

# COVID CHAMPIONS

**AUGUST 2020**

India reported its first Covid-19 case on 30th January in Kerala and after that things have gone downhill with the current count as of 22nd July at 11,82,915, including 4,11,133 active cases, 7,53,050 recoveries and 28,732 deaths. India is currently 3rd ranked in the world shortly behind the US and Brazil. With nation-wide lockdown and large-scale testing used to combat Sars Cov-19, India's troubles have barely begun. The nation-wide lockdown put the economy in the rear as millions of people lost their jobs, this further triggered the Migrant Crisis. With nearly 22 million migrants left unemployed and forced to reach their homes by travelling 100 of kilometers on foot with their families it painted a grim picture of the urban manufacturing process. Mumbai, one of the most sought after city in India was apparently also chased by the virus as it emerged as a hotspot and Maharashtra recording nearly 40% of all deaths. With broken economic infrastructures, schools and colleges being shut and healthcare under extreme duress our hope of coming out of this alive is by working together. Millions of frontline workers still report daily on their jobs even when thousands of their brothers and sisters have died. The pandemic has affected everyone though not in the same way and at extremely different magnitudes; it has irreparably changed the way we think and move in the world. Some of us have been on the luckier end of the spectrum by staying locked up in our homes and enjoying holidays from school and colleges; it has not been such a smooth journey for others. The revised version of this popular saying accurately describes the difference in experience of the pandemic between various groups of people. "We might not be on the same boat, but we are in the same ocean." With all that's been going on, our duty to give back to society has been amplified. With all of us doing our bit and trying our best in helping others and ourselves, there are some of us who went above and beyond in their moral duty towards the sick, poor and powerless. This Special addition of the Mumbai First Magazine aims to salute these warriors for their courage and selflessness.

**- Dr Neville A. Mehta**

**CEO, Mumbai First**

# KHAANA CHAHIYE



Ham sabko Khaana Chahiye. But while we all are privileged enough to not have to worry about our next meal there are others who have the misfortune of not knowing where their next meal is going to come from. This is what motivated Ruben Mascarenhas and Pathik Muni to create the Khaana Chahiye initiative along with Shishir Joshi, Neeti Goel, Anik Gadia, Rakesh Singh and Swaraj Shetty.

A not for profit movement that aims to give at least one meal everyday to everyone who needs it. In their pilot, they managed to give out 1200 meals along the Western Express Highway. The founding team along with core members like Mazher Ramzanali, Pranav Rungta, Maanoj Shah, Bhavik Kothari, Latha Sankarnarayan along with hundreds of food ninjas has managed to share more than 4.5 million meals so far. Through crowdfunding they partnered with restaurants and paid crucial attention to social distancing protocols and sanitisation at every step of the process.



Everything from procuring the grains, to cooking and packaging the food concerns regarding contamination and spread of the virus were given utmost priority. To reduce cost they set up a supply chain and got directly in touch with farmers and arranged for BMC passes for transport. Through this they also managed to employ farmers from interiors of Maharashtra who were already struggling with low market prices for their crops.



They extensively planned and researched to get accurate, genuine demands and an optimal route for it. Their systematic execution of such a daunting task is surely praiseworthy and even more so when we see that the movement was crowdfunded. In times like this when people are starving it is our moral imperative to keep aside our dalgona coffee and banana bread and work towards providing at least one decent meal to those who have nowhere else to go.

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# KRYSYN REGO



To keep things running for a longer period of time, capital and motive need to work hand in hand. You can't do good for others, if you aren't able to support yourself. Overcoming this barrier,

Krysyn Rego, owner of a waste management company from Bandra managed to manufacture low cost face shields at such a perilous time. He and his team would sell a face shield for as cheap as Rs 30 a piece and for every unit they sell they would donate one to hospitals, police officers and NGOs working for the aid of front-line workers. After learning about their work, they received help from the principal of the neighboring school, St. Stanislaus High School, wherein they employed and trained the migrant labourers residing in the schools to make shields for them.



The team reports saying that the workers soon made a game out of this and would even work in their free-time.

