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Nepal QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

July–September 2020

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International Citizenship Service (ICS)

Through our ICS II Pivot program currently we have been engaging young community volunteers to take a leadership role in their communities and conduct activities to bring about positive social change and generate awareness regarding the COVID-19.

Programme Update

Our now trained ICS community volunteers are going full steam ahead with the 'ICS II Pivot Programme' to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 through community interventions. So far, their positive feedback has shown that the sessions have galvanised the volunteers, leaving them feeling confident and ready to make a difference.

In close collaboration with municipalities and Urjaa, our volunteers have been raising awareness about effective hygiene, myths and stigma related to Covid-19. They have spread this message through a variety of mediums, including **online platforms, door to door visits** and **radio broadcasts**.

This co-ordinated effort has been greatly appreciated by members of the community, as expressed by several stakeholders.

"I am glad to have a discussion about this issue with community volunteers like you. In this situation, we need togetherness and support more than ever. I will do my part for not spreading hatred behavior" - Kalpana KC, Community member, Chhampi ward no.9, Godawari Municipality

Preserving our mental health is as important as protecting our physical health. That's why, as well as distributing WASH and PPE materials around the community, our volunteers have been working to prepare people for the emotional strain of the pandemic. In collaboration with the women's group Female Health Volunteer (FCHVs), they formed a self-help group. This group provides the opportunity for women to discuss and overcome the challenges of Covid-19 with their mutual support. The volunteers also helped train 40 social studies teachers and school principals from 13 public schools in psychosocial support. The training covered techniques for teachers to identify and respond to psychosocial problems in children in lockdown.

Impacts

Activity	No.	People Reached
Social media posts	11	3207
Door to door visits	40	278
IEC materials distributed	950	1736
WASH materials distributed	11 schools 3 health posts	Total: 2684
Demonstrations	10	186
Psychosocial support groups	10	156
Youth and child club mobilisation	10	221



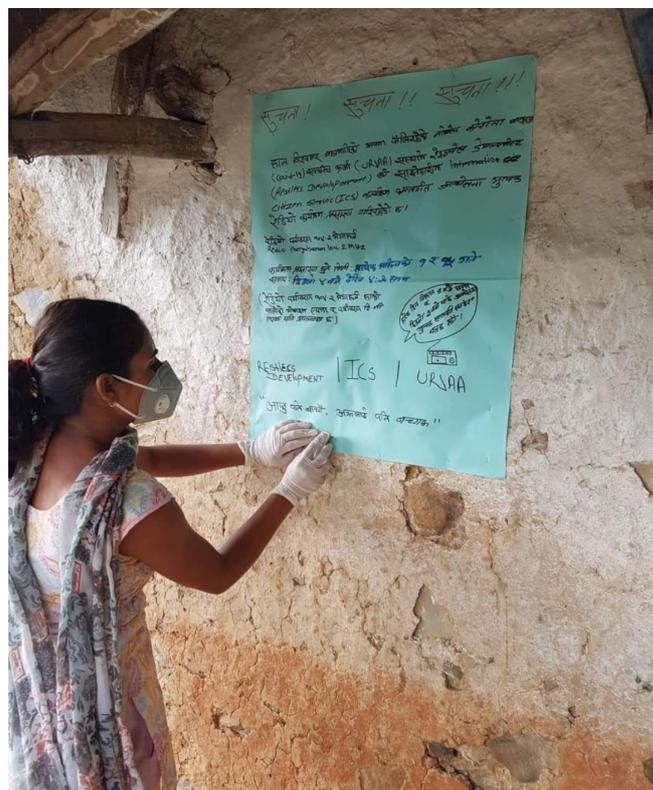
Alumni Engagement Committee

The second phase of the Alumni engagement Committee (AEC) has started from 23rd September 2020. The newly recruited alumni will be raising awareness on myth and stigma related with COVID-19 through social media champigns .

What will the alumni do?

