



NAVJEEVAN BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

*ASHA workers/Navjeevan Volunteers Usha Kumari, Sunitha Kunnaph & Shameema SMP supported stranded migrants in Kerala.

PROJECT BRIEF 2019-22



Caritas
INDIA
The Joy of Service...

“It was the first time in many years that our voices were heard! We finally feel safe.”

- Lilly Kutty



70-year-old Lilly Kutty is a widow who resides with her son in Arattapuzha, Velliyani Panchayat, Trivandrum. Since the flooding of 2018, Lilly and her 8 neighbours were being displaced and put in relief camp twice a year. Ward Disaster Management Committees formed by Navjeevan mobilised the District Administration and the height of the bunds (embankment) was raised.

Introduction to Navjeevan



Fr. Paul Moonjely
Executive Director
Caritas India

“Volunteers and frontlines workers came together as a driving force and breathed new life (Navjeevan) into the community.”

- Fr. Paul Moonjely

We would like to place on record our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Caritas Germany for facilitating Navjeevan, Caritas India's long-term DRR intervention that set out to build a more resilient community. The floods in 2018 led to mass destruction and displacement of vulnerable populations. While the state authorities and the community were still recovering from the 2018 floods the state was struck by floods again in the year 2019, that doubled the impact on vulnerable communities. The negative impacts of these disasters were magnified with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 that derailed ongoing development programs and humanitarian operations. Caritas India along with its 31 partners implemented Navjeevan - 'Building Resilient Communities in Flood & Landslide Prone Regions, Kerala' over a 3-year period.

We seek your active collaboration and valuable support to continue initiatives developed through Navjeevan and to build partnerships towards sustainable change. Caritas India endeavours to build well prepared, disaster resilient communities that are able to bounce back from disasters.

