

COVID 19 - DRF Response Strategy

We are at a very critical point in history. Humanity is facing one of its biggest challenge and poor and low income groups are in the most vulnerable situation. And more importantly, given the rapidly changing scenario, it calls for all of us to think on our feet and be vigilant and proactive for this new pandemic has underlined how we all are undeniably interconnected.

The Government of India has initiated a slew of measures, including declaring a nation-wide lock-down to stop the spread of the virus, health package to boost our preparedness, and a relief package to support vulnerable sections of the society. But even with these measures, given our population size, our education levels, poor living conditions coupled with the inadequate health infrastructure and livelihood challenges make the majority of our population very vulnerable. Also, with the vast sections of the population having just moved up from a “below-the-poverty line” status to a “low income” group this crisis is not just going to be about a health hazard that they will have to dodge, but also about how to climb back from the economic gorge that many are bound to find themselves in given the loss of jobs and a looming economic recession.

Dr Reddy's Foundation recognises that in these challenging times we have an even bigger responsibility to our fellow citizens. We are particularly concerned about the impact of this lockdown on the poor and low income communities that we work with and the livelihood hurdles that our young people will encounter. We look forward to the support of our partners as we leverage all our resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the immediate steps we have taken to address this challenge include the following:

Ensuring Safety and Security

- The welfare and safety of our staff and our communities will continue to be our top priority. In line with government directives we have closed all our operations and shared the “must follow” safety guidelines to all our teams and community.

- Extended support to our staff staying alone in cities away from home to either go back to their home towns or ensure they can manage independently in the city of residence. Checked and supported our staff who are staying in PGs and hostels to ensure their safety and well being

- Used our internal communication platforms to update all staff about developments and also alert every one about safe social media usage and to be vigilant about correct information vs fake news.

- Arranged for everyone’s salary to be deposited in advance to ensure they have ready funds in case of any emergency. Also open to support those who might need a salary advance to address health emergencies.

- Instructed Team Leaders to keep tabs on their teams to help them tide this situation ensure they are mentally as well physically in good shape.

- Reached out to staff with existing medical issues to check if they need support.

- All staff are working from home and they have been given the required IT support to ensure they stay connected



Bring alignment and changes in current Programs

- **Youth skilling program (GROW):** In our Youth Skilling Program, we have converted all classroom training to online classes and we are working on developing systems to [a] measure the effectiveness of online training [b] start new online batches and [c] study the impact on hiring by reaching out to our employers. In addition, we are in regular touch with all stakeholders, including our partners to keep them updated about the evolving situation.

- **Health Skilling program (HQHCS Program):** We are focusing on preparing lessons on skill sets and procedures, through short videos in vernacular languages to engage with our aspirants online. Additionally, we are exploring possibilities for adding a topic on 'Hospital Preparedness for Epidemics' in our curriculum by discussing with experts and employers, and a short term training program to help and prepare "Public Health Professionals" to respond to acute and emerging threats in partnership with government.

- **Improving Effectiveness of First Level Health Team Leaders:** We are working on using our digital solution platform (FLHTL APP) to orient frontline health staff on how to prepare and respond to outbreaks.

- **Skilling Program for Persons with Disability (GROW PwD):** Since our aspirants/students safety is a high priority our trainers are in regular touch with them and are using social media to create awareness about the safety measures they need to adopt. We have shifted our training to online modules and are supporting them in every way to complete their training.

This online training has been extended to youth from rural areas too so that they can avail the training from their homes. Our visually impaired students are being supported with compatible digital technology to enable them to participate in the training during this lockdown.

- **Supporting young girls to study science (Sashakt Program):** We have reached out to all our scholars to ensure they are safe and well. We are in touch with students through 'whatsapp' as they are locked down in hostels (Delhi University) and have requested their mentors to keep a tab on them and motivate them during these challenging times.

- **Small and Marginal Farmers (MITRA):** In our work with farmers we have stopped all community engagement activities to avoid any possible occurrences of community level transmission of COVID-19. During this critical period, we are extending support to our farmers to sell their produce by approaching market players to ensure farmers are not being exploited in the current situation. We are also exploring how farmers' can access quality inputs for the next season to avoid panic buying at higher price. We are also guiding the farmers to reach out to scientists and experts to seek advice on crop management through digital means.

- **Education program:** All our educational institutions are closed and we are working on holistic set of changes that will need to be brought from next academic cycle upon reopening.



Forging Collaborations with Stakeholders

- We are exploring how to build on our existing partnerships with the central and state governments, local NGOs, institutions and business heads to develop and execute collaborative models/interventions for building resilience in communities
- We are exploring ways to work together with our knowledge partners, donor partners frontline health workers, lead farmers, teachers, student mentors & scientists, trainers, community mobilisers, local self-governments to strengthen service delivery platforms
- We are leveraging all our social media platforms to network with partners and amplify right messaging



We would like to take this opportunity to thank our stakeholders, communities and staff for their unstinting support during this pandemic. We are confident that together we will be able to overcome this crisis.

Since this is an evolving crisis, we are aware that we will need to be alert to the changing needs. The above response will be continually updated as we review the developing situation.

If you would like to support us or need any additional information do get in touch with us. We are here to serve.

You can call on **9000869054** or mail us at info@drreddysfoundation.org