

INF NEPAL UPDATES

June 2021



Greetings to you.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Through this update, we would like to share you with some of the news across INF Nepal's working areas. Our COVID response work has begun. We have been providing essential health items and food supplies to the affected people through our district offices.

COVID Update: We are RESPONDING

As the Coronavirus was spreading during the second wave, the infection was on the rise among our staff members too. In order to boost the morale of our staff, INF Nepal began to visit the infected staff at their own residence, with proper care of course, and giving them a GET WELL SOON package designed to motivate staff with needed food supplies and hygiene materials. Thankfully out of the total 18 staff infected, 17 of them have already been recovered.

Despite the lockdown and travel restrictions INF Nepal began some of the response activities while many are progressing across its working districts. Some of completed response work are included here:

In Kapilvastu, in partnership with Armed Police Force, Nepal Police and local government, our Kapilvastu office has jointly conducted the awareness-raising programme on COVID. The programme was conducted to reach out to general public following an increased number of cases in the district. Kapilvastu office also distributed 500 surgical masks and supported protective materials to the district hospital worth NPR 1 lakh.

Our Banke office is the member of the Protection Cluster initiated by Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan office. As a representative of the cluster, Banke office distributed Children Creation Kit to four of the Children's Homes in Nepalgunj.



Similarly, as requested by the Protection Cluster, our Banke office provided 15 food packages to a needy family heavily affected by the second wave of the Coronavirus. These families mainly included those with a high risk of human trafficking and gender-based violence, pregnant women, single women, children and people with disability.

In Bajura we have handed over the hospital beds, PPE sets, oxygen cylinders, tent and masks to the District Hospital. Similarly we have also supported the Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura with health and hygiene materials, PPE set, surgical mask and sanitiser [worth NPR 75,000].



We are responding

INF NEPAL'S COVID RESPONSE WORK



8 Isolation Centres at the government institutions including local health post, RM offices and district hospital were supported with health equipments and safety materials in Kaski, Gorkha and Bajura.



18 Beds have been set up as dedicated isolation wards in three of our hospitals including stocking up of essential health and hygiene supplies.



104 Households of people with disabilities and other marginalised families have been provided with immediate food relief packages in Banke, Kapilvastu and Kaski.



Pokhara - Hand-washing station setup by INF Nepal in Pokhara Academy of Health Sciences



INF Nepal is regularly organising virtual programme as a part of staff care and support



Pokhara - visiting COVID infected staff and handing over GET WELL SOON package



Banke - Preparing food packages to be distributed for 15 needy families



Surkhet - PPE handover to Provincial Hospital



Handing over health items to government institutions in some of our working areas

Paving the Way towards Self-Reliance and Sustainability

A total of 90 people from 90 SHGs under the IDEAL Project were provided with the saving and credit training to strengthen the capacity of the members. The training was aimed at providing basic information on account management such as accounting and bookkeeping. The training dealt with theory and practical aspects of saving and credit mobilisation tool. This training will help the members develop and refine how they manage the group saving, record-keeping systems plans and activities. These kinds of training will acquaint the members of the SHGs promoting small savings in groups and providing financial access, along with the smooth functioning of SHGs and developing a vision around building an institution.



Sharing and Learning for Farmers

Initiating and sustaining the learning process among the selected farmers has begun in the project area. A total of 24 farmers participated in the orientation session. Farmers shared their experience regarding poultry farming, vegetable and high-value cash crops, and goat keeping. The discussion was open, and the agenda was defined based on the current, relevant and emerging issues on their livelihood and farming experiences. The process was aimed at facilitating their learnings and out scaling of knowledge, skills and approaches. These exchanges help farmers in building their confidence, self-esteem by recognising their knowledge skills and experience.

Integrated Approach for Waste Management

Managing increasing amounts of solid waste has become a significant challenge in many communities, resulting in severe adverse impacts on environmental and public health. INF Nepal Bajura initiated sustainable solid waste management in two wards covering 1099 households in Martadi. Martadi is the district head quarter of the remote Bajura in Sudurpashchim Province. Martadi Bazar area is located in Badimalika Municipality, and the two wards cover the municipality's market areas. The work was implemented, strengthening and mobilising the twelve settlement improvement committee from the two wards.

This act has empowered the communities and the Badimalika Municipality to take every necessary action at the local level. With increasing public awareness about good health and clean environmental sanitation, solid waste management has now become the municipality's priority in Bajura. They are also promoting waste reduction, reuse, and recycling practices among the communities.



INF Nepal Bajura also distributed bins to encourage proper storage of waste at the source. The municipality has introduced on-time collection systems, where waste is transported straight from the source to a collection vehicle at a given time. Eco-friendly farming practices, compost making and kitchen gardening in each household have also been implemented as an integrated and sustainable solid waste management approach.

