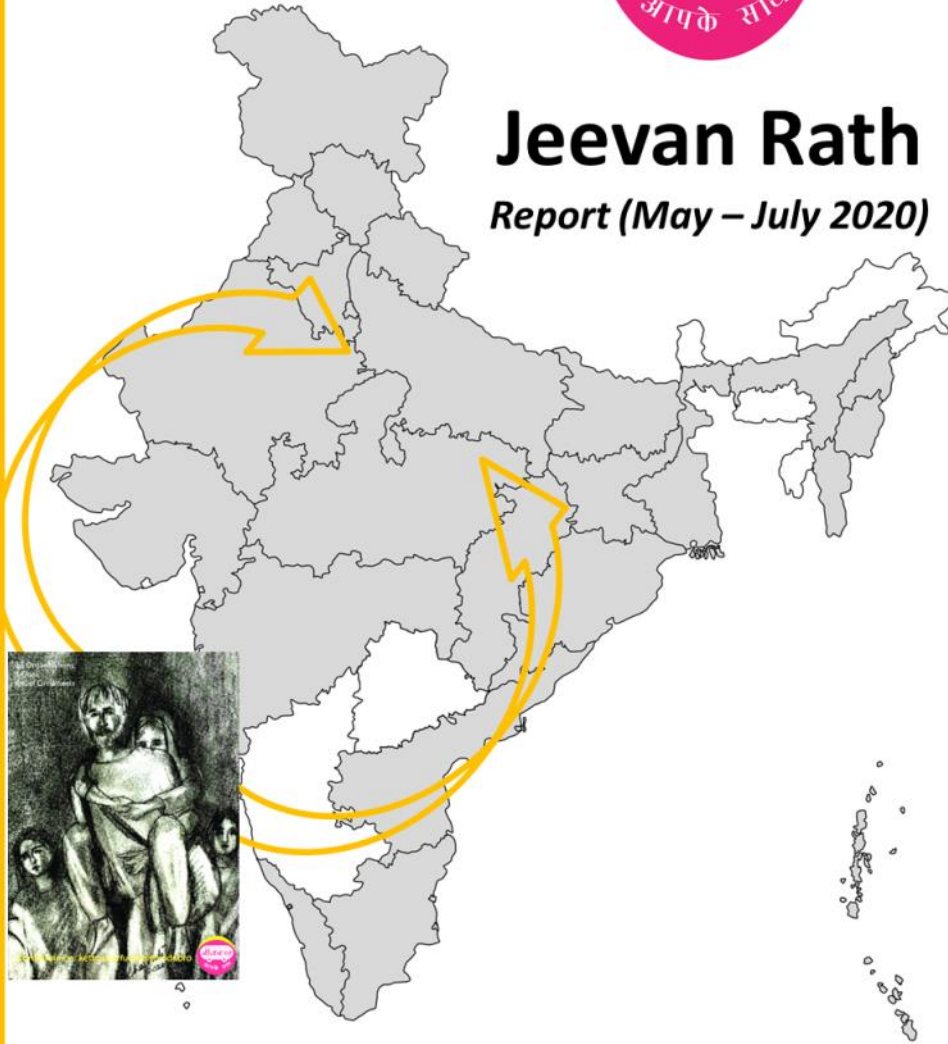


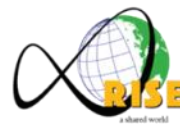


# Jeevan Rath

Report (May – July 2020)



unicef  | for every child



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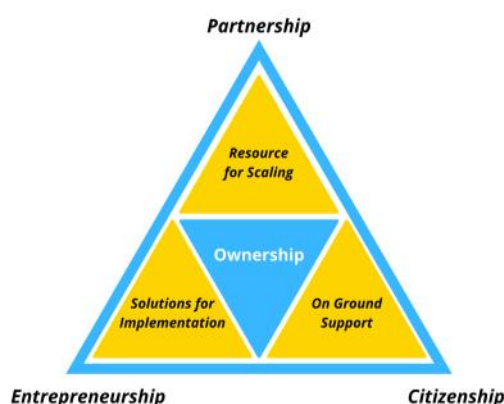
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### 1. Background

A total lockdown was announced in India on the 24th March 2020 without any warning to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, giving very little time for anybody to prepare. As a result, thousands of migrant and daily wages workers suddenly found themselves unable to earn money or feed their families, leaving them with no choice but to return to their home states — literally carrying all their belongings on their backs, often accompanied by children and elderly parents. More than 12,00,000 migrant workers in Mumbai, left for their native homes - either by private buses, trucks and most times by foot. Approximately 30,000 - 40,000 migrants were leaving Mumbai daily, without food and water, in a desperate bid for survival leading to a heart breaking mass exodus seen for the first time since partition.

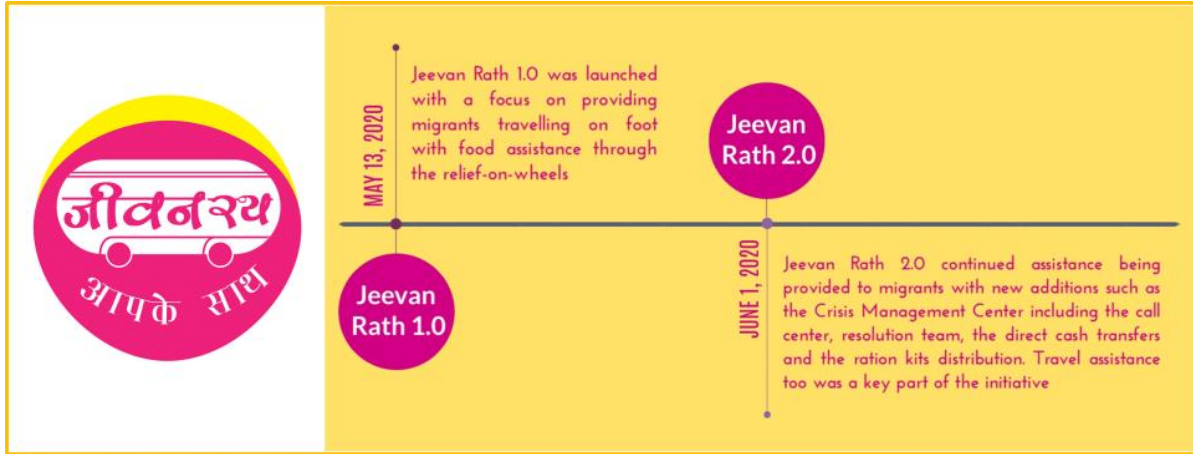
#### 1.1 UNICEF Maharashtra Migrant Crisis Response

In an attempt to streamline a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and connect with actual needs on the ground, a Learning Exchange session was hosted by UNICEF, Maharashtra and Idobro Impact Solutions to share ideas and avoid duplication in the relief efforts within their NGO networks. Further deliberations amongst these partners gave birth to the idea of the Jeevan Rath program, a relief-on-wheels initiative. The attempt was to collect and distribute non-perishable food, hygiene materials, water, and sanitary napkins and provide basic medical support to migrant workers using mini mobile trucks, which could operate in areas where a large number of migrants gathered to travel back to their home states.



The initiative transitioned from Jeevan Rath 1.0 to Jeevan Rath 2.0 based on the evolving needs of the migrants from food to travel and social protection as depicted above. This was the genesis of the **MAHA C19 PECOnet**, a UNICEF Maharashtra facilitated multi-stakeholder alliance of Partners (**P**) who support with resources for scale, Enterprises (**E**) that provide solutions and innovation, and Citizen volunteers (**C**) who provide traction on the ground. These are held together by the joint Ownership (**O**) of the cause and mission of the network.

## 2. Jeevan Rath Program Results at a Glance



The Jeevan Rath program led by UNICEF, Mumbai, went through two phases as the program kept evolving with the needs of the migrants. What started as a small WhatsApp group, quickly grew from 20 to over 60 members overnight and a movement took shape in mid-May, with a pledge to raise funds and support the needs of migrants. Some of the activities that were undertaken include:

- **Jeevan Rath 1.0 (May 13<sup>th</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup>)** – Food trucks that took food and essentials to migrants as they travelled on foot, buses or trains. The idea was that the migrants could pick up the food, and preserve it for a few hours as they walked.
- **Jeevan Rath 2.0 (June 1st – July 31st)** - A virtual call centre to track the movements of migrants and ensure they reached their destinations safely and/or received help in case of distress. Physical assistance provided to migrants for travel as well as relief measures to unreached families in need through food & ration, transportation and cash assistance for exigencies and medical expenses.



# Jeevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report

## 2.1 Jeevan Rath 1.0

The Jeevan Rath was a truck, which provided essential support, including basic medical support to anyone who was walking home. In order to make provisions easily available to migrants, the ‘Jeevan Rath’ was stationed at strategic locations like the toll nakas in the cities.

Initially, two trucks were stationed, which provided 2500 vada pavs twice a day, water and fruits such as bananas, apples and pears throughout the day. They were also provided with basic ointment to be used to heal their cuts and wounds sustained due to the long walk.

