



Annual Progress Report

January – December 2020

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Contents

Background	2
Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Nutrition Program	2
Community Based Mental Health Program	4
Construction of Integrated Mental Health Center in Dang	5
Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Program	6
Health and Computer Literacy Program	6
Health Point Water Project.....	7
Community Health Clinic	7
Health System and Response to CoVID-19	8
Public Health Webinars	9
Support to National Innovation Centre (NIC) to support CoVID-19 Efforts.....	9
Health Promoting School Framework and Strategy	9
Collaboration with Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD)	9
Health Research.....	10
Community Engagement, Program Monitoring and Team Building	10
Humanitarian Support to Flood and Landslide Victims	10
Internship Program	11
Need assessment and Capacity Building of Health Volunteers on Postpartum Family Planning	11
Stories of individuals dealing with mental health illness	12
Next Plan	12
Acknowledgement	13
Contact	13

Background

Health Foundation Nepal (HFN), registered as a non-profit organization in the USA and Nepal, has been working in Nepal since 2013. HFN has been implementing different projects particularly on under five child nutrition, women of reproductive age (WRA), pregnant and lactating mothers, people suffered and affected by mental health problems and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), digital and health literacy, health point water supply system and health system strengthening. HFN has been implementing different health research projects in partnership and collaboration with national and international organizations. HFN has been working closely with Government of Nepal (GoN), External Development Partners (EDPs) and local organizations. The key objectives of HFN are to ensure accessibility and availability of quality health care services to individuals of all age group; provide practical solutions – which are based on scientific evidences, on health and education to promote health and well-being of the community people and generate evidences to inform public health programs and policies, with special focus on existing and emerging public health problems. HFN has also been implementing internship program to train fresh graduates on community based public health programs and health research; strengthen innovations and advance the community work. All the programs initiated by HFN are comprehensive, community based and multi-sectoral in nature. This report presents the summary of activities accomplished from January to December, 2020.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Nutrition Program

HFN has continued providing community based Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Nutrition education services in selected communities of Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City, Dang. HFN has contributed to reduce the under-five malnutrition (weight for height) to below 5% in the project communities (annual report 2019). With the aim of equitable distribution of existing resources, HFN changed the program modality from general to selective interventions to assess and address the issues related to under nutrition among under five children in project communities effective from January 2020. HFN has reached to needy communities with information, education and communication (IEC) and behavior change communication (BCC) on MCH and nutrition along with anthropometric assessment, management of cases and referral as necessary. In addition to the direct interventions on nutrition, HFN has also implemented educational interventions on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy (HTSP); birth preparedness and complication readiness; safe delivery (institutional); post-natal care and immediate newborn care in close coordination with beneficiary communities.

HFN reached to 89 community people and 129 school adolescents with MCH, HTSP, ANC, PNC and nutrition messages. HFN also provided telehealth services on nutrition with special focus of under-five

nutrition to reach to 44 mothers. HFN also conducted nutrition screening session for needy community reaching to 52 under five children. Among them four children were found severely malnourished and six were moderately malnourished. HFN also conducted ten home visits to reassess the nutrition status and



HFN Public Health Nurse reaching to targeted beneficiaries with nutrition education and supplement during CoVID-19

provide nutrition counseling and supplements to family members. Family members were also provided with essential skills to prepare balanced diet (e.g. posilo jaulo) during the home visits. During this reporting period, 26 children in the catchment area were reached with multiple follow-ups (68) regarding their nutritional status and nutrition education was provided to their mothers and family members. Similarly, nutrition counseling was done to 12 mothers and provided assistance to prepare balanced diet (including lito) for their children. Altogether, 75 pregnant mothers were reached with health messages on four ANC visits, balanced diet and self-care. Similarly, 120 post-partum mothers were reached with health messages on post-natal and child care, immunization, nutrition (balanced diet) and post-partum family planning. The mothers were also supported providing messages on time of vaccination and information about referral centers in case their children become sick.

Due to Corona Virus Disease (CoVID-19) pandemic, physical movements were restricted by government and HFN introduced telehealth services to provide essential health care services including nutrition and MNH services through telephone. HFN provided nutrition education to individuals using toll free number. Telehealth services on nutrition and health was provided to targeted peoples including those staying at

quarantine. HFN also reached to all the FCHVs and community leaders from catchment area and provided information about essential health care services including CoVID-19.

