

## SEB'S PROJECTS INDIA'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19



In response to COVID-19, Seb's Projects India has contributed to the slowdown of the coronavirus spread by shutting all our schools in the Jawadhi Hills from 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and offering a work from home option for the team even before the virus spread took off in the country. We are providing ongoing support to the communities where we work to meet the basic needs of the poor and marginalized.

Our tribal school teachers have created awareness about crucial aspects like prevention, hygiene, social distancing and isolation to all the 7 Seb's NRSTC school communities in the Jawadhi Hills.

Migrants, when returning to the village from the neighboring states, were closely monitored by our teachers, and informed the Primary Health centres. A team of doctors and nurses visited these particular houses and checked for COVID-19 symptoms. As of now, no cases have been found in the villages where we work in the Jawadhi Hills. Disinfectant was sprayed in the villages to prevent the spread of the virus.

Distribution of food system and other supply chains have also slowed down. To overcome this situation, we distributed rice, dal and eggs in packets to the families of our tribal school children. Fortunately the tribal communities had just finished harvesting their millets and have sufficient stock of millets they can consume. Hopefully this will be an occasion for them to get back to eating the healthy millets as they did in the past, instead of bartering it for rice.

Seb's provided breakfast and lunch to 100 poor patients who had come from other states to CMC Hospital for treatment, and who were staying in the CMC Chatram next to the hospital. The breakfast programme has been an ongoing initiative and we continue to do so at this time. The lunches are made possible by a group of young people from the Jain community who have partnered with us.

Seb's has provided provisions for two weeks to 170 vulnerable families who are vendors and daily wage laborers in the Vellore town area and villages nearby. Each bag of provisions cost Rs 1000.

Seb's joined hands with another local NGO and was able to provide lunch packets to 100 homeless, elderly and children and flat rickshaw daily wage laborers who stay on the road-side.

Our project coordinators attended a two-hour Zoom webinar on **"Training on COVID-19 and Risk Communication"**, organized by the Communication Resource Unit and UNICEF, and TRIFED.

We have not faced any difficulties so far as our volunteers had written permission from the District Police Department.

### **Seb's future project plans for COVID-19 response:**

- Organize a medical camp for school students and the community, in partnership with the District Health Department and CMC, specific to symptoms.
- Identify chronically-ill patients and help them visit the hospital to continue their treatments.
- Follow up on the immunization of children in our communities.
- Focus on improving the school noon-meal programme to strengthen the immune systems of the children.
- Provide hand sanitizer or soaps to all the schools and ensure children wash their hands at regular intervals during school hours.
- Supply hygiene kit to each family in the community and educate them to practice hygiene.
- Identify destitute in the village and supply them with one cooked meal per day from the school.
- Supply a grocery kit to pregnant and lactating women for a short period to support their nutrition needs.
- Conduct CAMAL activities to revise the reading and learning skills of the students for three months when school reopens.
- Organize a meeting with parents of the mainstreamed students to continue their higher education.
- Provide psychosocial support at this time of uncertainties and COVID fears.
- Organize a one-day COVID training programme for teachers and health workers in partnership with the health service departments.
- Help people to access the schemes declared by the government related to COVID relief, in terms of subsidies, cash gifts and procuring food supplies, health benefits etc.

