

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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BUILDING HEALTHY AND
EDUCATED COMMUNITIES IN NEPAL



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Making clean drinking water accessible for families in Musey

MUSEY DRINKING WATER PROJECT

Nepal was struck by a major earthquake in the year 2015, which resulted in massive damages in many parts of Nepal. The water reserve tank in Musey, lower Solukhumbu also sustained some damages after the earthquake. As a result, availability of clean drinking water in the households in Musey became a rare sight, especially after the major earthquake. This led to a number of problems to families - especially women and children living in Musey, affecting almost 70 households.

Through Baseline assessment it was found that building a new water reserve tank is integral for improved public health and economy to thrive in the region. Women are responsible for water collection in Musey. So, when communities get water access nearby their home, women get more time for income opportunity and they can take charge of their own future. Furthermore, in such a water crisis scenario, it's often children who are compelled to

help their mother to collect water. As a result, they miss their classes. Thus, with the access to clean water supply, we can also ensure that children attend their classes regularly.

In this backdrop, Action For Nepal realized the water problem needed an immediate solution as the access of water could possibly solve a number of underlying problems associated with it like education, health, income - especially for women and children. In August 2018, an agreement was signed between Action For Nepal (Lakpa Thering Sherpa, Executive Director) and Hariyali Buffer Zone User Group (Lakpa Gelzen Sherpa, Chairperson) to build a safe and clean drinking water supply with filtration system, water reserve tank capacity of 15,000 litres and 30,000 litres with fire hydrant

system for the people of Musey village in Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality. The water project is expected to be completed by the end of the year 2018. The project is funded by Himalayan Trust New Zealand, the local communities and Sagarmatha National Park Buffer Zone.

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"Due to lack of a proper water supply, we're compelled to walk hours to collect water by crossing the nearby forest which limited our time for other income-generating activities. We, all the villagers have high hopes, thanks to this project." says Pasang Diki Sherpa from Musey.

Toilet Construction helps in school enrollment rate

SHREE RENUKADEVI SECONDARY SCHOOL, RAMECHHAP

Young girls during their menstrual period in rural Nepal miss out their classes due to absence of gender-friendly toilets with proper water supply. Realizing this need in Shree Renuka Devi Secondary School, Ramechhap as well, Action For Nepal initiated a toilet construction project and handed over the 4 gender-friendly toilets on September 17, 2018. We are hopeful that the newly constructed toilets will encourage the female students to attend their classes regularly and also help in the school's overall enrollment rate. Total beneficiaries of the project is 517 (402 students, 15 school staff, 100 local residents). The project was funded by Himaganga Fund Community - Australia, a project initiated by Michael and Robyn Dillion.

Statistics indicate on average, there is only one toilet for every 94 girls in Ramechhap district. Still 732 gender- friendly toilets need to be constructed throughout the district to meet the requirement of one toilet for every 50 students.



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"Previously, our school had only 2 toilets with no proper water supply. All the students had to take turns to use the toilet. As a result, most of us ended up defecating in open. Now, I am glad that we have 4 new toilets with proper water supply. I am also encouraged to attend my classes regularly." shares a student at Shree Renuka Devi Secondary School.

Meeting with the representatives of Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality

LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME IN SOLUKHUMBU (LIPS)

The success of any project is dependent on meeting expectations of key project stakeholders. Thus, on September 8, 2018, LIPS team organized a mid-year review and coordination meeting with key project stakeholders. The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade New Zealand and Himalayan Trust New Zealand. The participants of the program were the Chairperson and members of Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality, members from the Rural Municipality Education Committee, the Chairperson of the School Management Committees and the wards, and Headteachers from 11 schools under our literacy programme.



The aim of the program is to share Action For Nepal's literacy programme's achievement, challenges and learning and also strategy for the program's sustainability. Some of the points discussed in the meeting were the continuity of our literacy program beyond its project timeframe i.e. till the year 2020; extension of the program to other schools; extension of the program to nursery and upper grades in close coordination with the local government. The stakeholders shared their view on the success of our literacy model for early grade literacy improvement and claimed the project as one of the successful models for early grade literacy improvement in the region.

