

Disaster policy-

PRAAJAK DISASTER RESPONSE PROTOCOL (Version 1)

This document provides the basic steps for relief operations related to distribution of materials. It also incorporates a follow up and feedback phase.

STEP 1 (Assessing the Situation)

- ***Constitute Response Management Team (RMT):*** The organisation will immediately identify staff who can be involved in the Response Management Team. This team should include a core group with additional responsibilities of coordination, ensuring due processes are followed, supportive handholding, documentation (including updates to key local stakeholders and donors). The staff undertaking the response directly should also be identified and apprised of their role across the stages of the relief operation.
- ***On receipt of information regarding individuals/families/groups needing support*** –This information may be received by any staff at Praajak. Note the name and contact details of the person giving the information. Be empathetic. But also inform that Praajak will need to undertake a quick assessment as well as consider other relevant factors before deciding on providing relief support. This information is to be shared immediately with the core group at the Response Management Team.
- ***Undertake a Rapid Needs Assessment*** using the format given. The member of Response Management Team will ensure an orientation of the team members and volunteers who will undertake the assessment. This assessment is to be done through physical visit and/or obtaining information on phone call as feasible. While collecting information, the staff/volunteer must pay special attention to the questions on identifying vulnerabilities- The following categories will be given priority: belonging to nomadic and migrant communities, daily wage earners facing loss of work and income, women without family support, families with persons with disability, families with elderly and infirm, pregnant and nursing women and those with children below six years. Any other specific situation of distress should also be noted and given due consideration.
- Wherever possible, the data collected through the rapid needs assessment should be cross checked with reliable, local youth collective members or other community representatives. One should remain constantly vigilant, in terms of possible risks of volunteers/other local representatives including persons/families and related requirements as per their motivations/ interests and perceptions. Or, the volunteers may also provide information without adequate exploration. The RMT, in its daily follow up, should touch upon these aspects.
- ***Ensure prompt sharing of needs assessment formats:*** The filled formats are to be immediately shared with the RMT. The RMT has to maintain a spread sheet where

all the data is collated. This sheet will be used for tracking relief distribution. The data will also be helpful for further proposal development and/ or updating relevant stakeholders.

Ensure updating of information: The RMT will have to ensure that the information is updated by sourcing relevant information from other team members, volunteers and other individuals as needed. Wherever possible, a list of Below the Poverty Line households in the possible distribution sites should be sourced from government functionaries. It will also be helpful to collate information about local dietary patterns and sources of nutritious food available to the communities at the possible response locations. This will be a vital input in deciding what basic and/or supplementary food related needs are to be met. Food items that the communities are not used to in pre-Covid situation should not be provided as part of the relief materials.

STEP 2 (Deciding on Response Strategies)

- **Take decision on response design:** Based on needs assessment, the relevant Member RMT has to take a decision on the intervention strategy. Here, budget, on ground capacity to respond, synergies possible with existing projects, equipped staff and other such contextual aspects should be given due attention. The following aspects have to be decided upon.

Overall response design
(finalising relief materials, procurement and kitting, transport and storage, distribution, post distribution follow up, any further measures/supports needed; decide on responsibilities and time frames; check compliance with admin and finance)

Sharing with District authority- As soon as the need assessment is completed and the list of possible recipients and relief materials is drawn up, the information should be shared with the District authority (DM/ADM/SDO and at the block level -BDO) for supporting with the basic food relief (food grains) to the community. It is only in the stop gap of arriving government support; we will provide temporary relief to the community. However, there are exceptions for relief in case we find that the families/communities required additional and supplementary support.

Praajak should stress that it will provide materials as a stop gap arrangement and only to meet current shortfalls as far as possible. The overall emphasis will be on strengthening access of the people to mandated services and enhancing linkages between government functionaries and communities for continued support. The logic for choice of relief materials will also be shared (i.e. to cover what is not available through PDS, see what cannot be obtained by them and other immediate/pressing needs that can be met).