His endeavor helped in providing employment to laid off labourers and at the same time worked towards the noble cause of distributing protective gear at low cost to front-line workers.



They produce nearly 5,000 shields a day and even collaborate with other not for profit organisations in delivering these shields and tracking that it reaches the right people. Krysyn's model is sustainable in the long term and has the added benefit of providing employment to the unskilled labour.

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# BLUCATCH AND OFISH



Out of India's large and diverse workforce, the fishing community was also severely impacted by the state wise lockdown imposed in this pandemic. With the markets being shut down, the fishing community in and around Mumbai is facing absolute uncertainty. Seeing this, Ganesh Nakhawa, a fisherman from the Koli community, founder of BluCatch, director of Karanja Fishing Co-operative society and chairman of Maharashtra Purse Seine Fishing Society responded to the situation by directly connecting fishermen to end consumers in Mumbai. Devleena Bhattacharjee, founder of Numer8, a data science company that specialises in using geospatial data to address real-world problems like disaster management, coastal community monitoring, infrastructure monitoring, wildlife, and biodiversity protection.

Along with Myron Mendes from the Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change, the three of them conceptualized and innovated a program to help fishermen in forecasting and estimating demand through data analytics, while also responding to the lack of access to fresh seafood available in the city.



Their first run, which started by selling only 37 kgs of fish in Andheri has now reached new heights. With a network of 68+ boats, directly involving 680 fishermen and indirectly fisher families, the three of them have been dealing with nearly 3000 kgs of fresh seafood daily. The seafood, coming straight from the boats, is cleaned, cut and packed in Karanja and sold while following all precautions to reduce and contain the spread of the virus. By eliminating the middle men, the team has managed to increase earnings of the community by 10%. The supply chain has now directly connected the fishermen in the nearby villages to the end consumers in the city.



The orders were funneled through Whatsapp and instant payments were made possible to the fishermen so as to not leave them cash starved. Their work has increased the standard of living for the fishermen that was not possible even in the pre-covid time. The team is looking to expand this the People-Planet-Profit model by aiming to build an ethical business that will contribute to reducing carbon emissions, promoting sustainable livelihoods and providing accessible high-nutritional food security for all that is traceable. It truly takes a trio of heroes to empower others and create a sustainable future for fisheries. And they have done that!

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# KETTO



## **A CROWDFUNDING PLATFORM THAT HAS HELPED RAISE ABOVE RS.100 CRORE FOR COVID-19 FUNDRAISERS**

One of Asia's biggest crowdfunding platforms, Ketto, allows individuals, NGOs and brands to raise money for social, creative and personal causes.

Ironically, one of the most difficult parts of social service and non-profit work is gathering funds for the operation. With the added financial burden of a global pandemic it has become increasingly more difficult to rally monetary support for public welfare causes.

Making remarkable progress here is Ketto who managed to raise funds worth ₹ 109 crores during this pandemic using them to help and support more than 3 lakh people in various capacities. They have tirelessly worked for a plethora of causes including distributing Personal Protective equipment (PPE kits), ration kits and even helping the stranded migrants.

One of their most outstanding work is done with establishing and working with community kitchens which feed hundreds of people daily. Mumbai's community kitchens are operated out of small slum bastis and wards which are the soul of a place. In these trying times, these places bring a community together and provide them with the courage to sustain. During the lockdown 1.0, a large number of migrants were stranded in Mumbai and were facing layoffs and economic uncertainty.



With meager funds not even enough to support oneself, they could hardly support their families. To combat this, Ghar Bachao, Ghar Banao Andolan, a people's movement which gained support in the backdrop of massive slum demolition in Mumbai in the early years of this century, worked with Ketto & volunteered in feeding daily wage labourers and underprivileged children. Some kitchens, especially in the M-ward were institutionally funded by Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Ketto's work is extended towards helping people as well as animals. Several fundraisers for animal welfare and to support strays were successfully completed.