DANG

Empowering the People with Disabilities

INF Nepal Dang has been implementing the Community Based Inclusive Development Project [CBID] project since 2018. The project works through SHGs of persons with disabilities [PWD], empowering them to improve their health and livelihood condition. Through the project, many vocational trainings are provided to the PWDs and their families to support their livelihood.

A 65-day long agriculture training was organised in coordination with the Agriculture Training Centre in Dang. One of the participants was a 22-year-old Mohan* Thapa resident of Twongkhola village of Dang district and an SHG member formed by INF Nepal. Mohan has low vision and faces difficulty in seeing clearly and accurately. Mohan lived a worrisome life thinking about his future. He was often depressed about his condition and had very low self-esteem. Being involved in SHG has changed Mohan's life. He takes an active part in the life of SHGs and gets involved in raising voices for people with disabilities.

After completing 65-day long agricultural training, the project supported Mohan with materials for establishing a greenhouse, including vegetable seeds and the water pump for irrigation purpose. With this support, he started vegetable farming and have already harvested and earned around NPR 10,000 from the sale of vegetables. Mohan shares, "This has given me an immense sense of satisfaction and confidence."



KAPILVASTU

Harnessing the Power of Groups

INF Nepal Kapilvastu conducted the Group Facilitation Training to group facilitators of SHGs. A total of 48 group facilitators participated in the training, among which 43 were female participants. The facilitation training was aimed to equip the members of the SHGs with facilitation skills; good planning, keeping members involved and growing, resolving issues and creating real leadership opportunities. The training introduced some of the essential facilitation skills, their uses, and practical considerations to the participants, offering them a chance to develop and practice some of these skills in a supportive learning environment.



Communal Farming a Sustainable Approach

Thapabada is a small village in Kanakasundari RM with around 28 households. The primary source of the income of the villagers is traditional farming and livestock rearing. Janachetana SHG, formed by INF Nepal in the village, is actively involved in community development work. As a result, the SHGs members came together to do communal farming as it represents a more viable production system and can be used as a form of financial security. Twenty-two members came together. They ploughed and prepared the farmland for planting potatoes and other cash crops for the whole year. Previously, this piece of land was used for tobacco farming. This has been an excellent example of mutual social learning leading to sustainable and equitable development.



Changing Lives of Remote Communities

The construction of the drinking water scheme has brought significant relief to the villagers in Luma village of Jumla district, a remote settlement with 88 households. Residents of Luma village previously faced drinking water shortage, so the Chameli SHG and Sayapatri SHG, formed by INF Nepal, made the action plan for the construction of drinking water tap. The project was prioritised, planned and formulated by the members of the community themselves. INF Nepal supported materials for construction while the community members also contributed labour cost and locally available raw materials. With the availability of safe drinking water, there are fewer chances of people suffering from water-borne diseases. Also, with the drinking water at an accessible distance, the time saved in fetching water can be now spent on other domestic chores.

The difficult days are gone, especially for Women!



Livelihood Support to Migrant Returnees

In Jumla, a three-day poultry farming training was conducted for the migrant returnees. The training was designed following a preliminary assessment and interests of the participants. Migrant returnees and their families were one of the hardest-hit group during the COVID. We are committed to working with our partners to build the resilience of returning migrants and addressing the socioeconomic impacts to ensure financial sustainability. We aim to provide skill development training and livelihood support to migrant returnees to engage them in agriculture, poultry farming, and other small business creation training to help create employment opportunity through our projects.



KALIKOT

Promoting the Climate Resilient Agricultural

INF Nepal Kalikot conducted the Climate Resilient Agricultural trainings in three places of the target communities [Lalu village, Rupsa village and Kumalgaun village] of Naraharinath RM. A total of 101 SHGs members including 11 community mobilizer participated in the training. The project hired the trainer from Government Agriculture Centre of the RM Office. The overarching goal of the project is to support sustainable development by promoting the Climate Resilient Agriculture which aims at enhancing agricultural productivity contributing to food security through capacity building of SHGs members/farmers and facilitating better access to finance.

The project has observed an increased number of SHGs members adapting practices and were involved in cultivating the seasonal and off-seasonal farming of food crops and cash crops. This has been the source income to many individuals and family in Narharinath RM, Kalikot.



Integrated Pest Management Training

A total of 23 selected SHGs members participated in Integrated Pest Management training in Aadhela village of Naraharinath RM. New strains of pests have been emerging and this has hampered the marginalized farmers, because of their vulnerability to climate change and their inability to mitigate and adapt with effects. As Integrated pest management is one of the steps towards sustainable agriculture the training was aimed at helping them to manage the pest of vegetables and fruits by organic, cultural, biological pesticides using locally available herbs/plants and materials.



