



Mercy Home
Project Report
January—December 2020

Battling Poverty amidst a Pandemic

Rehabilitating people and their livelihoods in the COVID-19 pandemic



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1. Introduction

Sixteen families were released from seven Brick-kilns in 2019, seven families in June and nine in December, altogether 72 members. These were settling down nicely, men in their small businesses, women learning sewing, handicraft, adult literacy and other such skills, and the children enjoying their basic schooling when coronavirus suddenly struck the whole world, without a warning, not sparing anyone, indiscriminately affecting the rich and the poor alike. No one was able to stand the effects of its cruelty. Businesses were shut down; oil became invaluable and the cities large and small turned into ghost cities. Our projects were severely affected, as these families were disturbed with no work.

Our first response in this situation was to pray for these sixteen families, hold them together and give them some hope and reassurance; remembering the others, vulnerable and weak, who were still working on brick-kilns, and people working on daily wages.

From 23rd March 2020, we created a regular contact chain with Mercy Home Pakistan. We would call each of them several times a day to get updates on those who were struggling. These sixteen families were our priority. The small businesses, which Mercy Home had set up for them, were no longer running as every business throughout the country was shut down. They were confused and shattered because of the COVID-19 Crisis.

In the last week of March, we started sending funds from Australia to organise food packs for these 16 families, staff of Mercy Home, Christian Health Centre, Sarai Mahajir, families working on brick-kilns in our target area on 15 different locations, some families in Kasur, Sikandrabad, Hyderabad, Latifabad, and Faisalabad, who were dependent on their daily wage, which is hardly enough to provide a single decent meal for their children. Many lost their jobs and were depending on the churches and Christian organisations for help.

The executive committee immediately decided to help families on brick-kilns, those working in factories, mills, as labourers on daily wages, as they had no work. From April to mid-July, we were able to send funds for a month's food supply each month to almost 200 families. Besides this, we were able to help several families with their health issues and overall well-being. Our efforts in this area involved extending health services to women and their children including three normal deliveries of babies and a c-section.

Two weddings were organised on August 14, for two sisters released from a brick kiln in June 2019, which was nothing short of a dream coming true for them.

All women from the 16 families had six-month training in sewing and handicrafts. They were given a sewing machine each with accessories so that they can contribute to their family income. Distributed on Mercy's 100th Birthday, on 10th October 2020.

Twenty-five families working at four brick-kilns in Faisalabad received full bedding sets as 2020 saw some of the coldest winters on record in that region. These were given to them as Christmas presents.

2. Food rationing and distribution activities

Food packs were distributed to 16 families released in June 2019 and December 2019 in Sarai Muhajir (f.1-5). They were supported for four full months. Almost 50 families, still working at brick-kilns, were also supported with food and groceries for three months. Elsewhere in Hyderabad, (f.6-9), Kasur (f.10-11) and Faisalabad (f.12) similar activities continued.



Figure 1: Sunday Church Service in Mercy Memorial Church started on the 15th May 2020 when the provincial government of Punjab allowed religious gatherings, up to 50 members. Numbers have since gradually increased to 100.



Figure 2: Arshad, released in June 2019, receiving his share for his family of five, from Mr Javid Iqbal, manager Mercy Home, Christian Health Centre, Sarai Muhajir.



Figure 3: Shahbaz was the first one to be released from slavery in June 2019 – he lost his work for almost three months, receiving his share from Mr Ijaz Sardar, a voluntary worker with Mercy Home.



Figure 4: Food distribution to the 16 families released from Brick-Kilns in 2019 – received food regularly for four months, including Christian Health Centre staff, Sarai Muhajir.



Figure 5: Dr Narisa and Rachel took an active part in the Mercy Home food distribution.



Figure 6: Hyderabad food distribution project to over 100 families for three months.



Figure 7: Mr Jerryson George, a member of the executive committee, Mercy Home Pakistan played an active role in distributing food to daily wagers who lost their jobs.



Figure 8: See below



Figure 9: Hundred food packs every month were prepared by volunteers of Mercy Home in Hyderabad, for 3 months. Food was distributed in Hyderabad, Sikandarabad and Latifabad U5.



Figure 10: Food distribution at brick-kilns in Kasur for three months to 25 families. Rev Mukhtar Gulab, who works voluntarily for Mercy Home, helped in the distribution of food and groceries.



Figure 11: See figure 10



Figure 12: Pastor Sarwar Masih, who works voluntarily for Mercy Home in Faisalabad, distributed food to 25 families at various brick-kilns for 3 months. At the end of the project, he also suffered from COVID-19 in July 2020 and was in isolation for 21 days. He was treated for almost a month to stand on his feet. He is well and once again involved in visiting 25 Christian families in four Brick-Kilns.

3. Helping people restore their livelihood – June/July 2020

Mercy Home helped Shahbaz (right) to buy a loader, with which he earns around Rs.1,000 to Rs. 1,200 every day and has a happy family. They were released in June 2019 and are extremely grateful to Mercy Home and



to the people who contributed generously toward their release. Almost all the 16 families have started some form of work or businesses, earning happily towards a better livelihood.

4. Another family released

Mr Yasir Masih and his wife were released in June 2019 along with their two children. Mercy Home set up a small business for Yasir and he now earns Rs. 800 a day. His wife had two c-sections previously and the family borrowed money from someone to cover their costs. Upon being unable to pay their debts, their debtor took them to a brick-kiln owner three years ago. The family was thereby trapped into bondage at the brick kiln. This fortunate family had their third child through another c-section after their release. Mercy Home took responsibility for the procedure and the well-being of the mother and the child. Her operation was done at the Mercy Home Christian Health Centre at Sarai Muhajir.