Community Based Mental Health Program

HFN has been implementing community based mental health program including psychiatric rehabilitation services. During January to December 2020, HFN screened 324 new post-partum mothers and 81 pregnant women to assess the level of anxiety and depression among them. HFN also made follow up of 528 previously screened post-partum mothers and 93 pregnant mothers during this reporting period. HFN also provided individual psychosocial counseling to 193 clients and 19 family counseling. HFN reached to 362 community peoples through community based mental health awareness activities. Tele mental health service and psychological first aid was provided to more than 100 individuals using toll free number. More than 50 individuals from Nepalgunj, Bardia, Dhangadhi, Kathmandu and other parts of the country who were affected from mental health conditions were reached with mental health counseling and psychological first aid.

FCHVs, H-MGs and local leaders from project areas were informed about HFN's remote consultation package during CoVID-19 pandemic. HFN conducted health literacy sessions on mental health reaching to 106 adolescents of different public schools in Dang. School teachers from the participating schools were also



Capacity building and awareness raising session with school adolescents -Dang

oriented on mental health. Community mental IEC and BCC activities were also conducted reaching to 167 individuals including community mental health awareness campaigns in close coordination with Rotary club of Dang. HFN mobilized school teachers, H-MGs, FCHVs and local leaders to reach to target beneficiaries in the community.

Psychiatric Rehabilitation Centre at Kuirepani started providing mental health rehabilitation services as per memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between HFN and MOFIN. Two clients were admitted at the Centre and HFN health team (including Psychiatrist and Psychologist) provided clinical care including



Mental Health Counselors reaching to beneficiary community during CoVID-19 pandemic

counseling and support to them. Four additional outdoor patients were examined and counseled by Psychiatrist from this Centre. Due to the crisis created by COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre was used by Ghorahi sub-metropolitan city as a quarantine to manage suspected corona cases throughout the time

period. HFN mobilized a physician to provide clinical support to assess the health status of clients admitted at the Centre including their management and referral.

HFN conducted 13 community awareness events including information about CoVID-19 and stress management reaching to 195 participants (180 were females and 15 males). HFN also conducted an event on teenage and suicide for the school adolescents in Dang. Facilitated referral service was provided to 2 clients suffering from severe mental illness. Capacity building of staff on psychosocial first aid (PFA) and basic counseling skills was also done during this reporting period.

Construction of Integrated Mental Health Center in Dang

HFN completed background work to initiate construction of integrated mental health Centre at Jajaragaun, Dang. HFN received approval from Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) and Social Welfare Council (SWC) to start construction of integrated mental health Centre. HFN Nepal also received financial commitment from America Nepal Medical Foundation (ANMF) and HFN USA to complete the project.

Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Program

HFN has been implementing NCD Nepal study (a longitudinal cohort study) which aims to understand the epidemiology of NCDs and how they relate to socio-demographic, lifestyle, dietary and cultural factors and document incident NCDs and mortality. During January to December 2020, HFN mobilized trained Physicians, Health Assistants (HAs), Public Health Nurse (PHN) and other service providers to conduct NCD screening camps. Laboratory part was managed by National Reference Laboratory (NRL), Butwal branch.

In spite of the challenges created by Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), HFN continued implementing feasible activities following personal protective measures and infection prevention procedures in close coordination with government authorities. HFN conducted initial camps on NCD reaching to 125 clients. Lab investigation was done among 62 clients and 57 clients were participated in follow up camps. HFN provided continuity of care to NCD clients with established NCD with a special focus on management of hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, tobacco use using evidence-based therapies. HFN conducted health literacy sessions on NCD reaching to 129 adolescents of public schools in Dang. Patient counseling was done following standard protocols and PEN protocol. HFN conducted telephonic follow up of the enrolled cases in close coordination with local leaders and FCHVs. HFN frontline staff were oriented on tobacco cessation, verbal autopsy, hypertension and diabetes mellitus.

HFN conducted integrated community awareness sessions on NCD reaching to 89 community people and provided BCC messages. In addition, individuals visited community health clinic were examined and provided primary health care including counseling on NCDs. HFN also conducted telephonic follow up of missed cases due to CoVID-19 pandemic. HFN mobilized school teachers, H-MGs, FCHVs and local leaders to reach to target beneficiaries related to NCD in the community.

