When the lockdown was first announced in March, we reached out to our support group of domestic workers that was created as part of the #DignityOfMyLabour project with PRIA in 2018. We formalised that group over WhatsApp calling it “Sahyog”.

Our goal was to ensure that domestic workers were safe, got their wages and ration. We consulted with experts, prepared toolkits, sought help from organisations working on the ground, and were able to put them in touch with relief providers and psycho-social support.

But the women were determined to carry this forward so that they can become agents of change in their communities. Thus, the Domestic Workers' Action Network was born, whereby community leaders led the charge in their respective settlements to help other domestic workers access ration and wages (if they were denied it).

To curb domestic violence during the lockdown, MFF also curated helplines for psycho-social support as well as verified volunteer organisations and government helplines for relief (rations, essential services etc.) These toolkits were disseminated among domestic workers in the action network in regional languages (Hindi and Bengali) and through WhatsApp voice recordings. We also partnered with public officials and grassroots organisations - Chikitsa.org and COVID SOS - to assist community leaders coordinating relief efforts in their respective settlements.

In May, the Domestic Workers' Action Network led a study with 146 informal workers from Delhi, Gurgaon, Panipat, and Kolkata to ascertain the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on women migrant domestic workers who were unable to return to their home states. Some of the women domestic workers also reported from their communities; their stories and accounts have gone on to embellish the Those Who Stayed anthology. These documents were launched under our campaign “Pandemic Watch” in the lead-up to International Domestic Workers' Day.
On June 16, over 60 domestic workers representing 15 organisations (including unions, workers' forums and action networks) drafted a joint manifesto over a virtual roundtable. Titled *Reimagining the World of Work for Domestic Workers*, the manifesto lists salient demands and expectations of domestic workers from their employers, especially in light of the COVID pandemic, beginning with the demand for a central legislation for domestic workers and to bring them into the fold of the country's labour laws. The roundtable also witnessed participation from Labour Department officials, International Domestic Workers' Federation and National Domestic Workers' Movement. A joint *press release* was also issued by the organisers on IDW Day 2020.