



Nepal Red Cross Society

COVID-19

Preparedness and Response Operation

1 February-15 October 2020

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People from community in Tripurasundari Rural Municipality, Ward No. 6, Dhading district receiving hygiene kit supported by NRCS Dhading (**Photo: NRCS Dhading**)

BACKGROUND

As of 15 October 2020, 117,996 people have been tested positive for the COVID-19 infection in Nepal. Since 9 September 2020, the per day positive cases have been constantly above 1,000. It was on 10 October 2020 when 5,008 people tested positive in a single day which is the all-time highest. On the other hand, with the increase number of people being tested positive, the recovery rate is decreasing gradually. On 15 October, the recovery rate was 69.4 percent which is one of the lowest in South Asia Region. The recovery rate is highest in Pakistan followed by Bhutan, Maldives, and India. From the epidemiological perspective, it can be considered a sign that the fight against COVID-19 infection is going to be tough in coming days in Nepal. Apart from this, the Dashain festival which will be starting from 17 October can pose a greater risk of spread of COVID-19 infection in the communities. The movement of people from different parts of the country to their homes to celebrate Dashain with their family and loved ones can worsen the COVID-19 situation in Nepal. Government of Nepal is advising its citizen to minimize the movement as much as possible during Dashain.

Other than this, one of the alarming aspects is the continuous rise of number of cases in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts. In between 16 September to 15 October 2020, 40 per cent of the total cases are from Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts and 32 percent of total death cases are from these three districts. (HEOC sitreps)

The Government of Nepal has amended the National Testing Guideline for COVID-19. The fifth amendment of the guideline has paved a way for the starting of the antigen test at wide scale and identification of the target group (senior citizens, single women, front line workers, and severely disable person) for free of cost COVID-19 test. The guideline is available [here](#). Similarly, the Government has amended dead body management protocol. One of the key aspects of the amended protocol is the management of the dead in home isolation has been identified as the responsibility of the family member of the dead following precautionary measures. The amended protocol is available [here](#).

Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) has been involved in COVID-19 preparedness and response since early February 2020 in coordination with the Ministry of Health (MOHP), and Health Emergency Operation Centre (HEOC). NRCS provincial and district chapters and sub chapters have been engaging in various activities: food distribution, quarantine management, ambulance services, awareness raising activities, tents/tarpaulins and non-food relief items (NFRI) distribution, restoring family links (RFL), psychosocial first aid, health/help desk, personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizers, hygiene kits, soaps and information educational and communication (IEC) materials distribution. The NRCS frontline workers have been provided with safety and security items and orientations along with insurance provision. In addition to COVID-19, NRCS is also involved in monsoon preparedness and response activities.

Situation Overview (as of 15 October 2020)

	Nepal	Global
Confirmed Cases	117,996	38,770,259
# of patients recovered	84,518	29,139,220
# of people died	694	1,097,289
# of people in quarantine	4,825	
# of people in isolation	36,533	
#of Countries Affected		216

Source: MOHP situation report

MOHP website; <https://covid19.mohp.gov.np/#/>

VOICE

NRCS involvement in Case Investigation and Contact Tracing

Being a Red Cross volunteers, we are extremely happy to engage in Case Investigation and Contact Tracing (CICT) task to break chain of COVID-19 pandemic to some extent.

After attending the orientation on CICT, we have been working together with Changunarayan Municipality in recording the information of COVID-19 positive cases. Filling up B1 and B2 forms and follow up with the people tested positive to COVID-19, tracing their contacts thereby making a routine report are the major tasks we are involved in. Moreover, we are engaged in disseminating awareness message on COVID-19 to the people we came in contact with. This has really enhanced our professional skills and more than that we are happy to serve people during this pandemic as frontline volunteers which provides us self-satisfaction.