MUGU

Building Safer Communities

INF Nepal Mugu carried out the two-day training on Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment [VCA] to the ward level Disaster Risk Management Committee. A total of 18 people attended the two-day training. The participants were able to collect, analyse, and systematise their community's vulnerability to hazards in a meaningful way. The training allowed them to understand the impact of climate change and adaptation. This information was then used in preparing the key measure for the mitigation plan, analysing both the risks and existing capacities of the community. All the drafted measures and plans will be submitted to higher authorities to reduce people's vulnerability to potential disasters and increase their capacity to survive them and resume their lives.



ROLPA

Self-help and Solidarity

INF Nepal formed SHGs are taking the lead in community development works. One of the examples is Charipani SHG, created by INF Nepal in Bhitrigam Jheligung of Rolpa District. This group has 21 members, and all of them are females. All the members of this group belong to the Dalit [so called lower caste] community. Apart from one member of this group, no one has completed secondary education. However, this group has been playing a vital role in the development of their community.

So far, the group has completed 18 action plans. These action plans include collective vegetable farming, collective weeding, paving roads, constructing water taps and other sanitation activities. Just recently, the group has repaired and built the pathways from Jheligung to Kafaldada. The natural trail in Belitung was very narrow and was not constructed but had evolved through the passage of villagers over time. This trail was difficult and dangerous for the passer-by to take the route. However, the simple improvements to the path have brought substantial benefits to the villagers making the tracks safer and more accessible.

Group facilitator Sapana said, “Through the group formation, we have been empowered to be involved in social and economic activities. This has given us common ground and voice.”

More than ever, these women from disadvantaged communities find voices and escape poverty through the SHG. They are now living up to the aim of self-help and solidarity.



BANKE

Gender Analysis Tools through POWER Project

The POWER project has used Gender Analysis as one of the key tools to identify the community needs, their priorities, and ways forward. The gender analysis tool was used by the consortium members in the projects particularly in community structures such as farmers groups, and self-help groups. Various tools such as workload analysis, mobility tree analysis; power analysis, and access & resource control analysis were used to carry out the gender assessment.

The project has been able to identify the problems using the gender analysis tools with regards to women's economic empowerment, representation and decision-making, and workload balance.



SURKHET - FISTULA WORK

Outreach work is an integral part of our Fistula work in Surkhet, Karnali Province. These community Outreach works have not only improved the health and livelihoods of hundreds of women, but they have also trained government health workers, strengthened primary health centres and health posts. They have been pivotal in educating the remote communities about the Obstetric Fistula, identifying the new cases, and providing follow-up care.

Recently, our Fistula Outreach facilitator **Gyan** travelled to Mugu, one of the most remote districts of Karnali province. It takes two days to reach Mugu on a bus from Surkhet. After getting to Gamgadhi, the district headquarters of Mugu, it took another two hours of bus rides and then one day and a half-day uphill walk for the team to finally reach Khatyad RM.

In collaboration with the Rural Municipality, Gyan conducted an orientation on Obstetric Fistula to 15 Female Community Health Volunteers [FCHV] on Obstetric Fistula. Some FCHVs walked for three hours to get to this training.

"**Mayako Naya Sari**", a video drama made by INF with an awareness message about Obstetric Fistula was showed during the orientation. The facilitator explained the signs and symptoms, prevention and treatment of Fistula. The participants were unaware about Fistula.



After attending the Fistula orientation, one of the FCHVs identified and referred Sunita* to the Fistula Centre in Surkhet. She was diagnosed and found out that she has been suffering from Obstetric Fistula for many years. She was treated at the Fistula Centre and is now recovering her health back at home. Sunita is thankful to the Fistula team for making her life better.



"I feel like I have a new life" - Sunita

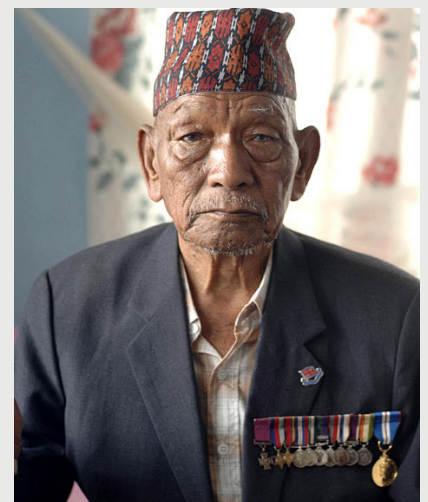
** Name changed for anonymity.*

Did you know?

If you are travelling between Cardiff, Bristol, Plymouth area in a Britain's Great Western Railway [GWR] Intercity Express Train, you are probably riding a train named Tulbahadur Pun. To mark the end of World War II, GWR has named one of its trains after the Nepali Gurkha soldier Tul Bahadur Pun, decorated with Britain's prestigious Victoria Cross for his bravery during WWII.



