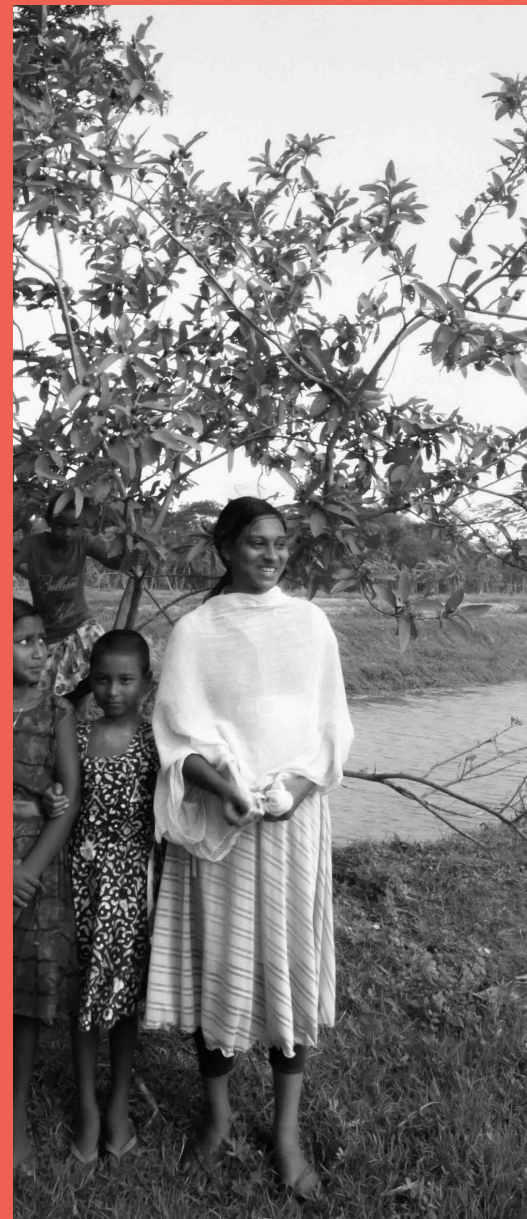


## MISSING LINK TRUST COVID-19 RELIEF REPORT



## OVERVIEW

As the count of COVID-19 cases in India cross the millionth mark with no immediate resolution in sight, more than 285 million young learners in India are faced with an unprecedented disruption in their education. In the wake of such uncertainties, some private schools have efficiently managed to resort to e-learning methodologies. However, schools with limited resources and access (especially government schools) have completely shut down.

The impact on children from low income families is multifaceted. They are now also devoid of healthy meals along with the stress of disrupted learning. Lockdowns such as these also intensify the risk of abuse witnessed by children at home. Moreover, the reliance on e-learning platforms has amplified their risk of exposure to online predators and inappropriate content.

In the wake of the current crisis, the social sector of the country has stepped up its efforts to overcome the pandemic and protect the children at risk.

A significant proportion of the financial support for the social sector comes from corporates (private and public companies). In times of crisis such as these, MCA (Ministry of Corporate Affairs) has appealed to companies to go “over-and-above” the legally mandated CSR ceiling of 2% (of average net profit of 3 immediately preceding financial years). The MCA has already declared various activities related to COVID-19, such as promotion of healthcare, sanitation and disaster management, as an eligible CSR activity. Many have pontificated about the role that CSR funds can play in these testing times but much of the discourse has stemmed from the narrow notion of donating them to designated funds mentioned in Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013, which now also includes the PM CARES fund.

NITI Aayog has also called upon the corporates to leverage their CSR so that it can complement India’s COVID-19 mitigation strategy. As per a publication by NITI Aayog:

*Instead of resorting to easier options of discharging their CSR obligations, like contributing to designated funds, they must first strive to professionalise their CSR teams, forge new partnerships with NGOs and work with the district administrations to deploy their CSR funds in the most effective manner.*

## INITIATIVES UNDER COVID-19

Missing Link Trust uses the power of innovation, education and empowerment to prevent sex trafficking. We strongly believe that awareness equals prevention and we use innovative tools and methodologies for mass engagement.