Amidst the current economic scenario and job uncertainties, Varun Sheth, Co-founder Ketto.org says, "We are hiring aggressively pan India during this pandemic as we have seen a huge growth of individuals and NGOs using our platform to raise funds for their causes, we believe with a larger team, the quality of experience and support will go up tremendously." Ketto relief funds have garnered monetary assistance for so many campaigns. They have managed to create a platform for interaction between genuine charities and donors working to tackle major problems with as much kindness as they can.



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# ADHATA TRUST



## A SMILE FROM THE DISTANCE

Adhata Trust is a non profit organisation working on psycho-social needs of elderly. We have 12 community centres in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai reaching out to Senior Citizens in these centres. Due to the present pandemic, as a precautionary measure all centres had to be closed. Unfortunately during these times, our newspapers, news channels and entire social media platforms are flooded with news, comments and statistics about senior citizens being vulnerable to the virus.

Yes, the elderly are more susceptible to the present health crisis but reality spells life is beautiful- full of hopes and dreams. In this situation, it is obvious to become more anxious, lonely, frightened about their surroundings leading to psychological conditions like distress, loneliness and depression. This can be synonyms to any age group- so they ask "WHY "ME".

So true, we are in total agreement of the above and are proud to announce that among hundreds of members- just one has left us. In line with the objective of the organisation to cater to psycho-social needs of elderly in the city, we are reaching out to each of our members, their friends and families through our "Listening Buddies" Program. Our Coordinators call them and spend time talking to them, finding out their requirements and teaching the methods to connect with each other. Our new mission began by making them tech-friendly and finding a new friend. A phone- their friend in need.



We are using a participatory method wherein members can take equal part and engage in the activities. The programme is on a daily basis- starting with Good Morning note and Activity for the Day. Some of the other new projects initiated in this period are like Magical Monday-Virtual Sessions with Meeting New Friends, Wonderful Wednesday- Mind & Fun Games and Fun-Friday Series which includes Zumba, Chair Yoga, Nutrition, Physiotherapy, Nature Talks, Dance – Live participatory based and informative sessions by experts in the field. We are using different social media platforms to reach our members and receiving overwhelming response from them. Our effort is to bridge the distance during social distancing.

Some of the special features about our sessions are planned considering specific needs of elderly members and conducted by a team of Gerontologist, Social Workers, and Human Development Professionals. These sessions are participatory based to actively involve members of all age groups. The overall benefits of these sessions is helping in boosting their self-confidence, an opportunity to interact with their friends, increasing a sense of belonging. As we plan sessions for their holistic well being, it revolves around their physical, social, mental health and psychological well being. Everything with a positive look and positive approach. A smile on their face is all that is strived to achieve.



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# UNITED WAY MUMBAI



United Way Mumbai (UWM) is working on the ground, providing essential protective supplies to our healthcare professionals and sanitation workers at the frontlines of the battle as well as handing out daily essentials to low-income families displaced by the lockdown.

Here's a short summary of what United Way Mumbai has achieved so far in our COVID-19 Response interventions. So far, with the generosity of contributors, UWM has been able to raise Rs. 91.2 crore for COVID-19 related interventions. With the funding received, the organisation has been able to reach out to 102 hospitals and healthcare centres in 24 cities from 9 states; 233 Police chowkis and 18 Municipal Corporations across the country.

United Way Mumbai's interventions have been categorised into provision of basic healthcare essentials to frontline health workers, medical equipment to hospitals, healthcare and hygiene essentials to other frontline workers such as police personnel, sanitation workers, etc. and ration and hygiene essentials kits to those displaced by the pandemic and the resultant lockdown. Items distributed have included crucial items to frontline workers such as PPE kits, N95 masks, 3-Ply masks, FFP1 masks, nitrile gloves, etc. United Way Mumbai has also distributed a variety of equipment to hospitals including ICU beds, quarantine beds and bedding material, Portable Ventilators, ECG Machine, Pulse Oxymeter, Oxygen Concentrator, various COVID-19 testing kits, thermal body scanners, IR thermometers,



Endotracheal Tubes, Closed Suction Units, self-inflating resuscitation bags, Video Laryngoscope, etc. Hygiene essentials like hand sanitizer, handwash, hand sanitizer dispensers (wall-mounted), hand wash dispensers (regular as well as foot operated), Aquaguards, water coolers, high pressure cleaning machines, multipurpose cleaners, disinfectants, etc. have also been distributed to those working in the frontlines.

