**Background**

Realizing the immediate priority of Government of Nepal (GoN) to vaccinate its people, international community with its COVAX program is providing vaccines to Nepal. After early forecast of possibility of third wave of COVID-19 in Nepal by the health specialists, all the stakeholders are on standby mode, ready to tackle the wave. Now, people themselves are more aware of the pandemic and are very willing to be vaccinated. In light of which, regular vaccination campaigns are under going throughout Nepal. As an auxiliary to the government, Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) is backing up most of the COVID-related preparedness and response activities led by the government. Staff and volunteers are mobilized in all COVID-19 affected districts.

Construction of WASH facilities in holding center, isolation center and health institutions are being rapidly implemented by NRCS through its funding partners. NRCS even has provided essential health care supplies to government bodies and hygiene kits to community people. Similarly, health volunteer, community volunteer and project staff are relentlessly devoting their time in the community to minimize the health risk in the verge of COVID-19. With all the preparedness and response activities rolled out all over Nepal, GoN now have eased the lockdown modality and have warned its people to take all the necessary preventive actions whenever they are out.

**Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan (MPRP)**

In less than a week after the start of monsoon, it wreaked havoc in several places of Nepal including Melamchi and Helambu of Sindhupalchok like never before. Since 15 June 2021, more than 22 deaths, 22 missing and 9 injuries had been reported due to heavy rainfall and landslide in different parts of the country till 25 June 2021. The event has also displaced more than 672 households and directly affected more than 1032 households. Similarly, 274 households were fully destroyed and 157 households were partially destroyed by the devastating floods and landslides. The affected communities are in need of immediate relief and lifesaving supports like emergency shelter, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, hygiene items and ready to eat food items.

NRCS volunteers are engaged in search and rescue, First Aid, assessment and relief distributions through its local units – district chapter and sub-chapter mobilizing skilled volunteers following the safety and security precaution against COVID-19.

This year, according to the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, heavy rainfall will further cause an increased water level in most of the major rivers in the country resulting devastating floods in terai districts and furious landslides in hilly districts. NRCS, being front liner organization in disastrous situations, had already prepared a monsoon preparedness and response plan (MPRP) that clearly reflects the organizational capacities and gaps for immediate response. As per the plan, trained human resources are regularly alerted for possible deployment similarly, various orientations have been conducted for disaster response including emergency shelter construction, NFRIs distributions, cleaning and disinfecting of water sources, water treatment, construction of sanitation facilities, i.e., emergency toilets and WASH relief items distributions and preposition of relief materials. With MPRP in hand, NRCS is now in better position to response whenever and where ever required.
After the 2nd wave break out of COVID-19 in Nepal, the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) requested all of its partners to allocate some budgets for COVID-19 response. Accepting NRCS proposals, almost 13 partners have re-allocated their budget. The allocation has been accomplished in 18 existing projects where COVID-19 responses were not incorporated during the design phase as they are non-COVID-19 response projects. By analysis, re-allocation has been agreed for 42 districts where five districts are overlapped by at least two different projects.

Diagnosis of re-allocation nature, mainly budget has been allocated in logistic parts especially for procurement of life saving items such as oxygen cylinder, medicines support, pulse oximeter, oxygen concentrators, personal protective equipment, disinfectants, medical masks. Apart from this, some budget has also been allocated for protection, risk communication and COVID-19 chain break activities. Based on the analysis, on average NPR 653,385 per district, NPR 1,524,565 per project and NPR 2,110,936 per donor have been allocated and being implemented through different departments.

NRCS COVID-19 Health Survey

NRCS, Community Development Department (CDD) has conducted a health survey in context to COVID-19. The main purpose of the health survey was to understand knowledge, attitude and practice on COVID-19 and to know the health condition of staff and program volunteers under CDD. Altogether 64 staff and program volunteers of CDD participated in this survey. Out of them, 23 were female. They are working in national headquarters and different projects in eight districts. The range of age of respondents was from 18 to 59 years. During the survey, 39 questions were asked to respondents. The survey was done online.