Deciding on relief materials (deciding on food in terms of dry rations and other commodities/staples such as bathing soaps, washing powder/soap, dettol/ savlon, masks, sanitary napkins etc)

*to learn from needs assessment *to check what is available through PDS or other sources easily and what is challenging to obtain *also consider requirements for

- ***Prepare and submit proposal:*** The needs assessment findings and the agreed upon strategies should be converted into brief notes/proposals that can be submitted to potential donors. The relevant documentation should be kept ready.
- ***Ensure readiness for quick response:*** The Response Management Team should be ready to act. Basic orientations and/or additional training, depending on the context, should be arranged. Possible challenges and their solutions should be discussed internally. In case of COVID, the need for the team to undertake safety precautions for themselves should be repeatedly stressed. The core group, with help from the field staff at possible response locations, should identify official authorities who need to be informed and permissions taken (as applicable). Permissions may also be needed to facilitate movement of materials and team members. A list of possible stakeholders who need to be informed and/or involved in some way should also be prepared for ready reference.
- ***Ensure accounts related aspects are understood by all involved:*** The core group has to inform the accounts and admin team about the proposed response work. Procedural aspects related to procurement, payments, distribution and maintaining related records must be clarified and mutually agreed upon.

STEP 3(Implement Response)

- ***Develop plan of action:*** Once the go ahead is secured from donor and organisation's management, a detailed plan of action has to be drawn up immediately. This plan of action should have detailed steps for logistics and distribution, communication and documentation. Travel routes, including alternates where possible, should be identified clearly. Praajak will preferably engage in relief efforts with communities it has worked with before. The emphasis will be on maximising coverage. Here, the range of items provided may be reduced to fit financial considerations. Praajak will work in new locations only where there is a clear and pressing need. Here, nomadic communities, those involved in begging and others without clear sources of income and living along railway tracks will be prioritised. The organisation will see if the related efforts can be tagged with Railway CHILDLINE.
- ***Inform and secure permissions as needed:*** The Response Management Team should inform and/or secure permissions from government functionaries as needed based on the earlier groundwork. Local police thana/s should also be informed. They should also inform other key non government stakeholders, as identified earlier. The grounds on which the support is being given may need to be clarified. The scope of the organisation to respond only to a certain number of those in need should also be stressed. The engagement with the government functionaries (such as ADM, DSWO, SDO, BDO and others) is essential to ensure that Praajak's efforts are seen as complementary to their response work.
- ***Undertake procurement:*** Based on the rapid needs assessment and other considerations mentioned earlier, the final list of relief materials should be prepared. Procurement processes should be undertaken. Ideally, the three quotation

norm should be followed. Where this is not possible at all, local solutions may be devised in discussion with the admin and finance team. Check if the suppliers will prepare the materials in the distribution kits. This may involve additional costs. Alternately, the Response Management Team can see how to do this. In either scenario, the safety precautions must be maintained. For instance, if the kitting is being done by the team and volunteers, this should be done at a location with sufficient space; the people involved have to wear gloves and masks, maintain social distancing, sanitising and hand washing directions etc. Praajak will continue to use existing procurement rules, with some reality based exemptions, that are documentation individually.

- ***Undertake storage and transport as needed:*** Arrangements for keeping the materials in warehouse/other selected sites have to be made. The storage location should not be damp or in any other condition that can adversely impact the materials. It should be accessible. Safety precautions must be followed by Response Management Team and others involved in the storage and transport processes as well.
- ***Undertake distribution:*** The response management team should then undertake the distribution. Volunteers can be involved as needed. Key local stakeholders, including the police, should be informed in advance. Also, check whether the presence of any government functionary is needed or has been mandated by local/state authorities. For covid relief, door to door distribution is preferable and better aligned to the safety precautions and lockdown norms. While following the protocol, the response management team should also be aware of the evolving situations. If there are any emerging issues or aspects that call for deviation from plans, these should be discussed immediately with the core group. Ensure documentation of the distribution with lists (with signatures) and photographs. It is important to ensure that the distribution and related documentation uphold the dignity of the recipients of the relief measures.

Further, the team and volunteers should follow the safety measures themselves and also encourage the recipients to do so. The core group should also undertake regular support and follow up calls with those at the frontlines of the relief distribution. This should be done on a daily basis.

- ***Other aspects at distribution stage:*** Reiterate the key safety and hygiene messages during the distribution. The team members may also have to provide information on PDS, linking with BDO for accessing any scheme etc. They should encourage the recipients to connect with the mandated government service providers for continuing support.
- ***Scope for provision of mobile top ups for key community leaders:*** Praajak can explore the provision of providing mobile top ups to select community leaders at the response locations. This will help in following up including learning about urgent needs and facilitating support. However, this provision has to be exercised for a limited number and time period.