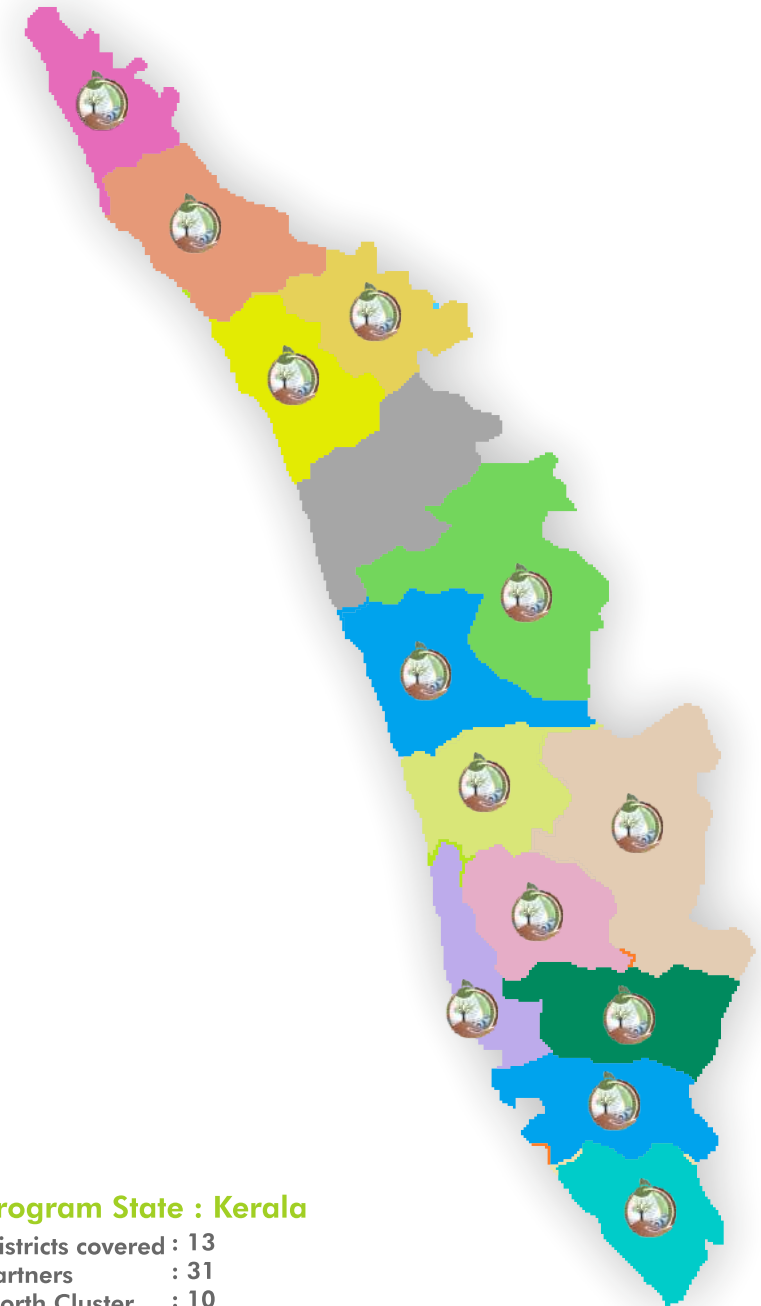
Navjeevan Outcomes & Reach

Building Community Resilience & Livelihood Recovery

Improving State Response Capacity & Strengthening DRR Mechanisms

Sudhaar – Support to Migrants

Improved Volunteer Mobilisation



Program State : Kerala

Districts covered : 13
 Partners : 31
 North Cluster : 10
 Centre Cluster : 11
 South Cluster : 10

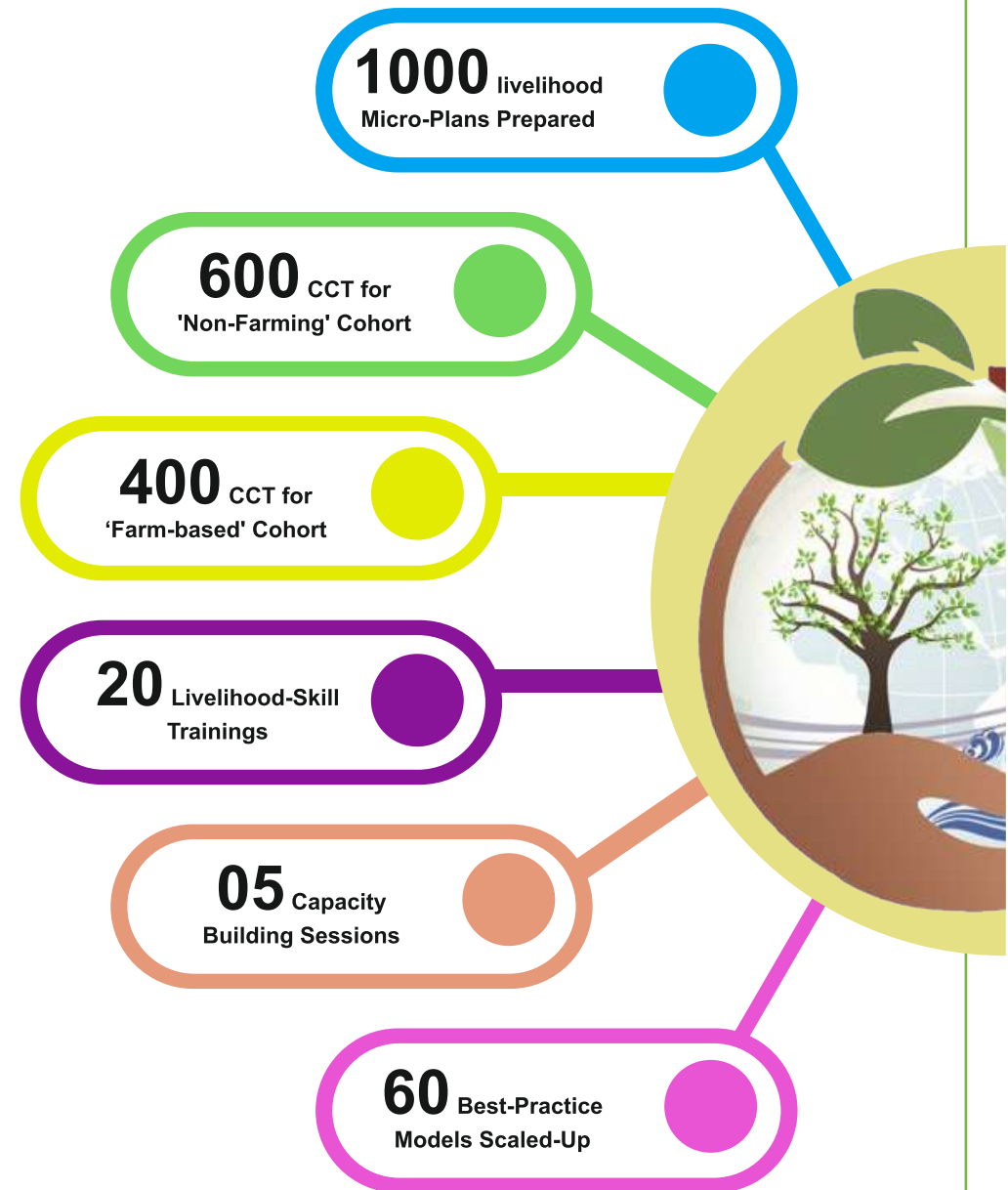
Livelihood Restoration and Resilience Building