The places covered by the trucks included Thane, Dahisar, Nashik, Pune, LTT, Vasai, Bandra Station, Vasai and Borivali station



### Results of Jeevan Rath 1.0

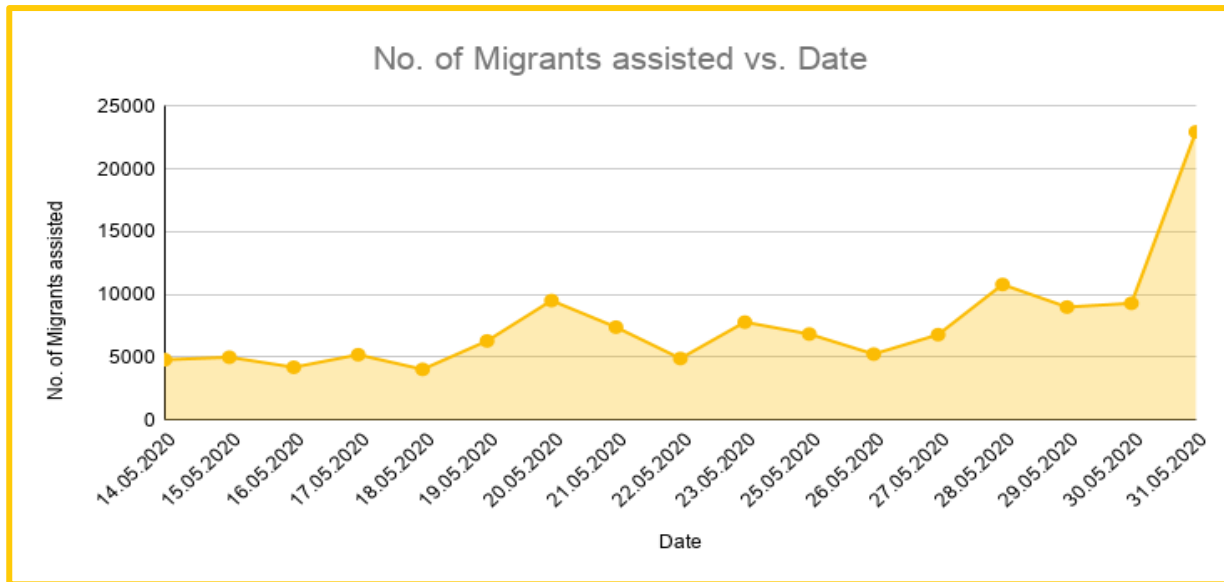


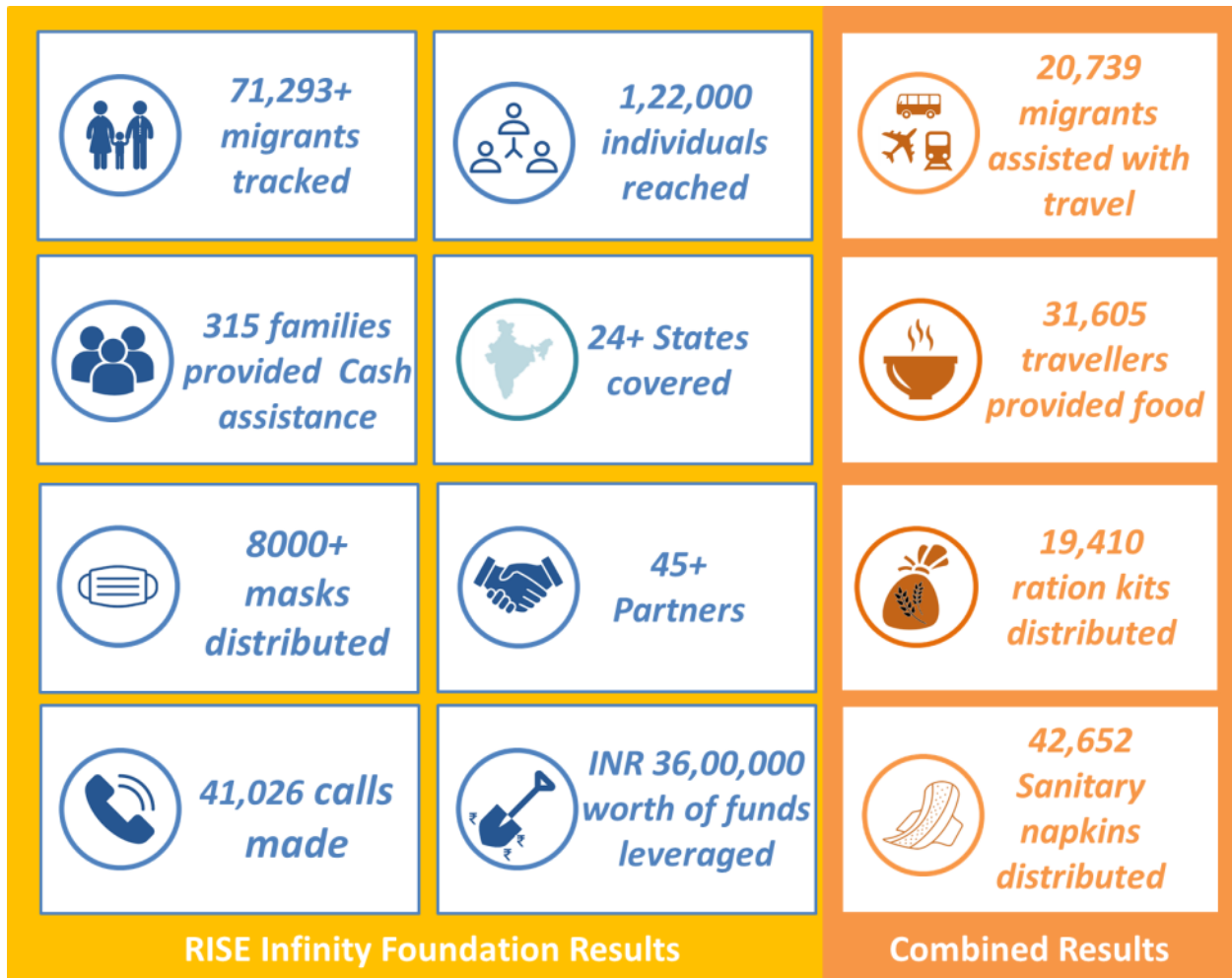
Chart 1 – Daily distribution during JR 1.0

## Jeevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report

### 2.2 Jeevan Rath 2.0

As the needs of the migrants evolved so did the initiative, from cooked food to travel assistance to ration kits and finally social protection in the form of cash transfers for medical and other forms of exigencies. The 2nd phase of the program, Jeevan Rath 2.0 saw the launch of a call center with a 15 x 7 helpline to provide the migrants with assistance as per their needs. The call center continuously made outbound calls to reach out to stranded migrants identified by the partner NGO's and document their needs. The team also resolved the needs and issues, wherever possible, through immediate assistance by other NGO partners and individuals providing on ground relief.

The Jeevan Rath initiative led by UNICEF, Maharashtra was a joint effort of 7 key partners. The results of this coalition led to a significant outreach and relief to over 122,000 individuals.



### 3. Jeevan Rath Nodal Agency Report

UNICEF Maharashtra Covid platform included multiple interventions that were managed by RISE Infinity Foundation as the Nodal Partner and Secretariat to meet the needs of migrants and to provide support to its partners on the ground. This document is a report on the interventions detailed below:

#### ❖ Crisis Management Center

- Setup of a migrant war room to track and coordinate with different transit points of 70,000 migrants (as direct reach), their needs and connecting with resources as required
- Compiling a database of local NGO network, other call centers in Maharashtra and other states, Hospitals, Police Stations, Rescue Homes and others, who could provide any psycho social need support for migrants during their journey
- Setup of a protocol to register grievances and responses of migrants for partner NGOs to act upon

#### ❖ Project Management

##### ○ Partner coordination for

- Food and ration kits for families in need
- Communication and Design
- Direct cash transfers to cover household expenses including rent or for food in areas difficult to reach physically and deliver ration kits
- Direct cash transfers for medical relief

##### ○ Donors and other Stakeholder engagement to leverage additional funding for

- Cash transfers
- Dry rations
- Livelihood engagement

#### ❖ Communication

- Documentation of key cases related to migrants & the assistance provided, for analysis and learning
- Design of IEC material for awareness generation on the initiative

#### ❖ Volunteer Management

- Provision of Covid specific insurance policies for on-ground volunteers
- Sourcing and distribution of protective gear like masks, face shields, gloves, sanitizers, etc for on-ground volunteers engaged in food distribution
- Documentation and set up of a formal process for payment to volunteer coordinators for migrant interaction and assistance
- Coordination of the entire program and platform for a month

**4. Crisis Management Centre**

A Crisis Management Centre (CMC) was established by RISE Infinity Foundation to track migrants to ensure that the migrants have reached home safely. This was a unique attempt as most organizers and supporters were ending their association once the transportation reached the destination or a group leader confirmed arrival. This end-to-end approach adopted by Jeevan rath helped to gain insights into the issues migrants were facing as well as livelihood patterns for recovery.

The call center under the JR-CMC was operational since 27th May, 2020 from 8 am to 11 pm in 3 shifts and could be reached through a single number - 08061933074. Collateral (Annexure) was designed to spread awareness on the same and was available in 7 languages as well.

**The CMC Org Structure**

The Crisis Management Center had a program Manager overseeing the entire operation.

The Call center team was a key component of the CMC. The team worked as a key linkage between the JR partners and the migrants, and assisted in identifying the needs of the migrants, and mapping them accordingly to partners, who could resolve them.

A resolution team was also formed under the CMC to reduce the time taken to resolve the cases coming in through the call center. The resolution team consisted of a resolution manager, a travel associate (who assisted with cases related to travel) and a food associate (who assisted with cases related to food and ration kits).

The resolution team ensured that the cases received by the call center were acted upon and resolved at the earliest following the required protocols.

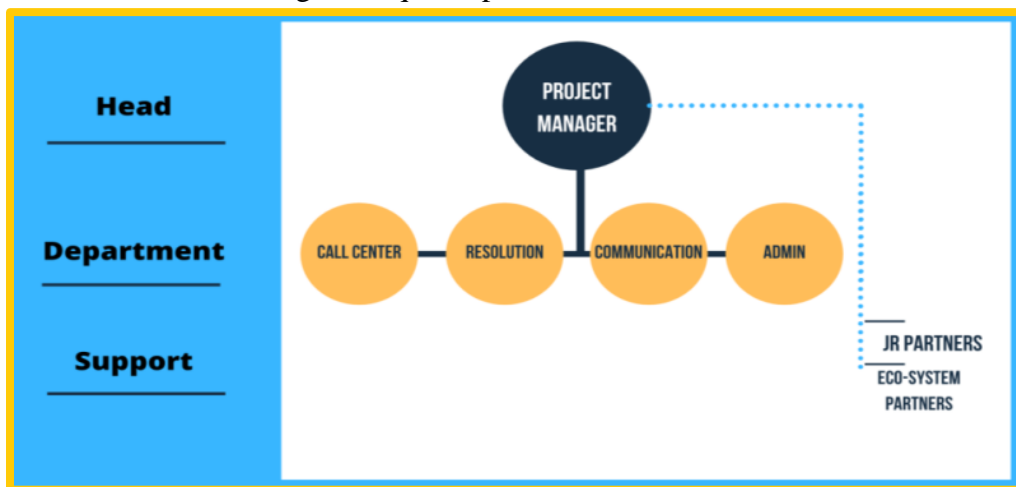


Chart 2 - CMC Organogram



# Ieevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report

## 4.1 Migrant Travel Tracking

The call center tracked the journeys of 70,000 migrants end to end, till they reached their final destination, with an objective of providing any help required throughout the journey.

Below given is the status of the persons reached out to by the call center who had either already reached home or were on their way back.