Some Pointers for COVID Relief Distribution

- *Ensure that the distribution processes have factored in due time for receipt, offloading and packaging of materials as needed.
- *Maintain norms for safe distance, wearing masks and gloves, being mindful of surfaces being touched and frequent hand washing among the team members. Keep sanitisers (or soap and water) ready for use. Advise the recipients about the same as well.
- *Be cautious in use of language. Do not use terms such as 'suspected cases'. Use messaging that is positive and does not perpetuate stigma in any way.
- *If any of the recipients appear to have symptoms of Covid, encourage them to report to the relevant health centre/ authorities.
- *Crowd management issues may emerge. Have a prior plan for dealing with such situations.
- *The interaction during the distribution process may bring other needs/requirements to light. The response management team can see how best these can be addressed i.e. through referrals to any government functionary/agency, linkage with schemes, connect with other NGOs etc. These also provide the basis for further programming. At the same time, it is important not to make any false promises to the recipients.

STEP 4(Feedback and Follow up)

- ***Follow up with recipients:*** The response management team/volunteers should follow up with the recipients within seven days of the distribution. The purpose of this follow up is to check the utility of the materials shared and related experiences. It can also be seen whether the recipients acted on information shared about PDS/other services and whether they need further inputs/support for the same. Any emerging/continuing needs can also be noted. The team can see which linkages can be leveraged to address the same.
- ***Follow up with systemic functionaries:*** Updates, including a final overview of the relief efforts, should be shared with the key systemic functionaries. The response management team should ensure that this is provided in both verbal and written form (can be an email). The list of recipients (and criteria for choosing) and materials provided should be clearly outlined. Praajak's appreciation for their support should be communicated. The emerging and continuing needs should also be reiterated. Here, the emphasis should be on encouraging the systemic functionaries to play their mandated roles in supporting the affected individuals/households.
- ***Closure:*** The relief efforts should be concluded as per the timeline. The response management team should cross check and finalise related administration, finance, monitoring and documentation requirements. The response management team

should conduct a meeting to reflect on its experiences, highs and lows and insights. The experiences of the volunteers should also be valued. Aspects such as further follow up with local systemic functionaries for specific communities should be noted. These may be communicated to relevant field staff/ local volunteers. Periodic updates can be taken from them. The insights gained can also be used to inform further programming.

Praajak will ensure access to counselling support for the response management team and volunteers involved. It will utilise its internal resources (i.e. staff trained on mental health). External support may be taken as needed.

Annexure 1 - Needs Assessment Form

Household characteristics

Location:

Address (Village, GP, Block, P.S, District, Landmark):

Contact number:

1. Background of Household Members										
No	Name of household member	Sex (Male /female /other)	Age (in years)	Education	Ration card holder (Yes/No)	Has bank account/ Jan Dhan account (Yes/No) and specify	Has job card (Yes/No)	Has Aadhar (Yes/No)	Is migrant stuck outside during lockdown (Yes/No)	Main Occupation
1	<i>Name</i> <i>(Head of household)</i>									
2	<i>Name</i> <i>(Relationship)</i>									
3										
4										
5										

2. Ration Status	
1) Are you getting Ration (Yes, No)	
2) please add - what did you receive last and when (date)	

3) Is the ration received enough for the family? (Yes, No)	
4) If No for (2). What is the present requirement for Ration?	
5) Remarks	

3. Vulnerabilities (Please √):

- a. Nomadic/Itinerant group . Migrant Labourers
- c. Family with elderly d. Family with Disability
- e. Pregnant women f. Lactating women
- g. Infant below 6 years h. Suffering from persisting/chronic illness
- i. Women without family support
- h. Any other (Please specify)

Note: Women without family support - This includes unmarried, widowed, separated/divorced, abandoned women who do not have any family support

