

## Jeevan Rath Overview

**Jeevan Rath (JR)**, a relief-on-wheel initiative was facilitated by UNICEF within 48 hours of the migrant crisis to alleviate some of the misery that they were undergoing in their desperate attempt to go home. Over 55+ development partners pledged their support and came together as the Maha C19 PECOnet to respond to the situation on the ground. The Jeevan Rath program evolved in phases as below:

**JR 1.0 - Mid May to End May:** The first phase was focused on Food Trucks that went wherever migrants were walking home and later at train and bus stations as transportation started to get arranged. The places covered by the trucks included Thane, Dahisar, Nashik, Pune, LTT, Vasai, Bandra and Borivali. The initiative reached an incredible milestone of a **1,30,000 migrants** served in a space of just 2 weeks. In addition to food, the trucks had also distributed footwear, caps, ORS, sanitary napkins and more. Kindly find below some links for photographs, videos and more on this journey:

<https://www.facebook.com/RISEInfinityF>

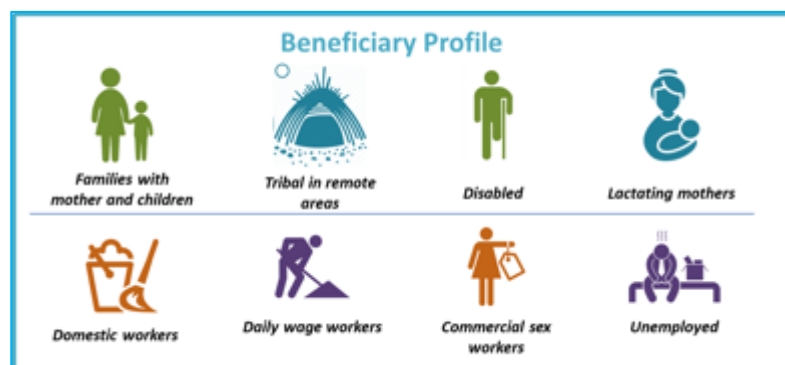
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/indiawaterportal/albums/72157714314736921/>



**JR 2.0 - May to July:** In the second phase, a Crisis Management Centre (CMC) was established by RISE Infinity Foundation\* to track migrants so as to ensure that the migrants have reached home safely. Alongwith other partners, major travel success stories include co-ordination of travellers on flights to Ranchi and Bhubaneswar, multiple buses and trains to UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand among others. We also distributed ration kits and provided cash transfer benefits to families for food, travel, medical and other emergency

needs. Over **74,000** migrants were tracked and an additional **50,000** provided direct assistance.

**JR 3.0 - August till date:** As part of phase 3, we are focusing on immediate and near term recovery efforts - Skill mapping and development, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Sustainable food solutions and Social protection. We will also continue to distribute food and ration kits as well as cash transfer, medical and travel assistance to those stranded in Mumbai waiting to go home or planning to stay back or return to find gainful employment.



In addition to the Jeevan Rath program, UNICEF has also facilitated the URBAN WASH COVID response program that has multiple components for implementation and capacity building such as “**Flush the Virus**”, Rapid Pro For Covid Sensitive WASH Services, RCCE on Covid, School Readiness, WASH in School and Menstrual Hygiene Management, Shelter Management and Livelihood tracking, Village Preparedness and Risk Informed Programming that has touched another **3,00,000** community members across Maharashtra.

**Together, the Maha Covid PECOnet platforms have reached over half a million lives.**

\* RISE Infinity Foundation is the Nodal partner and Secretariat for the Jeevan Rath program

## Policies and Practices

As the effects of the pandemic continued to cause distress and suffering for millions, the largest group and perhaps most heart rendering situation was that of the migrant labourers. Jeevan Rath as a coalition of Partners, Enterprises and Citizen Volunteers made by the Maha C19 PECOnet led by UNICEF responded to this unprecedented situation through its collective efforts.

### Core Committee for Governance

Governance Running a coalition-based project requires a significant degree of transparency and respect in order to build trust and deliver effectively. This was the basic tenet on which the PECOnet functioned from the beginning, every individual and institution realising their own role in the project while recognising the contribution of the others. A committee of core partners and UNICEF was formed to take decisions after debate and discussions.

Throughout the project, the team continued to assess the situation on the ground and charted the way forward based on the evolving needs and the dynamics of government and civil society efforts. Thus, there was a need to re-strategize constantly so as to adopt the optimum option to meet real needs of the community quickly. Policies, Processes and Practices were established to further ensure smooth operations and financial allocations. Some of the documented processes have been attached as annexures to the report.