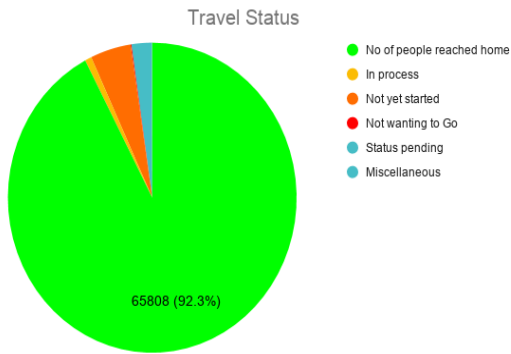


Chart 3 - Travel Status

Travel Status	
People reached home	65808/ 71293 (92.31%)
In process	528/ 71293 (0.74%)
Not yet started	3239/ 71293 (4.54%)
Not wanting to Go	68/ 71293 (0.10%)
Status pending	1608/ 71293 (2.26%)
Miscellaneous	42/ 71293 (0.06%)

Table 1 - Travel Status

## 4.2 Migrant Direct Assistance

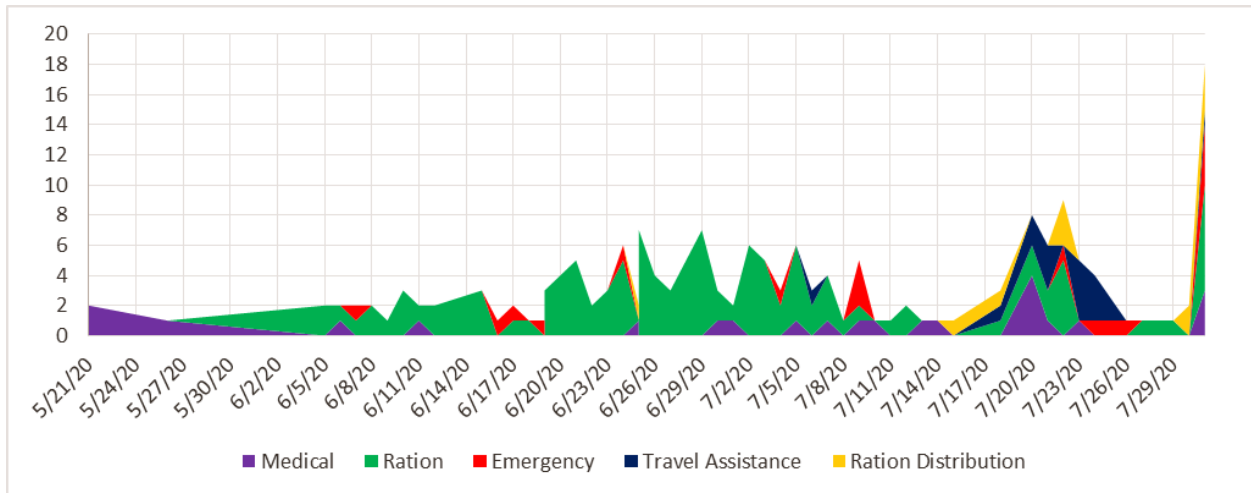


Chart 4 - Migrant Assistance provided across time

The above graph shows the assistance provided to individual's from May to July 2020. Ration distribution and travel are the key support activities throughout.

### 5. Partner and Stakeholder Management

RISE Infinity Foundation as the Secretariat of the Jeevan Rath initiative was responsible for collaboration between multiple partners with the same objective; providing assistance to migrants.



*The program has been an exercise in coordination and collaboration with various organizations for the following activities:*

- Collection of data from migrants on the field,
- Distribution of food items among stranded travelers,
- Identifying people in need and linking them to the call center,
- Laisoning with the local administration for travel permissions
- Organizing buses, trains & other transport assistance
- Providing support both monetary and in kind for medical and other exigencies

***RISE Infinity Foundation has been working with:***

- ❖ ***The UNICEF Team*** – for issues related to DRR, Social policies and fundraising as well as nutrition, domestic violence, health and WASH. Meetings along with government officials were also attended for further insights and future planning.
- ❖ ***The Jeevan Rath Partners*** – Fortnightly meetings were organized with the JR partners for reviewing the efforts being done on ground and to plan the way forward. Based on partner feedback, 5 reports were generated to capture perspectives and potential way forward at each stage of the program. A special advocacy campaign on change.org was led by YUVA for appropriate response and suggested measures to provide relief to migrants. Multiple channels were adopted for smooth coordination and updates between the Jeevan Rath Partners.

## **Jeevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report**

<i>Arghyam</i>	<i>United Way Mumbai</i>	<i>Citizens Association for Child Rights</i>	<i>The Resilient Foundation</i>
<i>Centre for Youth Development and Activities</i>	<i>Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action</i>	<i>Red is the New Green</i>	<i>Swayam Shikshan Prayog</i>
<i>Society for Promoting Participative Ecosystem Management</i>	<i>Rotary Club of Mumbai</i>	<i>Vibha Foundation</i>	<i>Life Foundation</i>
<i>Alert Citizens Foundation</i>	<i>Helping Hands</i>	<i>Habitat for Humanity India</i>	<i>Geo Roti Ghar</i>
<i>Triratna Prerana Mandal</i>	<i>Bright Future</i>	<i>Hungry Wheels</i>	<i>iCALL</i>

**Table 2 - Jeevan Rath Partners**

- ❖ **Ecosystem partners** – Substantial effort was required for execution on the ground and outreach on the scale as planned. Hence RISE Infinity Foundation tapped into a network of partners from the migrant travel eco-system. Partners were of immense assistance for required permissions from local administration, access to information and above all sharing and leverage of resources for logistics and direct support to migrants. Some of the key partners are listed below:

<i>Freudenberg Gala</i>	<i>Shapoorji Palonji</i>	<i>Za'atar Restaurant</i>	<i>Glenmark Foundation</i>
<i>CoAST India</i>	<i>Ghar Bhejo Ghar Bachao Andolan</i>	<i>ELSA, Mumbai</i>	<i>FICCI FLO</i>
<i>Karwan-E-Mohabbat</i>	<i>Project Mumbai</i>	<i>The Stranded Workers Action Network</i>	<i>Migrant Travel Support Network</i>
<i>Aahan Vihaan</i>	<i>IIMA Women Alumni</i>	<i>JGU Covid Support</i>	<i>IJM</i>
<i>Write To Recognise</i>	<i>Hungry Wheels</i>	<i>Apne Aap Womens Collective</i>	<i>Indo-Global Social Service Society</i>
<i>Earth Angels Foundation</i>	<i>Khana Chahiya</i>	<i>Need Vikas Sanstha</i>	<i>India Water Portal</i>
<i>Citizens Voice</i>	<i>Pravasi Sahyogi Team</i>	<i>Switch India</i>	<i>Jai Bajrang Mitra mandal</i>
<i>Tata Institute of Social Sciences</i>	<i>Vasai Cha Raja</i>	<i>Vikalp Sutra</i>	<i>Inner Wheel</i>
<i>Hunger Collective</i>	<i>Police Force</i>	<i>Railway Officials</i>	<i>State Government</i>

**Table 3 - Ecosystem Partners**

### 6. Key activities of the program



#### 6.1 Virtual Call center

RIF established a virtual call center under the Crisis Management Center to tide over the social distancing restrictions for the pandemic.

The call center was run in 3 shifts, for 15 hours with 12 executives attending to calls from migrants requiring assistance related to travel, food, medicine and shelter. The call center executives attended

inbound calls and also made outbound calls with a real time system for documentation of cases and resolutions.

The calls made by the executives were based on the databases compiled through the primary and secondary data collected on the ground by the various partner organizations.

-   
 15 Hours a day
-   
 3 Shifts
-   
 12 Executives

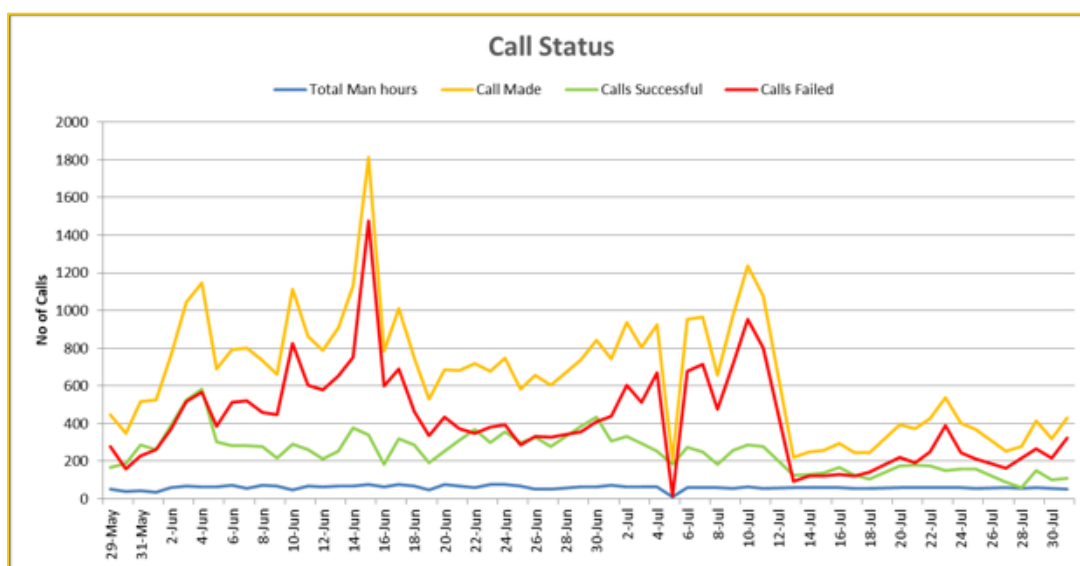


Chart 5 - Call Status

Call Made - 40,270	Calls Successful - 14,974	Calls Failed - 25,296
Total Man Hours spent - 3,608		Hit Rate - 40%*
<i>*Wrong numbers and no network coverage were the primary reasons for the failed calls Other was mandatory quarantine at destination or change in phone numbers</i>		

**6.2 Call Center Database Management**

**Representative analysis of Primary Data Received**

Jeevan Rath partners on the ground collected data from the migrants continuously to build the databases for further tracking by the call center and provision to help them.

