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# Mala News

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Surya Inc

An action programme for the elimination of child labour in rural India

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Greetings!

## India in Lockdown 2

The lockdown in most countries is proving difficult, but it hits the poorest people far worse. For people in India who exist below the poverty line, life has suddenly become much more challenging, as jobs have disappeared and they now have to rely on government handouts. The picture shows government officers who allocate and record the food distribution.



In normal times, the government gives ration cards to each family with incomes below the poverty line, which includes most of the families in our catchment area. This allows them to receive 20 kg wheat and 15 kg rice per month.

Though, since the lockdown, the government has increased the rations, it is still barely enough, so when the local vegetable trucks arrive in the villages they do a healthy trade.

Registered labourers are also getting Rs 1,000 (£11/\$14) a month from the government during the lockdown. This money is paid into a special bank account called Jandhan but they can only collect it on certain days.

People have been very disciplined in distancing themselves from each other when they queue for the handouts. They must do this, as if they did get infected with coronavirus, there is not the medical facilities in the villages to look after them.



Each class teacher has been asked to provide work for their students to do during the lockdown

They are observing the distancing rules whilst still running some classes in their villages. They have also set up a one to one mentoring system for teachers so that an experienced teacher mentors a less experienced colleague.

We are proud of the way our staff in India have adapted to continue providing children with some education. Mukesh and his team have been very imaginative in finding new ways to keep students and teachers motivated and busy.

They are making the most of this time so they will be ready to hit the ground running once schools are allowed to re-open.



As most of our teachers now have a mobile phone, we have established WhatsApp groups, where each teacher shares their ideas according to the class and level of the students. One group is for primary maths teachers and another for middle school English teachers, for example. These groups become platforms for teachers to learn from each other and get support from their peers.

As our teachers are always eager to learn and improve their teaching, they are doing their best to turn this difficult situation into an opportunity, rather than a disaster.



If you know anyone who you think might be interested in this newsletter, please forward it on.

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