Digital Content Creation and Sharing:

- AEC will play an active role in generating young leaders in the community, encouraging youth to take the lead in the fight against the pandemic and offering support to communities. This will be achieved by fighting misinformation, providing resources concerning the mental health and well-being of young people, and empowering young people to act and lead the battle against the ongoing crisis.
- They will create a contents to promote safe hygiene practices, and mythbusters widespread in the public regarding the virus.



Action at Home Highlight

Following the pandemic Lasata Shakya, ICS volunteer Q20 took the initiative to help her community during COVID-19 pandemic. As part of her Action at Home project she made YouTube videos where she demonstrated an easy and simple method to make masks using materials available at home. When the country was going through a shortage of masks due to hoarding and hiding of masks in the market, her small initiation helped many people. From this action, she realized that even a small video can make a big difference.

Similar to Lasata, 46 volunteers of ICS Q20 cycle have completed their action at home this quarter. Their actions vary from blog writings to organizing online training and workshops, making awareness videos and writing newspaper articles. They have completed their actions to speak about their ICS experience, raise awareness on COVID-19, dengue, menstrual hygiene, mental health, child marriage, mask making and cyber security.

Youth Take the Lead (YTL)

Youth Take the Lead (YTL) was started in 2019 with the support from The Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (Norec) to empower youth leadership through a volunteer exchange across Restless Development hubs in Nepal, Tanzania and South Africa. For a three-month exchange period, volunteers live and work in their host country, engaging Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and volunteers while generating evidence on youth leadership best practices. Once they return home they have a two-month follow-up period where they share the lessons that they learnt and develop an advocacy plan to address issues in their own community.

Our volunteers' story

Sushma and Binayak are two volunteers from Nepal who participated in the YTL exchange from January till March (the exchange program was cut short due to COVID-19). As dedicated activists, they are both passionate about cross-cultural learning and youth empowerment. They saw YTL as the perfect opportunity to build on their previous experience and develop a global perspective to activism. They travelled to Tanzania and South-Africa respectively, where they assessed and monitored CSOs, ultimately developing recommendations on how they could better engage the youth and community.

The program has encouraged both volunteers to continue their activism and apply the lessons that they learnt overseas in their own communities. It gave them a valuable grounding in practical skills, such as working alongside communities and initiating innovative approaches to generate funding. But it has also instilled a simple truth, which is at the heart of everything Restless does: sharing the stories of young people across the globe is the most powerful tool to inspire action and create change. Currently both are engaged in training young people through various online workshops on advocacy and leadership which aimed to empower young people to raise their voice and take necessary action in their communities.



“I feel like we were able to make significant impacts through our work. Sharing the stories of the young leaders in both the host country and home country has motivated and inspired young people to take action and create change” – Sushma



Supporting the LGBTIQ community

In partnership with Outright Action International and in coordination with the Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nepal (FSGMN), Restless Development Nepal supported the LGBTIQ community with 364 sets of relief packages consisting of sanitation materials and basic food. With the help of volunteers, 359 LGBTIQ community workers, including people living with HIV and AIDS, were reached in and outside of Kathmandu valley. Similarly, 28 CBOs from 22 districts were reached through the support.



During the lockdown, access to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) services was limited to most people living with HIV and Aids. People living with these conditions are at a higher risk of contracting severe illness from Covid-19, and as a result many were unwilling to travel to the ART Centre during the pandemic. FSGMN supported CSO members to facilitate 20 people living with HIV and Aids to access ART services in their community. They provided communication, travel and food costs to help improve the access to these vital services.



The pandemic and nationwide lockdown posed many challenges to the health and livelihood of the LGBTIQ community. Many people struggled to meet their daily needs. The mental wellbeing of most people living in this situation was severely affected. To combat this, the project conducted two groups of virtual psychosocial support sessions for 60 LGBTIQ participants. These sessions included stress management coping strategies, group counselling and were facilitated by a professional mental health practitioner. The counsellor provided a further 45 individual support sessions through telephone, Viber and Whatsapp to 16 LGBTIQ clients.