



## BEYOND OURSELVES: A RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The times of greatest crisis often produce the greatest charity. That's certainly true of the COVID-19 pandemic when people have been forced to distance from one another while still trying to extend a helping hand. Like many businesses, Infosys was placed in a difficult position as a company but still found ways to use its expertise and creativity to help millions in need, from hungry migrants to dislocated students.

When catastrophes strike, people and organizations around the world mobilize instantly to help victims recover. There are checklists and templates to follow and vast expertise at the ready when hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes devastate a region.

But what are the protocols when the crisis is diffuse, evolving, and, in the words of medical experts, novel?

The coronavirus pandemic has expanded the traditional scope and scale of disaster recovery and forced many, including Infosys, out of their comfort zones. The number of COVID-19 cases globally passed 3.5 million in May, according to the World Health Organization.<sup>1</sup> However, the number of people affected by the associated job losses, government-mandated lockdowns, school closures, and other hardships number in the billions.

*"These are unprecedented times that require every section of society to rise up to the challenge."*

**– Sudha Murty**

*Chairperson of the Infosys Foundation*

The need to react and the desire to help has inspired Infosys, along with most large organizations, to contribute money, skills, and resourcefulness to the fight against the coronavirus. These efforts go beyond helping 240,000 of our own employees stay safe through sanitizing workplaces, installing thermal scanners, and enabling most of them to deliver client work from home. Our new responsibilities include helping educate schoolchildren, expanding hospital capacity, and assisting governments with informing the public and tracking the disease's spread.

*"My experience is that our behavior in difficult times is what defines us."*

**– Salil Parekh**

*Infosys CEO*

## Education

This pandemic has left parents worldwide in a difficult position. In addition to their day jobs (for the fortunate ones still employed), they are now part-time teachers. School closings were among the first major

government actions as COVID-19 cases increased exponentially. UNICEF estimates that 1.5 billion children and young people were affected by school closings due to the pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

The advantaged schools were able to send students home with technology — laptops or tablets — and access to learning materials. That scenario isn't universal; access to online education resources is scattered and uneven.

In response, the Infosys Foundation USA repurposed its recently launched Pathfinders Online Institute learning platform and made it available to all. The educational platform was introduced just a few months ago at the 2020 Pathfinders Winter Institute, shortly before the spread of the coronavirus accelerated. Originally, it was available only to teachers who had participated in an in-person Pathfinders program. But even before mass stay-at-home orders were announced, the foundation was working to expand the platform's reach and add more content that meets the needs of the broader K-12 community.



As classrooms become virtual, the foundation is providing families with hands-on computer science activities and maker education activities through a vast network of partners and the Pathfinders Online Institute. Those range from the basics of video game design to rollercoaster construction using household items to experiments designed to teach empathy. The platform has reached thousands in the short time since it launched, including 3,500 families participating in Family Code Week events in English and Spanish.

Teachers can also use the service to share best practices and educational resources at a time when creativity and collaboration are essential. In a Microsoft survey, 30% of educators said they felt underqualified to teach computer science, and 20% said they felt overwhelmed.<sup>3</sup>

Pathfinders Online Institute is a one-stop solution for students, parents, and teachers to access high quality learning resources aimed at modern day skill development

"It is critical that we support our teachers, as well as all of those individuals who have taken on the role of teacher during this challenging time," said Infosys President Ravi Kumar S., who is also chairman of the Infosys Foundation USA. "By expanding access to the Pathfinders Online Institute and adding more CS [computer science] and maker content, we are providing a single location where students, teachers and parents can access resources and high-quality learning activities that support 21st century skill development."

The Pathfinders Summer Institute, held annually at Indiana University, is still scheduled for July. This time, it will

operate virtually, like many events today. Since it began three years ago, Pathfinders has provided intensive professional development to more than 1,000 K-12 public school teachers wanting to enhance their curriculum with computer science and maker content.

Since learning is a lifelong endeavor, this sharpened focus on education goes beyond schoolchildren. Infosys' renowned Global Education Centre in Mysore, the world's largest corporate university, has moved online. The 337-acre campus is capable of training 20,000 people at once but is now mostly empty. Thousands who previously would have filled the physical classrooms are now studying tech skills using Infosys' Wingspan training platform.

## Charity

Infosys' charitable response to COVID-19 looks different from traditional disaster relief. There are no massive blood drives or shipping containers packed with bottled water.

