

This second wave of the pandemic has affected every one of us. In times like these, it becomes almost impossible to cope with everything that is happening around our country. This month's update brings you some important stories from our work strengthening cities in India during this pandemic along with our direct interventions in the communities which initiated leadership and a thirst to fight the pandemic. We also have some talk sessions that you might be interested in.

Our director, Manvita Baradi, recently spoke about being "Vocal for Local" at The EU-India People's Summit wherein she discussed the importance of decentralisation for making cities resilient. The discussion can be accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAWNU8ysqXQ>

Please forward this newsletter to anyone that might be interested in this work. You can also email ([info@umcasia.org](mailto:info@umcasia.org)) if you want to access any of the material developed in this program.

We are thankful to the Govt. of India, Govt. of Gujarat, Govt. of Odisha, Govt. of Rajasthan, Govt. of Telangana, local governments, our funding partners- BMGF and USAID, and most of all, our partners in the communities all over India for their continued support.

## Technical Support to State and National Government

### Training ULB officials to establish Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSU) in Odisha

UMC, as the Technical Support Unit for the Garima Scheme by Government of Odisha, supported the H&UD Department, organised a virtual orientation for the ULB officials and various other stakeholders associated with delivery of sanitation service in 5 Corporations, 4 AMRUT towns and parastatal agencies like Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO), Public Health Engineering Organization (PHEO) & Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

UMC also supported WATCO, Bhubaneswar in conducting an orientation program for the 12 private sanitation service providers engaged in cleaning of machine holes and sewer lines across the city.

The workshops sensitized the officials to the updated regulation around sanitation work, and manual entry in confined spaces. UMC oriented the participants to institutionalise safe practices so as to mitigate the dangers of this reprehensible practice and avoid deaths of any sanitation workers. The participants were oriented on the use of protective gears and safety devices and the detailed specifications of these to enable quick procurement.

One of the major interventions to enable this is the establishment of the Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU). This a specially trained team to regulate all manual entry in confined spaces for attending sanitation requests.

H&UD Department with support of UMC is accelerating the constitution of ERSUs in all ULBs of the state in order to ensure that all sanitation services are delivered in adherence to the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

We also made a short drama-based tutorial on ERSUs in Hindi. The video can be accessed [here](#).



Left: Orientation of ULB officials Right: Orientation Program of private sanitation service providers

### Safeguarding vulnerable groups through enumeration and identification

Under the SBM- NULM convergence programme, UMC is supporting the ULBs in formation of SHGs of vulnerable groups such as waste pickers. In Dhenkanal, Odisha we identified 59 waste pickers and mapped whether they are a part of any SHGs under the DAY-NULM fold. Possessing an Aadhaar Card is a pre-requisite for SHG formation which most of the waste pickers did not have. UMC with support from Dhenkanal Municipality supported provision of Aadhaar cards to these workers and this will not only help them form a SHG but also help them access various government entitlements.



Supporting waste pickers get Aadhaar cards

### Training of Community Champions in Ganjam

In continuation to our efforts to enumerate migrant workers under our EMBRACE (Empowering Migrants in Building Resilience through Comprehensive Entitlements) program to provide social security benefits to the migrant workers and their families, we identified Community Champions from different blocks of Ganjam District as leaders to work directly with the community and facilitate the process of entitlement delivery. These community champions are the people from their area working as community leaders and social workers.

A virtual orientation of Community Champions was organised to train them on program objectives, schemes and application processing. They were also trained on the government structure, scheme details and delivery mechanisms, application process and approvals at different levels. Champions will coordinate with the government officials and field team on a regular basis.



Training of Community Champions

### **Our Communities are leading the fight against Covid- 19**



Ration kit distribution

## **Doing our bit to help in these unprecedented times – Ration kits distribution**

UMC directly raised funds to help the vulnerable groups who lost their livelihoods due to the pandemic and had very limited access to food and essentials. The funds were donated by our staff for covid relief. With the support of SAATH, we distributed over 100 ration kits last month in Ahmedabad. We identified and distributed ration kits to families dealing with health issues such as TB and cancer, families with no source of livelihood and many dependents, pregnant and lactating mothers and families with malnourished children.

## **Debunking Covid vaccine myths**

MISAAL settlement Committee members (MSCs) across cities are conducting house to house awareness in their settlements to generate awareness and importance of getting vaccinated to end the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

As the cities are preparing to vaccinate people from the 18-45 age group, our MSCs took the lead and decided to fight the myths around the vaccines in their settlements. They are disseminating information about the importance of getting vaccinated and still maintaining covid appropriate behaviour such as continued use of masks, social distancing and hygiene.

Some of the Self-help Groups in Sambalpur came forward and set up blood and plasma donation drives for Covid-19 treatment and led by example. MSCs have assumed it to be their responsibility to make sure there is proper flow of information between their people and city governments during these unpredictable times.



Left: Door-to-Door vaccine awareness Right: Blood and Plasma donation drive

## **Don't overlook the importance of health and nutrition during the pandemic**

MISAAL Settlement Committee in Milpara Settlement organised a health camp to spread awareness on health, nutrition and Covid appropriate behaviour in the settlement with support from UMC and in collaboration with Integrated Counselling and Testing Centres (ICTC), National Aids Control Organization (NACO).



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The camp focused on eliminating vaccine hesitancy, health & hygiene, the importance of nutrition and adopting healthy food habits amongst children. This camp helped people understand the health risks associated with poor living conditions without healthy food habits.

Looking at the impact of this health camp and the rise of conversation around eating healthy food and malnutrition, the MSC has already planned for another camp to deal with the issue of raising alcoholism and how to tackle it.

Kudos to them and their endeavours to make their settlement healthy and free from alcohol.

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