

## MEMBERS OF THE RESPONSE TEAM

- [Suvita](#) (a Charity Entrepreneurship-incubated nonprofit specialising in community messaging to increase immunisation uptake in India)
- [Charity Science Health](#) (a GiveWell-incubated and N/Core-incubated nonprofit specialising in mass SMS reminders to increase immunisation uptake in India)
- [Dr. Sebastian Bauhoff](#) (Harvard Assistant Professor of Global Health and Economics) and his research team

Members of our team specialise in **health economics, health-related behaviour change, community information dissemination, mass SMS messaging, phone-based surveys** and **data analysis**. We have a database of our **3 lakh (300,000) programme users across seven states in India** and working relationships with **multiple state governments**. This puts us in a unique position to support their work at this crucial time. We are now applying our skills and resources to the coronavirus pandemic, particularly to support Indian policymakers in encouraging **behaviour change to reduce transmission of COVID-19**.

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES

### Community outreach and mobilisation

1) **Send mass SMS messages and voice calls to provide information and encourage individual behaviour change to reduce COVID-19 transmission, reduce the burden on health services and save lives**

- Aligned with [MOHFW](#) and [WHO](#) recommendations
- Shaped by behavioural science
- Reach low-income communities who have limited access to information

We will reach:

- Up to **one crore (10 million) people on behalf of the Maharashtra State Government Information Education Communication Bureau (IECB)**
- Our **3 lakh (300,000) existing programme users**
- Populations requested by **other state governments** as the opportunity arises (partner discussions are ongoing)

2) **Send SMS messages to 70,000 ASHAs (community health workers) on the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19 on behalf of the Maharashtra IECB**

- Share government instructions rapidly and directly
- Nudge ASHAs to disseminate government-approved messaging in their communities

## Actionable research

3) **Investigate existing knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of low-income communities** in India related to COVID-19 (through phone surveys and in collaboration with other groups doing similar work). **Identify key gaps** which can be targeted by government messaging campaigns.

4) Use state of the art adaptive testing [techniques](#) to **optimise the timing, content and frequency** of SMS messages and voice calls to be maximally effective for encouraging COVID-19-related behaviour change in India. **Share these actionable findings in real time with policymakers and other organisations doing similar work.** This will assist other decision-makers with optimising their own mass messaging campaigns.

5) Utilise the research to improve the effectiveness of our regular mass messaging for immunisation. This will be valuable for **ensuring that a COVID-19 vaccine is taken up universally** when one is developed, as well as for **strengthening India's routine immunisation catch-up response**, which will be vital after coronavirus, as stated by [UNICEF](#).

*These plans will evolve over time depending on where we can most usefully support government efforts as the crisis develops. All activities will be conducted in accordance with the Government of India's coronavirus guidance and restrictions.*

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### Inform us

We are interested in existing data describing COVID-19-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in India. We are keeping up-to-date with IDinsight's work and have conducted our own pilot survey but are aware that other organisations may be conducting similar surveys in parallel.

### Share our findings

If you have contacts in state or central governments in India, or from other organisations sending COVID-related messaging in India, please get in touch. We would be delighted to discuss how we can work together to have a greater impact. We are already being put in touch with Noora Health and Busara.

### Fund us

We have committed our staff time over the next 6 months to the COVID-19 response. We are seeking funding to cover these costs plus a significant increase in our messaging expenses. The number of people we reach and our ability to iterate and optimise messages will be limited by the additional funds we can raise to send more messages and to evaluate their effectiveness.

**Contact us:** please get in touch with Varsha and Fiona at [covid@suvita.org](mailto:covid@suvita.org)