

Synergy seafarers make substantial contribution to COVID-19 relief fund

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Synergy Group seafarers have made a substantial collective contribution in support of a charity established to combat COVID-19 and provide relief for those most in need.

Thousands of employees of Synergy Group, one of the world's leading ship management companies, have donated a day's pay to the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (CARES) Fund, the COVID-19 charitable trust set up in the name of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi which is leading the fight against COVID-19.

Among those 'Synergians' to donate was Capt. Mark Fernandes, a 16-year seafaring veteran.

"As seafarers, it was important to us that we do our bit and contribute towards the PM CARES Fund," he said. "Every sector has been hit hard by the COVID-19 virus and we have to stand tall to fight this pandemic.

"We seafarers are a rare breed of individuals and we are willing and able to make a difference for society and our country. After all, the value of man resides in what he gives, not in what he is capable of receiving."

Vishal Bhagat, Synergy Group Chief Engineer, said: "Coronavirus does not discriminate, it has hit everyone hard. In times like these, empathy and solidarity should be our guiding lights. We seafarers try to think of those less fortunate than ourselves, so we're delighted to support the PM CARES Fund which is helping exactly those who need it most."

The substantial donation consisted of individual contributions by thousands of Synergy Group seafarers - both Indian and non-Indian - currently deployed on the company's fleet of over 300 vessels.

Synergy Group has also contributed 10% of the company's annual Corporate Social Responsibility budget to the PM CARES Fund.

Captain Rajesh Unni, CEO and Founder of Synergy Group, said the PM CARES Fund charitable trust, which consists entirely of voluntary contributions from individuals and organisations and does not receive budgetary support from India's government, is leading the way in the fight against the pandemic.

"The PM CARES Fund is providing the ventilators people need to survive this awful pandemic," he said. "It is also helping our migrant workers that have been hit so hard and conducting valuable research to help find a vaccine.

"Both in India and worldwide, the coronavirus has taught us that we're all in this together and we need to help and support each other.

"I would like to thank all the seafarers and staff that contributed to this fantastic cause."

The donations have been made despite most seafarers currently being unable to leave or join vessels due to global coronavirus lockdowns.

"These contributions have been made even though many of our seafarers are under tremendous duress themselves due to restrictions on crew changes which have left thousands stranded at sea and unable to return to their families," said Captain Unni.

"Seafarers are essential workers on the frontline in the battle against coronavirus. They deliver the food and essential supplies on which we all depend. We are hopeful that in the very near future their importance will be recognised and governments will take steps to allow them to return home using safe corridors."

Synergy Group carries out its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities through its partners Synergy Educational and Charitable Trust (SECT) and Go2C Changemakers Foundation (Go2C). In the 2018-19 financial year, Synergy funded 29 initiatives in India and beyond with a total of 35,114 direct beneficiaries. INR93.38 Lakh (USD\$ 129,694) of direct funding was provided and a further INR207.62 Lakh (USD\$283,611) of funding was raised.

The full FY 2018-19 CSR report can be found [here](#).

“Through SECT and Go2C we have put our efforts and resources into various initiatives that serve those marginalised and living in poverty across the globe,” said Captain Unni. “In many cases, we have put our shoulders alongside those who are serving on the ground, and in a few others, we ourselves have provided the boots on the ground to help bring value to citizens and public systems. In many endeavours, our employees have gone beyond the call of duty to give their time and personal resources to support social initiatives.

“In the future, Synergy will continue to show its strong commitment to progressive CSR policy. It is our duty as a responsible and caring company to play our part and inspire others to help our unfortunate brethren who are where they are for no fault of their own. The least fortunate in our society need a helping hand, now more than ever.”