



NEIGHBOURHOOD NETWORKING



NEW TOWN KOLKATA



NEIGHBOURHOOD NETWORKING IN NEW TOWN

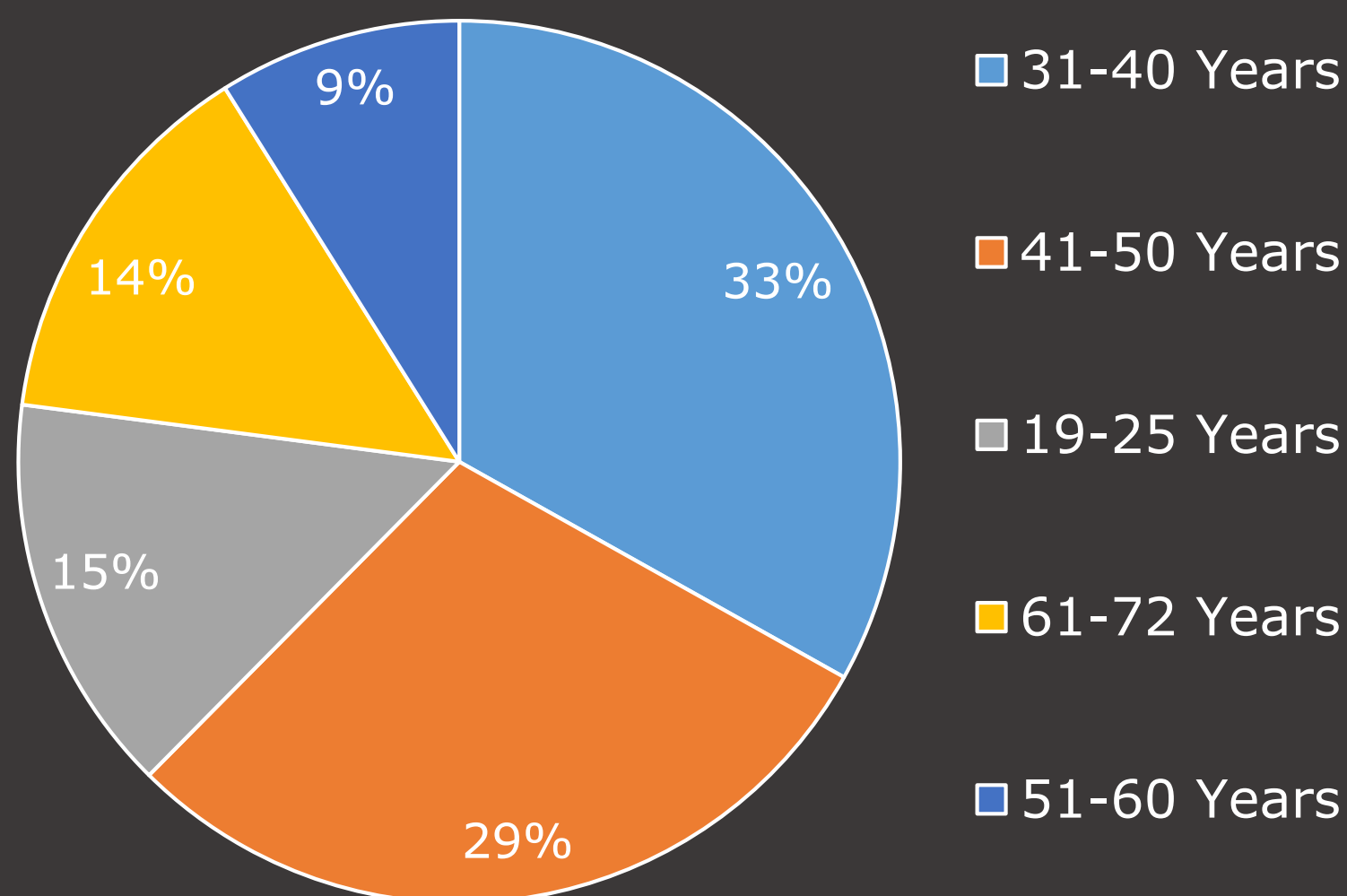
New Town Kolkata, being committed to mitigating the challenges of Covid 19 has been relentlessly taking multiple measures to ensure the safety of citizens, while also considering extending maximum possible convenience to them during these hard times. One such measure introduced by New Town is the Neighbourhood Networking initiative requesting citizens to volunteer for joining hands with the city authorities for effective delivery of services within New Town Kolkata.

The initiative has been very well received by the New Town residents, with quite a good number of citizens keen on extending their help registering to volunteer for the cause that spans several categories. The registration process was completely online through website.