For the exact numbers of items delivered, do refer to the excel sheet attached to this email. Additionally, United Way Mumbai has supported 26,350 families in 186 locations across 15 cities with Rations and Essentials kits, which comprise basic necessities that will suffice a family of 4-5 persons for a month.

These kits contain Rice, Wheat Flour, Tur Dal, Moong Dal, Cooking Oil, Salt, Sugar, Tea Powder, Bathing Soap, Washing Soap, Toothpaste, Sanitary Pads, Disinfectant and Phenyl. Also, with support from corporate donors, United Way Mumbai has been able to provide 4,38,900 pre-mixed meals to 7,915 families in Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata. Additionally, 3,85,212 freshly cooked meals were served across Mumbai, Bengaluru and New Delhi.

Even though the lockdown is slowly being withdrawn, the organisation's efforts have not diminished. UWM is still reaching out to those in need to help fight this devastating pandemic. To support their interventions, please visit

[www.unitedwaymumbai.org/fig](http://www.unitedwaymumbai.org/fig)  
**ht-covid** or email  
**contact@unitedwaymumbai.org**



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# HOME



HOME is an acronym that stands for:

H- Helping  
O- Orphans  
M- Mentoring and  
E- Education

The founder of this organization has a wonderful story of sipping tea at a local vendor with friends; the Indian colloquial term would be 'tapri with yaro'. Suddenly out of the blues comes a man on a wheelchair who asks for a cup of tea. The insight that struck the founder of 'HOME' Shanawaz Durrani and the other friends was we need to do something and be a source of help to others. Despite their work schedule and routine life they ventured to spread smiles and be a ray of sunshine to the hopeless.

They have ventured out to support a child's school fee, Orphanages and old age home rations and medicines to families during the lockdown.

During this lockdown, keeping social distancing in mind, we have provided ration to around 30 families, medicine to around 20 families and have paid hospital bills for other families.



Their vision is to spread joy and they have been able to spread festive joys with the old age home ladies.

They have taken responsibility towards the environment and conducted a beach cleanup drive. The tale is one of my favourites because I have been observing if anyone posts anything on Vasai local group, the team immediately lends a helping hand.

This tale is indeed worth marveling, the team leader is my school batch mate and it gives me immense joy to write about them. They are operating from home as registration and other details need to be done.

The only thing that they need is apparently many hands so their vision of spreading smiles could be accomplished. If everyone aspires to feed one, help one eventually we are being the helping hands of God. This tale inspires the youngsters that if you are blessed come and be a blessing to others. To know more about this group do check updates of 'HOME' on Instagram and Facebook. Join them in their mission and get transformed.



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# JAGANNATH'S KITCHEN - PANKAJ VARMA



Mr. Varma has been steadfast in providing meals from day one of lockdown. Starting with 350 meals/ day to serving 1500-1700 meals a day currently, Mr. Varma has been constantly raising the number of meals so that hardship is reduced for poor and homeless people on the street. He not only helps people with nutritious food but also provides food materials to needy, especially migrant labor. The food materials include rice, dal, potato, onion, and banana. During the lockdown, the focus is always centered around human beings while the stray animal on road is left without any support. To overcome the issue, Pankaj and his volunteers also serve stray animals with milk, biscuits, and animal foods.

Currently, more than 50 volunteers have helped Pankaj in the endeavor to serve the needy in such uncertain times. But the mobilization of volunteers for distribution has been one of the greatest obstacles for Pankaj because many volunteers mostly work for a week at most due to family objections.



But close friends have been the biggest support for Pankaj in his endeavor. Volunteers faced other challenges like police obstruction (they mostly were very supportive) and identification of the hotspots to serve. Even BMC has been trusting Pankaj and his volunteers for the distribution of the meal.

Every day BMC provides around 300-500 meals for distribution (this in addition to 1500-1700 meals served by him on his own) which Pankaj and his team help to reach the needy.