This time, the Infosys Foundation has moved quickly to fill in gaps created by the overburdening of the medical system, widespread job losses, and shortages of certain supplies. So far, the foundation has provided a broad range of assistance to nearly 100 different trusts, hospitals, governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Overall, the Infosys Foundation has committed INR 120 crore, or nearly US\$16 million, to COVID-19 relief in India. More than one-third was contributed to the PM CARES Fund, created in response to the pandemic and led by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Infosys has provided 2.4 million meals during this emergency and assisted more than 1 million people.

The donations have helped thousands of migrants weather the financial crisis

with food and other basic assistance, provided first responders with badly needed protective gear, and supplied civilian and military hospitals with 142 ventilators. Millions of masks and gloves were purchased for police officers, health care volunteers, and others. Medical professionals received 10,000 face shields. And Infosys paid for medical gas pipeline work at two hospitals.

Infosys and Narayana Health, one of India's largest health care providers, announced the creation of a 100-room hospital in Bangalore, entirely for COVID-19 patients. This facility is providing free care to low-income residents. Devi Shetty, chairman and executive director of Narayana Health, said providing safe space for people to isolate themselves is critical to fighting this pandemic, according to the Economic Times.<sup>4</sup>

Governments and health care providers have feared that those infected with the new coronavirus — particularly ones needing ventilators — could push hospitals beyond capacity. That has the potential to leave other COVID-19 patients and also people suffering from unrelated illnesses with nowhere to go. That threat has led to creative solutions, such as construction of temporary hospitals like this one.

## Public-private partnerships

In a crisis this large and pervasive, everyone's help is needed. There are roles for the tiniest local nonprofits as well as the world's largest companies. But their combined might isn't enough.

Governments everywhere play a crucial role in fighting the pandemic, whether it's issuing stay-at-home orders or organizing the distribution of critical medical supplies. But even these giant, powerful bureaucracies







can't do it alone. Infosys has collaborated with governments in India and the United States to help with immediate concerns and plan for the eventual reopening of their societies and economies.

In the Indian state of Karnataka, the Infosys Business Process Management unit has assisted officials with development of the Apathamitra app and helpline. Those tools provide the public with accurate medical advice, evaluation of symptoms, and testing and treatment referrals. Future versions are expected to include telemedicine components.

Infosys BPM also helped the government with outreach to residents returning from overseas and also with tracking their health. The company, along with industry peers and trade group NASSCOM, has used email, text messages, and automated phone systems to locate people who arrived in Karnataka since the last week of February. The public-private effort helped these travelers find testing facilities and assist with self-quarantining, when needed.

In three days, Infosys BPM digitized 52,000 travel records from the Bangalore and Mangalore airports and the Karwar docks to make automated communication feasible. Infosys employees also assisted with the complex effort to quickly research as many of the overseas travelers as possible and analyze the provided data.

State officials credited the work of Infosys and its competitors with helping flatten the curve of infections in Karnataka during March and April. In that initial five weeks, the companies reached out to 90,000 travelers and their contacts.

The government also enlisted the help of Infosys BPM after learning that a person who tested positive for COVID-19 attended a local concert. Infosys employees located attendees,

staff, and performers to warn them about their possible exposure.

Also, Infosys used its digital marketplace platform to create the Sahaya Setuve mobile app and web platform for Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) government officials. These tools, developed in just eight days with the support of other tech firms, enable Bangalore residents to donate both money and supplies to COVID-19 relief and volunteer for efforts to fight the pandemic. The technology acts as a bridge among various groups, including individuals, NGOs, doctors, and BBMP officials.

Government employees can assign activities, track inventory, and monitor and manage the overall process. The app also provides users with the location of "fever clinics" and Indira Canteens, which provide subsidized food.

Through its NASCOMM partnership, Infosys also assisted with the creation of a variety of dashboards for the Telangana state government. Those include a listening dashboard to provide sentiment analysis and related intelligence, coronavirus hotspot identification, and lockdown and reopening impact analysis. These tools are also being offered to other Indian state governments.

Nationally, Infosys is a member of India's task force helping the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and NITI Aayog, a government think tank, develop a COVID-19 contact tracing app. Each organization developed its own app, but government officials decided to combine the two, with the help of the country's high-tech industry.

