

COVID-19 RESPONSE REPORT

This report presents key highlights of actions undertaken by Mobile Creches from April to mid June, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and its immediate impact on young children, their families, and communities.

IMPACT ON MIGRANT WORKERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

What started as a health crisis across the world, turned into a humanitarian crisis in India. The lockdown has affected migrant workers and their children, the hardest. Haunting visuals of poor women with children in their arms, walking hundreds of miles will stay with us for a long time. Almost 94 percent of women are employed in the unorganised sector in India. Women will be far more adversely impacted due to the unemployment crisis unleashed by COVID-19 pandemic.

Children will bear the brunt of loss of livelihoods, rise in domestic violence, reduced health and nutrition, and emotional trauma due to the grave indignity suffered by their mothers. More than 20 million children under the age of six, living in poverty in urban India - at construction sites, on the streets, in the slums, were already burdened with high malnutrition, poor health, unequal access to educational opportunities, and neglect. They will suffer the most.



MC'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

In mid March when crèches were shut down, MC distributed *Anaj Mishran* (high protein ready to eat food) to last children a fortnight. Little did we know we would not meet them for 12 weeks, and still counting! Since the lockdown was announced on 25th March, crèche workers have stayed in touch with families daily to check on children's safety, health and nutrition.

MC grounded its disaster response around three pivots:

1. **Responding to hunger:** as the most urgent requirement to help households not go hungry
2. **Caring for children:** so that children's safety, learning, and wellbeing is not neglected
3. **Sharing about young children's issues:** to gather many partners and voices to highlight the plight of children under six, amongst other actors

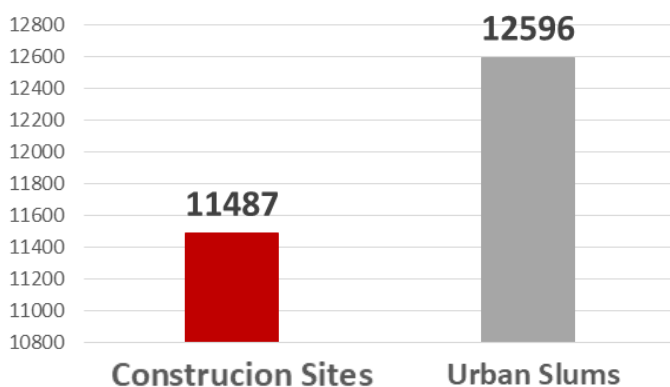


- Mapped 24,000+ households across 9 states and UT, in 51 construction labour camps and 23 urban slums, with 13 NGO partners and Delhi Neenvi FORCES network
- Distributed 928 quintal of food (*atta*, rice, *dal*, salt, sugar, tea, soya granules, oil), besides hygiene kits of sanitary napkins, soaps, washing powders
- Ensured special nutrition to children under 6 years with additional milk, *murmura*, glucose powder, and biscuits

All emergency relief distribution was possible due to a strong network of community leaders, site teams of developers, field partners, local suppliers, and support from police, school, and civic officials. MC and its partner teams tracked relief requirements, procurement, distribution, and data tracking through phone and online modes.

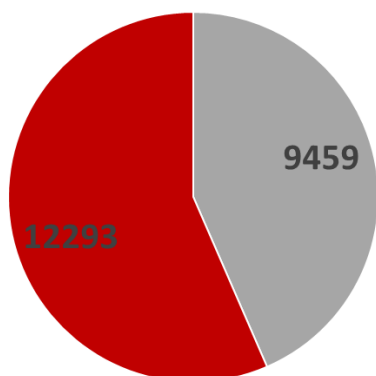
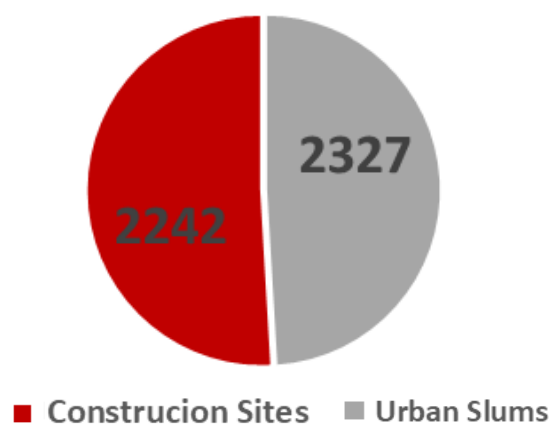


