

WASTE NARRATIVES



THE HASIRU DALA NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY 2021



2020 was difficult for us all, and waste pickers faced extreme food insecurity and even starvation as an underserved community without uniform access to public distribution systems. Thanks to the generosity of funders and individual donors, we were able to reach out to nearly 50,000 families across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Our collaboration with WithBengaluru, a citizen group, ensured food relief for migrant and daily wage earners across Bengaluru, thus we were able to serve people beyond wastepicker families.

However, this was a drop in the bucket against the severity of the crisis. Women especially were malnourished; children lost access to schooling and education, trying to stay afloat during the lockdown and beyond. The recycling markets came to a standstill, and are now recovering slowly. At Hasiru Dala, we took inspiration from the waste pickers who showed extraordinary resilience and showed the pathway to survive.

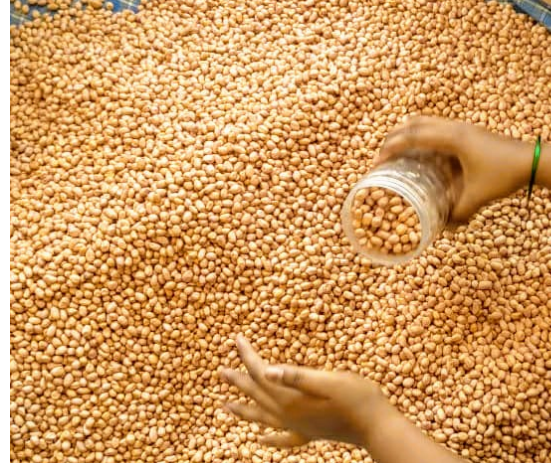
This was a testing time for our team to be relevant to the situation and rise to the occasion, continue our work with waste pickers. We started primary health care services as a bridge to government Primary Health Centres (PHCs) during the pandemic when PHCs were busy with COVID-19 testing. We are proud that we were able to train waste pickers' college-going children to be our community health facilitators. Our health intervention continues and we are serving about 12,000 families in Bengaluru.

Our work has expanded to over 25,000 waste pickers families in South India, working for social impact and livelihood empowerment in the Solid Waste Management Sector.

We wish for a happy 2021, for you and your loved ones!

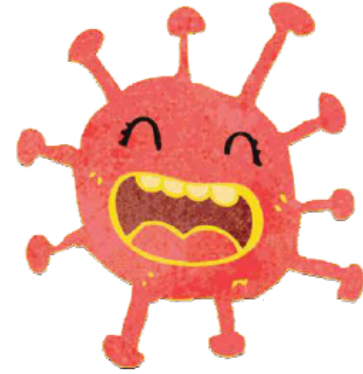
COVID-19 and the National Lockdown

We began fundraising for food relief as a lockdown was implemented in Bangalore in mid-March, and so were already in gear when the national lockdown was announced on the 23rd. A collaboration called WithBengaluru formed to support daily and migrant labourers in Bengaluru. Our care kits contained rice, legumes, spices, vegetable oil, soaps, tea powder and other essentials. We made sure that families received the food they were accustomed to eating - changing someone's diet in a period when they are facing starvation is not a healthy approach! So some of our care kits contained pigeon peas (toor dal) and others contained red lentils (masoor dal).



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MANUELA MOLINA - @MINDHEART.KIDS
WWW.MINDHEART.CO
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We also assembled protein kits for children (toor dal, masoor dal, chana dal, moong dal, green peas and sugar) as well as hygiene kits for children and pregnant women and lactating mothers.

With our children's kits, we included a Kannada translation of Manuela Molina's open-source primer on COVID-19 for young children, help them understand what the risks and the mitigations were.

	Care Kits	Protein Kits (children)	Hygiene Kits (children)	Protein Kits (pregnant women)	Hygiene Kits (lactating mothers)	Vegetable kits	With Bengaluru	Total families
Bengaluru	12,097	819	1,527		214	3,994	26,275	43,185
Chamarajanagar	45	36						81
Chikkaballapur	769	267	388		17			1,036
Davanagere	508	775	1,026		130			1,283
Hubballi-Dharwad	397	111	222		86			508
Mangaluru	39	33	63		19			72
Mysuru	159	164	248					323
Tumakuru	823	1,025	626	47	142			1,848
Coimbatore	200							200
Trichy	52							52
Rajahmundry	336	151	282		59	150		637
Grand Total	15,425	3,381	4,382	47	667	4,144	26,275	49,225

Hasiru Habba

Hasiru Habba ("Green Festival") is our yearly celebration of the waste pickers community, their contributions and their lives. We set out the path for the following year and take the day to meet the communities from across every city where we have a foothold. In this already depressing year, it broke our hearts to not meet each other - but how could we gather from several cities in a single location, and expose the community to the pandemic?

