In the beginning the virus seemed far and distant. But soon it reached our city and a large team from the Foundation got together with a wide range of partners, working at the frontlines.

An effective response was the need of the hour.

Put yourself in their shoes. There's a life threatening virus, and there's a chance you could lose your livelihood if you test positive for it.

So getting people to sign up for testing was not going to be easy.

There's a pandemic, people refuse to put on masks, and fear and misinformation has gripped the city of Bengaluru.

Saltwater bath kills corona! Masks trap toxic air!

Plant Neem!

There were multiple challenges to be tackled.
Our partners wasted no time to launch a campaign against misinformation.

And over the next few days, they gained the community's trust. They organized community meetings led by capable facilitators.

Doctors whom the community trusted came in, and soon people volunteered to get tested.

And N95s and PPEs were dispensed to frontline workers.

Mercy Mission opened field booths to screen people.

And everything was going according to plan.
Earning people's trust was one thing, but the tests themselves... that was a completely different story.

The government machinery was working overtime to come up with solutions.

This here is an RT-PCR machine, it’s the gold-standard for COVID-19 diagnosis. It works by searching for a specific genetic sequence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus from the sample taken from cells or fluid in a person’s nose or throat.

But RT-PCR, though highly accurate, requires complex bio-safety-compliant lab set ups and also takes longer to give a result.

Our partners encouraged members of the community to get tested.

Along with the RT-PCR, the Rapid Antigen testing kits were also used for testing. They usually provide test results rapidly and are easy to use which makes them more suitable for testing in the community.

However, the Rapid Antigen testing kits aren’t as accurate as the RT-PCR tests.

If the results turn out positive on the Rapid Antigen kit, then it’s taken as a positive. But if it doesn’t, they are retested on the RT-PCR machine just to be doubly sure.

Like I said, RT PCR machines are highly accurate, but they’re also expensive and hard to move around.
True NAAT tests that are used for Tuberculosis on the other hand, are battery operated, portable and cheaper. And come close to an RT PCR test's accuracy.

Over the last few months, 5 high capacity RNA extraction machines have been added to the labs in IISC, NIMHANS, BMCRI, NIV and NCBS.

3 RT-PCR labs were set up in Jayanagar GH, CV Raman Hospital and KC GH.

16 TrueNet™ machines were allocated to allow for mobile testing at the ward level.

Training sessions helped doctors and technicians to better use the machines.

It is estimated that testing capacity can be doubled by these efforts.
Things were finally shaping up, but in July, everything changed dramatically.

A partner hospital had been treating Covid patients for close to 4 months.

Our volunteers helped the hospital to expand their capacity of oxygenated beds.

But in July they experienced a sudden surge in the number of patients. And with it an increased demand for oxygen beds and ICU facilities.

And with the increasing number of cases, every extra bed counts.

And remember our partners at the frontlines?

They've helped to reduce a bit of the stress on the public healthcare system by screening and testing for early symptoms in the field.
After brainstorming with the government, we also realized that it was important to empower the critical care units.

Together we helped increase the number of oxygenated and intensive care beds in public hospitals like Bowring, Charaka and Lady Curzon Hospital.

As well as hospitals like St. Johns Medical College, Bangalore Baptist and St. Martha’s.

Our partners stepped in and helped by supplying equipment, and in certain cases, by bringing in equipment, doctors and nursing staff through our partners.

Doctors For You (DFY), along with their team of doctors, nurses and healthcare staff, worked with the government to provide care and treatment to COVID patients.

Covid Care Centres in Jigani and the government hospital in Anekal and Yelahanka were made operational by our partners.
A team of doctors and nurses managed the 150 oxygenated beds to cope with the demand.

There was a special focus to provide free treatment for patients who could not afford private hospital beds.

The hospital witnessed another sudden spike and experienced a severe supply crunch of ventilators.

They moved quickly, and our partner IQRAA in Calicut was able to send us back 8 ventilators that weren't in use.

In Bengaluru West Zone itself more than 27853 tests have been completed.

So how was all this even possible?

More than 29153 household surveys were conducted and Contact Cards distributed for assistance.
It's because of hundreds of people working around the clock, seven days a week.

Hundreds of our partners volunteered to work in the frontlines.

From getting the word out, to awareness, screening, and handing out supplies.

To people working behind the desk.

From liaising with the government, watching over logistics, and making sure everything ran like a finely oiled machine.

To the doctors who test and treat patients without any sleep.

Our partners give it their all.
Spread all across Bengaluru, each of our partners do their crucial bit complementing each other.

**FRONTLINE & COMMUNITY WORK**
1. Action Aid
2. Hasiru Dala
3. CFAR
4. Maarga
5. Sangama
6. FEDINA
7. Project Smile
8. Swabhimaan Trust
9. SAMA Foundation
10. Gubbachi
11. Let's be the Change
12. Reaching Hands
13. SEIDS
14. APSA
15. APD
16. India Rising

**HOSPITALS & CARE CENTRES**
24. Bangalore Baptist Hospital
25. Vimalaya Hospital
26. HBS Hospital
27. Enablers United
28. St. John's
29. St. Martha's

**MASS COMMUNICATION**
17. Surewaves
18. The Ugly Indian

**TESTING & CONSUMABLES**
21. Karuna Trust
22. Anahat Foundation
23. PHC Anekal

**HELPDESK & HELPLINE**
19. LabourNet
20. Mercy Mission

Plus all the ASHA workers, government employees and departments, Health workers, medical staff at the PHCs, other frontline workers and employees of the BBMP.

(* as on date the number of volunteers on the project is 1550)
Oh, and one last thing before you go.

Given the exposure from the nature of our work, we are constantly getting tested.

This used to happen twice a month, now it’s a regular feature.

But there’s still a long way to go. We don’t know how things may change a few months from now.

All I can say is that we will continue to do our job. Taking it one day at a time.