24,083* HOUSEHOLDS MAPPED AT CONSTRUCTION SITES AND URBAN SLUMS



*approximate numbers

COVERED 4,569 CHILDREN UNDER 6

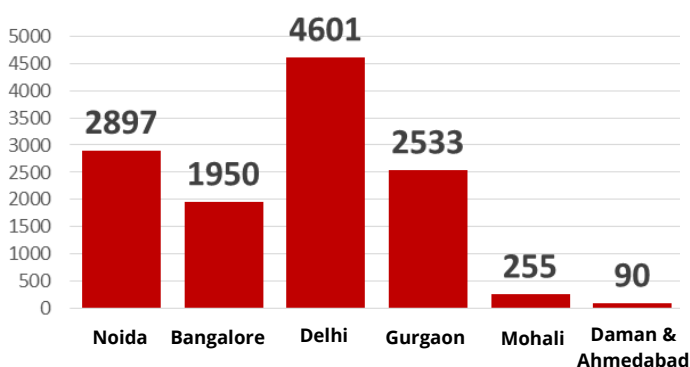


21,752

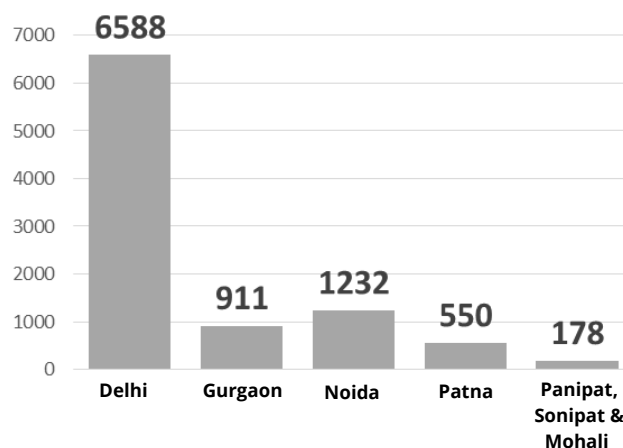
RELIEF KITS DISTRIBUTED

■ Partners ■ MC

DEVELOPERS SUPPORTED 12,326 CONSTRUCTION WORKERS' FAMILIES



9,459 RELIEF KITS DISTRIBUTED BY MC





Burdened by mounting debts and repeated threats by the local moneylender, Rakesh* and his family left their home in Nawadih village, Bokaro, Jharkhand, in February, to work at a construction site in Zirakpur, near Chandigarh. Life started looking hopeful as Rakesh began working at the site in early March, and his wife, Sushma* joined as a helper in the crèche supported by MC. Their four daughters, aged between 4 to 12 years, started attending the crèche programme.

Unfortunately, fate had others plans. Work at the site halted as soon as the lockdown was announced. Rakesh, Sushma, and their children were left with no work, food, or money. Worse, they had no information if they will be employed again, if they can continue to stay in their one room tenement in the labour camp, or they will be able to return home. They are back to the mercy of other people determining if they live or perish. This time, unfamiliar people in a city new to them!

With construction work grinding to a halt since lockdown was announced, more than 60 million workers like Rakesh were left with no work or wages. Overburdened by chronic poverty, unaware of what the future holds, their present is marked by hunger and doom. Contracting coronavirus infection is not their biggest worry.

* Names changed

CARING FOR CHILDREN

During a crisis like COVID-19 pandemic, young children are more likely to experience violence, abuse and neglect as families struggle to cope. Awareness on responsive parenting practices is relevant now more than ever to promote both mental and physical well-being of children. Since early days of the lockdown, MC redesigned its programme model to support parents in providing nurturing care to their children during this period.

- Created new modules to impart COVID prevention and precaution messages
- Redesigned a responsive parenting programme to support family's wellbeing and foster positive interactions through daily routines
- Adapted the *balwari* curriculum to help parents support children's early education

494 families;
739 children

12
construction
sites;
8 urban
slums

23 trainings
for
ECD workforce

95 crèche
workers

Trained
3 partner
organisations

REACHED

COVERED

CONDUCTED

TRAINED

SUPPORTED



Subhadra and her daughter Tanvi*, 4 years, live in the labour camp of Bestech 79, at Gurgaon, in the outskirts of Delhi. Since the MC run crèche at the site was closed, Subhadra has taken on the role of being Tanvi's educator along with being her main care-giver. She says, "I have learnt the activities given by crèche *Didi*. Tanvi and I do them together easily. When the lockdown started and we were struggling to save the little money we had, to provide food, Tanvi was very irritable and restless. Now she forces me and her father to spend time with her floating pieces of paper in the water, jumping in and out of the circle, reciting poems and listening to stories. Actually it also makes us forget our tension," shared Subhadra.

Parents living in construction sites and urban slums share the same fear and anxiety for their children, as Subhadra. In times of disaster, services to support young children are often not prioritised and end up being overlooked, leading to young children being disproportionately affected.

