



COVID19 – A GUIDELINE ON NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR



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The present document named **“COVID19: A guideline on navigating the pandemic with a special focus on the education sector”** has been conceptualized keeping in view of the prevailing covid19 crisis which has spared none including non-profit sector. The practice of “social distancing” is posing a multitude of challenges to the NGOs as their outreach to the beneficiaries is being compromised significantly – consequently, forcing them to reconsider the existing way of operations.

CSR team at Genpact (GSIF) has been always proactive and demonstrated exceptional dedication towards any social cause that demands attention. Continuing with same energy and vigor, the GSIF (Genpact Social Impact Fellowship) team at Genpact spearheaded a document which elaborates upon the host of challenges that the present covid19 situation poses primarily to the education (and related) sector and sundry possible solutions to these challenges. The scope of our research for this document is limited to the role of NPOs largely – what actions they might resort to (be it independent or in conjunction with the government).

Employing thematic approach, the article broadly divides the challenges under two major themes – Operational Processes and Program Continuity. In addition to these two themes, the research team also identified Mental Health concerns as a vital theme which deserves attention. While the first two themes bring to the fore the challenges encompassing programmatic and organizational/administrative issues, the latter one highlights the probable impending mental health and wellbeing issues that might engulf the employees, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Further, each theme carries sub-themes which categorizes the probable solutions into immediate approach (relief), mid-term approach (restore) and long-term approach (re-invent). As was expected, much of the research yielded solutions directed towards immediate relief with little emphasis on mid-term or long-term solutions. Additionally, the document also brings to light some of the best practices that are followed currently by some NPOs and can be replicated on similar lines by other NPOs too.

It is expected that this article will give light to numerous ideas available out within social sector – primarily on usage of technology-based solution. Albeit, this is a time of hardship, but having a positive connotation to it; this hardship is a blessing in disguise. Social sector always shirked using technology as part of its systems, but this is the right time for this sector to leverage technology and tame it to the best of usage.

NGO Operations related:

Challenges/ Scenario	Immediate term (0 - 3 months) - Relief	Midterm (3- 9 months) - Restore	Long term (9+ months) - Reinvent	Additional Notes/ Best practices
Employee engagement (Incl. para teachers)	1. Conduct awareness sessions on relevant Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (incl. Ed. Tech) tools available 2. Remote working technologies to support social distancing and ensuring business continuity while not	1. Cross skill/ up skill trainings to ensure fungibility and relevance 2. Encourage employees to keep building on the digital quotient to stay relevant 3. Encourage staff to explore opportunities	'Work From home' could be the 'new normal' for admin/ non-field staff even for Development sector. Accordingly, it would be imperative to keep employees engaged remotely	E.g. 1. Drishtee, a Nashik based nonprofit is utilizing this time to hold strategic discussions, which is usually not possible during normal business hours due to limited bandwidth of employees

	<p>compromising on regular / informal team connects and work-life balance</p> <p>3. Utilize time for upskilling employees through virtual training sessions (free tutorials on excel and other software)</p> <p>4. Conduct regular training sessions on various Govt. schemes, Do's and Don'ts so that the same could be passed on to the community through awareness sessions</p>	<p>in rural areas (if feasible)</p>		<p>2. Muskaan Dreams in collaboration with MP state is building teachers capacity</p> <p>3. Interesting/ useful reference links for idle time: Reference link 1 Reference link 2 Reference link 3</p>
<p>Donor Engagement</p>	<p>1. Ensure constant communication with donors about ongoing snippets of actions, project timelines and strategies/ way forward</p> <p>2. Reach out for any additional support needed</p> <p>3. Encourage corporate employees for skill-based volunteering. E.g. Spoken English, Basic/ advanced excel, Presentation skills etc.</p>	<p>1. Timely submission of closure & fund utilization report</p> <p>2. Continuously engage donors to be able to seek future support post immediate relief work</p> <p>3. Design skill based long term employee engagement plan with corporates</p>	<p>1. Timely submission of closure & fund utilization report</p> <p>2. Ongoing implementation of skill-based employee engagement program with corporates</p>	<p>E.g. Srujna, a Mumbai based NPO is engaging with their donors by inviting them for skill volunteering. For instance, corporate employees are volunteering to teach English via virtual connects</p>
<p>Funding Challenges</p>	<p>1. Collaborate with CSR partners for committed support for any future disaster relief work</p> <p>2. To minimize training related costs: - Seek support from corporate employees for skill-based volunteering. E.g. Spoken English, Basic/ advanced excel, Presentation skills etc. - Encourage staff to explore free online courses for continuous upskilling</p> <p>3. Nonprofits to negotiate restrictions on spending</p>	<p>1. Redesign Operational strategies to survive in New Normal (post lockdown) as the businesses get impacted, CSR funding will also see a crunch. E.g. Cost cutting, reevaluating business plan/budget, bring in process efficiencies</p> <p>2. Cut discretionary expenses (offsites, training) to avoid unnecessary layoffs or pay cuts in the future</p>	<p>1. Have a data base of corporates/ agencies which support emergency relief as their CSR mandate for ready reference</p>	<p>Primary research suggests that for this year corporates won't restrict flow of committed funds. However, funds for next financial may get impacted for this year</p> <p>Note: As HNI, foundations and individuals are donating towards COVID 19 relief funds, unrestricted funds which usually support the nonprofits</p>