**DISTRIBUTION OF AGE AND GENDER**

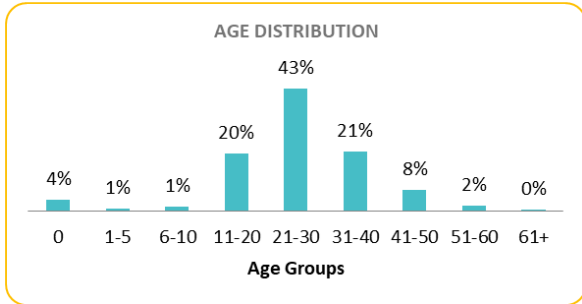


Chart 7 - Age Distribution

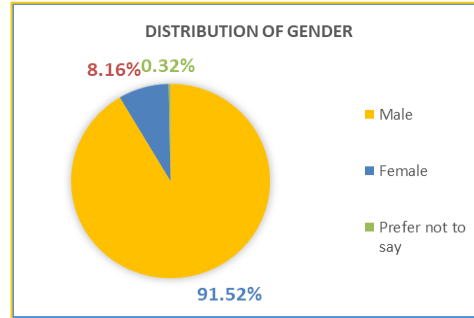


Chart 6 - Gender Distribution

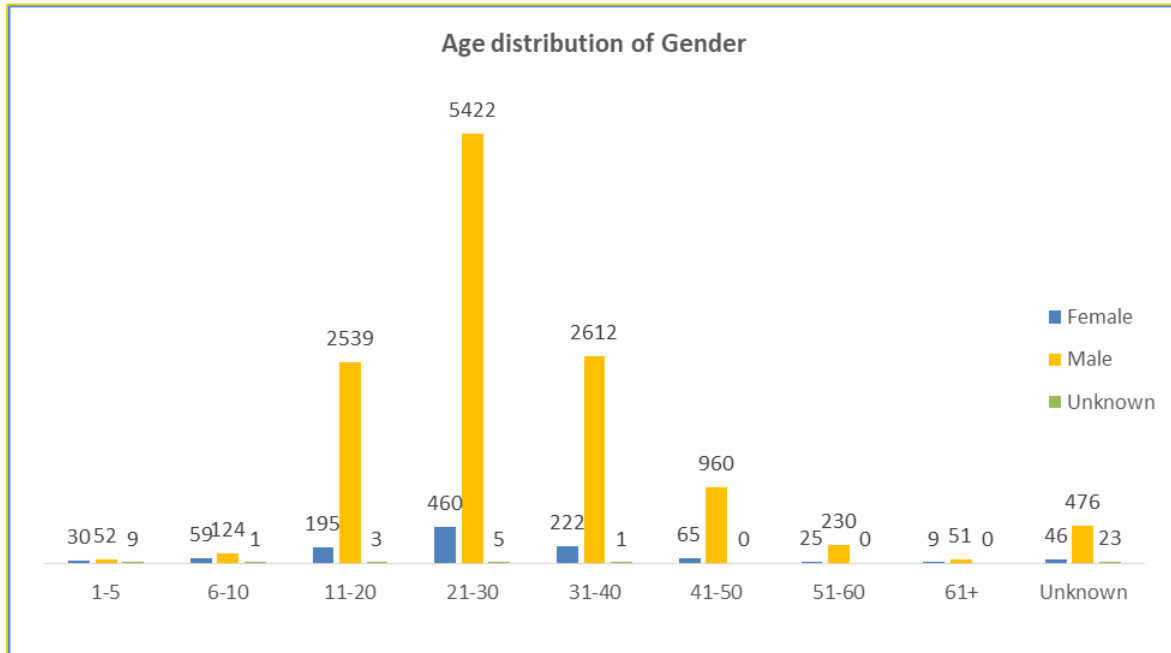


Chart 8 - Age vs Gender

43% of the total migrants tracked are in the age group of 21-30 and 92% were male. This confirms that daily wagers demographics who were left without any jobs post the lockdown.

**Destination of individuals**

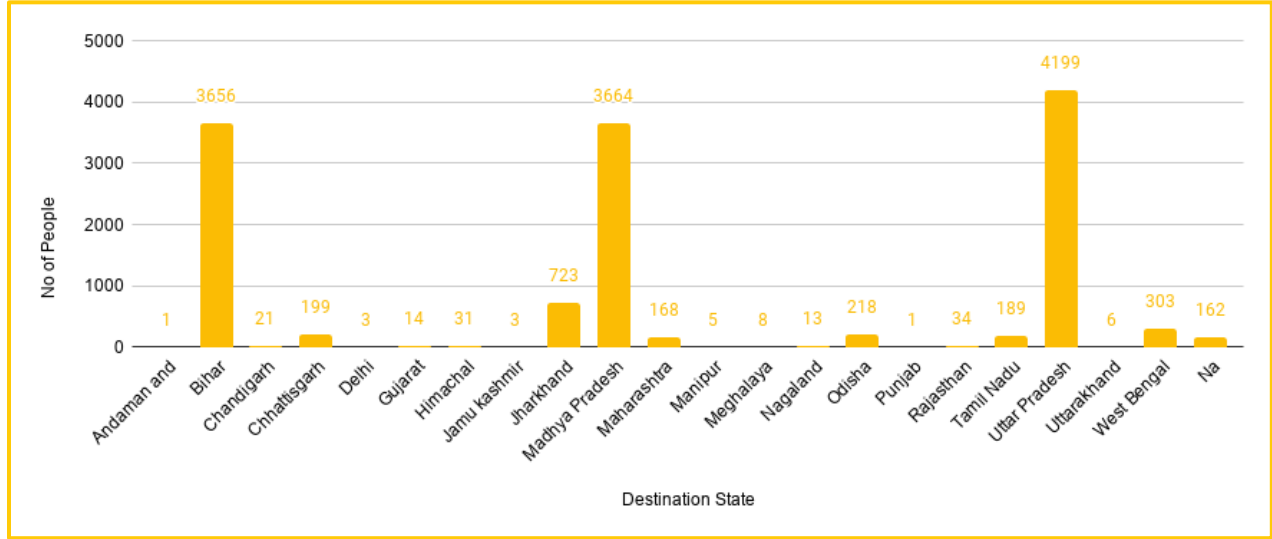


Chart 9 - Destination of individuals

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand were the predominant destination states of the migrants

**Occupation Status**

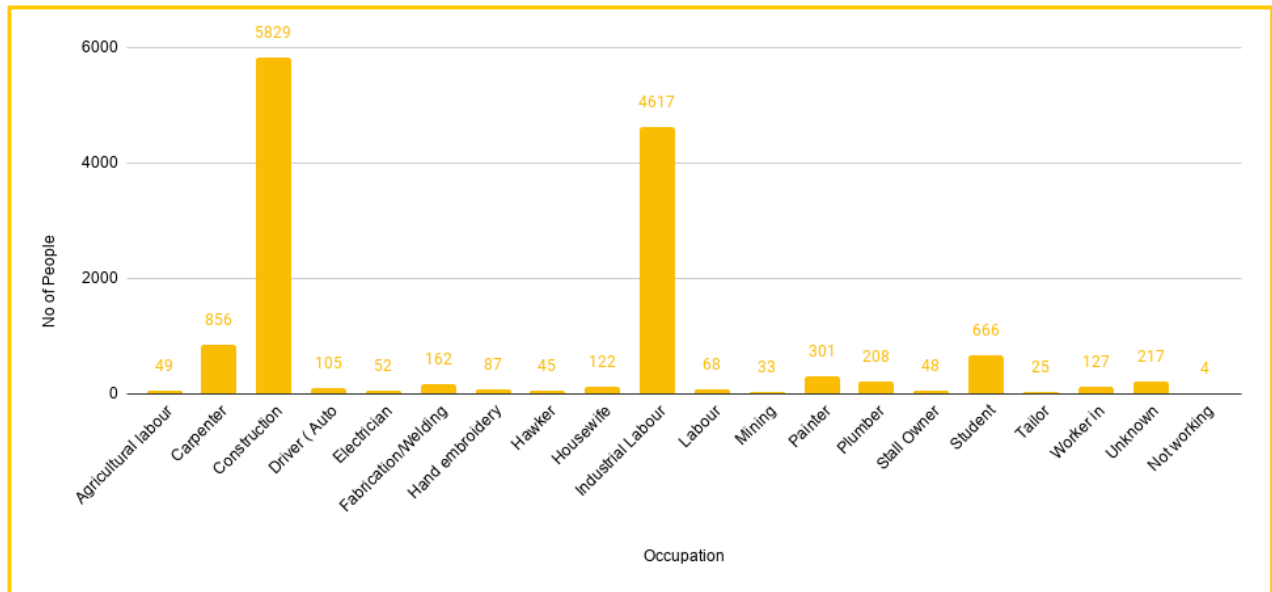


Chart 10 - Occupation status

Industrial labor and construction were found to be the two key occupations of the migrants.

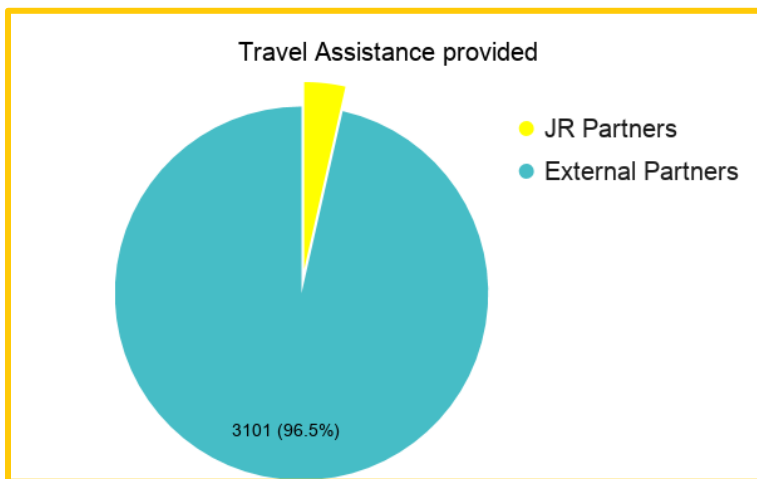
**6.3 Transport support**

At the peak of the migrant exodus, help with travel back to their villages formed the majority of the requests received by the call center. The call center coordinated with its network of supporters, government authorities and other partners and identified various ways and means to arrange for the travel of these individuals. Shramik trains, run by the government, private buses and even flights in some cases were used for ensuring the safe travel of the migrants.

