

## FROM THE FRONTLINES

An STCI Quarterly | April 2020 - June 2020

### Celebrating the Life & Work of Our Founder

This April 24<sup>th</sup> marked the 12<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of our founder Mrs. Vipula Kadri. Her extraordinary positivity that was able to change the lives of communities, women and children she touched, has also infused itself into how our organization works and thinks. Her undefeatable spirit shall forever guide our thoughts and actions, as we pledge to uphold her vision of India as a child friendly nation, and continue working towards ending discrimination, exploitation and neglect.



### Of Challenging Times and Unexpected Solutions

Even as the news of a COVID induced nationwide lockdown was settling into the prime-time discourse on March 24<sup>th</sup>, it became increasingly clear that we needed to quickly pivot from the known comfort of our in person operations to the digital realm- an area that we had never been comfort able or savvy with! However, the determination of every member of our team is what has kept us on our feet. Many video calls later, we hopped onto the technology train with Lark, a cloud based programme management application.

Over the past 3 months, we have transitioned our staff onto Lark, enabling a single space for organization wide announcements that also doubles up as a virtual space to celebrate our small victories together. We are now able to communicate seamlessly across verticals, create and share organizational documents for everyone's reference and use, get onto immediate video calls and even manage our teams' internal workflows. All credit for this smooth transition goes to our staff's impressive agility!



### Against The Rising Curve

This pandemic has had devastating effects on the livelihoods of millions, driving them deeper into poverty. Recognizing the need of the hour, STCI stepped in and since the month of March, till date, has supplied over 17,972 grocery and hygiene kits, has facilitated over 418 direct cash transfers, and has distributed 3500 masks and soaps. We have also engaged actively with police personnel, while also distributing over 6000 packets of food to migrants returning home on the Shramik trains.

With the pandemic still in play and despite avenues for funding drying up quickly, we hope to sustain our efforts, and reach out to many more vulnerable communities in the days to come. But we can't do this without your help.



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To Keep Us Going

### Collaborator in Focus: Sonali Fabiani

Sonali is the founder of Altry: Gifts That Matter; an alternative gifting platform that allows people to celebrate an occasion by making do nations to an NGO of their choice. Our collaboration with Altry through the month of May and June was what helped or ganize several digital fundraisers that allowed us to bolster our COVID relief efforts. We caught up with Sonali to better understand her motivations behind leading this extremely fruitful collaboration.

#### What made you support our NGO and our cause?

Having been Athiya's (Shetty) childhood friend, I have been familiar with your inspiring work for a while. But, it wasn't until I grew up, that I realized how STCI truly goes above and beyond for their beneficiaries and staff. You're like a family, and your support is holistic too, unlike most NGOs who are able to contribute to just one aspect of a beneficiary's life. Another aspect that I really admire is your work with children with disabilities, as well as the girls rescued from sex trafficking. These are members of society who are often forgotten, and yet are never missed by STCI.

#### What are the challenges you feel people are continuing to face despite the gradual lifting of the lockdown?

There are still so many issues with the migrant labour force. Many of them are still starving, stranded, or have lost their jobs. Lots of businesses and factories are in no position to rehire- that is the biggest problem right now. Our migrant workers and daily wage labourers need jobs and support.

#### What are your thoughts about STCI's COVID relief efforts?

What makes STCI stand out, is its ability to adapt. The harmonious customization of your work to cater to the need of the hour, whether or not it has been in your niche, is beautiful. When the lockdown happened and millions were rendered unemployed, it was heartening to see STCI spring into action and provide food kits and other essentials to those in need, even though it's quite different from the other work that you do. I appreciate that you stood in solidarity with the vulnerable and worked to redistribute duties and resources, assuming completely new roles as a team to extend a helping hand wherever it was needed.



### SOS: Strengthening The Spirit of Survivors of Trafficking

The current global healthcare crisis has been one of the biggest disruptors of all times. However, it has not only posed a challenge, but has also provided an opportunity to redefine, redesign and recalibrate our existing methods.

The job market has been hit particularly badly. In response, STCI moved from a physical-based-center skilling model to a virtual one. We were able to roll out multiple virtual training courses for the benefit of vulnerable young women in sectors such as the BPO sector, housekeeping (in hospitals), para-nursing, sales and retail. Over the past 3 months, 44 women have been trained and 34 have been placed, giving them the required tools to thrive even in this economic environment.

Besides our work in skilling, we also leveraged the digital space to reach out to survivors of trafficking in shelters across 11 districts in Maharashtra, to address various mental health concerns. We conducted virtual support counseling sessions to aid and ease the anxiety and depression that they were battling, thus supporting 348 young women and girls. Support counseling includes life skills, sessions, and information sharing, that helps address the anxiety and misgivings that victims have regarding their own rescue and post-rescue processes.



Months

2

Virtual Trauma  
Counselling  
Sessions  
Conducted

133

Beneficiaries  
Impacted

348

Protection  
homes  
reached across  
11 districts in  
Maharashtra

19

This pandemic has forced the world to rethink its approaches to everything. At STCI, we're seeing the world around us change and conversations become a little more inclusive and empathetic, even as many begin to notice the discriminatory lines in the sand. Let's ensure that 2020 is remembered, not as a year to fear, but the year in which we reinforced our commitment to erase those lines once and for all.