As of 14th April 2020, there have been **165 volunteers** registering for the initiative. Of these, **25 are women**, accounting for **15% of the strength**, and one of the youngest volunteers – 19 year-old student – being a woman.

There are also quite a few immensely enthusiastic elderly people opting to volunteer, of which the **oldest volunteer is aged 72 years!**

While the volunteers cut across several age groups, right from 19 up to 72, the **maximum number of volunteers registering hails from the age group of 31-40 years**, accounting for 33%. Given on the right is a quick snapshot of the strength of the volunteers according to age groups.



The volunteers have been grouped into 18 categories relevant to ensuring citizens' convenience as well as safety in the face of challenges posed by Covid 19 pandemic.

• Fund (donation).	• Solid Waste Management
• Market Intelligence	• Apps Development
• Medical Supply	• Mosquito Control
• Shop distancing	• Cars for Transport
• Shopping for Senior Citizens	• Pathological Test
• Salary for Domestic Help	• Teaching Zoom
• Food for Neighbours	• ATM Cash
• Whatsapp group for Neighbours and Grocer/	• Street Security
• Blood Donor	• Ensuring home Quarantine on Medical Advice

The **initiative was launched on 9th April 2020 through a webinar** held for every category by the New Town authorities to introduce the registered volunteers and take them through a training module on how to carry out the volunteering activities along with the city authorities, as well as create an overall awareness for the volunteers about the initiative.

The training module included an elaborate set of Do's and Don't's for the volunteers to follow, along with a brief on the code of conduct, and a detailed overview of the volunteers' responsibilities in each group

Neighbourhood Volunteers – DOs and DON'T's



- Volunteers to **practice good hygiene measures** - wash hands periodically, wear protective gears whenever leaving the house for volunteering activities.
- Volunteers to **maintain social distancing** while visiting shops physically and during volunteering activities
- Volunteers to **assist others mostly through online portals and apps** wherever applicable
- Volunteers to **maintain regular contacts with the people of his group and the captain**
- When in **doubt please ask the captain**



- **Do not leave the house** until absolutely necessary
- **Do not compromise personal safety standards during volunteering activity**
- **Do not encourage rumors that cause unnecessary panic**
- **Do not take your own decisions** - always consult with the captain or any government official

Role and Responsibilities of volunteers in various groups

Shopping for Seniors



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

Providing **assistance in shopping to the elderly citizens** who live alone or do not have family support (shopping for their essentials, like vegetables, milk, grocery and other items)

WA group for Neighbours and Grocer/ Vegetables



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- to form **WhatsApp** groups with
 - **members of the blocks/housing complexes** and
 - **vendors** dealing with the supply of **essential items** in the locality to enable buying and selling of essential items

Medical Supply



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- **arranging medicine supply for the citizens, especially for the senior citizens** of New Town
- Providing **information** regarding **duration of operation and location of medical shops**

Market Intelligence



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

Proving NKDA information about

- **unavailability** of any **essential supplies**
- **hoarding and black-marketing** of essential goods
- **difficulty** faced by any **organisation/shops** in arranging any essential supply in New Town

Shop Distancing



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- keeping NKDA informed about
 - **unnecessary overcrowding in any particular area/ shop**
 - people **not following the quarantine protocol** of maintaining **safe distance** during shopping. In any shops of new town
- Helping in maintaining ques at shops maintaining proper distance.

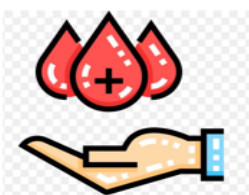
Application Development



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- Volunteering support invited from citizens in New Town for **developing Apps** that may
 - **help administration in the fight against Covid-19** or
 - **for any of the volunteering support listed here** e.g. – distribution of food among neighbours, shopping for citizens, blood donors, supply of essential items, etc.

Blood Donor



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- Blood banks are currently facing huge shortage of blood. Under this backdrop, volunteering support is requested amongst the citizens of New Town
 - **for donating blood at registered organisations**
 - **arranging for blood for the needy**, if required, during any unforeseen emergencies

Street Security



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

keeping NKDA informed about **safety and security in the locality** including reporting to NKDA about any **theft or act of misdeed** in the locality and regular watch and ward by rotation among themselves

Volunteers to also keep NKDA informed about **violation of social distancing protocol/ gatherings on the streets** of New Town and

Car for Transportation



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- providing **their own vehicles** (self-driven or by their drivers) **for use by their neighbours or other citizens** of New Town in face of any **unforeseen emergency during the lockdown period**

