

18th August, 2020

MANN DESHI FOUNDATION JOINS YOUTH BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL'S RAPID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PROGRAMME, FUNDED BY GOOGLE.ORG, TO SUPPORT STRUGGLING SMALL BUSINESSES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The programme, led by Youth Business International (YBI) and funded by Google's philanthropic arm, [Google.org](https://www.google.org), will support underserved micro, small and medium businesses to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Mann Deshi Foundation has been supporting rural micro entrepreneurs for two decades now. As a delivery partner of YBI in India, it will now focus on helping women micro entrepreneurs adapt their struggling businesses during this difficult time.

The global economy is suffering from an unprecedented shock as a result of COVID-19. In India, the informal sector has been particularly impacted and this is all the more so for business owners and entrepreneurs from underserved communities. Many are struggling to get through the crisis and need support now.

Suvarna Kakade who runs a small grocery shop in Tardgaon village, near Lonand, Maharashtra, and has been associated with Mann Deshi for some time says, "During the lockdown, I had to close my shop. Our family of six needs this income, so I had to rent a car and figure out how to make home deliveries safely. Now that things have eased up, I am keen to understand how I can continue to grow my business and expand and adapt to these new challenging circumstances."

Mann Deshi Foundation works with rural women micro entrepreneurs in the Indian states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka. Their Business Schools run a variety of courses to help women set up and expand businesses and their Chambers of Commerce support women micro entrepreneurs to scale up their businesses and reach new markets. They have supported 600,000 women till date.

On March 23rd, India imposed one of the strictest lockdowns in the world to contain the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. Women business owners were the hardest hit as most work within the informal sector. Through the grant, Mann Deshi Foundation will support these women micro-entrepreneurs as they navigate this lockdown. Support will include providing essential training and hand-holding on continuing, growing and adapting their businesses, along with information sharing on various government schemes and services that exist to support them. The Foundation will also provide the necessary financial counselling and digital literacy on how to use online platforms better and more effectively. Google employees plan to volunteer their time to share their knowledge and expertise, helping business owners to upskill and adapt in response to the current crisis.

Chetna Sinha, Founder and Chairperson of Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank and Mann Deshi Foundation, said:

"COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown has disproportionately affected rural women micro entrepreneurs in India. We are committed to supporting these business women through the

COVID-19 pandemic and are excited to be part of YBI's rapid response recovery programme funded by Google.org."

The global programme is led by YBI, an experienced network of enterprise support organisations. It will support over 200,000 small and medium business owners across 32 countries across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific to respond to and recover from the impact of COVID-19.

Anita Tiessen, CEO of Youth Business International, said:

"The world is changing dramatically from day to day and I feel deeply for business owners everywhere, especially those running smaller businesses and are from underserved communities, who are often least able to bear the economic shocks of this crisis.

"In the face of these challenges, I have been incredibly inspired by the quick response of our network to support business owners around the world. YBI, with Google.org's new funding commitment, will help us sustain and extend this support throughout 2020, ensuring more than 200,000 businesses can get the advice they need right now to navigate this crisis."

Rowan Barnett, Head of Google.org, EMEA & APAC, said:

"The coronavirus outbreak is taking a devastating toll on lives and communities, and small businesses are facing unprecedented challenges as they struggle to stay afloat. With this grant to Youth Business International, alongside a series of [Google initiatives and products](#), we hope to help some of the most vulnerable small businesses find a way through the crisis."

Information about the organisations involved

Mann Deshi Foundation

Mann Deshi Foundation was founded by Chetna Gala Sinha in Mhaswad, Maharashtra in 1996 to support poor rural women to have more control over their lives. Mann Deshi's vision is to empower women to make their own choices and to be celebrated as equal and valuable members of their families and communities. Its mission is to empower women with the knowledge, skills, courage, access and capital to become successful entrepreneurs with more control over their lives. Visit www.mannadeshifoundation.org

Youth Business International (YBI)

YBI is a global network of expert organisations in over 50 countries supporting underserved young people to turn their ideas into successful businesses, creating jobs and strengthening communities. Our vision is a world where youth entrepreneurship is recognised for driving sustainable economic development and all young people who want to set up a business can fulfil their potential. We connect our members to share expertise and collaborate on solutions to common challenges. Visit www.youthbusiness.org.

Google.org

Google.org, Google's philanthropy, supports nonprofits that address humanitarian issues and apply scalable, data-driven innovation to solving the world's biggest challenges. We accelerate their progress by connecting them with a unique blend of support that includes funding,

products, and technical expertise from Google volunteers. We engage with these believers-turned-doers who make a significant impact on the communities they represent, and whose work has the potential to produce meaningful change. We want a world that works for everyone—and we believe technology and innovation can move the needle in four key areas: education, economic opportunity, inclusion and crisis response.