

# Ektha-UNITY

THE SAVE A FAMILY PLAN NEWSLETTER



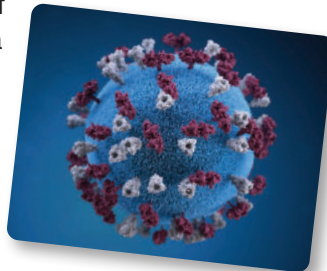
**SAVE A FAMILY PLAN**

IN INDIA SINCE 1965

## Challenges, Changes, and Champions



Early in 2020, there were news reports of a mysterious new virus emerging across the globe. As winter was turning to spring in the Northern Hemisphere, the virus arrived on our doorstep. Across the world, and here at home, we experienced an array of new concerns and fears. How can I keep my family safe? How will I earn a living? Will the sick be able to access hospital care? Will there be food and essentials on the store shelves?



These frightening realities, seemingly new to us, gave us a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, the hardships that families in rural India face every day when living in poverty. Tragically, it seems that when disaster strikes, usually the poorest of the poor are hit the hardest. In this newsletter, we'd like to share with you the good news of how our collective efforts have responded to extraordinary challenges.

### **Extraordinary Generosity**

In India, an estimated 43-million people have been infected and more than half a million have died. The actual numbers may be much higher. In response to urgent humanitarian need, Save A Family Plan launched a special Covid-19 assistance fund. The generosity from our supporters was nothing short of incredible. Through your outpouring of care and kindness, we were able to meet and surpass our target of \$75,000. THANK YOU! Those funds continue to help people as India and the world recover from the global pandemic.

Thanks to your generosity, SAFP partner families have

received urgent assistance to help meet their immediate needs such as food, water, medicine, masks, and hand sanitizer. As part of the Covid-19 Fund, families in the Family Development Program were also eligible for financial support to help them re-establish small business initiatives that foundered during the pandemic, or in starting new ones. The work is underway, and continues still. All of these emergency initiatives are in addition to the work already being done with our partner families and communities in India.

### **Extraordinary Efforts**

With challenges heaped upon challenges, life became even more difficult in India. Restrictions, lockdowns, and infrastructure closures brought all manner of challenges for our SAFP India team. Focused as always on the people we serve, the SAFP India team rose to the occasion. They found creative and meaningful ways to continue to support all of our partner families and communities. More on that in a moment.

At the same time as the pandemic raged, the Indian government implemented new regulations concerning the receipt of foreign funds. The Foreign Contributions Regulations Act (FCRA) meant having to cut the number of staff who could be employed in order to implement our vital programs, just when we needed staff more than ever. The result was a combination of partner families in dire need and much more responsibility shared among many fewer workers.

With heavy hearts, Save A Family Plan had to say goodbye to our beloved Animators, who [continued...]



for years, had provided direct personal support to our partner families. This resulted in a modified and increased workload for our Coordinators, who worked tirelessly to ensure that the care provided to our partner families continued without interruption.

In the Save A Family Plan India office, Mary and Sibi are the Accounting Coordinators. As a result of FCRA, they were tasked with helping nearly 8,000 families to close existing bank accounts and open brand new ones—right in the thick of a pandemic, when it was difficult or impossible to physically enter a bank. Even with supports, this vast and time-consuming process meant working late into the evenings, and often six days per week.



*Thank you, Sibi and Mary, for your extraordinary efforts and commitment!*

The Community Development Program continues to be managed with incredible competence and care by Shibin, the Program Manager, under the direction and support of Fr. Marshal. Changes to the Community Development Program are underway and will help to ensure that SAFP is compliant with the new FCRA regulations mentioned earlier. This, unfortunately, meant losing some long-standing NGO partnerships that helped us do so much good within communities in need.

*Thank you, Fr. Marshal and Shibin, for your continuing excellence.*



Likewise, Beena, Manu, and Alto, our Family Development Program team, showed true grace under pressure. As a consequence of the changes, responsibility for all program implementation now rests on just these three individuals. Many tasks, existing and new, had to be done remotely or socially distanced. Each FDP staff visits the NGOs to monitor the programs and verifies applications and reports of nearly 2500 partner families!



*Thank you, Alto, Beena, and Manu, for your incredible service.*

**The Canadian Team 🇨🇦**

The challenges of a global pandemic, compounded by the new FCRA changes, seemed overwhelming but were addressed one by one and overcome with perseverance and dedication. Working in the office or from home, as required by local public health units, the Canadian office staff continued to provide the administration, database/record-keeping, and management needed to operate an international charity while complying with all Canadian and Indian government regulations.



# Thank You!

*With unwavering support from our donors, the hard work of staff, and a common mission that inspires us all, we continue our important work of promoting change and social justice by assisting poor families and communities in India. Our partner families continue demonstrate incredible resilience in the face of poverty, natural disasters, and, more recently, this pandemic. It is an honour and a privilege to partner with them.*

***Once again, we thank you, our amazing donors!** Your support and caring have enabled people to work together, transform, and create opportunities to serve the poorest of the poor in rural India.*

**Poverty is Complex. Our plan is simple.**

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