Role and Responsibilities of volunteers in various groups

Teaching Video Calling Apps



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- Support to teach the **operational modality of any video calling apps** (like Zoom App, Skpe, Whatsapp Messenger ,Google Duo or other video calling app) to other citizens – especially the elderly in New Town – these would enable the senior citizens to stay virtually connected to their families and friends during the time of lockdown

Food for Neighbours



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- Delivering **cooked hygienic meals** for the neighbours in New Town who are facing difficulty in cooking due to absence of domestic helps during the lockdown period or to the socially backward who require our support. Volunteers can also **participate in donation/distribution of food grains**

Mosquito Menace



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- Volunteering support requested for **keeping NKDA informed about any mosquito menace** in the locality and help in prevention of the same through regular monitoring

Ensuring Quarantine on Medical Advice



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

Keeping NKDA informed about anyone who has not been maintaining the **protocol of home quarantine as prescribed by the health department**

Salary for Service Staff



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- Assisting the citizens in the **process of online bank transfers** to pay salaries to their domestic helps, drivers other Daily Wage Earners

Pathological Test



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- To **accompany the elderly residents of New Town for their regular pathological tests** if required and for informing the citizens about the operational timing of pathological labs in the vicinity

Solid Waste Management



ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- keeping NKDA **informed about any unclean areas in their locality**,
- The volunteers would also be required to **regularly monitor their surrounding and generate awareness** amongst members of their locality regarding cleanliness.

ATM Cash



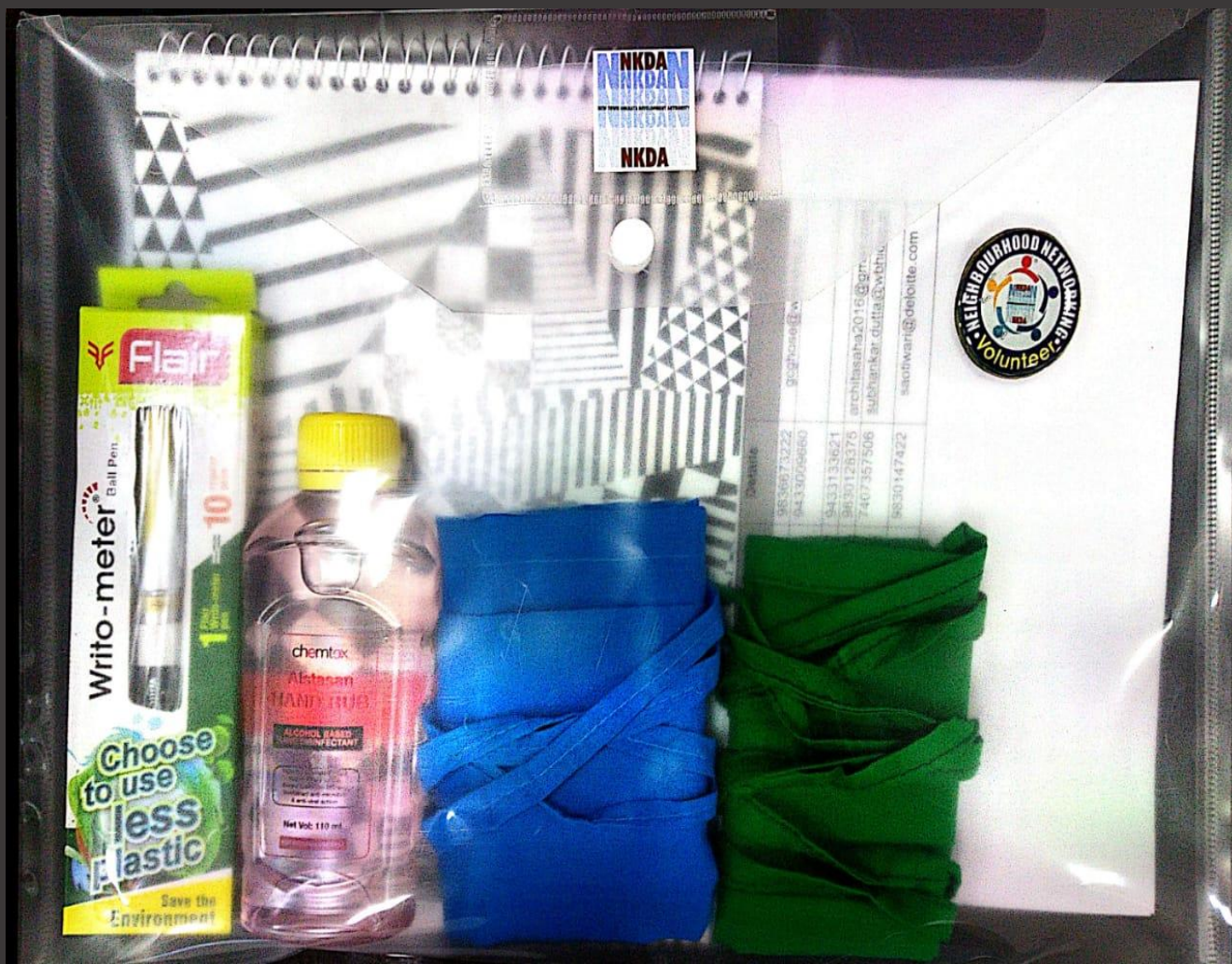
ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD VOLUNTEER