The travel help was not limited to only the identification of the trains or buses. The call center executives also ensured that:

- The migrants were provided with food and water for their long journeys
- Taxis and other private vehicles were arranged from remote areas to ensure that the migrants reached the train and bus stations on time
- With the lockdown underway, there were instances of the migrants needing to be picked up by specially arranged vehicles from containment zones as well, as there was no travel facility available.
- Cash transfers were also made to help the migrants to have some money when they reached home

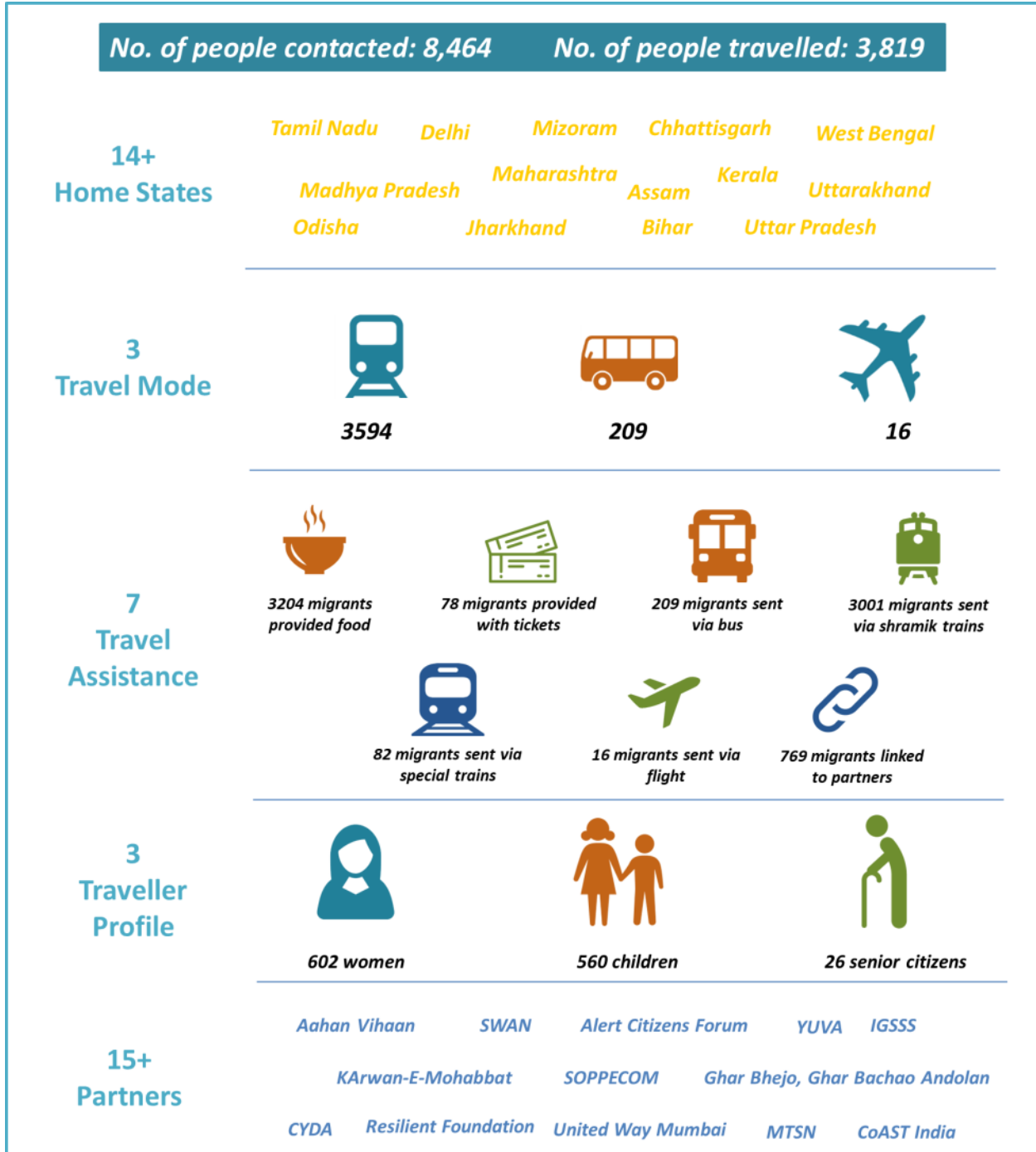
In some cases, several groups of people could only reach the nearest town of their remote villages through the trains or buses. In such cases vehicles were arranged for this last mile connectivity as well by the call center executives through the JR partners.



The chart above shows the significant role that eco-system partners played to fill the gap caused by the absence of Jeevan Rath partners working on travel logistics in Mumbai. Jeevan Rath partners in Pune (CYDA and SOPPECOM), Nashik and Nagpur (YUVA) were linked with travelers as well as connected to CoAST and MTSN for travel funding and/or support.

Chart 11 - Travel Assistance provided - Partner wise

## Ieevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report



CoAST India, Ghar Bejo, Ghar Bachao Andolan, United Way Mumbai and the Migrant Travel Support Network (MTSN) were our key partners who provided both financial and in kind assistance to over 3819 travellers and guidance to over 8464 migrants.



**6.4 Dry Ration kit distribution**

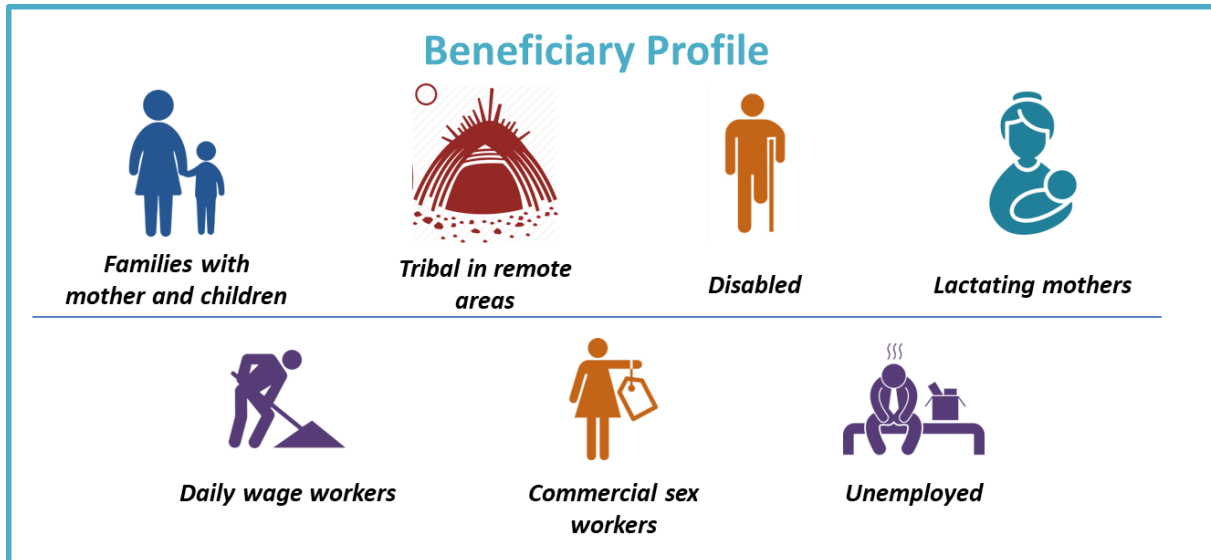
The migrant population was being given the same kind of cooked food by various organizations. This monotony along with cultural issues of regional taste for the food led to the introduction of distribution of dry ration kits. This helped the people to cook their own food as per individual tastes.

**4418 Ration kits distributed**

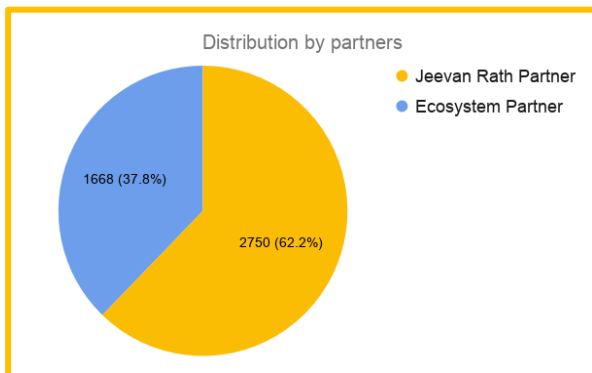
UNICEF – 750 + Other Donors - 3668

5kg rice, 6kg dal, 2kg masoor dal, 2kg chana dal, 2kg tur dal, 5kg wheat, 1kg sugar, tea, salt, masala and oil

The dry ration kits included rice, dal, oil, pulses, salt, sugar and some spices. While a part of the kits was financially supported by UNICEF, RISE Infinity Foundation also reached out to its partner network of donors to get support for additional ration kits.



The dry ration kits were distributed by Jeevan Rath Partners - CYDA, Resilient Foundation and Alert Citizen Forum as well as by RIF with the assistance of other external partners working on-ground for the relief work.



Vulnerable groups of families with mother and children were the key priority for the distribution, apart from other tribal groups living in far off locations and below income groups.

Special distribution of nutrition kits made especially for lactating mothers and children were also arranged and distributed in partnership with Jeevan Rath partner CACR.

