

Improving Health and Hygiene

Recover Better Support Fund



The Challenge

Improved Health through Hygiene Products: Primary health care covers basic health needs as it consists of essential services and products needed to prevent diseases, promote health, and manage illness. However, important hygiene products like sanitary napkins are rarely used in India, as for example, approximately 88 % of women use cloth and rags instead of sanitary napkins, which can carry bacteria leading to preventable illness.

Lack of Access in Rural Areas: The access to hygiene products in general is depending on affordability and accessibility. In rural areas of India health resources remain scarce. Barriers related to knowledge and awareness can be addressed by education, but barriers related to availability and cost are more difficult to overcome. Access by marginalized communities is further limited by economic, social and caste hierarchy. This discrepancy was further widened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Objective

The project aims to develop a continuum of care model by increasing access to tele-health and the creation of logistic supply chains that ensure availability of critical health and sanitation items at remote locations. In doing so, rural areas get connected to health resources.

The Target Group

The project targets women from underprivileged and marginalized communities who already work as Community Health Entrepreneurs (CHEs) to bring health education and lead behavioural change. The activities are implemented within the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh (UP) and the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. These districts have high concentrations of already active CHEs.

The Approach

Scaling up Activities of CHEs: Around 2,500 Community Health Entrepreneurs already work across Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They previously got trained on first aid, nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, menstrual health management, illnesses and diseases, and entrepreneurship. This project includes 100 CHEs in 200 villages, reaching 250,000 people from 50,000 families. Each CHE is responsible for two villages and conducts vitals and primary assessment of patients.

Implementing Tele-Consultation: The Recover Better Support Fund allows adding tele-consultation and critical supplies to the work of CHEs. Therefore, a tele-health mobile and web application is developed. It connects CHE with doctors and nurses, enabling them to bring professional healthcare and preventive services directly to their community. Based on the primary

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Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
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Implementing Organisation	Healing Fields Foundation
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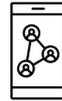
assessment of patients, the CHE either refers them to a hospital or connects the patients via tele-consultation to nurses and doctors. Follow-up examination and care services also carried out by the CHEs.

Establishing Supply Chains for Hygiene Products: Establishment of a supply chain through local bikers, supported by efficient technical solutions and coordinated through a network of distribution centres. Products in the chain include sanitary napkins, hand wash and toilet cleaner and will be expanded in response to demand of the community. The CHEs receive training on relevant entrepreneurial skills to expand their customer base and ensure entrepreneurial sustainability.

About Healing Fields Foundation

Healing Fields Foundation was founded in 2000 as a health-focused NGO, implementing its work in rural areas of poorer Indian states. Its vision is to build an eco-system that ensures access to affordable and quality healthcare for all, especially women from resource-poor communities. Healing Fields Foundation aims to achieve this vision by seeding and strengthening Community Health Leaders.

The Results



A tele-health mobile and web app is developed tested and deployed



Women and adolescent girls from 50,000 Families were educated on menstrual hygiene and have access to sanitary napkins



100 Community Health Entrepreneurs increased their income



A logistical supply chain is created between 200 villages

The Recover Better Support Fund supports efforts designed and implemented in partner countries to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic with the goal of building more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies while advancing the 2030 Agenda. For that purpose, it deploys two funding lines: (1) Sustainable development advisory bodies and (2) leaving no one behind and strengthening socio-economic resilience. Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), it supports 23 projects in 16 countries worldwide with up to 180.000 EUR.

GIZ implements the Recover Better Support Fund. For further information, please visit www.recoverbettersupportfund.com or contact the funds team at recoverbetterfund@giz.de

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