Figure 14: Yasir at the bedside of his wife and the newborn



Figure 15: The mother and the newborn child.



Figure 16: Yasir and his family are grateful for the help that Mercy Home and their donors and well-wishers have extended to them.



Figure 17: The healthy newborn was born from a c-section performed at the Mercy Home Christian Health Centre at Sarai Muhajir.

5. State-of-affairs amidst the coronavirus pandemic

We thank our supporters with heartfelt gratitude for helping and supporting more than 200 families who suffered a great loss - financially, emotionally, and physically - as a consequence of the lockdowns following the coronavirus outbreak. Most of them are back on their feet as their small businesses were restored in July 2020. There were no COVID-19 cases reported in any of these families. Brick-kilns were shut down for a full three months and many who were still working there, waiting for the work to start again, could still be vulnerable as they may have taken further loans from the kiln-owners to feed their families through the pandemic. We pray for those thousands of families that God might send help to them and their burden is decreased.

5.1. Weddings and celebrations

Mr Pervaiz was released with his family of seven from the brick kiln in June 2019. A year on from their release, Mercy Home helped in the wedding arrangements for Mr Pervaiz's two daughters - Sobia and Sunika. The family was elated and said that this was nothing short of a miracle.



Figure 18: Pervaiz's daughters Sobia and Sunika as brides on their wedding day



Figure 19: The bridegrooms, Adnan James and Shamoon Amin sat in the middle



Figure 20: Grooms imprint the Church of Pakistan wedding register with fingerprints.



Figure 21: They also provide their signatures in the register.



Figure 22: A beautiful picture of the two couples together



Figure 23: Pervaiz and his family proclaim this day a true miracle for their family



Figure 24: Mr and Mrs Javid Iqbal, staff members at Christian Health Centre and their daughter stand alongside the newly-married couples helping organise their wedding arrangements. In the background is the dowry that the two brides were given. The picture was taken in front of the Mercy Memorial Church at Sarai Muhajir.

6. Sewing and handicrafts

Women from the 16 families had a six-month training in sewing and handicrafts. They were given a sewing machine each with accessories so that they can contribute to their family income. Sewing machines were distributed amongst these women on Mercy's centennial birthday, on 10 October 2020, to get them to learn basic skills in sewing and handicrafts to fend for their families.



Figure 25: Sewing machines for distribution.



Figure 26: Sewing machines being distributed by the Mercy Home team at the Mercy Memorial Church on 10 October 2020.



Figure 27: Sewing machines being distributed by the Mercy Home team at the Mercy Memorial Church on 10 October 2020.



Figure 28: Dr Reginald shares words of hope and encouragement with the recipients of the sewing machines and their families via a direct link from Australia.



Figure 29: A large number of women saved from the brick kilns participated in the event.



Figure 30: A few sewing machine recipients gathered for a group photo.



Figure 31 - Training: Sewing and handicraft training for women released from brick-kilns. Both the newly-married girls, Sobia and Sunika, can be seen in this picture.

7. Distributing beddings and bed linens amongst the poor

During the harsh colds of December 2020, 25 poor families from Faisalabad were given full beddings. These gifts were distributed amongst the most marginalised families by members of the Mercy Home team in Sarai Muhajir with help from Pastor Sarwar.



Figure 32: Mr Ijaz and Mr Javed looking for quality bed linens to be distributed amongst the families.



Figure 33: Mr Javed selecting beddings and linen to be distributed amongst families



Figure 34: Beddings arriving from the shops in the city to be distributed amongst the poor



Figure 35: Mt Ijaz and Pastor Sarwar preparing a place to distribute the beddings amongst the poor



Figure 36: A large number of beddings were distributed amongst the poor



Figure 37: Various families were called in to receive this gift from the members of the Mercy Home team



Figure 38: A family receiving the gift as part of the Mercy Home's Christmas distribution



Figure 39: Taking the gifts back home

8. Financial statements

Given below is a breakdown of how Mercy Home used the various donations it was given.

Month and year	Donations	How donations were used
July 2019	-	\$ 400.00
August 2019	-	\$ 1,428.59
September 2019	-	\$ 181.45
October 2019	-	\$ 962.57
November 2019	\$ 10,895.00	\$ 7,231.00

December 2019	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,000.00
January 2020	\$ 2,200.00	-
February 2020	\$ 1,263.60	-
March 2020	\$ 350.00	\$ 2,040.60
April 2020	\$ 1,650.00	\$ 2,799.65
May 2020	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 4,400.00
June 2020	\$ 1,752.00	\$ 5,600.00

8.1. Breakdown of expenditures

To understand how the donations were used, we've broken them down into their broad categories below.

Breakdown categories	Expenditure	Percentage of total expenditure
Fuel	\$ 400.00	1.54%
Release	\$ 9,244.50	35.50%
Rehabilitation	\$ 800.00	3.07%
Resettlement	\$ 1,090.36	4.19%
Food packs	\$ 14,327.55	55.01%
Miscellaneous	\$ 181.45	0.70%

Closing words

Dear family, friends and supporters of Mercy Home, on behalf of the executive committees in Australia and Pakistan, with sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude, I would like to say thanks for your prayers, financial help and support, which enabled us to do whatever is mentioned in this report.

Despite the uncertain circumstances during the pandemic, we were able to keep supporting almost 200 families, physically, spiritually, morally and financially. No one knows how long this situation will last and when the pandemic will be over but we're committed to bringing hope through education and rehabilitation to the needy at all times.

Thank you,
Reginald Humayun