Chart 12 - Ration Distribution by partners

## Ieevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report

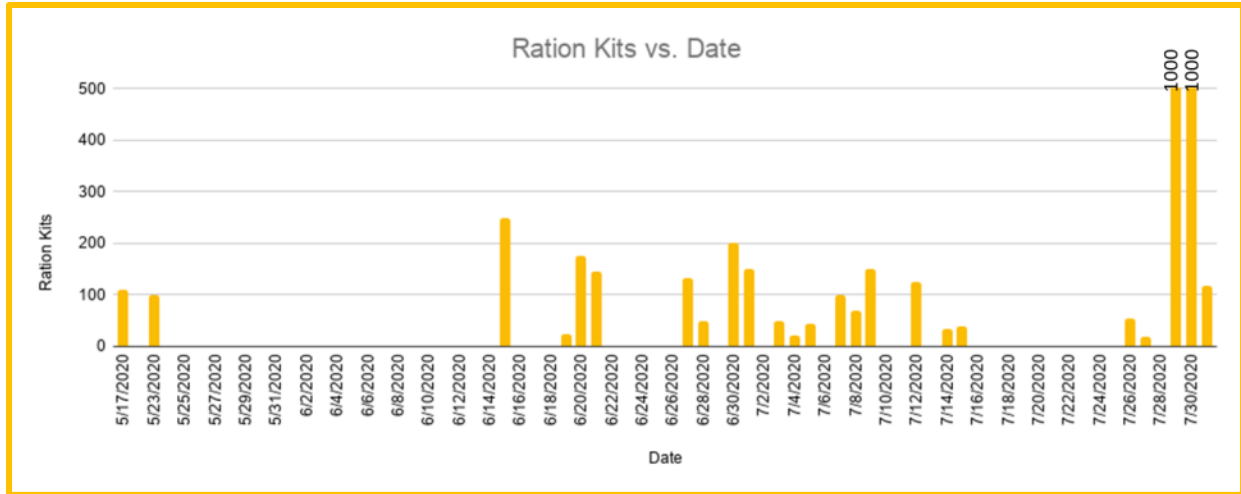
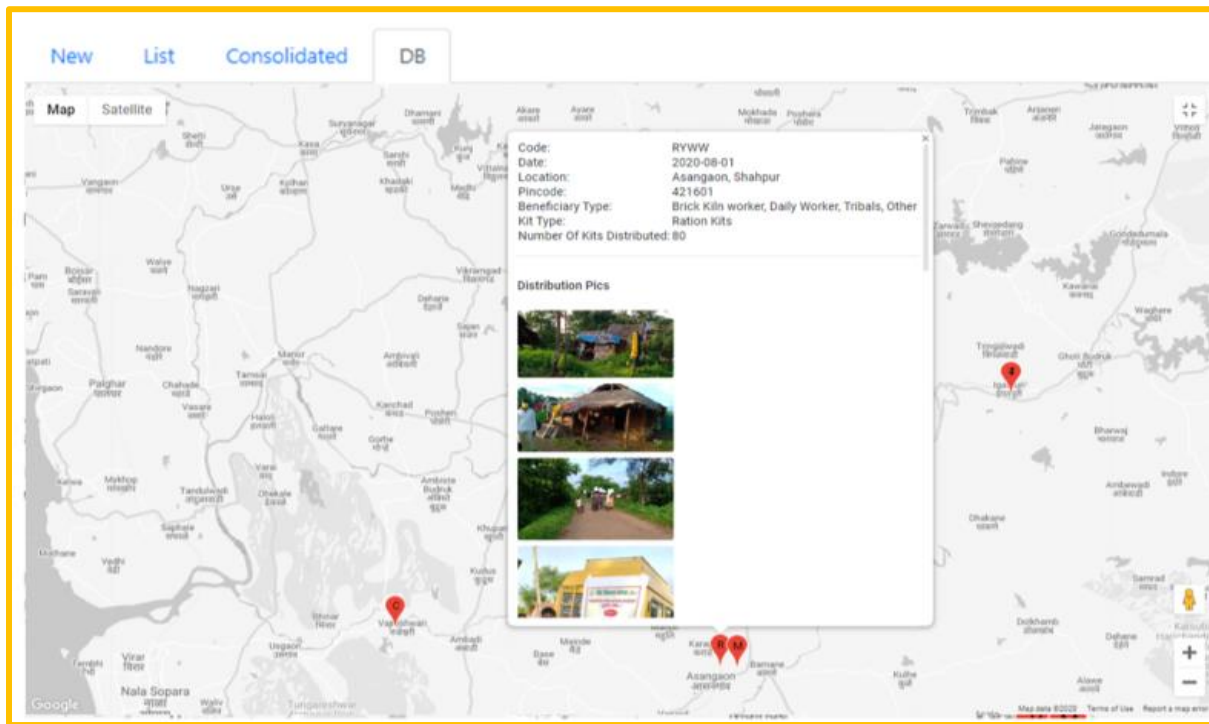


Chart 13 - Ration kit distribution

The chart shows the spread of the ration kits distribution across time and as seen a major part of the drive was started post 16<sup>th</sup> of June which remained consistent till the end..



A public reporting tool has been designed that tracks the distribution data by means of which an NGO partner can look up the dashboard and find if ration kits were distributed in a particular location earlier and hence identify areas which are underserved. This would not only reduce duplication and optimize resources, but also help in **“reaching the unreachable”**.

### 6.5 Cash Transfers<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic has taken a toll not only on the health of individuals but also affected everyone economically in a very big way. The resulting lockdowns has taken away the means of livelihood for the migrant workers as well. Many received assistance in the form of ration kits from various social organizations, though it is also possible that many in difficult to reach areas would not have received any assistance at all. But the people required money for other basic necessities like house rent, medicines for the sick and aged, recurring medical procedures like dialysis, blood transfusions, etc. The call center received a lot of requests for help towards these facets as well.



Hence a direct cash transfer mechanism was developed to cater to such needs as below:

- ❖ **Food** – to provide ration kits, where the shopkeepers were paid directly after submission of the bills and completion of the due diligence through Aadhaar cards of the beneficiaries
- ❖ **Medical** – to pay for expenses incurred for hospitalization, medicines, etc. after submission of prescriptions, hospital bills and completion of the due diligence through Aadhaar cards
- ❖ **Travel** – to cover payment for bus tickets, taxi to the bus/train stations for migrants traveling back to their home states after due verification
- ❖ **Emergency** – to pay for any other exigencies

The actual cash transfers were done by a separate finance team post verification and data checks of the verification team.

#### **Implementation**

In order to ensure uniformity, effectiveness and transparency, a minimum SOP was discussed and policies were established for identifying beneficiaries and documentation pre-requisites for the 3 main relief measures. Policies were established for:

- Criteria: for selection of beneficiaries
- Amounts: the maximum amounts to be transferred per category
- Verification: the process and documents for due diligence and verification of the needs and identity of the beneficiaries
- Actual payments: the mode of payment to the vendors or end beneficiaries

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<sup>1</sup> SOP for cash transfer and list of beneficiaries attached in annexure

## Jeevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report

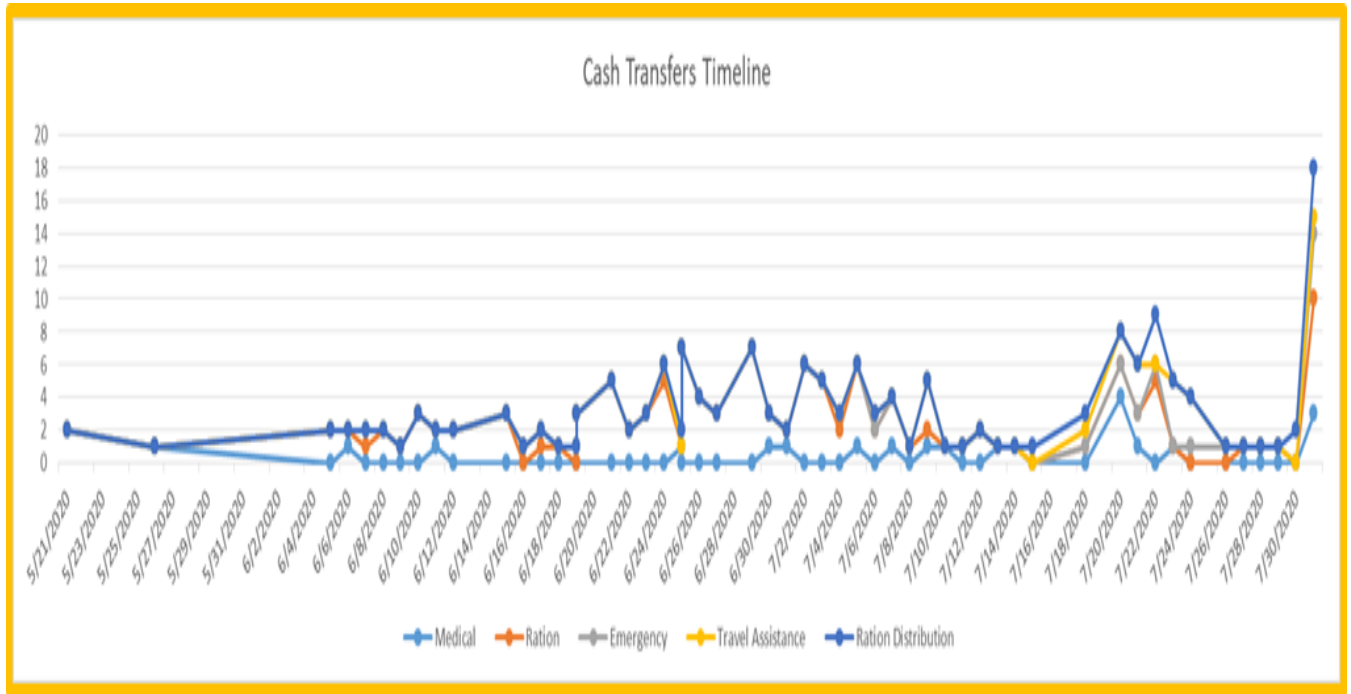


Chart 14 - Cash assistance cases

As seen in the graph above ration distribution was a continuous requirement across the project duration. Other cash assistance related to travel was seen to be more in the second part of June and in July as Shramik trains has stopped by then.

### *Spread of the cash assistance provided from 22<sup>nd</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> July*

Reason for Assistance	Numbers (UNICEF + Others)
Rations, Emergencies and Travel	182 + 100
Medical	25 + 13

**Total persons reached out to: 320\***

**5 cases were provided by Jeevan Rath Partner CACR**

**7. Social Protection**

**7.1 Status related to Employment, Ration and Cash**

As the lockdown got imposed, everything came to a grinding halt. Some citizens that had the means were able to stock up on supplies, and self-sustenance was not a challenge for this population. However, a large percentage of the country, often referred to as the ‘unorganized sector’ did not have the means to stock up on essential items, or order things online.

Construction sites stopped work. Street vendors were not allowed to sell goods. Domestic help was not allowed to enter societies that they used to be employed at. The same ‘unorganized sector’ that built our houses, roads, or sell the pani puri that we enjoy, were at a cross road. No source of income, no way to pay rent, no savings to sustain basic life necessities. Also, as the migrants reached their villages, there was a distinct dip in requests for travel support. It was also noted that there were frequent requests at the call center for employment.

Hence a process was initiated to understand needs for social protection interventions. This was undertaken for a limited period of 2 weeks and the results were as given below.

As the call center continued to accrue information on basic needs such as food and shelter, the team also started to collect information about education, skills, and employment history of the callers. The thinking was that when jobs would become available, a wealth of information about people’s employability would be available which could then be matched with the open positions. As recruitment and placement are primarily HR centric skills, a HR experience person was sought to be on-boarded on to the team. In parallel, all the JR partners were also reached out to inquire about jobs availability.

This would help to enable citizens to go back to work, earn a living, and live a life with dignity.