Since we couldn't ask the waste pickers to gather with us, we took Hasiru Habba to their homes. Communities from every city gathered to celebrate, take part in rangoli design, costume dress; citizens and officials sent videos talking about their support for the waste picking community. Hasiru Dala made a collected video showcasing the community and streamed it online - members of the community from every city all tuned in to watch at the same time. This unexpected and heartwarming display of togetherness has kept us going on the difficult days.



**20 HASIRU
20 HABBA**

Each year, waste pickers & Informal waste collectors across several cities of Karnataka & Andhra Pradesh meet to take pride in their work, and put forth their plans for the coming year. This year, we could not meet in person due to the restrictions placed by the pandemic.

WELCOME TO A DIGITAL HASIRU HABBA!
Join Hasiru Dala as we celebrate the contribution of waste pickers and informal waste collectors to our cities.

30-07-2020
Venue: bit.ly/HasiruDala-yt
Time: 3:30PM-5PM



Housing



Land allotments for waste pickers are hard to come by, and even harder if it is their first time being inducted into the system. But this year we created temporary stable housing for 14 families in Medina Agaraha. It took them 2 years of living in rented accommodations in the area to finally have the lands allotted to them by the Slum Board in March 2020. The board will build housing for them in 2021 - permanent, stable housing for people who previously lived on footpaths!

Community Health



Kadabagere is a small locality on the outskirts of Bengaluru city, in the North zone. A small community of waste pickers lives there, of about 70 families. The basti is not permanent, and the houses are small sheds or tents, impermanent and unstable structures. While distributing care kits at the basti we realised that 25 children showed signs of long term malnutrition, and further enquiry showed that a young child had died a few days prior of diarrhoea, an illness which should have been easily treated. We alerted the state government, who swung into action to provide regular food provisions through the local anganwadis. With the help of two volunteers, we have been distributing one hot meal there every day for the past three months. Food insecurity is a part of life not just within the pandemic but all the time for many communities.

Our response to our inability to hold health camps (our regular health initiative which was now barred due to the risk of infection) was the Community Health Facilitation programme, which empowered people from the slums to act as Community Health Facilitators for their communities in Bengaluru. The community could reach out to this facilitator - someone they could trust from their own community - who was trained to do basic health check-ups and were connected telephonically with doctors who can help with diagnoses, triage, or quick referrals if necessary. Altogether our Community Health Facilitators reached over 12,000 families in Bengaluru.

This was our first project of this kind, and at first, it was challenging to find people willing to step up into what is essentially the role of a frontline healthcare worker. But people did take up the responsibility. Our facilitators were predominantly college-going children of waste pickers. Indira, who encouraged both her children to participate, said, "I am encouraging my children to do this; if we do not take care of ourselves, who will?"



Livelihoods in Solid Waste Management

In Bengaluru, we saw a major change and opportunity as the BBMP published their Solid Waste Management Bye-Laws, naming waste pickers and Self-Help Groups to operate Dry Waste Collection in the city. This is systemic change we have been advocating for since we began work back in 2010! We now will work to support 59 Dry Waste Collection Centres (DWCCs) in Bengaluru. We also support DWCCs in Rajahmundry (AP), as well as Davanagere, Hubballi-Dharwad, Mangalore, Tumakuru and Mysuru, and waste pickers integration within municipal Solid Waste Management seems a dream well within reach.

Moving beyond municipal waste management, we also support Material Recovery Facilities (to convert waste into valuable recycling ore) and Aggregation Centres (to store waste in bulk for sale) to support the recycling economy in Bengaluru, Davanagere, Habballi-Dharwad and Rajahmundry, facilitating employment for 361 workers! Nearly 40% of these are women, entrepreneurs and community leaders in their own right.



Buguri Children's Library Programme

Immediately after the lockdown was imposed our Buguri library educators across Bangalore, Mysore and Tumkur made structured plans to contact the children through their parents' phones, through WhatsApp groups, phone calls and text. We designed therapy programmes specifically to reach out to children in the wake of the lockdown and to reach vulnerable communities to support children's emotional development. The Buguri Podcast with inputs of children during the lockdown is being broadcasted on Radioactive 90.4 MHz community radio channel. We are currently broadcasting season 3!

In Hubli, Davengere and Chikkaballapur, our teams have started Makkala Koota, children's clubs to address children's issues. In collaboration with Aravani Art Project we reached out to over 600 children with activity books and stationary. The libraries in all three locations began to re-open in the second half of 2020. We opened a new library in Jyothipura (Bengaluru) in December 2020, inaugurated with mural painting by the Aravani Art Project. The excitement of meeting the children in person after so long apart is still with us. We have so many plans for the year ahead!



Buguri Podcast is back ! Season 3
17th December 2020
A multilingual podcast with stories, activities, songs and child friendly Covid 19 awareness programs
Every Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday
at 4.30 pm

<https://soundcloud.com/radioactivecr90-4mhz/sets/the-buguri-podcast-season-3>