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"One of the priorities of the local government has always been to ensure quality education in the schools of Khumbu region. I am grateful that LIPS is helping all the teachers, students and parents in the journey to bring quality education. And the coordination meeting was indeed a great platform to discuss the program and its issues related to implementation and strategies for its sustainability." says Mr. Ngim Dorji Sherpa (Rural Municipality Chairperson)

International Literacy Week

LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME IN SOLUKHUMBU (LIPS)

To celebrate the International Literacy Week, our literacy project team organized a Book Review Session in Chaurikharka School under our project, LIPS - funded by Himalayan Trust New Zealand. The event was organized with an aim to improve listening, speaking, reading and writing ability of the students. Grade two students of Chaurikharka School also presented a short book talk in the school library under direct guidance and supervision of LIPS teacher coaches.



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Mr. Gyan Bahadur Karki (Teachers Resource Person/Education officer/Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality) says "I have found the literacy sessions interactive. There is constant interaction between students and teachers. There are a lot of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities. Likewise, I have found improved performance and understanding among the teachers about quality literacy."

A mission to impart health literacy

NURSES FOR NEPAL PROJECT

Breastfeeding gives babies the best possible start in life. And especially the first six months after the baby is born is extremely crucial. August 2 marks the start of World Breastfeeding Week. Despite much awareness on the issue, there are still very few women and men in the lower Solukhumbu of Cheskham and Waku village who are aware of its importance. Our Community Health Project Officers have been providing Birth Preparedness Package (BPP) training to the Female Community Health Volunteers in Waku and Cheskham region of lower Solukhumbu. An orientation on BPP training was conducted by a consultant for the Community Health Officers to conduct the training in the most effective way.

Social behavior change is the most challenging issue in the two targeted regions due to the prevalence of deep-rooted cultural practices against safe birthing among the ethnic minorities of the region i.e. Rai and Kulung people. Thus, to bring change, Action For Nepal has been persistently conducting health awareness sessions in the two regions.

Likewise, one of the another key component of our project is to support the local health post with skilled manpower because the local health post has been struggling on issues related to retaining skilled manpower. Our Community Health Project Officers have been supporting the local health post by attending incoming patients in the local health post. Furthermore, our two Community Health Project Officers who are by profession nurses have been providing training to the local health post staff.

Nurses for Nepal is a three-year project initiated in the year 2017 and funded by Australian Himalayan Foundation to improve maternal and child health in Cheskham and Waku of lower Solukhumbu.



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‘Waku is one of the most remote areas of lower Solukhumbu. Before the initiation of Nurses for Nepal project, there were only Auxiliary Nurse Midwifery and Auxiliary Health Workers at the health post who were not available every time due to frequent travel related to training and reporting. Now, after the placement of nurse at the local health post through Nurses for Nepal project, the health post is always open. We are grateful to Action For Nepal and the Australian Himalayan Foundation for this project and we hope that they will continue their support and expand their project in other sectors too.’ says Mr. Dinesh Rai, ward incharge of Waku-6.

Community mobilization to tackle maternal health

BUNG HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Bung Health Improvement Project is a three year project initiated in the year 2016 - funded by Himalayan Trust New Zealand to improve maternal and neo-natal health in Bung, lower Solukhumbu. Action for Nepal initiated this project with the concept of Community Action Cycle. This approach empowers the local communities and mobilizes the community to make informed health decisions. The first year of Bung Health Improvement Project was completed in September, 2018.

According to the data of the year 2017 of Bung Health Post, only 1.5% of deliveries are attended by health worker among the expected live birth in Bung.

Likewise, the rate of other safe birthing practices in the region is also not satisfactory in comparison to the national standard. The data along with the results from the Community Action Cycle meetings with the Bung mother's group have been aiding our objective to find out the root issues concerning poor maternal health and neonatal health in Bung by mobilizing the community.

Towards the end of this quarter, our two facilitators in Bung conducted their 5th meeting with the local people and health mother's group in 9 wards of Bung, lower Solukhumbu. Altogether, we have managed to reach 1114 people in Bung directly.

