



COVID-19 Response, May - September 2021

# Sustaining Action, Strengthening Resilience



# Riding the second wave

As villages of Odisha battled the second wave of COVID-19, Gram Vikas adopted a multi-pronged strategy to support marginalised communities struggling with interlinked issues of health, livelihoods, food, education, and mental health because of the pandemic.

We undertook large scale awareness programmes, established quarantine and care facilities, accelerated vaccination drives, and mobilised and trained community volunteers, frontline health workers, and local government representatives in COVID-19 response planning, care and surveillance.

Dry ration kits, a covid care centre, 24x7 helpline, and a mobile vaccination unit at the destination sites offered comprehensive support to migrant workers and their families.

Technology equipped learning centres made continued education possible while recreational games minimised the psychosocial impact of the pandemic on the children.



## COVID Care in Remote Villages

Our COVID Care programme for remote villages in Odisha included mass awareness drives, augmenting healthcare infrastructure, and supplementing human resources for frontline response through mobilisation of community volunteers and support of Gram Vikas staff.

Mobile vans with mounted speakers and 560 trained community volunteers reached 2.4 lakh people across 1325 habitations with messages on COVID-19 and safety measures to prevent an infection. Volunteers helped in the door-to-door screening of 14,000 persons. [Watch a video on awareness efforts.](#)

We set up and operated a 50-bed Temporary Medical Centre in collaboration with the Thuamul Rampur block administration in Kalahandi, which hosted 130 returning migrants in three batches. The well-equipped centre had daily visits by the local ANM and ASHA workers to do temperature checks and monitor the oxygen levels of the residents, and bi-weekly doctor visits. [Read a detailed feature on the centre.](#)

Distribution of cleaning materials, sanitary boots and gloves supported decontamination of COVID Care Centre in Baliguda block of Kandhamal district, and ensure sanitation workers' safety.

In collaboration with Medical Oxygen for All (MoFA), we supplied 10 Oxygen Concentrators to five Dedicated COVID Health Centres each in Gajapati district and Rayagada districts, and seven BiPAP ventilators to the district administration in Kalahandi and Rayagada. The support from Rapid Rural Community Response to Covid-19 (RCRC) helped provide 1480 pulse oximeters, 2734 PPE kits including overalls, face shields and washable masks, 1367 bottles of hand sanitisers to ASHAs and community volunteers.

We facilitated vaccination for 8458 people by tackling vaccine hesitancy through education to mitigate misinformation, aiding COWIN registrations, helping people reach the vaccination centres, and assisting health administrations in vaccination drives. [Read about barefoot volunteers driving vaccination in Adivasi habitations.](#)

In collaboration with Crypto Relief through RCRC, we provided three mobile vaccination units to Thuamul Rampur block in Kalahandi district. In partnership with the National Health Mission, block and district administrations, we have planned to saturate vaccination coverage across all 24 Gram Panchayats in Thuamul Rampur.



A 50-bed Temporary Medical Centre in Thuamul Rampur block of Kalahandi district, Odisha, hosted migrant workers for quarantine and care.



Trained volunteers and Gram Vikas staff assisted frontline health workers to screen 14,000+ people for COVID-19.



Vaccination drives have assisted more than 8000 people from rural Odisha to get vaccinated.



Mobile vans with mounted speakers reached 2.4 lakh people with COVID-19 awareness messages.

## Need specific support to vulnerable households

Based on our two rounds of assessment on the impact of the pandemic in our partner villages, we extended immediate support to vulnerable families to mitigate the crisis of food insecurity.

Women headed households or those with pregnant women or children in the lactating and weaning age group; families without PDS entitlement, with only senior citizens, having people with disabilities or prolonged illnesses; households who lost an earning member to COVID-19, suffered a permanent loss of income for over two months, or with only daily wage earners, were prioritised for support.

The initiative was a collective effort, together with the Village Development Committees (VDCs). The VDCs identified the vulnerable households and finalised the list of those in need of extra support. The VDCs led the process of vendor selection, procurement, packaging and distribution. Local procurement ensured transparency and reduced costs, and gave business to local suppliers.

Dry ration was provisioned to sustain at least for 15 days. Each kit contained about 12 items including dry ration and personal hygiene items with little variation based on local communities' demand. Sarojini Damodar Foundation (SDF), Bangalore, funded 850 kits, Crypto India Relief Fund, Dubai, funded 700 kits, and Gram Vikas funded the remaining 850 kits.



2130 households across nine districts in Odisha, and one district in Jharkhand, received food and essential supplies kit to cope with the fall out of the livelihood and food crisis due to COVID-19.

## Support to migrant workers

Our support to migrant workers is driven through partnership with the Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID) in Kerala. The Bandhu Shramik Seva Kendra (BSSK), a resource centre for migrant workers supported workers in Ernakulam and Thrissur districts of Kerala.