HFN conducted qualitative research on “knowledge, attitude and practice on NCDs among FCHVs of Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City Dang”. In addition to this, HFN also provided training to 29 FCHVs on NCDs and conditions (smoking cessation, hypertension, diabetes, Cholesterol). HFN applied for renewal of NCD project to National Health Research Council (NHRC). HFN also finalized the renewed MoU with National Reference Laboratory (NRL).

Health and Computer Literacy Program

HFN implemented health and computer literacy program in selected public schools and orphanage centers. HFN received approval from four municipalities of Chitwan (Bharatpur Metropolitan City, Ratnanagar Municipality, Khairahani Municipality and Rapti Municipality) to implement digital literacy

program. From January to December 2020, HFN reached to nearly 600 target beneficiaries with computer literacy sessions. HFN supported participating schools to prepare checklists on computer education for evaluating the progress of students.

Program volunteers and staff were engaged with students at Sai Kendra to execute PREM mentorship program focusing on different health topics and other impactful non-health topics. The program was started at Shree Satya Sai Vidyashrama in Pokhara. The computer sessions were conducted regularly at Shree Satya Sai Vidyashrama in Pokhara and Chitwan by Computer Instructor(s). HFN staff and volunteers posted various health information including CoVID-19 related messages on the official Facebook page of digital literacy program. HFN also conducted couple of sessions for school teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills on computer.

HFN implemented Peer Assisted Educational Enrichment and Mutual Mentoring (PREM) Program to enhance different life skills among school going children. HFN conducted health literacy sessions on different health topics to increase health awareness among school children. Altogether, HFN reached to more than 200 adolescents with different health messages. HFN conducted online sessions on digital education to the students who have access to internet and digital resources during lock down period caused by CoVID-19 pandemic. HFN also prepared tutorial videos on scratch programming language for the students and disseminated through You Tube.

Health Point Water Project

HFN received financial commitment from CMF (~NRs 3 million) and Bagamati Provincial Government (~NRs 3 million) to strengthen water supply system at Bageshwori Health Post, Nuwakot. Due to CoVID-19 pandemic, government's priority was shifted to disease control and HFN was not able to implement the project in FY 2020. CMF has committed to provide financial support in FY 2021 in case there is an observed need of external resources to strengthen water supply system at government health facilities.

Community Health Clinic

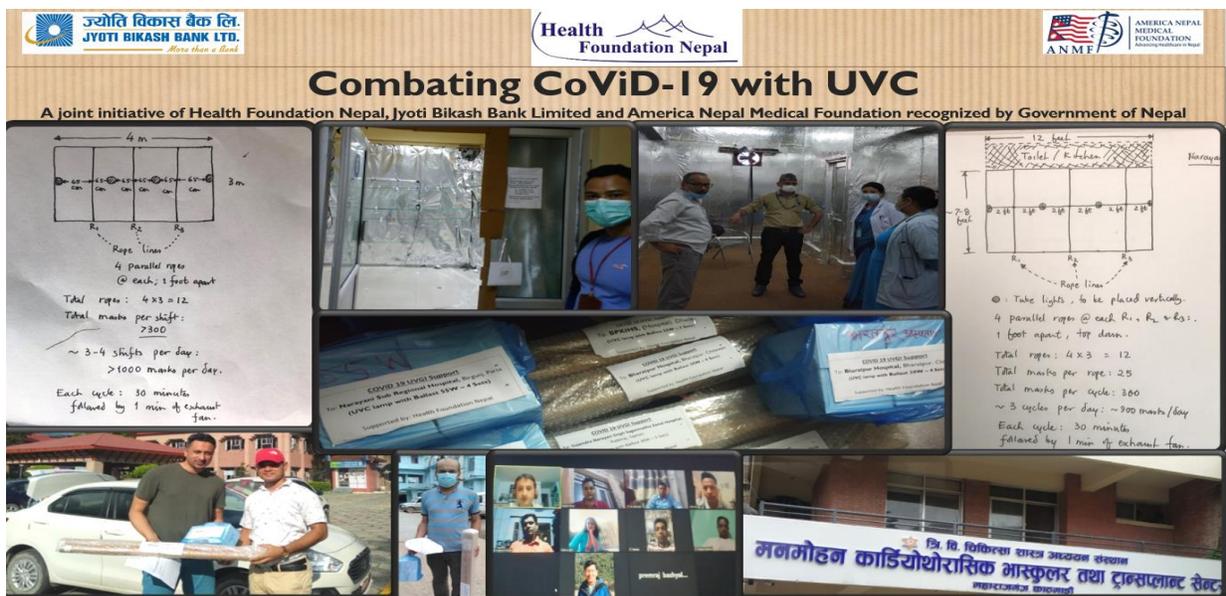
HFN has been running a static community health clinic in Dang to provide primary health care services including counseling and health education to local people. HFN reached more than 100 clients with primary health care services including follow up and counseling from this clinic. HFN continued providing health services from toll-free helpline (# 1660-82-56003) focusing on COVID-19, NCD, Mental health and MCH and nutrition. HFN has been reaching to the clients beyond project communities through the free of cost helpline services.