Organic farming emerged as one of the most sustainable activities that directly contributed to the local economy and revived food supply chains. Munnar, Idukki

Outcome 1: 1050 HHs recovered from economic setbacks caused by floods & landslides and contributes towards the socio-economic development of the community

Meeting the needs of the disaster-hit community required a strategically implemented long-term intervention that would provide a bridge from recovery to sustainable development. Caritas India identified the worst-affected and socio-economically vulnerable families that consisted of 'Farm-based' and 'non-farm' based cohort of households and individuals. The effective recovery of livelihood activities in-turn supported the revival of the local economy. Capacity building sessions and skill trainings were tailored and localised. Cluster groups were formed to facilitate market and Self-Help Group (SHG) linkages.



Skill Development for Effective Livelihood Recovery



Alice Babu 50-years-old, part of the farming cohort from Adimali panchayat turned to farming after attending training sessions on organic farming and business management.



Sateesh Vijayan 64-years-old, part of the non-farming cohort from Marayoor panchayat expanded his convenience goods store with the help of livelihood micro-plans developed as part of Navjeevan.



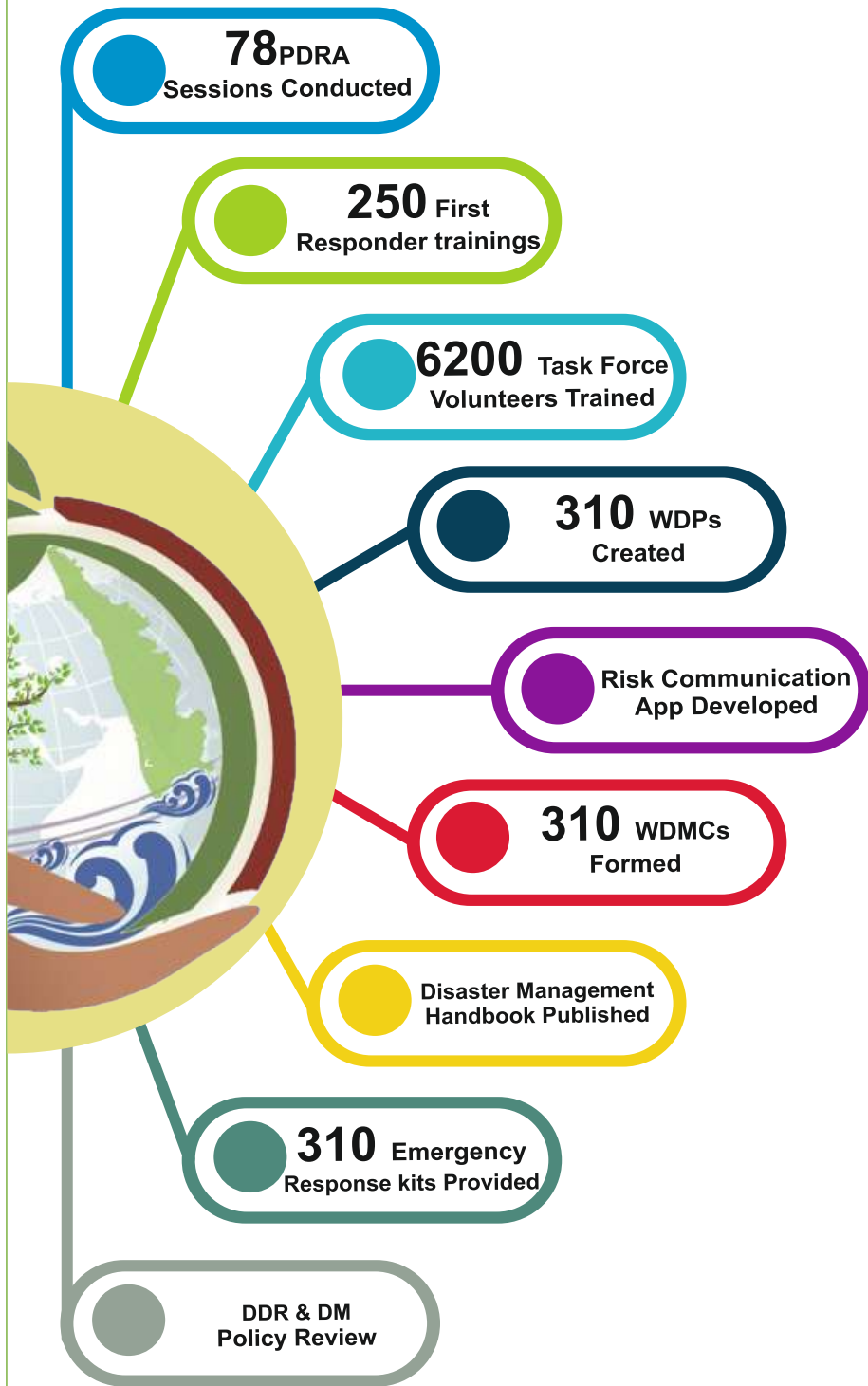
Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods

“Trainings enabled my wife and I to establish and sustain organic vegetable cultivation. We also formed an alliance with a local SHG to sell our own produce.”

- NJ Ram

The Navjeevan DRR intervention initiated, strengthened and revived economically and environmentally sustainable livelihoods. The goal was to support activities that directly contributed to future resilience and economic stability. The key to create a financially viable model rested upon the formation of strategic cluster groups linked to market platforms. These models were successful in reviving community structures and strengthening traditional systems of production. By giving people the opportunity to learn new skills to gain better employment and income opportunities the project was able to create an enabling-environment in which local entrepreneurial capabilities could grow and lead to adaption of sustainable livelihoods.

74-year-old NJ Ram presents his organically produced jackfruit seeds that have provided his wife Vijitha Ram and him a second chance at becoming economically stable. He calls these seeds 'white gold' in comparison to 'black gold' or 'pepper'. The seeds fetch him a higher profit than pepper.



Improving First Responders Capacity & Strengthening CBDRR Mechanisms

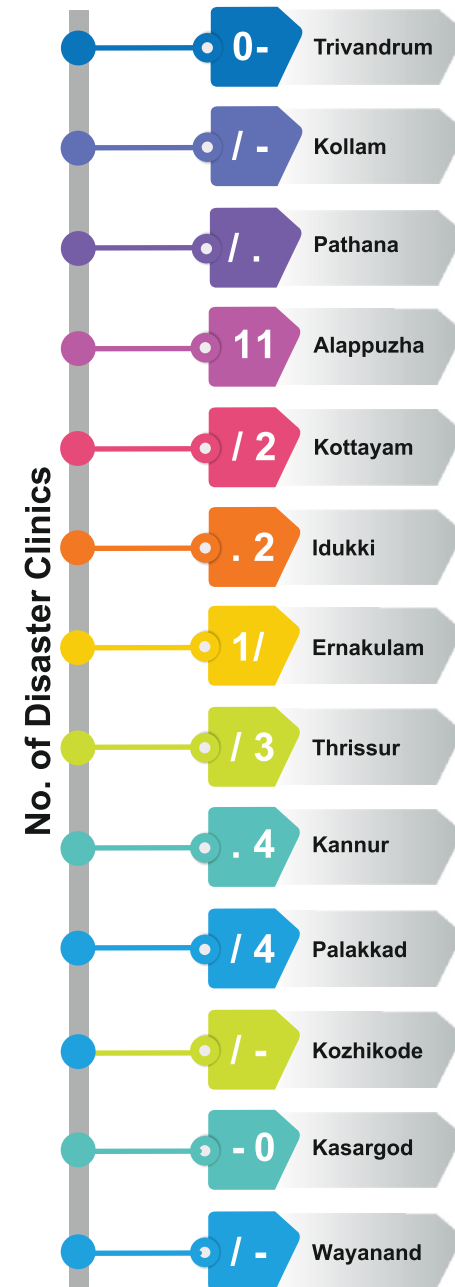


Community sessions were run by Disaster Clinics to inform the community of risks and hazards they face and how to better prepare for them. Wayanad, Kerala