	areas by corporates, so that investment can be reallocated based on need	3. Keep a close watch on CSR trend and directives from NITI Ayog/ MCA and strategize accordingly		operational expenses might get affected
Layoffs	<p>1. Give a clear picture of non-profits finances to the employees. In case of financial trouble, consider the following options before laying off employees:</p> <p>a. Senior management pay cut & decrease in other benefits</p> <p>b. Reducing working hours, if possible</p> <p>c. Short term lay off - will help save a job + protect the organizations' financial situation</p> <p>2. If none of the above options are viable:</p> <p>a. Offer to write a letter of recommendation</p> <p>b. Connect laid off employees to close group contacts for possible opportunities</p>	<p>If the program size shrinks and layoffs are inevitable,</p> <p>1. Communicate with affected staff as soon as possible</p> <p>2. Support with full & final settlement in the quickest possible way</p> <p>3. Make thoughtful decisions about work allocation</p>	1. Stay in touch with laid off employees and look for/ create opportunities for the ones still unemployed	

NGO Programs related:

Challenges/ Scenario	Immediate term (0 - 3 months) - Relief	Midterm (3- 9 months) - Restore	Long term (9+ months) - Reinvent	Additional Notes/ Best practices
Parents engagement	<p>1. Communicate future school strategy to parents and seek their feedback</p> <p>2. Create awareness about virtual classes on AIR/ DD channels/ open source educational forums (YouTube) and alternative academic calendar introduced by NCERT</p>	<p>1. Ensure kids start putting learnings from immediate term activities to practice</p> <p>2. Continued communication and awareness sessions with parents on personal hygiene measures, various Govt. initiatives and role played by</p>	NA. Assuming focus would get back on managing regular day to day routine	<p>1. Henwalvani community radio based in the outskirts of Tehri District Uttarakhand are preparing locals in the fight against COVID</p> <p>2. Women helpline numbers: - Women in distress: 1091</p>

	<p>3. Promote safe hygiene sessions with parents (and community) as a precautionary measure for COVID-19</p> <p>4. Awareness sessions on role played by Frontline health workers (FLHWs) to counter social stigma and prevent future attacks</p> <p>5. Create awareness about different govt helplines numbers and NPOs working against domestic violence</p>	<p>Frontline health workers (FLHWs)</p> <p>3. Help deploy a strategic nationwide campaign to promote awareness about domestic violence making use of national news channels, radio channels, mobile phone operators and social media platforms - like the way in which the government has deployed campaigns to combat COVID-19</p>		<p>- Domestic Violence: 181</p> <p>- National commission for women: +91 7217735372 (WhatsApp only) -</p> <p>Psychologists: 9000070839, 0402760531</p>
Student Engagement	<p>1. Ensure kids follow the daily schedule. Alternative Academic Calendar (4-week plan) by NCERT can also be leveraged</p> <p>2. Encourage students to stay connected to regular school curriculum through DD regional channels/ AIR, open source web links and mobile apps such as Kishore manch, Swayam, Diksha, e-pathshala portal, Khan academy related YouTube links</p> <p>3. To ensure better interest levels and practicality, encourage activity-based learning through use of household objects</p> <p>4. For high school going children, help them keep a diary and facilitate expression</p>	<p>1. Encourage students to start putting learnings from immediate term activities to practice</p> <p>2. Continued use of open access resources such as Swayam, Diksha, e-pathshala portal, Khan academy etc.</p> <p>3. Promote peer learning methodology. E.g. students teaching juniors in remote locality.</p> <p>4. Sponsor paid courses/ scholarships for students who display exceptional digital aptitude with a target to upskill peers on the same</p>	<p>1. Make personal hygiene a way of life - schools to plan for regular awareness campaigns (NPOs can volunteer here) on benefits of maintaining good hygiene at school and at home</p>	<p>1. 4-week Alternative Academic Calendar by NCERT has been designed for school students to keep them engaged during the lockdown</p> <p>2. In Chhattisgarh, Radio Mirchi along with UNICEF has started "Mirchi Ki Pathshala", a radio-based education campaign running daily from 5 to 6pm.</p> <p>3. Various Govt. run educational prog. on DD regional channels, AIR for the benefit of students having limited access to internet/ smart phones</p>
Reverse Migration	<p>1. To ensure faster outreach and greater impact, create a</p>	<p>1. Strengthen community volunteers (knowledge about</p>	<p>1. Facilitate workers with opening a bank a/c or Aadhar</p>	<p>1. Read Rapid Assessment on the impact of COVID19</p>