HFN has been running a static community health clinic in Dang to provide primary health care services including counseling and health education to local people. HFN reached to 439 clients with primary health care services including follow up and counseling services from this clinic. HFN introduced and continued toll-free health helpline services (# 1660-82-56003) focusing on COVID-19, NCD, Mental health and MCH and nutrition. HFN also reached to the clients beyond project communities through the free of cost helpline services during CoVID-19 pandemic.

Health System and Response to CoVID-19

The Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic severely stressed the health delivery system. HFN also faced challenges to implement community based projects due to nationwide lockdown and other restrictive measures adopted by GoN to limit the spread of disease. HFN reached to vulnerable individuals in the project communities through remote consultation sessions like telehealth services, tele- education and counseling in close coordination with government agencies. HFN supported government to execute COVID-19 quarantine services from Kuirepani Centre in Dang.

HFN also supported the work to establish a surface decontamination procedure through the use of ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) to address the shortage of N95 filtering face piece respirators (N95 FFRs) in close coordination with Manmohan Cardio Vascular and Thoracic Centre (MCVTC) and Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP). With financial support from America Nepal Medical Foundation (ANMF) and Jyoti Bikash Bank Limited, HFN provided necessary supplies to 10 hospitals namely Narayani Hospital [Birganj], Gajendra Narayan Singh Sagarmatha Hospital, Bheri Hospital [Nepalganj], Bharatpur



Activities on UVGI Project Implementation

Hospital [Chitwan], Seti Hospital [Dhangadhi], Rapti Hospital [Dang], BPKIHS [Dharan], NAMS [Bir Hospital], Manmohan Cardiovascular and thoracic Centre and TUTH. Technical assistance to participating hospitals was provided by Manmohan Cardiovascular and thoracic Centre in close coordination with Ministry of Health and Population.

HFN has also contributed to develop interim guidelines on reproductive maternal newborn child and adolescent health to address CoVID situation. HFN disseminated various behavior change messages related to CoVID-19 from social/mass media and telehealth services.

Public Health Webinars

HFN conducted series of public health webinars to address different health issues including mental health conditions created by CoVID-19. The webinars were facilitated by HFN leaders in USA and Nepal.

Support to National Innovation Centre (NIC) to support CoVID-19

Efforts

HFN provided financial support to NIC to combat CoVID-19. NIC has been locally manufacturing critical healthcare equipment like PPE, Corona Virus Booth, Aerosol Box, Nursing Robot, UVC Disinfection Box, Face Visor, Body Bag, 3D printed nasopharyngeal swabs, Ventilators etc. in Nepal. HFN supported NIC to purchase necessary items to support innovation and research.

Health Promoting School Framework and Strategy

HFN provided technical assistance to National Health Education Information and Communication Centre (NHEICC) Nepal to prepare and finalize health promoting school framework and strategy. This was a great initiation of government of Nepal to develop a strategic document on health promoting schools in Nepal. The strategy was finalized based on global, regional and local evidences and practices and there is a scope to revise and update the strategy based on new evidences and practices in near future.

Collaboration with Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD)

HFN worked closely with EDCD to implement mental health and non-communicable disease activities. HFN participated couple of national level meetings including mental health sub-cluster meetings. HFN provided technical inputs to strengthen national mental health program. HFN also provided updates of field level activities on mental health and NCDs to concerned government and non-government partners working in Nepal.

Health Research

HFN completed and shared the findings from evidence based study to demonstrate the outcomes of the reproductive maternal newborn child and adolescent health to concerned stakeholders at national level in close coordination with Canadian Red Cross.