- Keeping NKDA informed about any **ATM in the locality that does not have cash**, thus leading to inconvenience and overcrowding of other ATMs.
- This would enable NKDA to escalate the matter to concerned Authorities

Every group is allotted a point of contact or captain hailing from the city authorities' side, who would connect with the volunteers regularly and chalk out the plan of action for addressing any requirement that crops up.

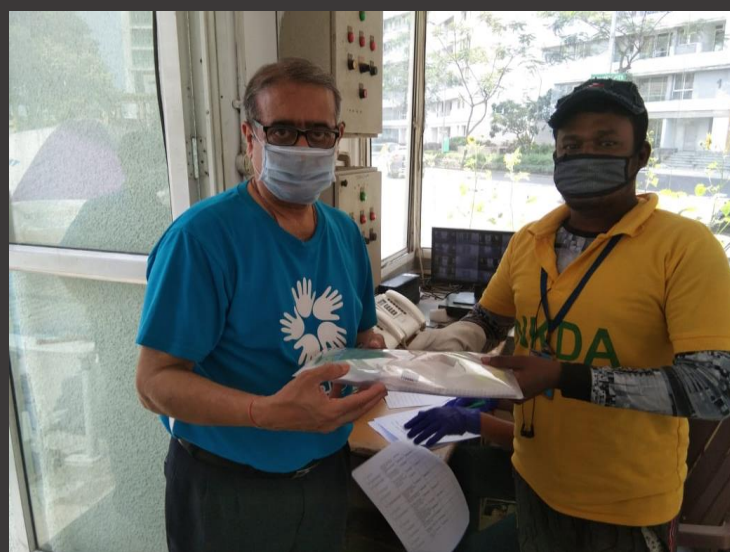
Thereafter, a Whatsapp group has been formed for every group, comprising the volunteers and members from the city authorities' side in order to maintain a constant touch between the volunteers and the city authorities.

Post training, each volunteer has been delivered a **Welcome Kit**, containing pair of masks, sanitizers and a volunteer badge, a writing pad and a pen, as token of initiation into the Neighbourhood Networking initiative.