Outcome 2: 70% households have improved their coping mechanisms and have reduced their exposure to different hazards through adequate DRR activities

Strengthening and improving capacities of first responders emerged as the most critical need to be met, especially in context of post-flood and ongoing pandemic management. The intervention aimed at enhancing community resilience by increasing community level preparedness and building the state, district and block level cadre of first responders and frontline workers. Strategic intervention plans were developed and implemented through 9 DRR activities. Caritas India's intervention and the consequent development of Disaster Clinics provided an opportunity to stakeholders to foster a decentralised bottom-up approach to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) through participatory and community-driven micro-interventions across sectors.

Disaster Clinics for Community-Based DRR



Capacity Building for a Disaster Resilient Community



Members of the Fire & Rescue Services Department, Government of Kerala along with other first responders, conducted hands-on trainings across all implementing districts. The sessions pictured above shows them teaching the 'Fireman Carry' technique and building of makeshift floating devices for rescue operations.



Community-Based Disaster Risk Management

“The biggest outcome for me is how effectively the community self-mobilises and volunteers to tackle disasters. DRR capacity building has made us better First Responders.”

- Chandu Krishna

Kalliyoor Panchayat in Trivandrum, like other panchayats in Kerala, faces flooding issues owing to its low-lying topography. A large number of people are displaced each year and are put in relief camps as a temporary measure. Over the years many people have lost their lives and the capacity to conduct rescue was identified by the Ward Disaster Management Committee as an essential skill. Even when flooding is not severe, waterlogging in areas causes disproportionate damage. To strengthen state response capabilities and develop individual capacities, Caritas India conducted trainings localised to each target area. Trainings were delivered through Disaster Clinics and attended by all volunteers and participants.

Chandu Krishna, Panchayat President, Kalliyoor Gram Panchayat, believes that the presence of a Disaster Clinic in his area has greatly reduced risk and increased community ownership.

Humanitarian Support to Migrant Labour

“Ration and medical services helped us survive the lockdowns. Vaccination saved our lives and jobs.”

- Mukayi Madiyalagan

This initiative, named 'Sudhaar' (meaning 'improvement' in Hindi) was piloted under the Navjeevan project. The activities under this outcome were implemented in collaboration with the Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID), a non-profit that advocates for and promotes social inclusion of migrants in India. Initially implemented in 3 locations across Ernakulam District, namely, Ernakulam Town, Aluva and Perumbavoor, it was extended to include two more districts – Kannur and Trivandrum. The primary objective of improving the living conditions of migrants was achieved by analysing their overall socio-economic condition and providing appropriate support through research-based actions.

Migrant workers Mukayi Madiyalagan from Tamil Nadu and Sunita Pal Pahadi from Bengal, proudly hold up their Covid-19 Vaccine certificates received after vaccination. 'Sudhaar' facilitated support to and improvement in the lives of the migrant community.



