

# COVID RESPONSE

# SEEDS



## IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

### *Activating relief seamlessly*

## Overview

SEEDS works with vulnerable communities in disaster prone areas. It provides relief and builds resilience of communities vulnerable to natural disasters - earthquakes, floods, cyclones, droughts and landslides. These disasters are often a result of climate change and unplanned constructions.

SEEDS works with at risk and affected communities in peacetime, during and after disasters. It focuses on safer housing, school and community infrastructure, water and sanitation, environment and health. It provides technical solutions like building infrastructure and also works on building socio-economic resilience in communities. At the heart of its work are SEEDS' own values of keeping the dignity, understanding rights of affected communities and maintaining professional and global humanitarian standards of aid and relief.

In decades of its work on disaster relief and recovery, SEEDS had worked on a range of disaster response. However, even SEEDS had not seen a disaster that affected the entire country at the same time. SEEDS was one of the first organisations to focus on crisis facing migrant workers due to the lockdowns. It also reached out to specific vulnerable groups such as commercial sex workers, transgenders, people with disabilities and tribal communities.

It activated itself in 12 states, reaching 400 thousand people and distributing 9.3 million meals, 9,700 PPE kits, 24,825 hygiene kits. SEEDS mobilised extensive support from companies that provided financial help as well as many volunteers for its relief work.

SEEDS worked with district officials in Bihar to create isolation and quarantine units for migrant workers returning home.



It also worked with authorities to create spaces for dialogues with villagers to increase acceptance and local absorption of workers returning home. Covid also led to SEEDS starting to work with micro-enterprises, providing the affected enterprises basic wage support and relief assistance.

During this period SEEDS worked extensively in West Bengal and Orissa which were hit by twin disasters – cyclone, floods and Covid. The challenges of providing relief and moving people while maintaining social distancing helped the team learn new response strategies.



## LONG TERM SHIFTS

### *Repurposing relief*

Continuing with its work on relief to micro enterprises affected by covid, SEEDS plans to focus on helping these enterprises revive their businesses and repurpose them to more sustainable opportunities. It is collaborating with partners in green energy, organic farming, vernacular design and construction to facilitate local solutions.

Additionally, its experiences and observations during Covid have brought into focus underlying social maladies, such as domestic violence and mental illnesses, that are not usually the priorities in disaster management. Going forward, SEEDS will focus more on addressing these social protection issues and restoring agency of individuals in the context of their families and communities.

SEEDS will also work with governments to increase vaccine uptake by removing myths and skepticism around Covid vaccination.

## Conclusion

Covid left bare the magnitude of disaster that an adverse phenomenon could unleash on an unimaginable scale. It also brought into sharp focus many social inequities and vulnerabilities. Socio-economic and political divides became more evident and visible.

Any organisation working by itself can only create very limited impact in the face of this enormity. SEEDS is working on creating collaborative models of work that can help societies crowdsource not just their problems but also their solutions and resources.