01

**EMPOWER**

Sunderbans Relief Aid -

- Mask Making Training and Production for Women
- Provision and Distribution of Ration Kits

03

**INNOVATE**

- New Website
- Social Media Campaigns
- Webinars
- Instagram Live Chat Series
- *Missing: The Complete Saga*

02

**EDUCATE**

- Cyber Safety Module
- Sex Education Module
- Parents' Module
- Outreach under COVID-19
- Swadhikar Youth Program

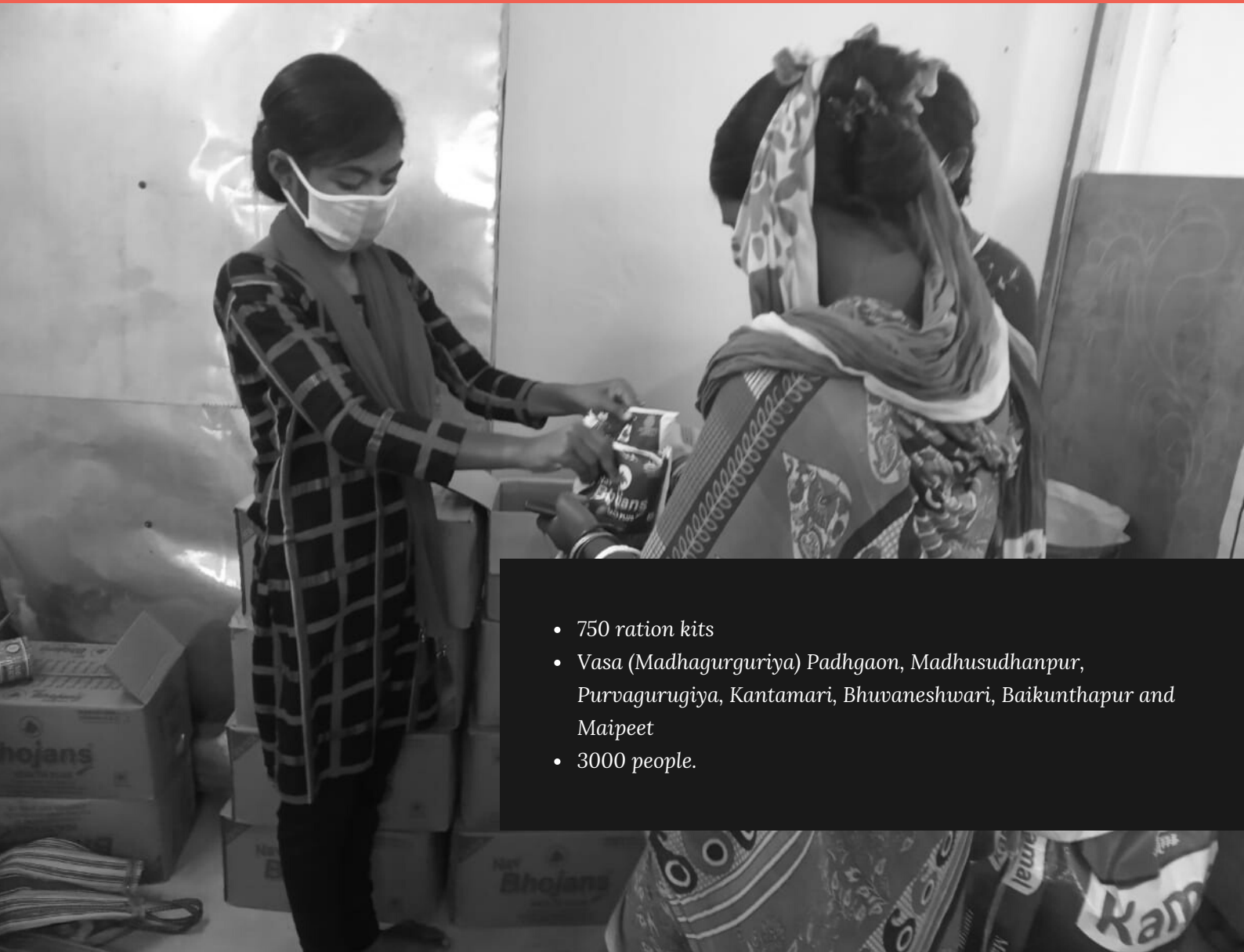
## 1. EMPOWER: SUNDERBANS RELIEF AID

The beautiful and climatically vulnerable region of the Sundarbans has been struggling to overcome the grave challenges brought due to COVID-19 and in the aftermath of the Super Cyclone Amphan. Reverse migration along with a lack of any foreseeable income, acute shortage of food resources, and loss of connectivity has led to communities constantly battling for daily necessities in the region. While we are continuing to implement the overarching objectives of skill training program and awareness initiative against sex trafficking under the Rural Livelihood Program, we have also included provision of ration kits for families, training in mask-making, rights-based awareness and relief work in these unprecedented times. Our Swadhikar Youth Program continues to empower the youth belonging to the highly vulnerable community not only for leadership opportunities but also for community outreach and research.

