



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene (WASH) For All

### ✖ Background

Amidst COVID-19, Nepal has suffered a lot from severe cases of climate change effects. Long and unexpected monsoon this year caused unbearable loss of lives and properties. All three regions (Mountains, Hills and Terai) are devastated. However, the spirit of the country and its people are still high with which, the greatest festival of Nepal, "Dashain" was celebrated with dignity and blessings of elders.

As per the latest government data, the rate of recovery is higher than the rate of new cases of COVID-19. Initial results from "*second nationwide seroprevalence survey against COVID-19 infection-2021*" indicate 68.6% of the collected sample (13,161) had developed COVID-19 antibody, among which people with a single dose of vaccine had 80% and people with complete dose had 90% antibody which shows the effectiveness of vaccination and the only way to achieve herd immunity against COVID-19.

### COVID-19 Situation Overview (as of 20 October 2021)

Description	Nepal	Global
# of confirmed cases	807,052	242,904,646
# of patients recovered	784,155	220,163,929
# of death	11,318	4,939,739
# of people in isolation	11,579	17,800,978
# of countries affected	223	

(click for updates): <https://covid19.mohp.gov.np/#/>  
<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

### ✖ Safe drinking water and sanitation: the immediate need in flooded rural terai



Houses and crop fields inundated in Sarwal Rural Municipality (PC: Jay Ram Basnet, NRCS, HQs)

Continuous and heavy rainfall in different parts of the country since 26 August 2021 triggered floods/flash floods and landslides that caused devastation in different parts of the country. Due to heavy rains, especially Nawalparasi-East, Nawalparasi-West, Rupandehi, Myagdi, Mahottari, Banke, Kapilbastu and other districts have been affected so far and necessary rescue and relief work is being carried out by the respected NRCS district chapters with its set of volunteers and staff.

As the flood caused inundation in major area of the affected districts, people lost their clothing, foodstuffs and their only source of drinking water i.e. tube well. Affected people with nowhere to go have set up temporary tarpaulins by their collapsed houses and by the nearby roadside. Temporary shelter, immediate foodstuff, drinking water and sanitation facility were their immediate need based on the situation.

NRCS with its local volunteers carried out rescue and relief work in the flood affected districts. National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) and Surge team were mobilized to expedite the relief work and coordination and response activities. The team facilitated the assessment, data validation, coordination with District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) and other response activities conducted by the respective district chapter. In addition to it, the team also assisted the NRCS district chapter in identifying need and gap analysis and set the target for relief and response operation in a coordinated and systematic way.

Based on the NDRT and SURGE team's observation following key issues, needs and gaps in the WASH area were recommended:

- ◆ Support for safe drinking/water testing and treatment (Chlorination).
- ◆ Clean and disinfect tube well.
- ◆ Orientation on the safe use of water (Point of use).
- ◆ Support hygiene relief items.
- ◆ Support for sanitation and hygiene facilities along with WASH awareness sessions.
- ◆ As schools are reopening, and points of entry are near to the flooded area, COVID-19 is still a threat to the affected communities and small children. So, risk communication and community engagement for COVID-19 shall be given as a priority as well.

Inundated handpump  
(PC: Jay Ram Basnet, NRCS, HQs)



## ✖ NRCS approach

### In response to socio-economically impacted families due to COVID-19

After the notification of the second variant of the Corona virus in Nepal on 17th March 2021, the number of positive cases was increased so rapidly that the health service system all over Nepal was approached by the COVID-19 cases beyond their threshold capacity. More than 75 percent of patients who were hospitalized needed extra oxygen support and the majority of them needed Intensive Care Unit (ICU) bed and ventilator support. On the other hand, aiming to minimize the spread of the virus in the community, the Nepal government-imposed lockdown and prohibitory orders almost all over the country. The situation alerted the social and economic life of people, eventually disrupting the trade, business, culture and mobility of the people. Tourism, transport service, education, manufacturing companies, industrial sector and hotel business have been suffering the most. Similarly, the informal sector like street vendors, construction workers and the people engaged in the supply chain including porters were also affected badly.

As a consequence of all above mentioned, millions of people have lost their job. Together with it, around one million people who used to work in India and abroad have lost their job and returned to their home town. On one side, people have lost their job which has a direct impact on the household level economy including maintaining minimum meal requirements, medical expenses and so on. On the other hand, the people who were being suffered from positive cases with symptoms have been spending their savings on medical treatment. Moreover, the loss of the income source of the family has severely affected the children, women and other people who are in special circumstances like disability or pregnancy especially in seeking emergency services. In addition, protection and SGBV cases including mental health among all the age groups of people is being a big problem.

To reduce the suffering from the pandemic, the majority of humanitarian organizations including the Nepal Red Cross Society and the government entities are focusing on health service delivery and to some extent system strengthening by supporting beds, oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators, ventilators, and PPEs to the hospitals and other service delivery site. In addition to the support to the health system, there are a few organizations, local clubs, civil societies, and local government that has also been focusing on the affected household by providing relief supports.

Nepal Red Cross Society in partnership with the Red Cross movement and non-movement organizations have made a plan to economic support to Covid-19 affected families so that they can maintain their basic livelihood threshold and also provide the protection and GBV related supports and services to the targeted families.

The basic livelihood threshold supports included the unconditional cash grant to the affected families to fulfill their basic needs which includes minimum food items and other basic needs like WASH, health expenses, education, etc.