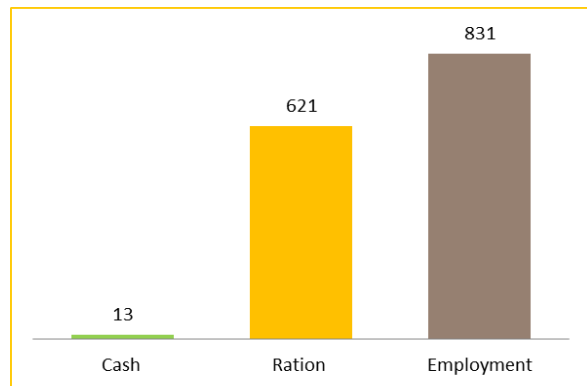
**Total Calls made: 1974**

**Ration: 621**

**Cash Transfer: 13**

**Employment: 831**

- Employed (part or full time): 100
- Unemployed, seeking employment: 5
- Student: 6
- Not interested in employment: 20
- Retired: 1

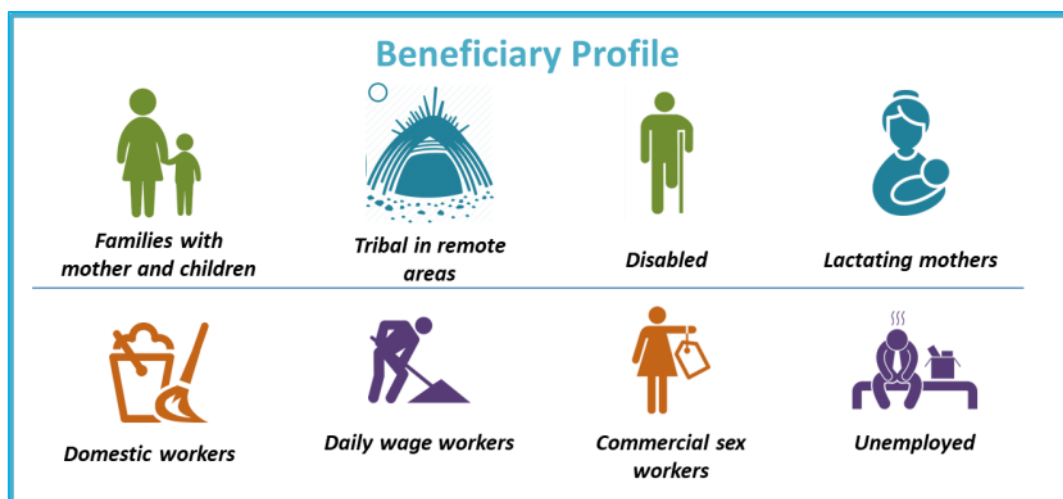


**Not sharing info: 509**

Chart 15 - Employment Status

### 7.2 Equity, Gender lens, Reaching the Unreached

The objective of the Jeevan Rath program was to reach out to *the unreached vulnerable*, which means disregarded slum communities, tribal belts, remote locations and generally vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, women and children and senior citizens. There was a critical need for resources for immediate relief. However, it was also realized that there was a need for sustainable solutions that provided *short term assistance and assisted in medium term recovery*. The lens appropriate to *practical execution was used while taking appropriate decisions*.



Throughout the program the key focus has been to serve the underserved section of our society the ones who have not been provided any sort of assistance as well as others who would need support; women, children, the elderly and disabled. An effort was also made to reach out to tribal communities living in remote areas and villages.

### Entitlement & Employment

The YUVA team also helped lead a petition on Change.org, supported by Jeevan Rath partners, which amplified migrant workers' needs and demanded for state-led efforts to be strengthened for their safe and dignified travel home.

However, from a medium term perspective, it is clear that employment was important as a support mechanism for recovery efforts. This would require co-ordination with government for data on returning migrants, unemployed youth and others in need of employment. Reskilling programs with NSDC and MSRLM could also be explored. Social security was another key policy and entitlement issue. MNREGA and other government schemes need more awareness and accessibility by the target groups. Urban and Rural issues are also linked as migration will reduce if rural opportunities are increased.

### 8. Special initiatives & Innovations

The Jeevan Rath initiative had been an immediate response to the crisis faced by the migrants due to the pandemic and was executed within tight timelines. Due to this there were significant challenges that were recognized as the situation on the ground became clearer. A problem-solving approach was adopted by the team and the program evolved with new mandates and innovations. Some were implemented or initiated as time and budget permitted, few of which are presented below along with their current status.

#### 8.1 Virtual Call Center

A war room is typically a fixed operating space. However, the restrictions of the lockdown and measures related to social distancing were a severe constraint to start the Crisis Management Center. Moreover, the need was for a quick turnaround and an economical approach to infrastructure. Keeping all these factors in mind, RIF established a virtual call center, recruiting and training executives 12 executives within 3 days.



The VCC operated in 3 shifts, for 15 hours seven days a week, with both outbound and inbound calls with a real time system for documentation of cases.

#### 8.2 Need based distribution

While the mandate of the project was to focus on food, travel and medical exigencies, there were other items that were being requested of by both community members as well as frontline workers. Hence efforts were undertaken to provide sanitary napkins and masks for community workers, while raincoats and oximeters were organized for the police and frontline workers.



#### 8.3 Domestic Violence

Cases related to domestic violence saw a rise during the lockdown especially with respect to women, children and domestic workers. An Effort was made to provide relief to the affected individuals in such cases by linking to UNICEF Social protection team who in turn reached out to relevant government departments and partner NGOs for appropriate solutions.



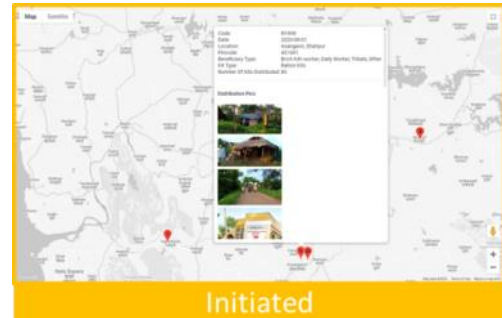
### 8.4 Special Diet for lactating mothers



A special nutrition drive was planned with high nutritive value food items for pregnant females, lactating mothers and children below 5 years in areas such as Shivaji Nagar, Govandi in M (east) ward, who are at the risk of developing severe malnutrition and impaired immunity. This was done in coordination with the local Anganwadis' Sevikas. The Nutrition kit contained high nutritive value food grains such as Ragi, Chole Chana, Roasted plain Chana, Black Beans (Gevda), Rajma and eggs. Body soap and sanitary napkins were also provided along with these kits.

### 8.5 Public Reporting Tool for Distribution

A technology platform has been identified and on boarded which will provide us with a reporting tool for any kind of distribution. The Map will display the location, Beneficiary profile, type and number of the distributions conducted by partner NGO's. It will also allow for a display of associated images. This will not only assist in avoiding duplication and identifying gaps or under-served areas, but will ensure that resources are utilized efficiently and effectively.



### 8.6 Sustainable food solutions

The standard food that was provided during lockdown, whether, cooked or dry ration revolved around rice, wheat and pulses. Hence, an initiative is being planned to introduce fresh and leafy vegetables to increase the nutritional value in the diet as well as to increase diversity of food. Micro-greens are also to be explored with the communities, that have been provided ration kits. Implementation of kitchen gardens or Nutri-gardens to provide essential nutrition to the entire community are also being encouraged in rural spaces to have a healthy population.





### 8.7 Giving it Forward

RISE Infinity Foundation is experimenting on a “Give it Forward” program to encourage the individuals, who have received help from others, to in turn, help their own communities in whichever manner possible and relevant to their own situations. This will ensure that each person, who receives any assistance from Jeevan Rath will start a multiplier chain reaction for community development and positive impact.



### 8.8 MCGM Food Distribution Collaboration

Jeevan Rath partners are interested in working with the government and exploring alternative means of engaging with officials. They are also convinced that the linkage to the Government PDS is critical for ration distributions to the community.

MCGM themselves has been working with three initiatives,

- Helpline – A number that people could call and provide information
- Mahadanya App – This app has been developed by the BMC to track ration kit distribution by select NGO partners who register themselves and voluntarily offer to provide data on any distribution they may undertake with funds from their own donors
- Milkar Platform – A fundraising platform by select NGO partners backed by a consortium of Corporate donors.



Discussions are underway for Jeevan Rath to work with MCGM to strengthen processes and build capacity to scale these initiatives and make it available to a larger number of beneficiaries.

### 8.9 Employment Assistance

One of the key change in migrant conversations as the lockdown continued was that of requests for employment as there was no source of income for the past 3-4 months and people were going into depression having to accept charity for their very survival. To understand the scope and potential of such an activity, RISE Infinity Foundation started a concerted effort to collect additional data points on interest in job opportunities and other factors that can lead to or hinder employment. Simultaneous discussions were also held with partners and other networks on efforts at



rehabilitation and recovery. Options such as Job Melas (virtual), reskilling, government schemes and donor support are being explored.

### 8.10 Supporting SHGs and Artisans



Masks have become the new normal due to the pandemic now. This initiative aims at providing hand painted and hand crafted masks to the community and thus support artisans with a source of income and livelihood.

The artisans can typically be micro, home based entrepreneurs and also Self-help groups.

This will help in creation of friendly and nurturing ecosystem for these artisans to thrive and create value

### 8.11 Palghar District Level Plan

#### Palghar Action Group

Initiated

A meeting of Jeevan Rath partners working in the Palghar region and other stakeholders having a presence in the area was organized by the Jeevan Rath team. This objective of the meeting was to understand the developmental work being undertaken by various NGO's and explore any possible collaborations amongst themselves.

The discussion focused on the below points;

1. Food & ration distribution – to ensure adequate and nutritious food for all
2. Water – to encourage agriculture, by ensuring enough water is available through various means

3. WASH – addressing sanitation and health issues that drain their resources further

4. Employment – map skills and job opportunities for income generation

5. Emergency needs – identify critical areas, communities and families and provide support

Based on these discussions, key actionables were identified and an action plan is being developed in consultation with UNICEF, CTARA – IITB and others.

### 9. Policies and Practices

As the effects of the pandemic continued to cause distress and suffering for millions, the largest group and perhaps most heart rendering situation was that of the migrant labourers. Jeevan Rath as a coalition of Partners, Enterprises and Citizen Volunteers made by the Maha C19 PECOnet led by UNICEF responded to this unprecedented situation through its collective efforts.

#### **Core Committee for Governance**

Governance Running a coalition-based project requires a significant degree of transparency and respect in order to build trust and deliver effectively. This was the basic tenet on which the PECOnet functioned from the beginning, every individual and institution realising their own role in the project while recognising the contribution of the others. A committee of core partners and UNICEF was formed to take decisions after debate and discussions.

Throughout the project, the team continued to assess the situation on the ground and charted the way forward based on the evolving needs and the dynamics of government and civil society efforts. Thus, there was a need to re-strategize constantly so as to adopt the optimum option to meet real needs of the community quickly. Policies, Processes and Practices were established to further ensure smooth operations and financial allocations. Some of the documented processes have been attached as annexures to the report.