The Welcome Kit for Citizen Volunteers

A close-up of the citizen volunteer badge

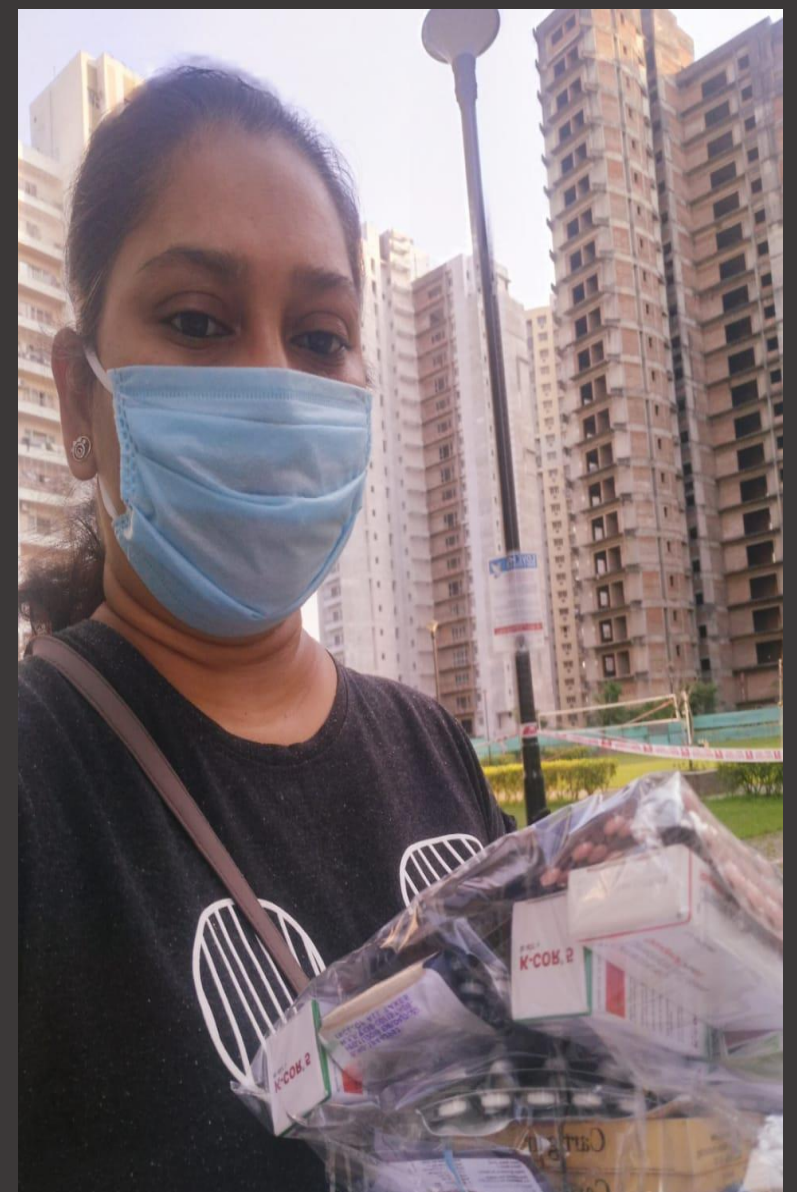


Citizen Volunteers receiving their Welcome Kit

The volunteers must return their badges to the city authorities after stepping down/completion of the volunteering service

The volunteers have been advised to mostly coordinate from the confines of their homes and leverage technology for carrying out their duties. However if they are at all required to venture outside for discharging their duties, they have been mandated to wear masks, carry sanitizers, and take necessary measures to protect themselves, including resorting to touchless delivery of things.

The volunteers are expected to form Whatsapp groups with their fellow residents/families and keep in touch with them regularly. Also, they must keep their captains and the other city authorities' members in their group updated with their feedback regularly on Whatsapp so that prompt action could be taken by the city authorities against any feedback/reporting by the volunteers.



Citizen Volunteers delivering essentials and medicines to senior citizens, and also arranging food for stranded labourers in New Town

A few Success Stories of Neighbourhood Networking

A volunteer helping senior citizens learn Zoom calls



A screen shot of the Zoom session in progress

One of the volunteers organized a session on Zoom Call for the senior citizens in New Town and helped them connect with their near and dear ones living in other parts of the country and also in other countries, leveraging technology!

This proved a great way to technologically equip the older generation, while finding a way for them to reconnect with their loved ones.

Prompt delivery of medicine to senior citizens by volunteers

One of the volunteers delivered medicines to a senior citizen in New Town, who is a retired brigadier.

Also, one of the pharmacies in New Town, that has enlisted itself in New Town's citizen volunteer group, delivered medicines promptly within a couple of hours of receiving the request.

Such instances of prompt response by the citizen volunteers, working hand in hand with the city authorities have surely instilled a great sense of assurance among New Town's citizenry



A citizen volunteer delivering medicines to the retired brigadier

A few Success Stories of Neighbourhood Networking

Volunteers' information led to the city and police authorities to promptly address issues of gatherings on streets

The volunteers of the street security group have been diligently monitoring the streets and areas around their buildings/localities to look for instances of public gatherings and crowding.

Every instance of crowding is being brought to the city authorities' notice through the Whatsapp group, by sharing photographs, along with location details.



Some of the photographs of crowding and gathering on streets as shared by the volunteers

Constant sharing of such photographs and keeping the authorities informed about the situations have been of immense help for the authorities and police to identify such locations and take prompt actions to displace the crowd and ensure order and social distancing is maintained.

A few Success Stories of Neighbourhood Networking

A webinar on Mental Wellness for Senior Citizens conducted by one of the volunteers



A session on mental wellness was conducted by one of the volunteers through video conference for senior citizens to celebrate Poila Boishakh (the Bengali New Year) on 14th April, 2020.

As the name suggests, the session aimed at improving the mental wellness for the senior citizens of New Town. It involved a lot of fun activities to break the monotony and de-stress the participants in most innovative ways possible.

The session was quite a hit, with about 50 participants attending it and enjoying themselves to the fullest.

Mosquito menace addressed at NKDA Hawkers' Market

One of the volunteers in the Mosquito Menace group, informed NKDA about mosquito menace at NKDA Hawkers' Market.