* Name changed

Renu, MC's balwari teacher, shared "The calls that we make to the parents is very important because initially when the lockdown started parents were very tense about their incomes. And children used to insist on going out. During the calls, we check on family's food situation, remind them about taking precautions against corona and suggest a few activities they can play together with their children."

Talking to the MC team, many parents expressed that it makes them happy that crèche *didis* are thinking about their children during these difficult times. Parents look forward to the calls now, as they say, it helps them spend time with the children and reminds them of their childhood days. Interestingly, fathers report to be spending more time playing with their children now.

MC provides this support through telephone calls and WhatsApp messages where possible. At other locations, community leaders form small groups to share these messages through a common phone connection.

SHARING ABOUT YOUNG CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Children are not the face of this pandemic. But they risk being among its biggest victims. (UNESCO Policy Brief, April 2020). MC and partners have kept their ear to the ground, following the insurmountable challenges faced by children under six years, and their parents.

Shared experiences about early childhood development in the COVID-19 days:

- Neenv Delhi FORCES (network focused on rights of children under 6 years) tracked status of ICDS services reaching enrolled children and pregnant women, audited PDS shops for availability and residents' access to entitlements, and submitted findings to relevant authorities for urgent action.
- Presented a webinar in April for ARNEC (Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood) on Young Children Amidst COVID 19 to highlight the ground situation of children of migrant workers in India.
- Presented a webinar in May for HCL Foundation Academy on Why Early Childhood Development Matters during COVID-19

Collaborated with many networks and forums

- Neenv hosted a webinar in May, on Livelihoods and Childcare Challenges of Women Informal Workers, in the post COVID-19 period. Many partners and coalitions engaged with the overlapping issues were part of this session.
- Alliance for Right to ECD (a policy group for under 6 children), moderated a webinar in June, on Invisible Rights of Young Children, focusing on the right to early childhood education, along with partners from RtE Forum
- Collaborated with Right to Food campaign partners to observe 1st June as National Day of Mourning to affirm dignity to the lives and livelihoods lost.

Developed positions to make recommendations for action

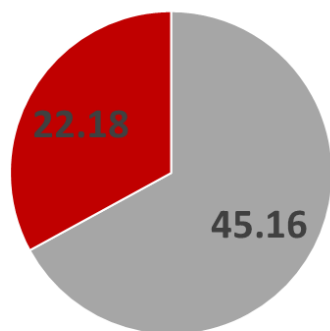
- Alliance submitted a statement to policy makers focusing on the urgent needs of most vulnerable migrant workers, especially women and young children, for their action.
- Submitted a set of recommendations for holistic needs of children during early childhood, and entitlements of ICDS workers, as a part of RTE Forum's submission, to many stakeholders.
- Collaborated with several child rights' groups, to develop Rights of Children in times of COVID-19: A Policy Brief - encompassing children's rights to health & nutrition, education, protection from violence, and their access to justice.
- Alliance has undertaken an evidence-based assessment of the effect of lockdown on children under 6 years, and pregnant and lactating mothers, to provide timely recommendations to the government. The report is due in July 2020.



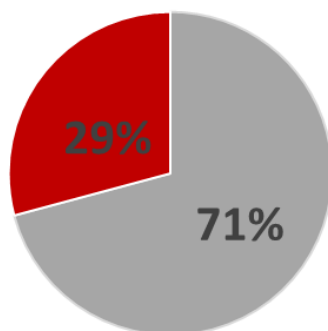
THANK YOU

We thank all our funding organisations, partners, networks, individual donors, supporters, governing body members, friends, and our own families for your amazing support during these tough times.

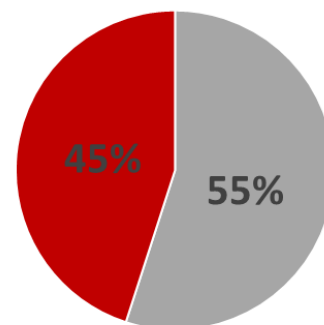
RS. 67.35 LAKHS FOR COVID RELIEF



BREAK UP OF COVID RELIEF FUNDS



BREAK UP OF INDIVIDUAL DONORS



■ Funds Reallocated ■ Funds Raised ■ Individual Donors ■ Funding Organisations ■ New Donors ■ Existing Donors

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"Women Left the City and Won't Come Back"

COVID-19 and informal workers in urban India - By Cities Alliance

Ensure children are not malnourished: NGO to govt

By The Hindu

Mobile Creches reach 18925 households affected by the lockdown

By CSR News

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Mobile Creches

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New Delhi - 110001
T : +91-11-2334 7635, 2334 7281
W: www.mobilecreches.org