## MASK MAKING & DISTRIBUTION

The Missing Link Trust Rural Livelihood Program, through its two Women Empowerment Centres (WECs), aims to create awareness amongst rescued women and vulnerable girls in the villages of Kultali and Madhusudanpur by introducing them to alternate means of earning a livelihood. These centres are enabling women to discover their potential. Since the onset of the pandemic, 25 women and girls have been trained in making masks at our Centres. They have been making cloth and non-woven three ply certified masks which will hopefully help them continue to support their families during the crisis and with unemployment looming large. 300 masks have been supplied to the community and 1,000 have been made against orders across India. We, at the Trust, are striving to make the mask-making initiative more sustainable by setting up order floors of minimum 500 masks per order in order to cover the costs and provide reasonable incomes to the working women.

## RATION KIT



- 750 ration kits
- Vasa (Madhagurguriya) Padhgaon, Madhusudhanpur, Purvagurugiya, Kantamari, Bhuvaneshwari, Baikunthapur and Maipeet
- 3000 people.

To help the poorest of the poor in Sunderbans, the Trust has been providing relief ration kits. Each of these kits consisted of items required for basic sustenance. The relief kits have contained mustard oil, red lentil, soybean, rice, potato, onion and puffed rice (moori), turmeric powder, salt and hand wash.

So far, 750 ration kits have been distributed to the villages of Vasa (Madhagurguriya) Padhgaon,

Madhusudhanpur, Purvagurugiya, Kantamari, Bhuvaneshwari, Baikunthapur and Maipeet, helping over 3000 people. Each ration kit provided by MLT can sustain, on average, a family of six to seven members for four weeks.



## CURRENT SCENARIO



The predominant livelihoods in the Sunderbans delta, namely farming, fishing, and crab hunting, are all currently at stake. The ambiguity due to the imposed lockdown and the dire aftermath of the cyclone has not only threatened the security but also the very survival of these livelihoods. The saline content of the water has increased to an extent wherein farming has been deemed nearly impossible in the forthcoming years. The loss of life and property hasn't even been properly accounted for. However, such losses are expected to be considerably high given the prevailing economic distress due to the pandemic and the lack of preparedness for mitigation of such calamities, especially in the low-lying areas.

The regional farmers and fishermen are out of work. The forest department has not yet sanctioned entry into their areas of work, rendering them further helpless with no potential source of respite.

Moreover, the reverse migration from the states of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kerala have brought back over 5000 construction workers, the sole earning members for families of five or six, thereby increasing the demand pressure for ration and supplies.

## 2. INNOVATE

With our parameters of normalcy disrupted completely, it is up to every civil society organization to put renewed emphasis on re-inventing and re-imagining interventions. The current global situation has forced us all to look beyond our comfort zone.

Using innovative mediums like gaming, murals, public art and comic, we create a highly immersive and empathetic experience on sex trafficking. Creating novel methods of combining art and technology for mass awareness have enabled us to shape our campaign to provide smart solutions reaching every section of the public.



## WEBINARS

*The Young FICCI Ladies Organization, Kolkata (YFLO) in collaboration with Missing Link Trust hosted a session on 'Cyber Safety for Kids'. The Panel included leading experts in the fields of Cyber Law, Cyber Security, Cyber Psychology and Child Development and Safety - Dr. Karnika Seth, Mr. Sebastian Edassery, Ms. Nirali Bhatia and Ms. Leena Kejriwal.*

A Webinar session was then conducted in collaboration with the Young FICCI Ladies Organization, Delhi (YFLO) on 'Cyber Safety at Home' with the same esteemed panel. Important insights into legal processes, practical solutions, advice about responsive parenting and strategic tools for prevention and protection against cyber crimes were discussed and deliberated. Using these insights as a foundation, Missing Link Trust has formulated a 'Quick Guide to CyberSafety' as a tool to help parents and children remain safe in today's digitised world.

## MISSING: THE COMPLETE SAGA

The Trust is working towards the launch of 'MISSING : The Complete Saga', a reality-based role-playing game set in a rural Indian village in the Sunderbans.

The Sunderbans is a low lying area in East-India, it is extremely remote and impoverished. A hot-bed of trafficking, it accounts for 44% of India's trafficking victims. In this stimulating experience you are taken through the journey of a young, impoverished girl named Devi. Her circumstances at first seem tragic but it all depends on the choices you make. With her brave and courageous spirit she is all set to fight her dreary destiny, break the chains of human trafficking and at last find her own place in the world.