NKDA's mosquito control team promptly addressed the matter, and visited the market, along with the volunteer, and sprayed insecticide and fumigated the entire market.

During the visit, a blockage in the market's sewerage channel was also discovered, which causing stagnation of water, leading to mosquito breeding. PHED was immediately informed of the same and they cleaned the channel up the very next day.



Fumigation being done at NKDA Hawkers' Market

A few Success Stories of Neighbourhood Networking

Volunteers arrange for supply of bread in New Town



Monginis Van delivering their offerings at NBCC Towers

The requirement for availability of bread at doorsteps cropped up in New Town, especially considering the lockdown period, which allows limited outdoor movement.

This propelled some of the volunteers to speak to one of the popular confectioners in Kolkata, 'Monginis', and convince them to have their van selling breads and other items move around New Town, allowing people to buy breads and other confectionary items from it.

As a result, a Monginis van moves around New Town selling their offerings at citizen's doorsteps

Volunteer's intimation leads to prompt action by NKDA

One of the volunteers intimated the NKDA about the requirement for sanitization of the Power Towers compound in New Town.

NKDA immediately attended to the request and got the compound sanitized within half an hour of the receiving the request.



Sanitization being done at Power Towers compound

A few Success Stories of Neighbourhood Networking

Volunteers arrange for home-cooked food for elderly couple – An initiative by the people for the people

A very elderly couple residing in New Town was facing trouble with cooking of food as their domestic helps were unable to come to work due to the lockdown and it was difficult for them to cook their own food.

The home delivered food from the restaurants and other food delivery services, being too spicy, did not be of much help to them either as one of the senior citizens was an acute gastric patient. So, they were looking for options to get home cooked, less spicy food at a reasonable price. However, considering the lockdown situation, it was difficult to get such options for home cooked food.

Upon knowing this, the city authorities immediately called on the citizen volunteers through the Whatsapp group created for this purpose. Upon receiving such information from the city authorities, several volunteers promptly offered to cook and deliver food to this elderly couple throughout the lockdown period, thus providing a fruitful solution. Accordingly, a weekly roster was prepared and shared on Whatsapp, listing out which interested volunteer would be responsible for cooking and delivering food on which day of the week. Thus, following the roster, cooked food was delivered to the elderly couple every day by different volunteers, ensuring there was no gap in delivery of home-cooked food to the elderly couple.

"So many thanks to NKDA and the volunteers for the food you supplied. It was very good and appropriate for us. Grateful to all of you!"

- Mrs Gouri Sanyal (73 years), CD Block



One of the volunteers handing over the food for the couple to the security guard of their complex



Another volunteer delivering home-cooked food for the elderly couple, and also resorting to touchless delivery

The voice of the beneficiaries

"It (the Mental Wellness Session) was altogether an impressive session....Though I didn't participate in making the paper window as I didn't have a white paper ready with me, I watched it and observed it attentively. I enjoyed very much participating in the breathing exercises at the start."

- Mrs Uma Dasgupta, a Snehodiya resident

"This humanitarian initiative of NKDA is really commendable. I am deeply touched by the several helping hands reaching out to us in these desperate times..Appreciate the step taken. Also, pleasantly surprised by the number of young volunteers. It takes a Covid to bring out the good in people. Hats off"

- Ms Moitreyee Mukherjee, a New Town citizen

"You are doing wonderful work. Highly appreciable. The medicine delivery has been a great help. Allowed me not to step out. I am grateful. Many thanks"

- Retired Brigadier Abhijit Saha, a New Town citizen

"The Zoom learning session is a new thing for us. It is a good initiative to make us senior citizens more technology friendly. We welcome this initiative"

- Mr Pijush K Chakraborty, a senior citizen in New Town

"The sanitization work has been done satisfactorily at Power Towers. Thank you for your support"

- Mr Sovon Dutta, a New Town citizen

Media coverage of Neighbourhood Networking

New Town seeks resident volunteers

SNEHALSENGUPTA

New Town: The township authorities have invited residents to volunteer in the fight against the coronavirus.

Volunteers can choose from 18 options that range from buying and delivering medicines in their localities, managing queues at markets in order to ensure social distancing, driving others in times of emergency and delivering food to pavement dwellers and migrant labourers at various construction sites near their homes, an official of the New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA) said.

Those willing to be part of the group of volunteers can log on to the NKDA website: www.nkdamar.org and register themselves, the official said.

The idea to include residents in a regular volunteer force that will be active across all three action areas of the township was accepted after NKDA officials held a series of teleconferences with many New Town residents.

One the one hand, a large part of the population consists of elderly residents who stay alone while on the other there are residents eager to step out and help, Debashis Sen, the NKDA chairman, said.