Some of the major findings of the health survey are:

- Eight respondents are found at risk level, five at moderate risk level, three at high-risk level and four at the extreme high-risk level of their health in the situation of COVID-19.
- 35 respondents were found in a healthy weight, 23 are overweight and six are in underweight categories. In the overweight category (23), it shows that two respondents are obese status whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is above 30. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states that people who have obesity are at increased risk for many diseases and health conditions.
- During the survey, 13 respondents were found to be in stress, fear or disappointment conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the report, crucial recommendations and conclusions were drawn as a way forward for safety and security of staff and volunteers in context of crisis and disaster. Some are given below:

- Awareness on the importance of health for everyone, thus, the significance of the healthy living while performing on humanitarian organization, which often works on emergency and pandemic.
- Continuous monitoring and practices on safety behaviors among the staff and program volunteers.
- Promotion of understanding and practices of spiritual health.
- Increased understanding and importance of holistic health.
- Promotion of other health and wellbeing-related subsidies while health insurances being basic security.

Click on the icon to read the full report
NRCS volunteers helping in distribution of relief materials (PC: NRCS, Sindhupalchok)

People using handwashing station facility at PoE, Birgunj (PC: NRCS, Parsa)

NRCS providing ambulance service to COVID positive patient from home isolation to hospital (PC: NRCS, Parsa)

Construction completion of School toilet (PC: Arun Kunwar, NRCS, Dailekh)

Handover of sanitation materials for mobile toilet at Teku Hospital (PC: NRCS, Kathmandu)

Handover of life saving medical equipments and WASH items (PC: Arun Kunwar, NRCS, Dailekh)

Conducting hand washing practice session to children under 18 (PC: NRCS, Jhapa)

HH using candle filter distributed by NRCS and RM (PC: Srutinath Chaudhary, NRCS, Dailekh)
COVID-19 has spread worldwide now. Till now, millions of people are dead, along with ever increasing number of infected people in the world and the case is similar in Nepal too. Kailali district chapter in coordination with NRCS HQs and UNICEF, conducted vaccination campaign by forming ward level working team under preparedness and response program to fight against COVID-19 in Dhangadi sub-metropolitan city.

Under this program UAT is a key actor for successful execution of program activities. Ward no 12 coordinator of UAT, Aarati Acharya assists disabled, weak and older citizen for vaccination. She says, “I am very fortunate and happy in assisting people in need of support.” Differently abled man, Manbir Nath says that he will never forget this help and expresses a big thank you to Aarati Acharya. Health in charge Dr. Krishna Bahadur Bohara says that, “UAT members are involved in awareness activities in the communities, assisting people in queue, making vaccination cards, helping disabled people and are supporting in vaccination center, this has turned out to be very effective in the battle against COVID-19.”

**Coordination and collaboration**

All NRCS actions related to COVID-19 are in-line with GON MOHP, HEOC guidelines and initiatives. NRCS province offices, district chapters and sub-chapters have remained in close contact with local authorities and has supported their plan for quarantine, isolation and holding site assessment, establishment and management. Participation in district disaster management committee meeting in all districts. Participation in WASH cluster meeting (national and provincial) and other meeting such as media interaction program.

**Upcoming/participated event**

- WASH literature club meeting every Friday
- Monsoon meeting (WASH) on 18th May, 2021
- National WASH cluster meeting 22nd June, 2021
- COVID-19 task committee meeting
- CVA and WASH TWG meeting

(Click on the link to donate: https://bit.ly/3nXndUu or use the QR code)

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Mr. Sanjay Gharti Magar, Chairman of Chisapani DWSS (PC: NRCs, Rolpa)
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

- Water Bottle: 120,912 Distributed
- Bucket With Jug: 143 Distributed
- Hygiene Kit: 255 Distributed
- Soap Bar: 5,928 Distributed
- Hand Washing Station: 42
  - 5 New and 37 repair
- Mobile Toilet: 10 Installed
- Total People Reached: 224,265
- Disinfectant: 1,995 supplies

Update as on 22nd July, 2021
Source: 4W Reporting (NRCS)

Nepal Red Cross Society