	<p>consortium of nonprofits with delegated responsibilities to provide immediate support with life essentials</p> <p>2. Creating awareness & access to services & schemes:</p> <p>a. NPOs may use Haqdarshak app (that has information about welfare schemes and COVID 19 government measures) to disseminate knowledge and information</p> <p>b. NPOs can run a helpline number in their operational area to support queries/ access to services and schemes</p> <p>c. Create videos/ audio messages on Corona virus and physical distancing in regional languages and disseminate through DD/ local cable channels, AIR, community radio, speakers on moving vehicles</p> <p>d. Awareness sessions to counter social stigma and prevent future attacks on returned migrants</p> <p>3. Human rights organizations must advocate against the lost wages</p>	<p>help centers, nearest hospital, where to seek support) before non-profit exits from the location with relief work --> reduce dependency before exiting</p> <p>2. Nonprofits to track children and facilitate in-formal education in the respective regions through community volunteers as formal education may not be worked out due to instability of families in a location</p> <p>3. Advocate for-profit FMCGs to set-up food processing units in villages.</p>	<p>registration to avail cash benefits</p> <p>2. Advocacy with Govt. for ensuring adherence by employers to provide worker identity cards</p> <p>3. NPOs can connect with Labor Dept. of respective states for regularizing NCLP (National Child Labor Project) Schools for children of migrant workers</p> <p>4. After factories resume production</p> <p>a. NPOs/ human rights organizations to advocate dignified work conditions for the returning workers with zero compromise on wages</p> <p>b. Ensure Health measures like protective equipment etc.</p>	<p>lockdown on migrant workers by Jan Sahas,</p> <p>2. List of NGOs providing relief work</p>
Awareness on Govt. Schemes	<p>NPOs can spread awareness on below Govt schemes:</p> <p>1. Free Distribution & home delivery of "Mid-Day Meal" to Govt. school children from 6 to</p>	<p>Three ways Govt can help farmers, migrant workers overcome the current crisis in mid/ long term:</p> <p>1. Restoring food supply chain. Direct procurement from</p>	<p>Three ways Govt can help farmers, migrant workers overcome the current crisis in mid/ long term:</p> <p>1. Restoring food supply chain. Direct procurement from</p>	<p>There are State/ central Govt. schemes around monetary support in field of education. E.g. "Kanyashree Prakalpa" scheme in West Bengal, ICPS</p>

	<p>14 years across the country</p> <p>2. Under Integrated Child Development Scheme- ICDS, ration is being provided through Anganwadi Workers to children (3-6yrs)</p> <p>3. Immediate cash transfer has been done for 3 months to the MGNREGA Card beneficiaries and for buying LPG under "Ujjwala Scheme" for BPL beneficiaries</p> <p>4. Free Ration to those having Below Poverty Line Card under Public Distribution System</p>	<p>farmers without charging the market fee.</p> <p>2. Direct cash transfers to end beneficiaries</p> <p>a) Expanding PM-Kisan to cover rural landless/migrant workers</p> <p>b) Revision in unemployment allowance under MGNREGS.</p> <p>C) Transfer of subsidies, including crop insurance</p>	<p>farmers without charging the market fee.</p> <p>2. Direct cash transfers to end beneficiaries</p> <p>a) Expanding PM-Kisan to cover rural landless/migrant workers</p> <p>b) Revision in unemployment allowance under MGNREGS.</p> <p>C) Transfer of subsidies, including crop insurance</p>	<p>(sponsorship) by central government</p>
Embracing Technology	<p>1. Create awareness about the recently launched "Aarogya Setu" app which is a one-stop solution for all aspects of dealing with the novel coronavirus</p> <p>2. Team up with mobile network providers like Airtel/ Vodafone to create awareness through SMS/ IVR about various initiatives being taken across sectors (education, health etc.)</p> <p>3. Influence for-profit organizations like Amazon Audible to broadcast their audiobooks on AIR/ private radio channels for children. Can create own content as well. E.g. Pratham Books is already working on this model</p> <p>4. Leverage Technology to manage ones mental health. E.g. Free wellness</p>	<p>1. Automate time-consuming, mundane, and repetitive administrative tasks to ensure better process efficiency and be better prepared for any potential fund crisis</p> <p>2. 'Work From home' could be the 'new normal' for admin/ non-field staff even for Development sector. Start exploring Technology to enable the same</p> <p>3. Continue to support state education departments (with training content) so that electronic media like DD channels/ AIR can continue to reach out to students with limited access to internet/ smart phones</p>	<p>1. Technology to enable at least 25% of NPO staff to 'Work From Home' for 75% duration</p> <p>2. Influence Govt. to work towards ensuring reliable power supply and ubiquitous Internet connectivity for Govt. schools (1st priority) in remote locations Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities (aspirational)</p>	<p>Webinars by CIRT (Central Institute of Education Technology) on fighting COVID19: - Daily webinar telecast can be watched through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SWAYAM Prabha DT TV Kishor Manch channel #31 - DD FreeDish #128 - DishTV #2370 - Tatasky #756 - Airtel #440 - Videocon #477 - Sundirect #793 and - Jio TV Mobile app – <p>All recorded webinars are available for free on YouTube</p>