"We decided to have a well-organised team of volunteers who will join hands with Hidco and NKDA officials to form a sustainable team capable of giving outputs over a period of times," Sen said. "For example, we have a helpline where requests are pouring in to home-deliver medicines. We can ask a volunteer who stays closest to the address from where the request was raised to deliver them."

The teams will be asked to help people in their neigh-

bourhood instead of travelling large distances, keeping in mind the restrictions because of the lockdown, he said.

Once the registration is over, NKDA officials will videoconference with volunteers to guide them on what they have to do, Sen said. The officials will train them and allot specific tasks under the supervision of an NKDA task force.

TO DO

Medical supply: Arrange and deliver medicines in neighbourhoods

Transport: Volunteers who can provide vehicles for use by people of New Town during emergency

Lockdown norms: They will ensure social distancing in markets

Shopping: Volunteers to assist the elderly who live alone by getting them essentials from markets

Food: Delivering cooked hygienic meals

Solid waste management: Volunteers to alert NKDA about garbage in their locality

According to an official WhatsApp groups of volunteers will be created for each locality so that they can "better coordinate" among themselves, according to officials.

Saptarshi Roy, a resident of New Town's Action Area I, said he had signed up on the NKDA website to be part of the volunteer group. "I am doing my own bit by feeding stray animals in our locality and I am glad that somebody actually thought of bringing people, who want to work for the community, together."

NKDA comes up with 'neighbourhood networking'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: In a bid to assist elderly and infirm people in New Town, Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (HIDCO) and New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA) have brought out a new concept to get in touch with these people.

The concept called 'neighbourhood networking' has been set up to beat the COVID-19 pandemic. The link https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfzLFY9fuD0R93UHugSAMe6Z1PZIVBJ_GIFFC2mgFSEhwdvQ/view-form has been created.

Anyone visiting the site will find 18 options, from which anyone may opt for up to three, for example home quarantine monitoring, shopping for senior citizens, distancing at markets or even offering car with driver for emergencies.

After receiving a handful of options, NKDA will train them and allot specific tasks under the supervision of a Task Force.

During lockdown various people have come to NKDA offering help, which



PIC/MPOST

included donating masks. Two friends have gifted 300 packets of meal (Khichuri) on Saturday, while Wipro is offering dinner and lunch.

A resident from Sukhobrishti Complex in Action Area 3 has come up to offer several tonnes of foodgrains, while a resident of Salt Lake has offered her as yet unoccupied but ready-to-move-in 3BHK flat near Biswa Bangla Gate to be converted into an isolation/quarantine unit. Another resi-

dent has offered to organise a community kitchen in association with Cafe Ekante of HIDCO. An architect has offered to design things to help people stay indoors, while a pre-school has designed boredom-buster online games for 2-4 year-old children and shared the same with NKDA.

An apex Chamber of Commerce has approached to help as well. A well-known consultant agency has offered to give free apps/software to track lockdown violators.

NKDA, locals join hands to help poor, elderly citizens

Suman.Chakraborti
@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: A total of 158 New Town residents have joined hands with New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA) to extend support by being part of NKDA's neighbourhood Covid-19 network. The volunteers will help the poor and also provide support to senior citizens in the neighbourhood.

The volunteers, who are being trained and assigned tasks by NKDA, have been divided into 11 task forces with each team working on a specific issue. For example, group 1 is looking after mask procurement and distribution, group 2 is looking into delivering medicines to senior citizens while group-3 will deliver food grains to stranded workers and reach out to elderly citizens staying alone. Similarly, another

Mayukh Sengupta



A volunteer supplies essentials to an elderly woman

group is looking into the care of senior citizens, including video conference assistance.

"NKDA has been working to come up with various initiatives to help the citizens and ensure that residents get the basic civic services," said a senior NKDA official.

#LOCKDOWN HEROES

From doctors, nurses, bankers to milkmen and security guards, there are many frontline warriors who are battling it out daily to ensure we are safe and taken care of during the lockdown. We salute all these real, unsung heroes. If you know of #LockdownHeroes whose stories you would like to share please log on to www.toilockdownheroes.com. We will seek to get in touch and feature some stories in The Times of India newspaper

"We felt it was our duty to extend support for our fellow citizens in this difficult time," said a volunteer.