#### **Beneficiary Profile**

One of the first decisions was to go beyond migrants travelling home, and to focus on helping migrants/people who:

1. were yet to leave for various reasons (pregnant wife, illness, senior citizens etc) and do not have funds to travel or need food and rations while they wait to get transportation
2. who stay back and need assistance for food, rent, medical, etc while they find jobs
3. those coming back to Maharashtra (in-bound migration) and need to re-settle
4. those migrating within the state (reverse migration), a significant number in itself and whose skill mapping was critical for advocacy on recovery efforts.

One of the significant pivot in the program was to also add multiple vulnerable groups to the migrant population, viz. who were “COVID affected” and “indirectly affected with need”, such as:

1. Slum communities and
2. Tribal belts and rural areas to reach the unreached

### **Planned intervention**

The five key aspects that were decided upon as means to continue our assistance to the above groups were:

- I. Food & dry ration kits, that would include rice, dal, oil, pulses, salt, sugar and some spices. Hygiene items were to be included based on budgets and donors available
- II. Transportation - train and bus tickets as possible
- III. Cash transfers to cover household expenses including rent, medicines, quarantine, etc

### **Locations**

Mumbai, Thane, Kalyan, Palghar, Vasai, Virar, Pune, Nashik and Nagpur and nearby areas

### **Fund Allocation**

UNICEF provided an initial seed amount to RISE infinity Foundation for cash transfers, food and travel assistance. RISE Infinity Foundation has reached out to its vast network of corporate and other partners to leverage support for the Jeevan Rath program, both in terms of monetary and in kind assistance. All partners were to continue their efforts to raise additional funds to supplement the above. Partner Allocation was made as per previous process adopted for Ketto fund by UNICEF and RISE Infinity Foundation in consultation with partners for transparency and effectiveness.

### **Implementation**

In order to ensure uniformity, effectiveness and transparency, a minimum SOP was discussed and established for the identifying beneficiaries and documentation pre-requisites for the 3 main relief measures.

While a conditional cash transfer along with ration kit was okayed as part of relief measures, it was agreed that cash would be given only in exceptional cases depending on the vulnerability and need. It is one time transfer and we can ensure beneficiary listing as per the criteria. Any additional amounts and recurring assistance would be discretionary based on the severity of the situation, averaging of cases and availability of resources.

Based on the above policies, RISE Infinity Foundation formulated process and practices to go with the same as documented in Annexure.

### 9.1 Challenges

- I. **Uncertainty:** The uncertainties of the pandemic, be it the spread of the virus or the timing of the lockdown have resulted in a tremendous amount of anxiety for most if not all stakeholders. This has resulted in proving to be a huge challenge to plan for any activities to return to a Business As Usual situation.
- II. **New normal:** This quickly was visible to all involved in Jeevan Rath. There was limited face to face interaction, and stemming from the new normal of Zoom meetings, planning, collaboration and coordination had to be figured out on the fly. There was no SOP, nor was it feasible to design an SOP as the ground situation was constantly changing.
- III. **Unpredictable state machinery:** While all the stakeholders were (and still are) committed to assisting all in need, there were (and still are) things that were not in our control. Ranging from random decisions about ration card necessity, to Shramik train availability, it was evident that the state machinery was far from stable and predictable in terms of services/assistance available to citizens.
- IV. **Infinite demand, limited supply:** Whether it was a meal, or ration kits for families, the demand of those in need by far outstripped the availability of any supplies. Ranging from food to hygiene products, to availability of seats on trains/buses, the demand was exponentially higher than the available supply.
- V. **Multifaceted complexity of crisis's:** The hardships that were encountered had complexities that were unprecedented. Travel for some was of paramount importance to their home states, but associated with that was the lack of any income upon reaching home. Hunger was widespread, and was easily alleviated by providing a meal, but there was always the question about the next meal. And meals one month from then as it were the loss of jobs, and the highly virulent environment that threw everyone off globally.
- VI. **Logistics:** Even when there were solutions, due to travel restrictions, combined with areas that were containment zones, delivering of the solutions was never easy, thereby, further stretching the 3 most precious commodities – time, manpower and finance. Challenges eased off some as lockdown opened partially, but just the unavailability of transportation made these times more challenging than ever before.
- VII. **Team Morale:** With the ongoing lockdown, uncertainty and fear of the corona virus, maintaining team morale for a normal team has been difficult for most organisations, but for an organization providing disaster relief it is even more difficult. Solutions are not always available nor perfect. Exposure to human suffering can demoralize most fellow human beings and even lead to depression. This was compounded by the fact that most team members (other than the call centre executives) were working 14-15 hours a day on average and were expected to be available round the clock for emergency response. Co-ordination post mid-night was a norm and on occasion have been all night long. Under these circumstances counselling and team spirit was the key to boosting team morale.

### 9.2 Learning's

- I. **Constant monitoring:** Given the nature of the times, we learned very quickly that a solution designed for today, may not work tomorrow. Whether it was train schedules, or policies being rolled out by the state, things were changing constantly. Having the pulse on the situations became the necessity during such times.
- II. **Knowledge management:** The world has seen much innovation occur during these times, and while some solutions are public knowledge, it is of significance to have a forum by means of which both quantitative and qualitative data associated with finding solutions is shared in large groups. While social media did this to some extent, development of a repository for such matters will be extremely valuable.
- III. **Team management:** With no face to face contact between most team members, and the absence of hallway conversations, these times has shown us that there is much need for structured communication, both transactional and social in nature. Furthermore, there has been much anxiety about the pandemic, the economic impact, and this can have an impact on the performance and productivity of team members. In line with this, is the clarity of team responsibilities, and necessary changes to existent policies and flexible working hours.
- IV. **Rapid Design of solutions while defining problem:** As time unfolded, it was clear that new problems kept emerging, and new solutions had to be designed. Whether it is data collection forms, or mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts, solutions had to be designed rapidly, even though the full nature of the problem may not have been understood. This rapid reaction became essential at the times of such situations.
- V. **Prioritization:** There will be no debate on the demand by far exceeding the supply. In such situations, there must be mechanism that allows prioritization such that maximum impact can be delivered to those that are most in need.
- VI. **Collaboration:** In times of disasters, the importance of collaboration cannot be over emphasized enough. Without the support of networks both individuals and institutions, all bound by the single objective to support migrants, a pan India effort would have been neigh impossible.
- VII. **Volunteers:** The incredible selflessness of time and effort by volunteers speaks volumes of the good that exist in our world and gives hope to build back better. A key insight was also about a difference in perspective and approach of volunteers as compared to paid staff. This is not about good or bad differences nor about right or wrong, but it is critical to understand that the mindset of each can be contrasting and so you need to work with each group in a very subtle yet clearly demarcated boundary lines.
- VIII. **Distress lines:** While there were a plethora of helplines during the crisis, most shut down or moved to whatsapp, IVR and google forms. This was because of the focus on inbound which at times became overwhelming. Moreover, helplines are manned for a specific period of time, weekends, evenings etc. Distress lines on the other hand have to be available whenever required and hence is almost operational 24\*7. Moreover, in times of distress, you cannot wait for them to find help, assistance needs to reach them. With this in mind, the Jeevan Rath Call centre focused primarily on Outbound calls to reach out to migrants as they travelled so as to track whether they have reached their destination safely and offer support in case of problems.

### 10. Way forward

The Jeevan Rath program was started as an emergency response to provide disaster relief measures. The program is now entering an early recovery mode and there is much to be done to ensure further progress post 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, the project end date. It was unanimously agreed by the group, that there was a clear need for the continuation of the current assistance for the immediate critical needs of our target groups – *food and cash transfers*. In addition, we should work on *Employment and WASH* as both have financial consequences – one on inflow, the other on outflow. *Skill development and Entrepreneurship* would be the tools for rehabilitation and reintegration of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers into the economy.

It was also reiterated that we need UNICEF's assistance to leverage the government as well and to bring visibility to our efforts thus far. Systems are also required that can be used in emergencies and over a wide time lens. A common database where all can get details of distribution to avoid duplications, would be the need of the hour. Technology would be a key enabler of such processes backed by appropriate MIS.

We will need to expand the partner network to have more hands on ground as well as increase resources available for the program and relief packages. The budget provided by UNICEF Mumbai is to seed the program, it will be necessary for all partners and stakeholders to build on the same. Formation of sub-groups such as the one for Palghar along with a multi-sectoral approach was an example of how the group can evolve and yet stay manageable as it grows and multiplies its impact.

Between 1 and 15 June, the government spent Rs 557.7 crore on distributing ration to NFSA card holders through the Public Distribution System. A total of 1.51 lakh MT of rice and wheat was distributed to 152.59 lakh card holders in the first fortnight of June. Further, through the PMGKAY 0.51 lakh MT of rice and dal was distributed to 28.72 lakh card holders for this period. Under the 'Shiv Bhojan' scheme, aimed to provide one square meal a day to poor and needy populations, 15.3 lakh thalis were distributed, and the state spent Rs 1.94 crore. The state is trying to increase NFSA coverage by encouraging people to register, by self-declaration of income. Rationing Dakshata Samitis in villages and District Takrar Nivaran Samitis are being activated to monitor the PDS. A Data collection initiative can be drawn up post 31<sup>st</sup> July to create a list that segregates NFSA and non-rational card holders to whom we distributed ration kits under Jeevan Rath 1.0. Also collect basic information regarding access to government schemes (having Jan Dhan account, job card, etc). The program going forward can then establish linkages with PDS and add to the existing PDS with supplies recommended so that it complements the existing schemes.

It is recommended to understand how the Jeevan Rath program could be complementary to government response and next steps to strengthen the program outcomes for long term impact. **Documentation - Reporting – Amplification** would go a long way in putting in place appropriate *policies, processes and practices* for an efficient coalition ready to respond to real needs. **Advocacy & Action through and for Employment & Assistance** would be the framework for **Jeevan Rath 3.0.**

**Jeevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report**





### Table of Abbreviations

JR	Jeevan Rath
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
RIF	RISE Infinity Foundation
CMC	Crisis Management Center
IEC	Information Education Communication
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PECONet	Partners, Entrepreneurs, Citizen, Ownership Network
MCGM	The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai
CBO	Community Based Organizations
NFSA	National Food Security Act
PDS	Public Distribution System
MIS	Management Information System
MT	Metric tonne
PMGKAY	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana

## Jeevan Rath (Relief and Response on Wheels) Report

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*We thank UNICEF and all our Partners and collaborators, staff and volunteers for their unstinting support and efforts to meet the needs of people in distress in this unprecedented situation of the pandemic and the ensuing humanitarian crisis.*

***RISE Infinity Foundation Team***



**RISE Infinity Foundation**

*Mumbai*

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