### Beneficiary Profile

One of the first decisions was to go beyond migrants travelling home, and to focus on helping migrants/people who:

1. were yet to leave for various reasons (pregnant wife, illness, senior citizens etc) and do not have funds to travel or need food and rations while they wait to get transportation
2. who stay back and need assistance for food, rent, medical, etc while they find jobs
3. those coming back to Maharashtra (in-bound migration) and need to re-settle
4. those migrating within the state (reverse migration), a significant number in itself and whose skill mapping was critical for advocacy on recovery efforts.

One of the significant pivot in the program was to also add multiple vulnerable groups to the migrant population, viz. who were “COVID affected” and “indirectly affected with need”, such as:

1. Slum communities and
2. Tribal belts and rural areas to reach the unreached

## **Planned intervention**

The five key aspects that were decided upon as means to continue our assistance to the above groups were:

- I. Food & dry ration kits, that would include rice, dal, oil, pulses, salt, sugar and some spices. Hygiene items were to be included based on budgets and donors available
- II. Transportation - train and bus tickets as possible
- III. Cash transfers to cover household expenses including rent, medicines, quarantine, etc

## **Locations**

Mumbai, Thane, Kalyan, Palghar, Vasai, Virar, Pune, Nashik and Nagpur and nearby areas

## **Fund Allocation**

UNICEF provided an initial seed amount to RISE infinity Foundation for cash transfers, food and travel assistance. RISE Infinity Foundation has reached out to its network of corporate and other partners to leverage support for the Jeevan Rath program, both in terms of monetary and in kind assistance. All Jeevan Rath partners were to also continue their efforts to raise additional funds to supplement the above. Partner Allocation was made as per previous process adopted for Ketto fund by UNICEF and RISE Infinity Foundation in consultation with partners for transparency and effectiveness.

## **Implementation**

In order to ensure uniformity, effectiveness and transparency, a minimum SOP was discussed and established for the identifying beneficiaries and documentation pre-requisites for the 3 main relief measures.

While a conditional cash transfer along with ration kit was okayed as part of relief measures, it was agreed that cash would be given only in exceptional cases depending on the vulnerability and need. It is one time transfer and we can ensure beneficiary listing as per the criteria. Any additional amounts and recurring assistance would be discretionary based on the severity of the situation, averaging of cases and availability of resources.

Based on the above policies, RISE Infinity Foundation formulated process and practices to go with the same as documented in Annexure.

## Way forward

The Jeevan Rath program was started as an emergency response to provide disaster relief measures. The program is now entering an early recovery mode and there is much to be done to ensure further progress post 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, the project end date. It was unanimously agreed by the group, that there was a clear need for the continuation of the current assistance for the immediate critical needs of our target groups – **food and cash transfers**. In addition, we should work on **Employment and WASH** as both have financial consequences – one on inflow, the other on outflow. **Skill development and Entrepreneurship** would be the tools for rehabilitation and reintegration of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers into the economy.

It was also reiterated that we need UNICEFs assistance to leverage the government as well and to bring visibility to our efforts thus far. Systems are also required that can be used pan emergencies and over a wide time lens. A common database where all can get details of distribution to avoid duplications, would be the need of the hour. Technology would be a key enabler of such processes backed by appropriate MIS.

We will need to expand the partner network to have more hands on ground as well as increase resources available for the program and relief packages. The budget provided by UNICEF Mumbai is to seed the program, it will be necessary for all partners and stakeholders to build on the same. Formation of sub-groups such as the one for Palghar along with a multi-sectoral approach was an example of how the group can evolve and yet stay manageable as it grows and multiplies its impact.

Between 1 and 15 June, the government spent Rs 557.7 crore on distributing ration to NFSA card holders through the Public Distribution System. A total of 1.51 lakh MT of rice and wheat was distributed to 152.59 lakh card holders in the first fortnight of June. Further, through the PMGKAY 0.51 lakh MT of rice and dal was distributed to 28.72 lakh card holders for this period. Under the 'Shiv Bhojan' scheme, aimed to provide one square meal a day to poor and needy populations, 15.3 lakh thalis were distributed, and the state spent Rs 1.94 crore. The state is trying to increase NFSA coverage by encouraging people to register, by self-declaration of income. Rationing Dakshata Samitis in villages and District Takrar Nivaran Samitis are being activated to monitor the PDS. A Data collection initiative can be drawn up post 31<sup>st</sup> July to create a list that segregates NFSA and no rational card holders to whom we distributed ration kits under Jeevan Rath 1.0. Also collect basic information regarding access to government schemes (having Jan Dhan account, job card, etc). The program going forward can then establish linkages with PDS and add to the existing PDS with supplies recommended so that it complements the existing schemes.

It is recommended to understand how the Jeevan Rath program could be complementary to government response and next steps to strengthen the program outcomes for long term impact. **Documentation - Reporting – Amplification** would go a long way in putting in place appropriate **policies, processes and practices** for an efficient coalition ready to respond to real needs. **Advocacy & Action through and for Employment & Assistance** would be the framework for **Jeevan Rath 3.0**.

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