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সেবায় হিডকোর পাশে দাঁড়াচ্ছে নাগরিক সমাজ, তথ্যপ্রযুক্তি সংস্থা

অভিজিৎ বসাক

লকডাউনে সমস্যার পড়া নিউ টাউনের বাসিন্দাদের বিভিন্নরকম ভাবে সাহায্য করছে হিডকো। তাদেরও সাহায্য করার জন্য এগিয়ে আসছে নাগরিক সমাজ, বণিকসভা, তথ্যপ্রযুক্তি সংস্থা। খাদ্যস্রাবা পৌঁছানোর পাশাপাশি নিউ টাউনে ঘরে থাকা মানুষদের বিনোদনের কথাও মাথায় রাখা হয়েছে। তৈরি হয়েছে মোবাইল গেম। নিয়ম ভেঙে কেউ রাস্তায় বেরোলে চট করে তা ধরার জন্য বানানো হয়েছে অ্যাপ।

হিডকো সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে, অনেক মানুষ তাদের সাহায্য

করার জন্য এগিয়ে আসছেন। নিত্যানন্দন উপায় নিয়ে তাঁরা এগিয়ে আসছেন। বিশেষজ্ঞদের পরামর্শ মেনে বাইরে যাওয়া মানা। মানুষ রয়েছে ঘরে। ফলে অনেক সময় পাচ্ছেন তাঁরা। এই অচেল সময় সৃজনশীল কোনও কাজে লাগানোর উপায় বাতলেছেন এক স্থপতি। হাতের কাজে দিবি কেটে যাবে সময়। আবার একটি সংস্থা আইনজ্ঞদের খুব সহজে ধরার কথা জানাচ্ছে। তাঁরা নিখরচায় অ্যাপ, সফটওয়্যার দিচ্ছে। এর সাহায্যে লকডাউন না মেনে কেউ রাস্তায় বেরোলে ধরে ফেলা যাবে সেই অভিব্যক্তিকে। কচিকাঁচার জন্য অনলাইন গেম তৈরি করেছে একটি প্রি-স্কুল। সেটি নিউ টাউন কলকাতা উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (এনকেডিএ)-এর

কাছে তুলে দেওয়া হয়েছে। এক নাগরিক তাঁর নিউ টাউনের সদ্যানির্মিত একটি ফ্ল্যাটকে আইসোলেশন ইউনিট হিসেবে কাজে লাগানোর জন্য আবেদন করেছেন। ক্যাফে একান্তের সহযোগিতা নিয়ে এক বাসিন্দা এগিয়ে এসেছেন কমিউনিটি কিচেন চালাবেন বলে। সুখবৃষ্টি আবাসনের এক বাসিন্দা একা কয়েক টন খাবার জিনিস তুলে দিয়েছেন।

এমনভাবে অনেকেই এগিয়ে আসছেন সাহায্য করার জন্য। কাজের সুবিধের জন্য তৈরি করা হয়েছে একটি ওয়েব পেজ। সেখানে কে কোন কাজ করতে আগ্রহী, তা জানাতে বলা হয়েছে। এর ফলে কাজ ভাগ করে দেওয়া সহজ হবে।

সেখানে ১৮ রকমের কাজ করার সুযোগ রয়েছে। স্বৈচ্ছাশ্রমে আগ্রহীদের বলা হয়েছে তার মধ্যে থেকে যে কোনও তিনটি বেছে নিতে।

নিউ টাউনে বসবাসকারী প্রবীণদের জন্য বিশেষ ব্যবস্থা করেছে হিডকো। এবার পরিকল্পনা করা হচ্ছে, তাঁদের জন্য নির্দিষ্ট সময় বরাদ্দ থাকবে বাজার করার। যাতে তাঁরা সহজে কেনাকাটা করতে পারেন। সকালে ঘণ্টা দুয়েক সময় শুধুমাত্র তাঁদের জন্য বরাদ্দ রাখা যায় কি না, তা খতিয়ে দেখা হচ্ছে। ফোন করে তাঁদের শারীরিক অবস্থায় খোঁজখবর নেওয়া শুরু করেছে হিডকো। ফোনে পরামর্শ দিচ্ছেন চিকিৎসকেরা।

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Champions braving COVID 19



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*Shantanu Banerjee,
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*Kavita Bhanuka,
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*Ranabir Ray,
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*Tamal Sen,
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*Aditya De,
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Extension*



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*Subhajit Roy,
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*Suman Gupta,
Service,
Animikha*



*Udaya Lokre,
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*Supriyo Chaudhuri,
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*Yousuf Imam,
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*Sagar Deb,
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Self Employed,
Greenfield Ambition*



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Uniworld City*



*Sanat Chatterjee,
Retired Banker,
Sankalpa*



*Vivek Rathore,
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Ujjawala HIG
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24X7 New Town Helpline: 1800 103 7652