The basic livelihood threshold-related activities are the unconditional cash support to the families to fulfill basic needs including food, water, hygiene, sanitation, medical expenses and education. Whereas the protection and SGBV related supports include the activities related to the protection of vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly people, people with disabilities, violence prevention, supports to the people with disabilities including assistive devices, educational support for those students who are not accessing to online classes and to the people who are suffering from chronic illness. These groups will be supported to meet the needs that they were unable to fulfill due to the pandemic. The protection and SGBV related supports focus on preventive measures.

*This intervention is planned to integrate with the overall COVID-19 response program of the Nepal Red Cross Society*

### Integrating livelihoods in WASH

Access to safe water and sanitation facility is the most important thing for improving personal hygiene and health status, specially, in the rural community and to reduce water borne diseases. However, only safe water and sanitation may not be the sole requirement for community health improvement.

There is an abundance of other materials which are equally essential for improving the personal hygiene and health status of the rural community people such as: laundry and bathing soap, water containers for storage, toothpaste and brush, comb, nail cutter, toilet cleaner, slippers etc. But unfortunately, most of the rural community people may not have access to these things due to other priorities and one of them being low-income sources.

I-WASH project supported by Austrian Red Cross, is being implemented in the rural community of Palpa district to reduce waterborne diseases through access to safe water and sanitation facility. In this project, livelihood activities to increase the income source of the community people has been integrated. This particular activity is endorsed to support those who are unable to afford additional WASH materials to achieve overall improved health status.

Thus, "increase investment for increased income" by the means of livelihood support activity well integrated in the WASH projects shall be a basic norms for the development projects conducted in rural community by NRCS.



Livelihoods support of cash grant of NPR. 50,000 to Ram Bahadur Darji from I-WASH project (PC: NRCS, Palpa)



## ✦ Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) in Action



Construction completion of WASH facilities  
(PC: NRCS, Rautahat)



Technical orientation to plumbers on repair and maintenance of  
contactless HWS (PC: NRCS, Udayapur)



NDRT and Surge team during monitoring of flooded area of  
Nawalparasi (PC: Jay Ram Basnet, NRCS, HQs)



Orientation on vulnerability assessment to health volunteers  
(PC: NRCS, Bhaktapur)



Health volunteers and UAT members requesting public to wear  
mask compulsorily (PC: NRCS, Parsa)



Handover of WASH items in Chandragiri Isolation Center  
(PC: NRCS, Kathmandu)



NRCS volunteer being interviewed by Palika Khabar media at  
holding center (PC: NRCS, Rupandehi)



Where is ur mask? campaign led by UAT members and Nepal  
Police distributing IEC materials (PC: NRCS, Kailali)



## ✦ Highlight stories

### Healthy future of Baluwadi



Rupsana demonstrating 6 steps of handwashing with soap  
(PC: NRCS, Jhapa)

Rupsana Bi.Ka, 13-year old girl reading in grade nine is a residence of Kachankawal Rural Municipality, ward no. 7, Baluwadi, Jhapa. She was happy in attending the session of handwashing practice and coronavirus related awareness program conducted by Nepal Red Cross volunteers and UAT members under the COVID-19 preparedness and response program.

Her brother, sister and colleagues also attend the same awareness sessions and she now happily says, **"I know the importance of washing hands with soap and water following 6 steps, maintaining social distancing and use of mask practically as well as theoretically"**. She is regularly washing her hands with soap and water and uses mask when going out from the house. She disseminates all this learned knowledge to her family members as well as her friends. Lastly, she is thankful to NRCS and UNICEF for valuable learnings.

### Free transportation service for returnees

Hello! I am Dhansara Chand 43 years old. My house is in Bansgadhi Municipality-9, Thumani, Bardiya district. I went to India with my daughter Shanti Chand (22 years) and grand-daughter (4 years) six months ago. As expected, the second wave of corona commences and we lost our jobs and work done for about the month was remained unpaid as our company itself was closed. We arrived Nepal after encountering many hurdles and decided to return to our home Bardiya. We reached the Jamunaha point of entry of Banke despite financial difficulties. We were in panic and were running out of cash even to go home on rental vehicle. However, we came to know from Red Cross volunteers that NRCS provides different help like giving transportation facilities to vulnerable people. After then, NRCS volunteers help to different administrative to provide the transportation facilities for us. We were able to reach our home easily and safely using transportation facility provided by NRCS. We arrived home safely and reunited with our family. **I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the NRCS to bring us back home safely in this arduous condition.**



Dhansara Chand with her daughter and granddaughter at Jamunaha PoE  
(PC: NRCS, Banke)

## ✦ 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

- ◆ UNICEF Partners meeting 17th September, 2021
- ◆ MHM PA meeting on 7th September, 2021
- ◆ CVA in WASH roadmap development workshop on 23rd September, 2021
- ◆ Program evaluation conducted by PMER-IM division  
(Click on the link to donate: <https://bit.ly/3nXndUh> or use the QR code)



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## दर्शनमा घर फर्कने लामो यात्रा, नबनोस् कोरोना सार्ने बहाना

सार्वजनिक यातायातमा यात्रा गर्दा कोरोना भाइरसको जोखिम उच्च हुने भएकाले जनस्वास्थ्यका मापदण्डको पूर्ण पालनामा हेल्चेक्रयाई नगर्ने।



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