

Greetings!

We hope that you are doing well. Don't you all think that COVID-19 brought so many changes along with it? It has affected our day to day activities and forced us to remain indoors. It's not just us even nature underwent a healing process. In metropolitan cities during the lockdown air quality improved and pollution was reduced. While we remained indoors and appreciated these changes, there were families who struggled to arrange meals for themselves and their families. The breadwinner of the family had nowhere to work and did not have any source of income. HIMserve stood to act during this crisis created by COVID-19. With the help of our donors we provided a good quantity of dry ration to 2838 families in 236 villages of Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Dooars. Families that received relief in the form of ration had



one of the family member working as a daily wage labourer, did not have a ration card so they were not included in the Public Distribution System (P.D.S) which is Indian system of ration distribution at low cost depending upon number of members in the household. The effort from united forums, self help groups, village development committees and health volunteers is mention worthy. These community groups from Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Dooars stood united

and coordinated in conducting survey to identify underprivileged families for distributing ration in April and May. We praise God for leading us in this endeavor. We are also grateful to our donors ECTA, DAI, LJI, DIFAEM, KerkinActie, Cindy Perry, Tigi Verghis and Payal Rai for their support.

### Act of Love during pandemic times

In Kalimpong area, the effort of United Christian Minority Cell (U.C.M.C), the united forum of Dubling is noteworthy. The community groups continued working together even after HIMserve took an exit from these villages after HIMserve completed 10 years Members of U.C.M.C identified 65 families in Lolay village under Lolay Gram Panchayat located about an hour away from Dubling on the way towards Kalimpong. They came to know about these families through their contacts with church leaders in Lolay village. 65 families had run out of food grains during the lockdown as they had no money left to buy food. These beneficiaries were overjoyed to receive a bag of rice, dal and oil depending on the number of family members. One of the beneficiaries after collecting his share of ration said, "We had never thought that we would receive relief from an N.G.O. We had never expected to receive free rations in this pandemic time." To make the ration distribution at Lolay a success U.C.M.C, self help groups, village development committee and health volunteers put in a lot of effort. Visiting homes of villagers and walking for hours to make enquiries in identifying families in need is not an easy task in the Himalayan region. Hard work from the community groups resulted in leaving an impact among the villagers. During the relief distribution at Lolay village, Community Motivator Akela Lepcha also got an opportunity to share about HIMserve and its work. Somsing Sada and Passang Lepcha, church leaders

from Loday were also U.C.M.C's local contact persons for relief work at Loday. They were impressed with the act of love done by Dubling United forum and have expressed their desire to take Truth centered transformation teachings. In Barbote in Kalimpong area community health volunteers left no stones unturned in handing out relief to underprivileged families. The Barbote united forum Nimbong Pabringtar Christian Minority Society (N.P.C.M.S) together with community groups and health volunteers made arrangements and distribute rations. In Dooars region Suraksha S.H.G from upper Bhalukhop village in Kumai set out to help 50 families from lower Bhalukhop village in the month of May. In Kumai families rely on growing vegetables which is widely used for consumption by family and for sale



within their village and even outside. 6 members from Suraksha S.H.G grew vegetables in their green house. The remaining 4 did not have green houses but grew vegetables in their kitchen garden. All SHG members had surplus vegetables at hand as the local weekly markets were shut to avoid unnecessary crowding and maintain social distance. It was during one of the SHG meetings women from Suraksha group came to know of 50 families in need to vegetables. They had their stock of rations but needed vegetables. Women from Suraksha group took the initiative and called up some friends from lower Bhalukhop to get some more information about the 50 families. It took them a day to decide on the vegetables and arrange 30 kgs of green beans and 40 bundles water cress. Suraksha group purchased 100 kgs potatoes from a shop close to lower Bhalukhop village. The group worked together to bundle the watercress, pluck the beans and gather them at one place. Their husbands fully supported them in reaching out to villagers in lower Bhalukhop. It takes about half an hour from Upper Bhalukhop to reach the other village. No vehicle was required as the village is within a walk able distance. These 50 families would have a difficult time to make arrangements to purchase vegetables. Although the quantity of the vegetables would not last them long, the concern and love from women from Suraksha S.H.G have left a lasting impact. Women from the group are happy that their surplus vegetables helped their friends and families from the other village. They received help from their husbands in making this initiative a success which has also given them a boost. In Darjeeling area Rimbick Lodhoma Interdenominational Christian United Committee, the united forum worked together and made arrangements for taxi fare for carrying rations for relief upto some distance. Community group members and Community motivators helped senior citizens and disabled persons by carrying their bag of rice till their homes. Even for villages of Lankapara community motivator reached homes of disabled and bed ridden persons to deliver their share of rice, oil and pulses. The account of events that occurred in the villages of Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Dooars has provided us with a sense of satisfaction. Though we could help a limited number of families, we found families in genuine need. We are grateful to our donors as well as our entire team who put in all their efforts to make this relief distribution a success.



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