-Kabin Karki and Kripus Karki,
NRCS CICT volunteers for Changunarayan Municipality

Health and Care

Major progress

Services

- **247** ambulances mobilized across the county
- **113** blood transfusion service centres/emergency units functional across the country
- **2,817** people received psychosocial first aid service

Materials distribution

- **343,640** personal protective (disposable examination gloves, full body apron, full body PPE set, goggles, face shield, head cover, mask, rubber boot, long tube rubber shoe) distributed

Training and orientations

- More than 1,800 people reached through remote and physical psychosocial first aid (PFA) training and orientation
- **15** people including two female staff and volunteer from NRCS Bhaktapur trained on Case Investigation and Contact Tracing (CICT). The training was facilitated by medical team of Kathmandu University CICT self-paced training. NRCS is planning to collaborate with them for implementation of contact tracing in other districts too
- IPC training provided to more than 40 volunteers including focal person of 21 district chapters

Guidelines developed

- COVID-19 response guideline
- Infection, prevention and control guideline

Target group

- People infected by COVID-19, their families, and the communities they are living in.
- Frontline health responders
- Vulnerable groups such as elderly people, children, pregnant women, people with disability (PWD)
- Migrant returnees/labourers/workers
- School children,
- People in holding areas, quarantine centres
- People in prisons
- Public in general
- Red Cross volunteers and staff



NRCS volunteer describing proper use of mask to children from vulnerable household at Pokhara-18, Lamagaun (Photo: NRCS Kaski)



Disinfecting the community where there are reported confirmed cases of COVID-19 (Photo: NRCS Bhaktapur)

Water Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

Major progress

- **800** hand washing stations established in public places and quarantine sites

Materials distribution

- **1,077** hygiene kits distributed
- **37,305** bars of soap distributed
- **4,771** buckets distributed
- **1,966** mugs distributed

Training and orientations

- **45,841** people reached through hygiene promotion activities (hand washing demonstration sessions and practical session)
- More than 40 people from 21 districts were oriented on environment cleaning and disinfection

Other actions

- **45** emergency toilets constructed in different quarantine sites
- Supported in disinfection of public places including cultural heritage sites, schools, quarantine and holding areas in different districts



A girl using child friendly tap constructed by NRCS and UNICEF in Bidhyanagar quarantine site, Dang (Photo: NRCS Dang)



Water filter installed in quarantine site at Judhha Ma.Vi, Gaur-2, Rautahat (Photo: NRCS Rautahat)

Risk Communication and CEA



NRCS Kathmandu and Bhaktapur have been disseminating COVID-19 awareness message to travellers at point of entry, airport and bus parks (Photo: NRCS Kathmandu and Bhaktapur)

Major progress

- **700,943** IEC materials such as pamphlets, flex, stickers, flyers, brochures, banner with COVID-19 awareness messages produced and distributed
- **955** calls related to COVID-19 received and responded through Red Cross Hotline 1130
- **152** episodes of Red Cross radio programme aired through different FM stations across the country
- **580** COVID-19 related posts shared in NRCS Facebook site that was viewed 5,438,363 times
- **932** Unit Action Team formed to support and keep record of people entering the community, recognize the threats and keep the community informed with lifesaving message and appropriate referral service.
- NRCS social media volunteering page developed and more than **1,600** youths joined the page as members. NRCS volunteers' activities and awareness messages related to COVID-19 have been shared through this group

Protection Gender and Inclusion

Major progress

Services

- **44** districts involved in different activities related to RFL services; NRCS volunteers contacted **508** people arrived from India/other countries
- **78** people supported in their family contact
- **5** people supported in reunification of their family
- **18** street children supported with emergency shelter

Materials distribution

- **18,533** people including daily wage workers, street children and passengers supported with food in coordination with local authority
- **356** families supported with Combo kit in in Bhulke village of Udayapur district
- **1,081** dignity kit distributed in the quarantine site
- **214** Kishori kit distributed in quarantine site
- **191** community people and **31** quarantined people oriented on sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) referral pathway

Training and orientation

- **147** staff/volunteers oriented on PGI
- **180** staff/volunteers trained on SGBV