HFN also completed a research project on feasibility of mental health crisis helpline services for the prevention of suicide in Nepal. The findings were shared to all the concerned stakeholders at national level.

Community Engagement, Program Monitoring and Team Building

HFN worked closely with all the beneficiary communities and frontline staff to sustain the ongoing efforts. HFN worked on capacity building of front line staff through regular staff meeting, project team meetings, virtual seminars and onsite coaching and mentoring. At organizational level, HFN Nepal and HFN USA team leaders have been working closely and sharing the ideas through senior management team (SMT) meetings to review and sustain project specific progress and initiate new activities.

Humanitarian Support to Flood and Landslide Victims

HFN provided financial support to Raju Lama Foundation to provide humanitarian support to 200 families impacted by a series of devastating flood and landslide that occurred in selected communities (Sakuwa, Barabise Nagarpalika, and Bulkutte, Bhote Koshi Gaon Palika) of Sindhupalchowk district. The relief package included food items and other staples to targeted families, who lost their homes and family members due to the natural disaster.



Landslide victims (Sindhupalchowk) collecting relief package from HFN

Internship Program

In 2020, Six public health interns joined HFN. Among them, four interns were Bachelor in Public Health (BPH) final year student of Manmohan Memorial Institute of Health Sciences, Kathmandu. They visited project sites to implement mutual projects on NCD and Post-Partum Family Planning using standard tools and procedures. All the interns successfully completed the projects on time.

In the same year, two senior public health (MPH) interns also joined HFN to complete their one and half months' internship. The interns were from Manmohan Memorial Institute of Health Sciences, Kathmandu and School of Public Health, the University of Tokyo, Japan. They involved in mental health program including their engagement at national and subnational levels. They visited community sites providing mental health services and supported to organize community based awareness sessions, review available data and interpret the findings. They conducted interactions with national level mental health program managers and experts to understand mental health program in Nepal. They had successfully completed the internship.

Need assessment and Capacity Building of Health Volunteers on Postpartum Family Planning

HFN conducted “Need assessment and Capacity Building of Health Volunteers on Postpartum Family Planning (PPFP)” from November 2020 to January 2021 in different places of Ghorahi Sub metropolitan city of Dang.



PPFP Training Participants and facilitators

This project intended to enhance the FP counseling skills of FCHVs and focused on the promotion of positive health outcomes for mothers, newborns and infants by building FCHVs skills in providing Community based health education on postpartum family planning and increasing postpartum women's access to all family planning methods and services, so that couples can follow healthy timing and

spacing of pregnancy.

A qualitative study was done to assess the status of PFP, existing knowledge, role of key stakeholders and their perception regarding the program. The study covered ward 3, 4, 6 and 7 of Ghorahi sub metropolitan city of Dang, working areas of Health Foundation Nepal. The qualitative findings provided in depth information about the status of PFP, existing beliefs and perceptions in the community, activities and role of key stakeholders. All findings and various literature suggested the need to orient and enhance the knowledge of FCHVs in timely manner to improve the work performance which ultimately help achieve positive outcomes. FCHVs are recognized as



Effectiveness of Training

an important influencer who helps in linking the communities to health services. They are the first point of contact for people in their communities who are in need of health services.

HFN conducted capacity building events to equip FCHVs regarding Postpartum family planning, its importance to mother, child and family, available methods, risks if not initiated in an appropriate time, Healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy, Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM), Need of family planning counseling to pregnant and postpartum mothers, community based health education, Involvement of male and adolescents and FP need for migrant workers. Altogether 39 participants representing all the catchment areas of Health Foundation Nepal were trained.

Stories of individuals dealing with mental health illness

With the aim of highlighting the issues related to mental health, HFN worked with Stories of Nepal (SoN) to collect, document and disseminate individual experiences of people dealing with mental health illnesses from Dang and Kathmandu. These stories captured the live experiences of survivors and their families.

Next Plan

HFN will continuously be working on impactful health interventions and initiate new projects in close coordination with Government of Nepal and like-minded organizations. HFN will also continuously be exploring new and innovative approaches to reach to unreached and hard to reach populations in Nepal.

Acknowledgement

HFN would like to acknowledge Government of Nepal, national and international partners, all the donors and beneficiary communities for the support and cooperation to successfully plan and implement different health projects in Nepal.

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