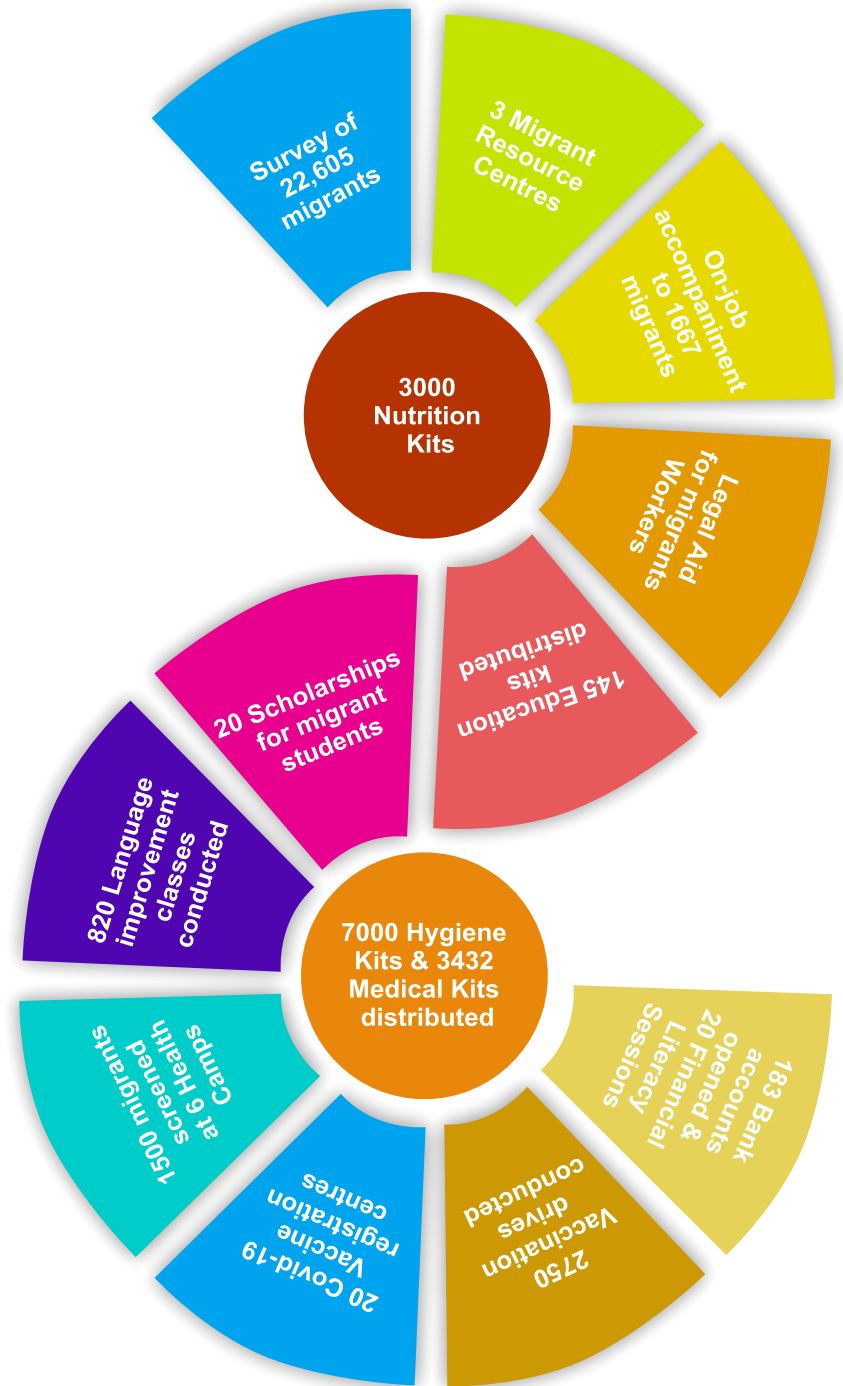
Sudhaar – Support to Migrant Workers



Thousands of workers like Mukayi Madiyalagan were stranded during Covid-19 lockdowns and suffered severe loss in wages and very few migrants were able to get vaccinated.

Outcome 3: Improving the living conditions of 1000 migrants through accompaniment and legal aid support

This migrant crisis was a complex mix of unemployment, loss of work and wages and their inability to sustain themselves without any social welfare or aid. Caritas India along with its partners took a decision to provide aid in the form of nutrition and hygiene kits, education support for migrant children, linkages with government social welfare schemes, conducting Covid-19 vaccine drives for them and by providing them with legal support. This intervention was supplemented by providing long-term support in the form of skill development and trainings, conducting financial literacy classes for them and by establishing an information and resource centre that could provide long-term support to them.



Impact of Sudhaar



Owner of A1 Bricks in Kaloor, Ernakulam District, Kerala, Mr. Davis Perumayan was unable to pay his workers any wages during the lockdowns. With support from the Panchayat and the Navjeevan team, he was able to support his worker's needs. They organised vaccination and general health camps for all his workers and provides them with ration and hygiene kits for over 3 months owing to 'Sudhaar'. The livelihood-aid was well received by the stranded workers as it helped them sustain themselves till lockdown restrictions were lifted and they could earn wages with as business activities resumed.

Following the exodus of the migrant community observed during initial days of the lockdown, Caritas India conducted a baseline survey to collect relevant data about the migrant community and their needs. The baseline study, created in collaboration with the Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development, was published and shared with the administration. The study covered twenty thousand migrants from Tamil Nadu, Bengal and Andhra in India as well people from Nepal and Bangladesh.

