two initiatives since 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

### **Helpline for Low Income Communities**

Objective: A helpline for awareness of COVID-19, reasons for lockdown, do's and don'ts, addressing fake news and misinformation, dissemination of information on Government initiatives, understanding health-related and other concerns.

The helpline is being run by Pune City Connect with support from PMC and Connecting (a distress support NGO). PCC staff and student volunteers are managing the helpline. PMC has provided space, infrastructure and information support to run the helpline. We have received over 3000 calls till date where information on food distribution and medical services has been provided.

Do you know anyone who has questions about CoronaVirus, wants referrals to welfare schemes, or just needs to talk?

 **020-25506923/24/25**

**VASTI-MITRA  
CORONA SUPPORT  
HELPLINE**  
(For low-income communities ONLY)

- References for Food Distribution
- Corona Information Support

**TIMINGS: 10 AM TO 6 PM**  
*Please spread the word within citizens from slums and other low-income communities.*

 Operated by Pune Municipal Corporation  
&  
Pune City Connect,  
with support from Connecting NGO 

## Distribution of Essential Groceries

Distribution of essential groceries in a single kit (5 Kg Rice, 5 Kg Wheat Flour, 1 Ltr cooking Oil, lentils, tea, sugar, spices and bathing soap) to most vulnerable families from slum communities in Pune.

One kit will help support a family of 4 members, for two weeks.

This initiative is being implemented with support from PMC (Pune Municipal Corporation), which is providing logistical support and vendor-suggestions. PCC has been responsible for identification of and distribution to the most vulnerable and obtaining financial support from individual citizens and corporates.

## Status as of 27 April 2020

Total families served – 2512

Families reached out through Lighthouses- 1105

Families reached out through Helpline- 857

Families reached out through PMC referral - 550



*Beneficiaries in different areas of Pune*

### Identification and Verification Process:

1. The recipients have been identified through:
  - a. Our database of Lighthouse students where we have focussed on identifying vulnerable families. The Lighthouse is a sustainable livelihood program run for low-income communities, and 9000 students have been enrolled till date.
  - b. Details of other vulnerable families that come to light either through personal information or through the Helpline
  - c. PMC (Pune Municipal Corporation) requests that are being received for specific areas where they feel urgent help is required. In such cases, the Grocery kits are being handed over to a community coordinator identified by helpline volunteer/PMC official.
2. In all other cases i.e. where distribution to each individual is by Pune City Connect, a code is shared through WhatsApp which has to be checked before actual handing over of the kit.

3. Contact details are taken, code verification is done and a picture taken as documentation of every kit distributed.
4. Norms of Social Distancing have been followed for distribution.

#### **Challenges faced:**

1. Vendor identification and management:
  - a. It was very difficult to find vendors who would be able to supply ration in large quantities and packaged in one single kit. We managed this through limiting the no of distribution per day and thus ordering small quantities but mostly well packaged so that its easier for the beneficiary to carry the package home.
  - b. There were many last minute changes in vendors due to sealing of certain administrative wards and difficulties in procurement. Our team had to respond very quickly to changes in the external environment and line up other vendors instead.
2. Transportation: This has been a key challenge. We have identified a trusted private vendor, a PMC vehicle as well as partnered with another NGO to manage the distribution in some areas.
3. Volunteering and organized distribution: The actual distribution required minimum 4 volunteers on-ground, else the distribution was chaotic and neither documentation nor social distancing norms could be followed. A system was arrived at, with specific roles for each volunteer, and we were fortunate that several of the PCC team chose to step out of their homes and be there for our communities. A small honorarium has been provided to such volunteers.

**The essential groceries kit has been appreciated by our communities as it is substantive and of good quality. It will last a family of 4-6 members for a minimum period of 2 weeks.**

Over the next 2-3 weeks, we will continue to reach out as many unique families as we can serve through the contributions made by individuals and corporates.

#### **How can AVPN members support?**

Over the last few weeks, Pune City Connect has been thinking through its strategy and how the current programs can rapidly respond to COVID recovery and enable beneficiaries to develop “ agency” and thereby improve overall wellbeing during and after COVID situation.

We would like to share this thinking and seek both strategic inputs as well as financial support towards economic and overall well-being in the current scenario in the city of Pune.