The primary purpose of the resource centre is to provide a source-destination continuum of services for migrant workers from Odisha, and other states, who move to Kerala. BSSK linked up with the Shramik Bandhu Seva Kendra (SBSK) in Odisha to ensure that issues of workers and their families who stay behind are effectively resolved through coordinated efforts at the source and destination.

Along with CMID, we collaborated with the Labour Department, Government of Kerala, to ensure that migrant workers from Odisha working in Ernakulam district received food and essential materials kits. Special effort was made to identify the most vulnerable workers in a migrant hotspot, including footloose migrants not supported by one particular employer, and migrants with families. We distributed 3911 food kits to 5502 migrants.

In collaboration with the Labour Department, Government of Kerala, the BSSK Helpdesk Co-ordinator stationed at the Interstate Migrant Workers Facilitation Centre in Kochi



5502 migrant workers and families received food kits in Kerala.

managed the helpline. It addressed different needs such as support to workers who needed jobs, help with employer grievances, dry rations during lockdown, information on vaccination and COVID care for those who tested positive. The two BSSKs in Kochi and Thrissur, and SBSK in Odisha responded to 2247 calls during the second wave.

BSSK set up and operated a COVID Isolation Centre in Vathuruthy in Kochi, in collaboration with the NHM, UPHC Champakkara, Janamaithri Police, Bandhu Clinic of CMID, and the local community. Vathuruthy has more than 1000 migrant workers. The team helped 18 COVID positive migrant workers to isolate until recovery.



9911 migrant workers received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 110 workers got both the doses.

On July 01, 2021, in partnership with National Health Mission (NHM), Gram Vikas and CMID, the BSSK rolled out the first exclusive mobile vaccination unit for migrant workers by a civil society organisation in India.

Arghyam support through Gram Vikas and CMID provided the human resources, basic equipment and infrastructure, while the NHM provided the vaccine, syringes, and consumables. It facilitated bio-hazardous waste management, linkages with primary health centres and technical oversight.

The NHM issued the unit a user ID as vaccinator in the COWIN portal. As of 14 September, 9911 migrant workers received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and 110 workers were fully vaccinated.

# Education & psychosocial support to children

Our COVID-19 response plan for children has three components: raising awareness on COVID-19, facilitating access to digital learning resources, and recreational activities to minimise the psychosocial impact the pandemic. The initiative continues and is currently ongoing in 112 villages across Ganjam, Gajapati, Keonjhar, and Kalahandi districts in Odisha.

Village level Child Clubs with an average membership base of 20 children, in the age group of 6-14 years, is the main platform to roll out these activities. Children meet every 10-14 days to plan the activities supported by village volunteers and Gram Vikas staff.

Children learnt about COVID-19, and safety protocols through age-appropriate IEC resources, e.g., posters, art and craft activities, videos, games, etc.

Tech-enabled Learning Centres in 35 villages made continued education possible for children from classes 7,8,9 and 10. Each of the Learning Centres are equipped with a Raspberry Pi, a single-board computer that plugs into a display board, and a projector. Local volunteers, who are either Class 12 graduates or pursuing college education or with teaching experience, became para teachers. Currently, 28 centres across four districts benefit 563 students.

[Know more about our Learning Centres.](#)

The pandemic and related school shut down affected the children's learning outcomes as well as socialisation, and increased the burden of household chores on girls. The financial stress at home also affected the children.

We introduced a host of recreational activities to support the children's emotional wellbeing and enhance their learning abilities.

Portable libraries set up in 112 villages give children access to 100 books in Odia, Hindi, and English. The books from Pratham Books have stories, biographies, and poems for children with varied reading and comprehension levels. Toys from Anthill Creations engage children in activities where they learn through play.

Activities like games, music, dance, art and craft workshops, etc., are organised at the Child Clubs, and arts and crafts materials, such as crayons, drawing sheets, scissors, pencils, coloured sheets, etc., are made available to them.



Bankeswar Bagsing, a para teacher taking classes for the students at Patrapur Learning Centre. Currently, 28 technology equipped Learning Centres make continued education possible for many first generation learners in 115 villages across Kalahandi, Ganjam, Gajapati, and Keonjhar districts in Odisha.

# A hat-tip to our partners

Gram Vikas is grateful to organisations, civil society groups, and individuals providing us continued support.

## Institutional Partners

Arghyam

Australian Odia Community

Azim Premji Foundation

Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development

CryptoRelief through RCRC

ESAF Small Finance Bank

Government of Odisha

Gram Vikas USA

Klockner Desma Machinery Private Limited

Medical Oxygen for All (MoFA)

Rapid Community Response to COVID-19 (RCRC)

Sarojini Damodaran Foundation

Skoll Foundation

Swasth

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