Tejbahadur Punmagar, 29-year-old from Nepal, is a labourer in Kannur District, Kerala. The pandemic had a negative impact on his well-being, "suffering from serious depression and unable to function, I lost the will to live." Under Navjeevan, he was screened, vaccinated and provided ration. Stranded migrants like him, with no support were taken in and their lives were improved. Workers from other states were given similar support as well as provided job-accompaniment and access to legal services.

Supporting Educational Aspirations of Migrant Children



Teachers of St. Augustine School, Kaloor, Ernakulam District stand as role models to other schools for their efforts to increase inclusion of and support to migrant students.

The pandemic forced school closures across the country and rendered parents helpless, unable to cope with the loss in learning. Vulnerable families were hit severely as their access to digital platforms for education was limited. Migrant parents felt this as a compounded effect owing to their fragile socio-economic condition and the lack of any support. Migrant students started dropping out and there was a need to restrict this alarming trend.

Headmaster Bijoo K Ranjan of St. Augustine School, Ernakulam along with the Navjeevan team, came up with a simple solution to address the increasing rate of dropouts amongst migrant students. 46 students were provided a gamut of support including provision of school kits, study materials, special Malayalam language classes held twice a day, a feedback mechanism to raise their concerns and an innovative Parent Teacher Association (PTA) for the Migrant Community. Migrant parents were provided a safe place to address their concerns and problems and solution-oriented actions were taken as a group. The teachers of this school created an environment of inclusivity and safety. Integration of migrant students into the school community was effective in restricting further dropouts and all 46 students chosen started doing well over the course of implementation.

Volunteerism Builds Resilient Communities



Volunteers for dead body management during Covid-19, 'Caritas Samaritans' ready for the day's shift. Alappuzha District, Kerala



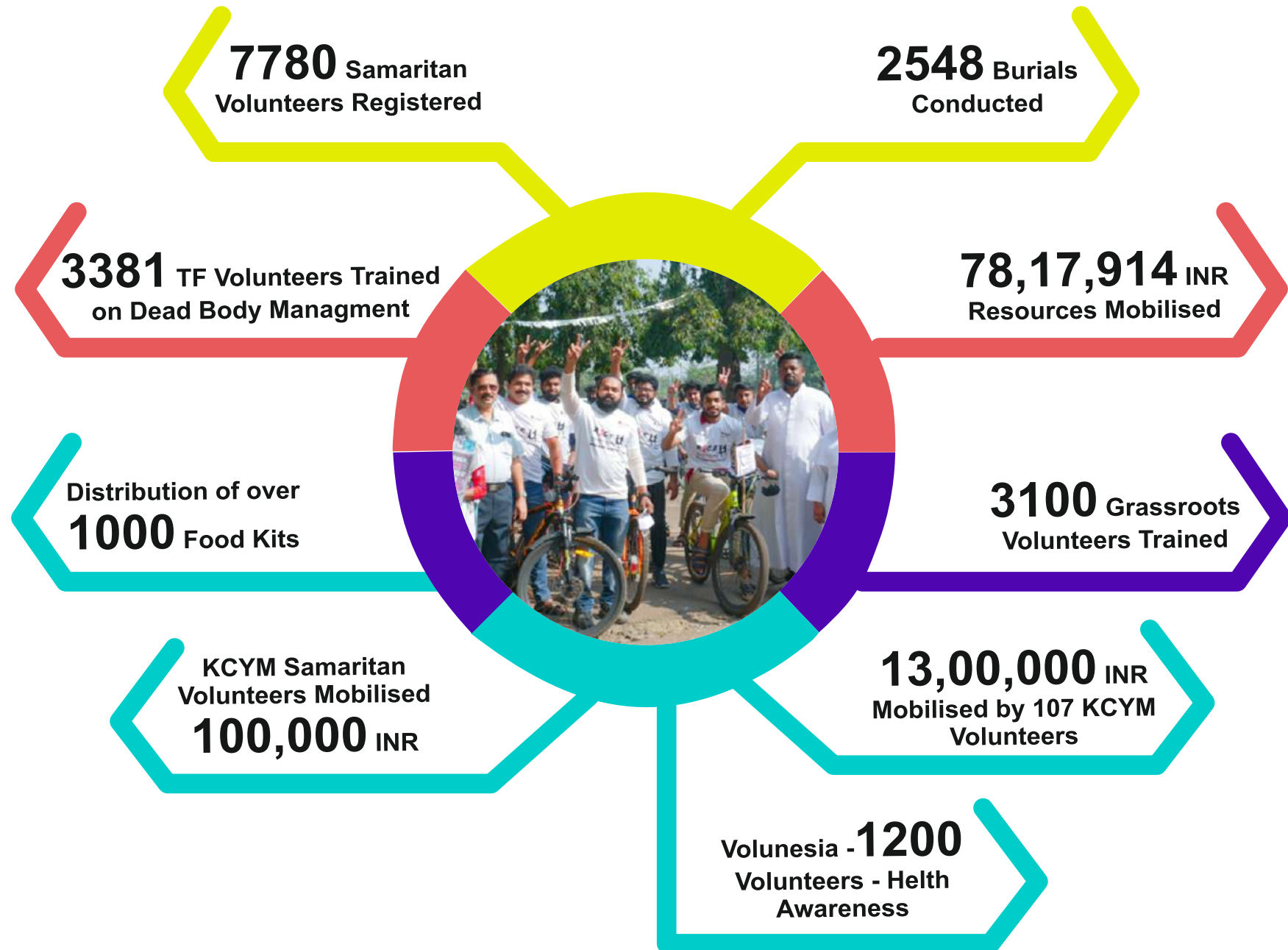
Outcome 4: Improved engagement of volunteers and resource mobilization through continuous community engagement