Guidelines developed

- Rapid guidance for providing RFL service during COVID-19
- Family support combo kit management guideline



A man in Rupandehi district reading the pamphlet with information on SGBV components distributed by NRCS volunteer (Photo: Surakshya Bhattarai, NRCS Rupandehi)

Other support on PGI

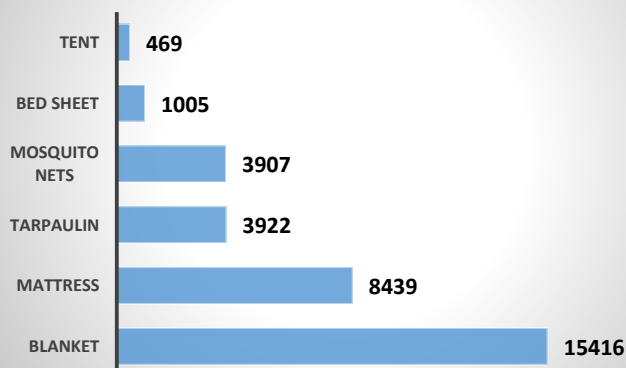
- People supported with transportation facility to return to their house in different districts
- Sexual and gender based violence referral message airing/broadcasting through radio and television

Shelter

Key Actions

- Supported in quarantine site management including district jails as per necessity
- Supported shelter and non-food relief items to quarantine sites, isolation sites and households in COVID-19 affected area

Shelter and non-food relief item distribution



GOOD PRACTICES

- To reduce the potential chain of infection as well as support/recommend in testing mechanism for the NRCS staff at headquarters, a team has been formed and mobilized for case investigation and contact tracing.
- NRCS continues the blood collection for plasma therapy from 12 blood center. This includes Central Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) Kathmandu, 6 Province BTS of Biratnagar, Birjung, Chitwan, Pokhara, Nepalgunj and Dhangadhi and 5 district BTS from Rupandehi, Bhaktapur, Jhapa, Sunsari and Dhanusha. Till date 312 pint of plasma has been collected of which 252 has been supplied for the treatment of COVID-19 patients.
- Dissemination of COVID-19 awareness message along with Dashain wishes through flex banner and other IEC materials at exit point of districts, Bus Park and nearby areas of airport.



Flex with Dashain wishes along with COVID-19 awareness message kept at various points of entry and bus park targeting the people travelling (Photo: NRCS Kathmandu)

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

- All Red Cross actions related to COVID-19 are in line with Government of Nepal MOHP, HEOC guideline and initiatives.
- NRCS province offices, district chapters and sub-chapters have remained in close contact with the local authorities and have been supporting quarantine and isolation sites management including assessment.
- Participation in District Disaster Management Committee meeting in all districts for COVID-19 preparedness and response.
- Participation in health, WASH, PGI and shelter cluster meetings and other meetings such as media interaction programme.
- NRCS has maintained bilateral collaboration with Coco Cola and UNICEF for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response.

CHALLENGES

- The potential risk of COVID-19 transmission to the frontline volunteer and staffs has caused some setbacks on implementation of the COVID-19 response.
- Difficulty in use of defined monitoring tools to track district response on COVID-19.

OUR PARTNERS FOR COVID-19

RCRC Movement: ICRC and IFRC including Participating National Societies

UN agencies: UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO

Private Sectors: Coca-Cola Company, local industries and traders

Philanthropists: Supreme Master Ching Hai International Association, individual donors

Government agencies at federal, provincial and local levels

Note: This report has been prepared by PMER-IM –CEA team in consultation with concerned sectors at NRCS headquarters and main sources of information include: 5W report received from NRCS district chapters, and Situation updates from WHO and MOHP HEOC.

For further information

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- <https://www.facebook.com/nepalredcross/>; <https://twitter.com/NepalRedCross>
- For further details of the information and 5W data please find the link for COVID-19 Dashboard: [Link](#)