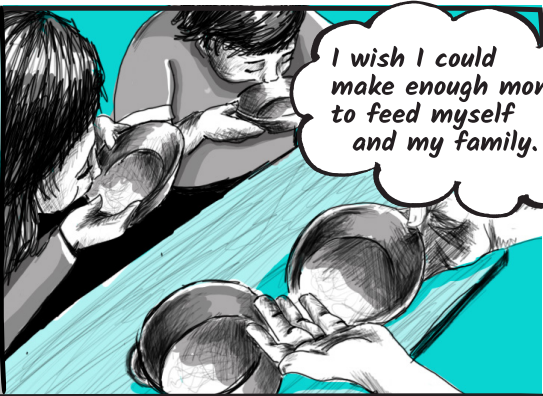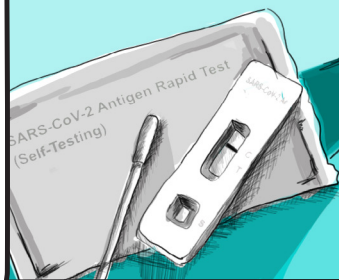# THE URGENT NEED FOR RESILIENT AND SUPPORTIVE HEALTH SYSTEMS FOR TB:
A Father's Journey

(India, Spring 2021) Tarak is a 42yo father of six living in a slum in major city. He works in a local factory. He struggles to ensure his children eat and he is continuously worried about money.

I wish I could make enough money to feed myself and my family.

He had a cough for several months and colleague suggested he take a morning off work to visit the local health center

SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Test (Self-Testing)

He was sent to the COVID-19 testing center. His COVID results are negative, but the cough continues.

After 4 months, he feels progressively worse. He sees a doctor in a private facility, costing him 2 weeks of wages.

He is prescribed antibiotics for "pneumonia" but did not have a chest x-ray or any testing for TB.

What am I going to do? I can't get the time off of work!

You need to visit your local TB clinic and provide a sample to for testing.

A year later, he collapsed and was rushed to a local hospital. He was diagnosed with MDR-TB. Now, all his family members also have symptoms. He is hospitalized with a lengthy course of treatment ahead of him.

A YEAR LATER...

He finished the medicine but feels no change and has lost a lot of weight. A neighbor who recovered from TB last year encouraged him to go to a public hospital for a variety of tests, including TB tests. He was supposed to return for a morning sputum sample, but he could not get the time off work.

In his hospital bed, he reflects on his ill health. He had started drinking to cope with the stress. Unable to work, the family is relying on his children's wages to survive.

Tarak and his family are supported with medical, financial, and nutritional care by a local health organization. Their health is improving, but the cost burden of healthcare has kept them in severe poverty.