In a way, Pankaj has been supporting the BMC in his fight against COVID-19. Apart from food material, Pankaj and his volunteers started collecting cloth from people and distributed it to people staying in the street who haven't changed clothes for many days. He also distributed sanitary pad, sanitizer and sanitized face mask for street people so that they are not infected with virus.

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# PRAJA FOUNDATION



When the lockdown was announced on 25th March, Praja Foundation and Madhu Mehta Foundation understood that there would be one major imminent problem – how does a state feed around six lakh migrant workers who are suddenly out of a job for an indefinite period with the constant threat of fighting against an unknown virus looming over their head?

The foundations decided that the best way to move forward was through collaboration and distribution of food through Councillors and ward committees. Councillors are directly elected representatives and this allows them to have a better understanding of the respective areas and its demographic. Over the past two decades, Praja has closely worked with councillors in various efforts to improve urban governance and this allowed the foundation to move quickly and start the relief effort within days.

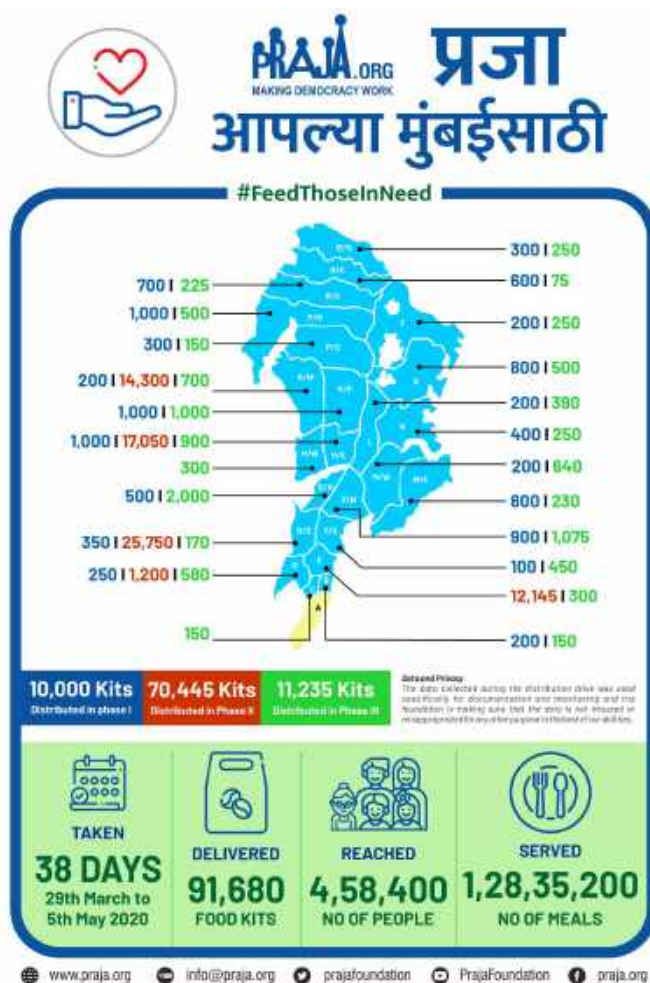


Phase I of the distribution, within a short span of 14 days, met their target of distributing 10,000 food kits consisting of Rice, Atta, Tur Dal, Food Oil, Onion, Potatoes, Sugar, Salt, Tea Leaves, Chilli Powder and Turmeric Powder. Phase I saw food kits being distributed in each and every ward barring A ward, C ward, E ward and H/West ward in Mumbai.

Some areas saw the distribution of food by the elected representatives and karyakartas being conducted door-to-door. Photos of the distribution drive along with details of the family were also taken for documentation purposes.

The 10,000-food kit distribution, however significant, was dwarfed by the huge number of migrant populations that still needed help. It was then that Praja took on the herculean task, with the help of several partner organisations, of distributing food kits to the tune of 70,445 families in the containment zones.

The foundation is now moving on to the fourth phase where they will use their network of Municipal councillors, Mumbai police, MCGM and other organisations who will once again distribute food ration supplies to the needy families.



