

September 12th, 2020

Urban Farming: COVID-19 Resilience Building Program, Chennai

Compiled by Pudiyador Association for Community Empowerment (PACE)

Summary of urban farming program from July to September:

Date of distribution	Organization	Purpose	Number of individuals/ families	Cost (INR)	Approx. cost (USD)
Jul 7, 2020	IRCDUC	Survey	500	10000	\$143
Jul 31, 2020	Pudiyador	Garden kits	65	61750	\$882
Jul 31, 2020	IRCDUC	Garden kits	65	61750	\$882
Aug 22, 2020	Pudiyador	Garden diary tracker - Notebooks	49	2695	\$39
Sep 1, 2020	Pudiyador	Monitoring and Evaluation resources	3	3520	\$50
Oct 1, 2020	Pudiyador	Monitoring and Evaluation resources	13	8000	\$114
TOTAL	-	-	-	147715	\$2110

An individual report for Pudiyador is included.

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Pudhiyadhor Charitable Trust (Pudiyador)

Please visit www.pudiyador.org for latest updates (COVID-relief pages are updated weekly).

Overview of Urban Farming Program

The Urban Farming project is designed to be run by community members for the community. The vision of this project is to provide gardening kits for each family to grow their own produce sustainably.

PACE supported both IRCDUC and Pudiyador in providing emergency relief food rations. For more than 2 months we were monitoring the needs of our communities, and have successfully completed 4 rounds of food relief distribution within the communities of operations. After the 4th round of distribution, it was clear that emergency relief rations were no longer required and thus the urban farming program arose.

We have repurposed the remaining 2,24,937 lakhs or \$3213.39 to do an urban farming project with our beneficiaries who have expressed specific interest in this project. We conducted a detailed survey to identify families that will be interested to do this. 130 gardening kits were purchased. 65 respectively for IRCDUC and Pudiyador. Pudiyador also wanted to engage the children in this project as this will be a great practical learning for them. Additionally, money has been allocated to pay Pudiyador alumni (youth and teens) to monitor and evaluate this project within the communities for over a 6 month period.

Geography/Profile of our communities

Pudiyador takes a cradle-to-college approach to community empowerment. Pudiyador works with disadvantaged communities in Chennai to provide access to resources and education that allow communities to break cycles of generational hardship. As an organization, we take a multi-pronged and holistic approach to community empowerment to ensure that we are working with the needs of all stakeholders within the community. Pudiyador is currently working in these four communities:

- Ramapuram - Girinagar (PR1)
- Ramapuram - Gangai Amman Kovil (PR2)
- Besant Nagar - Kakkan colony, irular tribe, vannanthurai (PKA)
- Besant Nagar - Urur Olcott Kuppam (PUK)

Urur-Olcott Kuppam is a fishing community. Gangai Amman Kovil (GK) and Girinagar are scheduled caste communities of migrants. In both GK and Girinagar, most women work in garment export companies, while men are predominantly construction workers, drivers, watchmen and carpenters. Kakkan Colony is

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a mixed area, composed of the Irular Vannan (laundry men and women) sub-caste, and most recently, a community of migrants from neighboring Andhra Pradesh. The migrants from Andhra are primarily housekeepers that serve middle-class families in the nearby area. The Irular community consists of the Irula tribe that were traditionally nomadic rat catchers, but today pick through garbage and sell recyclable materials. In all communities, families fall in the Economically Backward Class.

Number of Farming Kits Distributed

Community	Number of kits distributed (one per family)	Number of kits returned
Ramapuram - Giri Nagar	11	0
Ramapuram - Gangai Amman Kovil	21	5
Urur -Olcott Kuppam	19	4
Kakkan colony, Irular tribe & Vannandurai	14	5

***Note: When the kits were distributed, 11 families returned the kits back despite showing interest during the initial survey. The reason for return is lack of space as the kits turned out to be big in size and difficult to accommodate in the small sized homes especially during rains and they also expressed fear of rats and pests. As of October 14th, there are 6 families that have expressed interest in doing urban farming. We will soon be assigning monitoring and evaluation resources and get them started. The remaining 5 kits will be retained in our centers as there are many families that are not in town due to the pandemic. We want to encourage more families in the community to take up urban farming and these kits will help us do that. 3 of the kits that are on hold are the kits that need to be grown at the centers (physical spaces where children come for after-school program sessions). Since there have been no ground operations, these kits are each kept at the 3 community centers. As of October 8th, we have started micro-classrooms and will be able to encourage the children that didn't have space at home to slowly take up responsibility for the center kit.

Collection of Data (Initial Survey and Analysis)

We designed a questionnaire for this project. Out of 125 families, 62 families were interested in executing the project. In addition to the 62 families, we arranged 3 more kits at our centres (physical spaces where the children come for the after-school sessions) as a few of the households have space, water and other constraints which is why the extra kits at the centers are planned. This extra kit at the centres ensures that resources should not inhibit the stakeholders participation.