	apps, communication tools to stay virtually connected			
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Mental health/ Wellbeing related:

Challenges/ Scenario	Immediate term (0 - 3 months) – Relief	Midterm (3- 9 months) - Restore	Long term (9+ months) - Reinvent	Additional Notes/ Best practices
Employees/ Para-teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health & well-being programs/ related group sessions focusing on meditation, yoga and various group activities will boost employee morale and enhance group cohesion and feelings of belongingness. 2. Organize online learning courses/ training sessions to imbibe a sense of confidence and determination 3. Reduce panic and anxiety mounting from fear of financial crisis among employees by providing assurance on job safety or help in seeking jobs in face of job loss 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce panic arising out of fear of acquiring virus post resuming work by adhering strictly to Govt. guidelines on workplace safety 2. Report any irrational or abnormal behavior/ response to any arousing stimulus to appropriate authority 3. Appoint any mental health professional (either on regular or visiting basis) to address issues concerning mental health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is assumed that over time the situation will be normal but as a good practice, continue with mental health professional to address any related issues at the earliest 	
Parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Online counseling sessions (along with supporting reading material) with parents on management of issues such as - adjustment challenges, aloofness, internet addiction etc. among them as well as their children 2. Encourage parents to prepare everyday timetable for children to enable them in continuing regular 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue sharing online material to ensure parents keep themselves abreast with knowledge 2. Encourage parents to report to any mental health professional in case any abnormal change in behavior is noticed either in themselves or their children 3. NPOs can organize regular meetings/ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is assumed that over time the situation will be normal but as a good practice, continue with mental health professional to address any related issues at the earliest 2. NPOs can organize regular meetings/group discussions etc. in communities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leverage community radio for awareness campaigns, do's & don'ts around COVID 19 and for reducing anxiety and stress levels 2. Providing free psychotherapeutic services to cases of escalated anxiety - over phone or video call - primarily crisis management

	<p>routine - will prevent children from engaging in destructive ideas and thoughts</p> <p>3. Imparting knowledge on identifying early signs and symptoms of anxiety and panic so to arrest them at an early stage</p>	<p>group discussions etc. in communities (physically) on various mental health concerns</p>	<p>(physically) on various similar concerns</p>	
Students/ children	<p>1. Organize discussions (in presence of parents) issue of covid 19 and its impact on mental health and how to seek help</p> <p>2. Inform children about access to Govt. help - calling CHILDLINE at 1098 for any concern related to childcare and queries</p> <p>3. Communicate with students, through school authorities preferably, about academic calendar, assessment etc. - which will help in lowering uncertainty and anxiety pertaining to schoolwork</p>	<p>1. Continued awareness on helpline numbers like CHILDLINE 1098 that is open for 24X7 to help children reduce anxiety or stress levels</p> <p>2. Explore possibility of including content on Child protection, Child rights and mental health in state syllabus</p> <p>3. NGOs to have advocacy meetings with state education departments on conducting individual/ group counselling sessions in their operational network</p>	<p>1. Schools can organize regular mental health sensitization camps</p>	<p>1. Pratham Books campaign in partnership with United Way where children give a missed call on 08033094243 and get to listen to delightful stories from Pratham Books</p> <p>2. West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights is offering helpline numbers for children under stress due to lockdown</p> <p>3. As a part of Delhi online happiness class programme, students are taught various activities including meditation, street plays, etc. with an aim to reduce anxiety and stress levels among children. Streamed live every day at 4PM and could be accessed through YouTube and other social media platforms</p>

References:

The following articles/journals were referred for secondary research:

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Disclaimer:

For primary research, along with inputs from GSIF partner organizations from recently conducted roundtable discussion, discussions with officials from government offices were also undertaken. The ideas and thoughts shared were their personal and do not represent any official views from any Government.