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*Phase I saw food kits being distributed in each and every ward barring A ward, C ward, E ward and H/West ward in Mumbai.*

# VOLTAS



## **Helps India keep running amidst the lockdown**

### **Servicing the essential service providers:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Voltas has been focussed on lending a helping hand to the essential services that continue to function. They are maintaining the upkeep of essential services, concentrating on the employee development and upgrading medical facilities to make them Covid-19 compliant. At Voltas, we have always strived to ensure that our services remain focussed towards our consumers and the nation's needs at large which included providing our services to various hospitals, cold storage units for dairy and blood banks, power distribution centres, ATMs etc. Voltas' Operation & Maintenance (O&M) teams across India are currently providing the services to the "Essential Services" sites where customers need the operation, maintenance and breakdown support.

Today, we continue to ensure the upkeep of the nation through approximately 7500 Voltas technicians that are currently operational on the field. Voltas, through its Domestic Projects Business, has been responsible for approximately 260+ customer sites when the lockdown was at its peak.



We have been dedicatedly working towards the smooth functioning of the nation's essential services while keeping in mind the safety and security of our employees. Voltas engineers maintained over 50% ATMs in India to ensure smooth functioning of banking services. With regards to the healthcare infrastructure, Voltas engineers provided immediate service to 100+ Hospitals in lockdown, covering 25000 beds and over 25 pharmaceutical companies to help manufacture life saving drugs. Over 1500 chillers across India (used for pharma companies, hospitals, etc) were maintained remotely from our Remote Monitoring Cell in Thane. Our engineers maintain over 40 airports and metro stations in India. During the lockdown, we continued to provide support to these urban infrastructure.



### **Customer-centricity initiatives (Home appliances and durables):**

In line with the government's announcement, Voltas has informed its customers regarding the suspension of call centres. Voltas is also assuring its customers "not to worry about warranty lapse during the period of Covid restrictions". In order to help customers with issues, Voltas is uploading 'Do it yourself' videos on YouTube to help them with basic maintenance that will result in immediate solutions. Voltas has used various means like SMS, Website, Weblinks, outbound calling and emails to update customers regarding the changes in processes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Lastly, Voltas has also undertaken several health awareness initiatives for its technicians and sent advisories to them on precautionary measures to be taken in order to ensure their own safety as well as that of the customers. Voltas is also reaching out to its vast community of field engineers and technicians via the Mobile learning app Handy Train to sensitize them regarding health and safety by sharing Covid-19 awareness videos. Through this app, Voltas is also creating technical content for the users, resolving queries and troubleshooting, as well as conducting assessment and certifications for its technicians in a streamlined manner.



### **Upgrading medical facilities:**

While several businesses have come to a standstill due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Voltas continues to service the nation through its Domestic Projects Business. It is playing a crucial role in maintaining the HVAC systems of various hospitals and has helped build a test centre at Kovai Medical College and Hospital, Coimbatore to help the state contain the Covid-19 outbreak . Earlier a part of the academic block, the centre is now being used as an isolation ward for Covid-19 patients, after carrying out the necessary HVAC modifications. In Thane, one of the most affected COVID-19 cities in the state, a factory owned by Voltas is being converted into a new 1000-bed hospital for coronavirus patients. The hospital will be set up on the land belonging to Voltas on Pokhran Road 2 by CIDCO and it will have requisite medical facilities including Oxygen and Non-Oxygen beds, ventilators, ICU and a dialysis centre.

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# A NOTE OF THANKS

For a while now, thousands of our fellow Mumbaikars have been on the frontlines of battling the novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that has spread rapidly throughout our city, state and nation. They are putting themselves in the path of this virus — in Mumbai and around the world — in this unprecedented crisis. Our doctors, policemen, nurses, technicians, transporters, EMTs, pharmacists, and everyone who supports patient care are rising to the occasion and caring for our most vulnerable populations.

From everyone at Mumbai First, we thank our frontliners and other COVID warriors that have stepped up during this time of need and for the sacrifices that they have had to make, every day and especially during this pandemic. Your dedication, commitment and courage deserve our deepest gratitude and admiration.