The result is the Bluetooth-based Aarogya Setu app, which shows whether the user had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.<sup>5</sup> This can help individuals self-isolate more quickly and slow

the disease's spread. However, its effectiveness relies on a large percentage of the population downloading the software to their phones. A robust contact tracing program has been one of the most effective weapons for curbing the spread of the coronavirus.

Infosys has also been active in assisting U.S. state governments, primarily related to the economy. Company officials serve on Indiana, Connecticut, and Rhode Island advisory councils that are planning for post-coronavirus recovery.

Infosys and WONGDOODY, an Infosys-owned creative agency, are also helping the Rhode Island state government with various COVID-19 efforts, including a response and contact tracing app. The software will alert individuals who have encountered others who tested positive and provide the state with disease hotspot visualization and data analytics. The GPS-based app is expected to launch in May to coincide with the reopening of many businesses. New features will be added in three-to-four-week cycles. Some of those features are expected to include Bluetooth-based contact tracing, symptom monitoring via chatbot, anonymized notification of potential exposure, and COVID-19 test scheduling.

Infosys has been supporting Rhode Island state government in building a response and contact tracing app to combat COVID-19

The work at the Providence hub goes beyond the cause of the crisis and seeks to address its effects. Providence staff designed a Rhode Island arts website and platform at the request of state officials.<sup>6</sup> The platform allows the state to communicate with







artists, allows audiences and artists to connect, and provides a way to direct donations to that community.

The Infosys Small Business Tech Support team in Rhode Island also helped local businesses move online for the first time. The team created an online shopping template and order form for Roch's Fresh Foods, a local grocery store, and a website showing the inventory of Moore Blooms, a local nursery. Food and flowers won't wait until the pandemic has ended.

## Blurred lines

The COVID-19 pandemic is certainly a generation-defining event that

simultaneously brings people together and splits them apart. There is a clear consensus that this period will transform the workplace. However, it is also broadening the way businesses think about charity.

The corporate reaction to this pandemic has been hands-on and collaborative, whether it's developing government apps to slow the disease's spread, retooling a manufacturing facility to produce hand sanitizer, or turning a parking lot into a drive-through testing center. Businesses have moved quickly to help mitigate the effects of the crisis — even those enterprises unaccustomed to being on the front lines of a disaster.

As distinctions fade between work and home, the pandemic is showing businesses the value of blurring the boundary between commerce and charity, between doing the right thing for shareholders and simply doing the right thing. The world has reached a moment when creativity, expertise, and teamwork are sometimes as valuable as cash.







## References

- <sup>1</sup> [WHO Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Dashboard](#), World Health Organization.
- <sup>2</sup> [Children at increased risk of harm online during global COVID-19 pandemic](#), April 14, 2020, UNICEF.
- <sup>3</sup> [Infosys Foundation USA Launches Online Platform for K-12 Teachers at its Pathfinders Winter Institute](#), Feb. 18, 2020, Infosys Foundation USA.
- <sup>4</sup> [Infosys Foundation partners with Narayana Health City to open quarantine facility for COVID-19 patients](#), April 1, 2020, Economic Times.
- <sup>5</sup> [How to use Aarogya Setu app and find out if you have coronavirus symptoms](#), April 15, 2020, Economic Times.
- <sup>6</sup> [RIArts](#), Rhode Island State Council on the Arts.

## Authors

### Jeff Mosier

Senior Producer,  
Infosys Knowledge Institute  
[jeff.mosier@infosys.com](mailto:jeff.mosier@infosys.com)

### Aruna C. Newton

Associate Vice President and Head,  
Global Diversity and Inclusion, Sustainability Reporting and Governance  
[arunacnewton@infosys.com](mailto:arunacnewton@infosys.com)



---

## About Infosys Knowledge Institute

The Infosys Knowledge Institute helps industry leaders develop a deeper understanding of business and technology trends through compelling thought leadership. Our researchers and subject matter experts provide a fact base that aids decision making on critical business and technology issues.

To view our research, visit Infosys Knowledge Institute at [infosys.com/IKI](https://infosys.com/IKI)

---

For more information, contact [askus@infosys.com](mailto:askus@infosys.com)



© 2020 Infosys Limited, Bengaluru, India. All Rights Reserved. Infosys believes the information in this document is accurate as of its publication date; such information is subject to change without notice. Infosys acknowledges the proprietary rights of other companies to the trademarks, product names and such other intellectual property rights mentioned in this document. Except as expressly permitted, neither this documentation nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, printing, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of Infosys Limited and/ or any named intellectual property rights holders under this document.