## WEBSITE LAUNCH

On July 30, 2020, World Awareness Day against Trafficking in Persons, our organization is launching a new website. The Trust has come a long way - from being a public art project to a global campaign it is only fitting that the website reflect the growth and transformation.



The new website explains the bigger picture by providing the viewer comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of our work on the Prevention of Sex-trafficking. It uses an improved interface to navigate through the various projects and resources which fall under our three pillars – Innovate, Educate and Empower.

We are constantly pushing ourselves to do more, and to do better. We also hosted a webinar ‘Awareness Equals Prevention’ highlighting the roles of different mediums and praxes to address social issues and how each of them will help in shaping a new social fabric.

### 3. EDUCATE: CYBER SAFETY MODULE

Out of the 40.3 million victims of trafficking today, 25% comprise young children. We educate to create a new social fabric to end demand through systematic awareness programs for students.

Today, under Covid 19, more than two crore students in India have been affected. Online platforms are now the dominant mode of interaction among young children and adults. According to the ICPF, the online data monitoring websites are showing an increase in demand for searches like 'child porn', 'sexy child' and 'teen sex videos'. Sex abuse and trafficking has moved beyond physical boundaries, and reached the homes of children through their phones. Predators are turning to social media platforms to lure and trap the children into trafficking.

We have constantly been updating the our Missing Anti-Trafficking School Program to sustain its relevance in a changing world. It is important for children and young adults to be aware of what ‘being online’ entails.

To this end, we have added the Cyber Safety Module and are now introducing it across platforms. The Cyber Safety module under the MATp provides a full know-how of how to stay safe online

It is designed in collaboration with cyberlaw, cybersecurity and cyberpsychology experts addressing the increasing instances of cyberbullying, cyber abuse and toxic cyber cultures as recently seen with the BoisLockerRoom incidents and with the earlier ‘Confession Pages’ of schools.

Our aim is to develop resilience, sensitize and empower children with the tools to identify risks and achieve the collective goal of prevention and safety, using interactive and creative activities.

### SEX EDUCATION MODULE

With the increasing adolescent population in India the need for addressing issues regarding sexual and reproductive health strengthens. Incidents such as the BoisLockerRoom highlight the need to talk about respect, consent and gender equality.

This can be done through sex education which gives students the knowledge, attitude, skills and values to make informed choices. The Module is being formulated to help students increase their knowledge, understanding and self-awareness which will further help them make informed and better choices.





## PARENTS' MODULE

While children have limitless access to information, entertainment, and creative tools, the internet puts them at a heightened risk. Identifying and understanding these risks, increasing transparency between children and parents about online activities and establishing safe practices while 'surfing' online are significant to any child's holistic development and growth. Understanding the need for empowering children and parents with the tools to take their protection into their own hands, Missing Link Trust has developed a Parents' Module to help parents and children remain safe.

## SWADHIKAR YOUTH PROGRAM

The 'Swadhikar Youth Program works closely with the youth in most vulnerable communities. The objective of the program is to developing community leadership among the youth which can play a huge role in creating awareness against sex trafficking. Community leadership can reduce their vulnerability and strengthen the social dynamics in the area.

In the villages of Kantamari, Madhusudhanpur and Bhuneshvari, the Swadhikar Youth Group continues to enable and empower especially vulnerable youth through its systematic awareness and leadership program; against against sex trafficking, violence, social imbalances and community unrest.

Today, 120 members have enrolled, to help with our community outreach and data collection, ensuring that the Government initiatives reach all the 3,000 people associated with us.

## GET INVOLVED

### CSR OPPORTUNITY

Our Programs Cover:

- ✓A mutually beneficial collaboration
- ✓Sustainable Outreach
- ✓Compliant with Companies Bill 2012
- ✓Result Oriented and Scalable
- ✓Brand Visibility
- ✓Builds Social Capital and Partnerships
- ✓Nation Building
- ✓Impact Assessment and Outcome Report

### CSR UNDER COVID-19

Under our COVID 19 initiatives we have now trained the women at our empowerment centers to make essential items like masks to meet the rising demand.

Our #SunderbansLivesMatter campaign is driven to provide ration to the poorest and the families in the remotest regions to prevent the increasing vulnerability to trafficking.

## TO DONATE

- Donations accepted through Cheque/DD and online transfer in favour of the MISSING LINK TRUST.
- 
- Our Bank Details for Online Transfer: A/C No: 50200015561433; IFSC Code: HDFC00000008 HDFC BANK LTD, Stephen House Branch, Kolkata
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- Donations to MISSING LINK TRUST (registered under Sec 12A of Income Tax Act, 1961) are exempted from tax u/s 80G of IT Act.