The Nabha Foundation’s Geared up Efforts towards Ensuring Learning and Development in the times of COVID-19

There is no escaping the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has created huge short-term uncertainties for all countries and communities around the world. With over 3.5 lakh confirmed cases in India, the sudden outbreak of this crisis has created an environment of extreme fear, volatility, and uncertainty among people. Amidst impacting health, economics, and politics, this pandemic has also disrupted the nature of the workplace and workforce capabilities. With nationwide lockdown and ensuing isolation, organizations are compelled to rethink drastically and adopt new paradigms of working.

‘Remote working’ has become the norm as organizations seek operational continuity during the global pandemic. Nevertheless, it is also important to reiterate here that the changing work environment and increased uncertainties about the future are bound to impact the personal and professional skills of the people and create psychological upheavals. It is, therefore, imperative to keep the workforce engaged, motivated, and upskilled while ensuring their wellbeing during these difficult times.

In the fight against COVID-19, The Nabha Foundation (TNF) adhered to the protocols and guidelines of the government and adopted the new norm of working from home during the lockdown period, securing the safety of its employees. Apart from embracing the new change in the workplace, The Nabha Foundation also recognized and understood the need for transforming this period of lockdown into an opportunity of personal and professional development for its people. Little or no access to the field during the lockdown brought forth an excellent opportunity for the team members to enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding their work and personal life. It was also important to keep the team constantly engaged and productive and it was crucial to inculcate in them the power of working collaboratively and most importantly, being positive during these times. The Foundation realized that the key to ensuring the continuity...
of the work was indeed effective communication and highlighting the significance of learning, re-skilling, and upskilling. For achieving that, TNF organized a series of informative and digital training sessions for the team members throughout two months of lockdown. The main purpose of organizing these sessions was productively utilizing this time of crisis and expanding the learning opportunities by providing resources and platforms for continuous professional development and enhancing the existing skillset of the team members. The nature of these training sessions was online which further helped in building an effective digital learning culture for the team, especially for those working in the fields and had little or no time to upgrade their skills. The content for the training sessions consisted of topics that could enhance the capabilities of the team and result in long term benefits for their work and upcoming careers. Suggestions from the team leads and team members were incorporated while developing the training content. For conducting effective training sessions, the team was segregated into three online groups, which were created on WhatsApp, and each group consisted of 5-8 members. The training sessions were conducted through video conferencing platforms such as zoom and the link comprising the topic, date, and time of the sessions was circulated in these groups for the team members to join in. The sessions were conducted and prepared by the team leads using PowerPoint on specific subjects related to learning and development and the relevant training materials were also shared on the groups for teams to refer and read later. The two-hour sessions were demonstrative and knowledgeable and generated active participation from all the team members. The team members were also given assignments for each session just to determine whether the information has been retained and effectively received. Sessions on topics such as re-introduction to MS Word, MS Excel, and PowerPoint were conducted to enhance the documentation skills of the team members, especially the field level employees. To improve the understanding of types of data and their management, a session on data management was organized and team members were introduced to these systems. You get to see the lush fields of Nabha in Punjab under our ‘Agriculture Program’. We introduce you to a farmer toiling in his fields to grow crops for our sustenance. You get to feel the resilience and optimism by listening to them and how they have already adopted alternate ways of farming to deal with the current Covid-19 situation.

Under our ‘Women Empowerment Through Phulkari Program’, you will see a lady artisan working painstakingly on a phulkari design, handed down over generations which still evokes the same sentiments!

We take you to meet the NaviDisha School Children under our ‘Education Program’. By way of their drawings you get a glimpse of their feelings and thoughts and also how their young minds are dealing with the current Covid-19 crisis.

All this and more we showcase on our Instagram @thenabhafoundation & Facebook https://www.facebook.com/thenabhafoundation/. Do connect with us and be a part of our journey.
asked to prepare a data cycle report related to their programs as part of their assignment for this session. To strengthen the knowledge around community participation and its approaches, detailed and in-depth sessions were conducted on Participatory Rural Appraisal and its various tools and techniques.

The team members were assigned to prepare a report stating the significance of incorporating the techniques of PRA in designing and implementing their program activities. Furthermore, an informative session was organized on the introduction and understanding of Sustainable Development Goals as well as the relevance of these goals nationally and internationally. The team members were also trained on the effective use of technology and incorporating the use of digital methods to reach out to the community.

Apart from these sessions, the foundation made sure to conduct an elaborative session on the awareness and information regarding the precautions and safety measures against COVID-19. This session also entailed detailed discussion on the various guidelines issued by the Punjab and Central government for mitigating the impact of the global pandemic.

The team members were advised to maintain the protocols of wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining social distancing while resuming their work responsibilities after lifting of the lockdown. Special emphasis was laid on making sure that the team members are following the standard operating procedures while working in the field or operating from office space.

These training sessions were extremely effective in developing and strengthening the capacity of the team members and keeping them connected to their work while safeguarding their health and well-being. The entire experience was very fruitful for the team members as they were able to learn, enhance their knowledge, and develop their professional skills, something which they had always wanted to pursue.

“ What Makes Me Happy”

Hardeep Kaur, Composite Targeted Intervention Project Team Member

Through the online training, I got an opportunity to update my skills. I had the knowledge but what was missing was the structured approach. Below are a few skills that I have newly acquired through the online training:

- **Data Management** – I learned how to collect & manage data and give a final analysis.
- **Report Writing** – I learned the nuances of writing a good, structured report for PSACS (Punjab State AIDS Control Society) & other organisations with whom we collaborate for our work.
- **MS Office** – I had very basic knowledge of this and had never used excel which I have started doing now regularly. I am amazed how easy my work has become due to this new skill.

I am looking forward to more such trainings which are proving helpful and have improved the quality of my work.

In our next issue, we bring you board exam performance of Navi Disha School Children under our ‘Education Program’.
The Nabha Foundation Online Training for our various Programs

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We apologize for any errors or omissions