Monitoring and Evaluation plan

To ensure the execution and monitoring of the project, we have elected a total of 10 people from all the 4 communities that are stakeholders of Early Teens, Youth Advancement Program, Alumni and Women's Program of Pudiyador. In addition, 3 internal resources who are also full-time employees at Pudiyador will mentor the field resources to execute the project smoothly. The 10 community resource persons and the 3 internal resources will be given an honorarium each month.

Detailed plan for monitoring and evaluation by the field and internal resources along with the costs involved for the period of 6 months is captured in the attached link -

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1clk2wL6EwUMdKloQis6jX_V3jLcNTFT-/view?usp=sharing

Orientation

Procurement of kits was done by Sempulam Sustainable Solutions whose vision is to create rich earth through eco-friendly, sustainable technologies. Ms. Parimala from Sempulam conducted orientation sessions for all the resource persons involved in this project and few stakeholders about the gardening kits and its usage. Following which we organised internal discussions with our 10 community resource persons on how to proceed with the project. This was beneficial as our resource persons were able to help our beneficiaries efficiently.

Distribution strategy

As this project took place during the lockdown, we made sure that we abided by all government rules and norms. Our Ground Team is in charge of making the phone calls and ensuring that staff members in each respective community receive the correct number of garden kit packages. A distribution location is designated (most often being a Pudiyador centre) and distributions begin. A team of staff members and volunteers call all families to inform them of this collection date and time and confirm that someone from the family will come to collect their garden kit package. On the day of distribution, one member from each family came at their designated time to receive their respective kit. All distribution spots followed safety protocol (physical distancing, masks, hand wash/hand sanitizer) and ensured that one family was invited at a time and family members were instructed to wear masks. Pudiyador staff members in each community recorded the collection data and also handed out the garden kit manual and garden diary tracker notebook.

Highlights and challenges (August - September)

Highlights :

- Community resource persons have shown great interest in the project. They have taken ownership of the tasks allotted to them. Some of the most impressive outcomes are - call up the assigned families each week, confidently answering queries, following up on the garden

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diary tracker, visiting the homes and plants, sharing photos and videos on the groups and coordinating with the internal resources to seek advice.

- Our beneficiaries, especially children, are enjoying this project. They are carefully tracking the growth of the plants and writing down their feelings each day in the form of emoticons in their garden diary notebook. Each time there is a leaf, fruit, vegetable or flower that they see, they have been overjoyed.
- Some of our beneficiaries harvested their produce like spinach and have made several hearty home cooked meals with them

Challenges :

- 11 of the families who had expressed interest during the initial survey, returned the kits as the kit had many items which didn't fit in their homes. (6 families have expressed interest as of October 14th and will soon be given orientation and assigned monitoring and evaluation resources)
- Pests like rats and insects made the gardening process strenuous
- Most families have access to only salt water and as a result it became challenging for them to take care of their plants well
- Consistency in maintaining garden diary tracker has been tough as many beneficiaries are busy with their daily chores at home and work
- During heavy rains, the families are unable to protect the plants as shifting them inside their small homes is not feasible

Budget breakdown (July - September)

Garden kits

Cost of 1 garden kit is Rs.950 / \$14

Organization	Community	Number of kits distributed (one per family)	Total cost (INR)	Total approx cost (USD)
Pudiyador	Ramapuram - Giri Nagar	11	10450	149
Pudiyador	Ramapuram - Gangai Amman Kovil	21	19950	285
Pudiyador	Urur -Olcott Kuppam	19	18050	258
Pudiyador	Kakkan colony, Irular tribe & Vannandurai	14	13300	190

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IRCDUC	Chennai zone 5 - urban farming survey	-	10000	143
IRCDUC	Chennai zone 5	65	61750	882
Total	-	130	133500	1907

Garden diary notebooks

Cost of 1 notebook is Rs.55 / ~\$1

Community	Number of books distributed (one per family)	Total cost (INR)	Total approx cost (USD)
Ramapuram - Giri Nagar	9	495	7
Ramapuram - Gangai Amman Kovil	16	880	13
Urur -Olcott Kuppam	15	825	12
Kakkan colony, Irular tribe & Vannandurai	9	495	7
Total	49	2695	39

Monitoring and Evaluation cost for resources:

Cost per resource per hour is Rs.160 / ~\$3

AUGUST				
Resource	Number of resources	Total hours spent/month	Total cost (INR)	Total approx cost (USD)
Internal	3	22	3520	50
Community	0	0	0	0
Total	3	22	3520	50

SEPTEMBER				

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Resource	Number of resources	Total hours spent/month	Total cost	Total approx cost (USD)
Internal	3	10	1600	23
Community	10	40	6400	91
Total	13	50	8000	114

Photos:





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