4. Requirements		
Item	Quantity	Remarks

Key Activity	Timeline	Responsibility	Outcome	Support Required
<i>Orientation of field workers/volunteers on Disaster Response Protocol and rapid need assessment format</i>		Response Management Team	The field workers/volunteers understands the protocol clearly before starting the relief work	Support from Project lead/Director
Undertake Needs Assessment	2 days	Field Worker	Needs Assessment information at Praajak office	Guidance from Praajak office; logistics, etc
Information spread sheet processing	1 day	Response Management Team	Updated spread sheet ready for proposal development	Guidance from project lead; Director
Information dissemination with stakeholders (District- DM/ADM, Sub-division- SDO Block- BDO and Police)	Continuous, as per need	Member, Response management team	Advocacy and proposal development	Guidance from project lead; Director
Project design and proposal submission	As per donor request	Member, Response Management team	Proposal and budget for submission	Guidance from project lead, task force, and project director. Support from GB members as requested
Post approvals, procurement system in place	To be filled in as per project timeline	Member, Response Management team in coordination with admin and accounts (?)	Tenders approved for procurement	Guidance from project lead; Director
Post approvals, distribution plan in place	To be filled in as per project timeline	Member, Response Management team	Purchase, packaging, transport and warehousing/storage processes in	Guidance from project lead; Director

			place	
permission (written/verbal) taken from authorities related to list of recipients and materials (DM/ADM/SDO and BDO) and informing police, and relevant community stakeholders	Continuous, as per need	Member, Response Management team	Effective distribution of relief	Guidance from project lead/ Director
Safety measures by the Field staff/volunteers (ensure that all have mask, gloves and sanitizers)		Response Management team	Field staff/volunteers stay safe from pandemic while discharging their duties	Guidance from project lead/ Director
Distribution logistics & Transport	To be filled in as per project timeline	Member, Response Management team	Distribution and storage plan in place and executed (Can put storage before distribution, can mention safety measures)	Guidance from project lead; Director
Documentation (Along with the list of distribution with signatures/thumb impressions, field staff shall also take a receipt/ acknowledgements from the community members, if necessary) Photography/Video can be taken but with consent/ norms laid down under Child Safeguarding policy	To be filled in as per project timeline	Member, Response Management team	Documentation plan and key outputs, including photographs, case studies, videos and process reports	Guidance from project lead; Director. Support from GB members as requested
Reporting	To be filled in as per project	Member, Response Management	Reporting as per donor requirements	Guidance from project lead;

	timeline	team		Director
Follow up (This could be by visiting the beneficiaries again or through telephone, if they are not available on phone then this can be done by through local volunteers)	Post response project activity, depending on availability of beneficiaries participants	Member, Response Management team	Report for future project, and stakeholder reference	Guidance from project lead; Director. Support from GB members as requested
Advocacy with state for linkages (Primarily block and District level functionaries; can include other levels as possible)	Post project activity, depending on availability of stakeholders for sharing and dissemination events	Member, Response Management team	Minutes of stakeholder events; follow up actions	Guidance from project lead; Director. Support from GB members as requested

Disaster Preparedness Plan-

Praajak will set up an Emergency Response Team (ERT) that will work together during a disaster situation.

The key functions of this ERT will be as follows:

1. Coordinate Praajak's emergency preparedness plan and response
2. Raise awareness about the cross-cutting nature of emergency preparedness and response among all units of the organisation
3. Allocate responsibilities among staff
4. Identify areas where gaps in mandates or lack of operational capacity exist
5. Ensure that staff understands and knows how to apply standards and guidelines regarding to emergency preparedness and response
6. Ensure the Emergency Preparedness Plan is kept up to date and used to inform strategic and programmatic planning processes

The role of Praajak's ERT during a disaster response:

1. Send an emergency alert to all stakeholders
2. Make sure all staff are safe
3. Call an ERT meeting to review EPP and plan for response
4. Dispatch proposals for disaster relief to donors and stakeholders
5. Set up a communication process for the ERT
6. Ensure the timeliness, quality and effectiveness of emergency response
7. Prepare, review and update an initial Response Strategy for all related stakeholders
8. Participate in relevant interagency coordination meetings (clusters), assessments, gender analysis, and sector specific interactions
9. Arrange proper support to the emergency response in the form of programming, finance, administration, procurement, safety and security, IT and communication
10. Develop media and communications materials for dissemination across stakeholders

11. Carry out After Action Review (this usually takes place after three months of the emergency response) and feed the lessons learned to the existing programmes