Volunteerism as an outcome of the Navjeevan project was a practical way to reach out to the most marginalised sections of society. Community leaders, through volunteerism, were provided an opportunity and a platform to leverage ownership, participation, empowerment and inclusion and thereby play a more active role in their own development.

The creation of a social capital of formally trained and capacitated volunteers helped address the ever-evolving needs of a community affected by multiple floods and then fighting through the Covid-19 pandemic. Pro-active volunteers were identified, trained and oriented based on the selection criteria developed by Caritas India.

This army of volunteers (formally known as 'Caritas Samaritans') organized and led awareness programmes across the State. Campaigns were conducted where these volunteers mobilised by the thousands through the streets of Kerala to continuously engage local communities and raise resources.

Milestones Achieved by Volunteers





Task Force Member, J. Hinkuthara, the 64-year-old President of Arthungal Panchayat in Alappuzha District was recognised as 'Best Volunteer 2021' for his efforts in flood operations and Covid-19 Management

Rise of Volunteerism in Kerala

"As a volunteer I am better equipped to respond to disasters, with technical skills like mapping and strategic rescue planning."

- J. Hinkuthara

Kerala was one of the first to impose strict lockdowns in India to tackle spread of the coronavirus. Despite best efforts, the state suffered high losses and consistently reported high number of active cases throughout. Taking into account the emerging needs of the community, Caritas India implemented activities to instil a sense of volunteerism amongst the youth and adolescent community in Kerala. 'Caritas Samaritans' emerged as unsung heroes during the multiple peaks and waves of Covid-19 Kerala faced. Volunteers were registered with the Government as 'Sannadha Sena' (meaning 'ready to volunteer army'). This moment of crisis saw the rise of volunteers across the state, trained on dead body management and linked with state health authorities to support their efforts in the proper disposal and/or burial of the dead.

Volunteerism at-scale linked with state machinery was one of the most effective methods of sustaining long-term community resilience. Trainings provided by Caritas to volunteers were critical in meeting Covid-19 Pandemic needs. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) calls for 'a broader, more people-centred approach to disaster risk reduction, and notes that governments should engage volunteers and others in the design and implementation of policies, principles and standards.' Navjeevan's participatory response to disasters in Kerala is also in line with the Core Humanitarian Principles.



Covid-19 dead body burial at work in Trivandrum District, Kerala.

Partnerships

Frontline Workers



Government Collaborations



Implementing Partners





Rose Margaret, a 38-year-old homemaker and mother of two from Alappuzha District, Kerala emerged as a Covid-19 warrior. She ran a community kitchen for 3 months during the first Covid wave in India. DRR Trainings provided were key in helping individuals like her develop their own sense and method of volunteerism to support a disaster-hit community.

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