Photo: Great Western Railway



FEATURED STORY

Earnings at Home

Twenty-nine-year old Harka* Bista lives with his father, wife and sister in the remote village Sunchhahari RM of Rolpa. Harka's family is making a decent income through farming and agricultural work, but this wasn't the case a few years ago.

Having lost his mother at a very young age and school being very far from home, he couldn't continue his education beyond grade five. Due to the lack of education, he couldn't get any job in Nepal. So, to support his family, he took a loan from the local landlord and went to Qatar to do labour work. Even in Qatar, he couldn't get a decent earning job, so he decided to return to Nepal in just two years. It was



exhausting for Harka and his family as their loan hadn't been repaid yet. Their agricultural produce could only support the family for mere six months.

In 2018, INF Nepal went to his village and formed a Self-Help Group [SHG] comprising 15 women and four men. The SHG sits for meeting twice a month. In SHG meeting, they discuss various issues and problems of their community. They also conduct saving and credit activities in the SHG. Harka knew about such saving and credit practice for the first time through SHG. He realised how much money he has been wasting all these years. He says, "I now regularly save money through SHG. We offer loan to any member needing cash. This has saved many of us from wasting unnecessarily."

In one of the meetings, Harka raised an issue about how he can uplift his income level. He mentioned, "Considering my financial situation and family condition, I did not want to leave my village to earn." So, the meeting recommended Harka should take off-seasonal vegetable farming training. So, the SHG requested INF Nepal Rolpa Office. Harka got three-day training on Off-Seasonal Vegetable Farming and got plastic for the tunnel, some PVC pipes for water-drop irrigation, and different vegetable seeds from INF Nepal.

He utilised all the techniques he learned from his training, but the production was not so high during the first year. In the second year, he was able to produce more. He now sells his vegetable produce, carrying them in a locally made bamboo shack and selling them in his village and nearby market.

"Earlier, I couldn't earn neither in Nepal nor abroad, but now I cannot just earn but also live happily with my family".

Harka says he is satisfied with his lifestyle now and feel proud when the local ward chairperson gives Harka's example to encourage other unemployed youths in his village. With a big smile on his face, Harka gave all credit to INF for showing him the right way.

Give yourself a pat, Harka for your hard work and perseverance..



** Name changed for anonymity.*

For more information and updates:

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INF NEPAL'S COVID APPEAL

WE ARE RESPONDING • 2021

COVID & PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA



Kamala* and Bikram* from Raptisonary Banke were happily married. The couple has two daughters and were living with ten family members. Bikram was the eldest son of his parents and was responsible for looking after the family.

Bikram was a graduate and worked as a teacher in the local school. The decent earning from teaching in school was not enough for him to support his family. He was exploring the possibilities of going abroad to earn his living.

In his pursuit to work abroad, Bikram decided to try Korea, one of the most attractive destinations for many Nepali workers. He went to Kathmandu to learn the Korean language. His family took a loan of NPR 4 lakh [USD 3478] to support his living and expenses in Kathmandu. He spent three years learning the language, and after much efforts, he passed his examination and was selected. But soon after that, the COVID crisis struck and his visa did not come. The pandemic blew up all possibilities of working abroad for Bikram.

Bikram returned home feeling helpless after the government announced the nationwide lockdown. He felt beaten down by the worries, not being able to work or pay the debt. Kamala recalls, "He would continuously lament, If not for the Corona, I would have been in Korea now, earning money, paying off debts, and sending our daughters to a good school, but the luck did not favour me."

Bikram's condition was deteriorating. They did not know what was going on with her husband as he was now a

different person. He would have regular arguments with her and other family members. He would often feel angry, ashamed, and fearful. He would run away to escape those feelings.

One fine day, Kamala was shocked to see him hanging. The financial stress prompted Bikram to take his life. Kamala's world was shattered. "My eyes welled up thinking of my husband who left unannounced from this world. The pandemic must have damaged his self-esteem, as he would feel flawed all the time and was in constant despair. It was hard for her to come to terms with what had happened.

"The problem stems from the loss of work, worries of money and our future. This pandemic took my husband who would not have died otherwise."

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused immense stress and undermined psychological well-being for individuals like Bikram. More than infection, the concerns have been for financial hardships. Your support will enable us to reach out to many individuals like Kamala.

**Name changed for anonymity*

SUPPORT US



\$20

This can provide hygiene kit and general medicines during self-isolation.



\$42

This can provide food parcels for a family impacted by COVID for a month.



\$50

This can provide expert counselling support for each session.



\$110

This can provide income generation support for poor families.



\$400

This can provide technical and vocational training to vulnerable people.

Please donate us at www.inf.org/covid19