

COVID-19 STRATEGY 2020-21



Covid-19 Strategy



The COVID-19 pandemic hit India for the first time at the beginning of 2020, with severe health, social and economic repercussions on the safety and well-being of the Indian population. The threat posed by the virus has continued over the year 2021, marked by a new wave of positive cases surging in April and reaching its peak towards May-June. Tamil Nadu has been one of the states most affected by the outbreak of COVID-19, which has added increasing stress on local communities and the most vulnerable segments of society. Blossom Trust has taken immediate action to respond to the threats posed by this pandemic. We have adapted and reassured operations, mobilised resources and implemented ad hoc responses to mitigate the devastating effects of the COVID-19 crisis on our beneficiaries while contributing to national efforts towards the containment of the virus.

1. Blossom Trust Response

Blossom Trust's adaptation measures have been multifold. On the one hand, it is undeniable that our operations have reduced or faced disruption, partly to ensure compliance with social distancing, safety and hygiene norms, and lockdown restrictions, and partly because of financial constraints exacerbated by the pandemic. On the other hand, we have reorganised our priorities to provide emergency relief and support long-term recovery for the hardest hit, marginalised communities.

i) Rations Distribution - Madurai

The Madurai area has shown a significant incidence of positive cases, resulting in an increased number of households being unable to respond to their most basic needs, including food. In response to the ongoing crisis, between September to November 2020, the COVID-19 Emergency Distribution supported 2660 beneficiaries in over 15 locations across the Madurai urban area. The project targeted high-risk families and individuals, providing emergency kits to meet their most immediate needs, primarily food. 40% of beneficiaries were daily wagers or engaged in the informal sector. Over 650 people had pre-existing health conditions, of which nearly 25% were TB patients, followed by differently-abled and HIV-positive individuals.

ii) Greater Chennai Corporation

In partnership with the Health Department of the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), Blossom Trust was one of the 28 NGOs implementing the Community Intervention Program (CIP). The project ran from May to September 2020, covering 15 zones in the Chennai metropolitan area. During the Community Intervention Program, Blossom Trust reached 2879 households in 9 high-risk settlements in Chennai. Risk-profiling allowed identifying a vulnerable beneficiary pool, composed of almost 70% of individuals aged 60 years old or over, and patients with hypertension and Diabetes. Overall, of the 201 individuals referred to the healthcare facilities, 187 were tested for COVID-19. On average, about 40% of tested persons were discovered positive. What emerged from field data is a positive relationship between the increase in the number of people tested and those found positive to COVID-19. This data reflects the importance of testing to improve virus tracing, treatment and containment.

iii) Awareness Raising

As part of the GCC we also developed an awareness raising component. As COVID-19 awareness campaign based on handling Triune Hygiene Methods, was performed by Blossom Trust staff to 1,010 households. Topics included hand washing, mask wearing and disposing and how to maintain social distancing. Alongside performances, Blossom Trust has also increased advocacy and awareness on social media.

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1. Blossom Trust COVID Strategy

COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns continue to be a threat to Blossom Trust. With an unpredictable timeline on how long the impacts of COVID will last, the implications on our outreach and funding opportunities are uncertain. Our key aims moving forward are to adapt to the needs of the community and to build resilience within Blossom Trust.

Adapt to the needs of the community - In addition to the health risk, COVID-19 has raised a number of challenges within the community, in particular the pandemic has put a significant amount of pressure on economically vulnerable households. Restrictions on movement leaves many unable to generate income, and so unable purchase food, medication or other essential items. As a result, Blossom Trust needed to adapt to this situation and distribute emergency rations to households. Similarly, in 2020 we undertook a community survey asking the community what their needs are. The response was overwhelmingly in favour of economic empowerment. As a result, the agricultural project was developed and is underway. As the impact of COVID-19 continues for the foreseeable future, Blossom must continue to adapt to the community.

Build resilience within Blossom Trust - Blossom Trust must continue to build up its financial and staffing resilience. Ensuring Dayspring has both immediate funding to pay staff and ensure food, educational and medical supplies are available, whilst also looking for long-term funding options and investment into sustainability to options is crucial.

Safety - All staff must wear masks, sanitise regularly and maintain social distancing. This should be adhered to stringently, particularly when visiting Dayspring