Although initially, facilitating the meetings in 9 wards of Bung was difficult as often the facilitators have to make an arduous and risky journey through a forest to reach the communities, which are also all dispersed widely in 9 wards. And then, engaging the locals and encouraging the women to express their opinions is also another challenge in itself to run successful meetings.

According to the Annual Report of Bung Health Improvement Report, it was found that some of the key identified issues in the recent fifth meeting in 9 wards of Bung was still-born babies, malnutrition, jaundice and low birth weight among neonates and infected umbilical cord during new births.



"Women in Bung prefer home delivery rather than delivery by a skilled birth attendant at the health post because a majority of the communities in Bung are not in close proximity to the local health post. Moreover, the local's ignorance regarding complications during childbirth may also have contributed to the problem," says Purni Maya Rai, Female Community Health Volunteer. "However, the Community Action Cycle meetings have helped the women here realize the importance of maintaining appropriate diet during pregnancy, regular Antenatal and Postnatal check-ups and delivery at the health facility."

Staff Dashain Celebration

Almost to the end of this quarter, on October 12, 2018, Action For Nepal celebrated 'All staff Dashain Reunion Programme' with the entire staff at Kathmandu office followed by a Dinner Event with Action for Nepal's Board of Directors and other stakeholders.

The event kickstarted with an ice-breaking session i.e. introduction session among the staff, followed by a presentation of projects by the project leaders in the field. The presentation brought an opportunity for the entire staff to share their stories in their project sites and the extent of their project impact. The Dinner event started with a welcome speech from Mr. Lakpa Thering Sherpa, Executive Director of Action for Nepal. The event continued with fun bingo games and interactive sessions and distribution of gifts as token of love to Action for Nepal's Board of Directors and stakeholders for their continuous support to Action for Nepal's vision, mission, and values.



David Burwen and Susan Burwen's Visit to Solaban

On Oct 21, 2018, the Executive Director of Action For Nepal, Lakpa Thering Sherpa, Project Coordinator Dorjee Sherpa along with David Burwen and Susan Burwen, the Founder and the President of Burwen Education Foundation handed over the newly constructed 14 houses to families in Solaban, who lost their home in earthquake in 2015. In the event, the donors were warmly welcomed and were showered huge appreciation by the Solaban community. With the funding support from David Burwen and Susan Burwen (Burwen Education Foundation - USA) our Solaban Earthquake Rebuilding Project aims to build 37 houses out of which 14 houses are already constructed and 10 houses are in construction this year. And the remaining houses will be constructed in the following years.

The Burwen Education Foundation (BEF) was founded in 2002 by Susan and David Burwen of Mountain View, California, USA. Since 2000, the BEF has provided funding support for a school building and a hydro power project for 80 households in Solaban, lower Solukhumbu. Action For Nepal would like to extend huge thanks to BEF for their generous funding support to Solaban Earthquake Rebuilding Project.



Executive Director and Programme Director's International visit

On 26th August 2018, our Executive Director, Mr. Lakpa Thering Sherpa was invited as the guest speaker on the 10th Year Anniversary of Luklass Association at Bruson, Switzerland. He highlighted the important role played by Luklass Association to improve the quality of education in Lukla and Chaurikharka region. About 120 participants were present with the members from the association, guests along with the Mayor of Bruson and Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality.



Luklass Association has been supporting Lukla and Chaurikharka schools with different educational projects. The association was founded by Mr. Denis Bertholet.



Our Executive Director (Mr. Lakpa Thering Sherpa) and Program Director (Dr. Jangmoo Sherpa) also had a successful meeting with CED Nepal Association in Paris on August 27, 2018, regarding the future health and education projects of Action For Nepal.

Contribution for a Community Learning Centre

On August 10, an agreement was signed between Action For Nepal (Lakpa Thering Sherpa, Executive Director) and Farak Sherpa Kyiduk (Ang Chetar Sherpa, Chairman) to provide financial support to Farak Kyiduk's initiative to build a Community Learning Centre for the people of Farak community.



The main purpose of building the Community Learning Centre is to provide training related to disaster management, Sherpa culture promotional activities, literacy programme and formal and informal education programme for women and various other vocational and capacity-building training for people of Farak community.



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