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ICS II Pivot Program

ICS II pivot program supported young people to lead in the response to combat the effects of Covid-19 in Godawari, Dakshinkali, and Mahankal Rural Municipalities. 'ICS II pivot' witnessed young people of the communities, who have emerged as the local youth leaders, taking leadership to prevent and respond to the pandemic. Young leaders including 10 community volunteers and 9 Alumni Engagement Committee played a crucial role in conducting online and offline activities to access and disseminate credible information related to COVID, and lead to building resilience within their communities during and after the pandemic. Some activities conducted between the months of October and December 2020 included (i) WASH Materials Support; and (ii) Stress Management and Psychosocial Support.



WASH materials support

School and health care centers in the community were struggling to access hygiene and sanitation materials. In this context, Restless Development Nepal supported WASH materials to the school and health care center. This enabled schools and health centers to carry out their work in a safer environment. The community young volunteers successfully advocated for local government to continue to supply schools and health centers using a system of resource distribution based on need rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, making more efficient use of resources.

2514 school students, 21 teachers, and 189 community frontline workers received PPE and hygiene materials, including masks, gloves, sanitizer, buckets with taps, soap, sanitary pads, dustbins, and handwashing stations installed in schools, ward offices, and health centers. Similarly, 4 contactless Handwashing facilities were installed in schools, ward offices, and health posts; along with quarantine management training for the community people.

Stress Management, Psychosocial Support and Mental Health

The uncertainties brought by COVID-19 has seen an increase in mental stress among the people in the community. In order to support the community and young people, stress management and psychosocial support both online and offline activities were conducted. Organized by community volunteers and facilitated by certified psychosocial counselors, 40 teachers in public secondary schools were trained on psychosocial counseling. The objective was to support them to be able to identify psychosocial problems in children and make referrals when necessary.

The participant developed a capacity and self-confidence to respond to mental health issues caused by the pandemic. They transferred their learning and knowledge on Covid-19 and psychosocial issues to mothers and girls groups, children, the local community, and youth group members. They were able to identify people to seek professional mental health care and referred cases to the primary health care centers.



As a part of stress management and psychosocial support, the community volunteers collaborated with Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) who were trained on the Community Informant Detection Tool (CIFD). The training was effective to identify the people requiring mental health care and and raise awareness on this topic.

FCHV Mobilization

In the context of increased mental health issues, ICS Volunteers collaborated with Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), the local primary healthcare workers at the ward level in Nepal, to raise awareness about the effects of the pandemic on mental health. Following training on how to identify mental health issues and provide mental health support, the FCHVs delivered sessions to mother's groups and were able to be a support system or refer people to the relevant support services.

Community Informant Detection Tool (CIDT) Training

To increase FCHVs and mother group's access to the mental health treatment care facilities and centers, 20 FCHVs were trained on CIDT. 11 mother group members were trained on CIDT by 11 FCHVs at Godhawari rural municipality.

Post-training the female community health volunteers in coordination with volunteers organized orientation and awareness sessions in the community to aware and report cases of psychological distress. They played important role in monitoring psychosocial needs and delivering psychosocial support to local community members.

Alumni Engagement Committee Online Engagement

Young people are easily influenced by mass media which increases the risk of miscommunication through social media and direct messaging. During this time online platforms are one of the most effective ways to reach out to people and spread awareness and information. Keeping this as the center of the action, The Alumni Engagement Committee (AEC) extensively engaged in informing young people and the wider community regarding Covid-19 and its challenges on a weekly basis, through online mediums like Facebook and Instagram. They also 8 online events including dialogues, workshops, and webinars reaching 220 young people (106 alumni and 114 non-alumni).

The 39 social media posts were able to reach 21,770 viewers and engage 2487 (likes and shares) people. A rapid survey conducted by AEC with 83 alumni engaged through social media posts found that: young people were informed with correct information on Covid-19 and its prevention; they had increased awareness on mental health issues, its prevention, and management; an increased sense of responsibility to take action in response to Covid-19. 73.5% of the respondents, wanted to seek possibilities to serve their community even during the pandemic. 62.7% wanted to take initiative for food distribution and help disadvantaged groups of people. About 85% of alumni participating in the survey found the online posts shared through Restless Development Nepal's online platforms were helpful and informative.



ICS II Pivot Learning

International Citizen Service (ICS) implemented by Restless Development since 2011 has officially concluded in 2020. The Q20 cycle of the ICS program started in January 2020 and ran its placements for 107 volunteers (55 UK and 52 In-country volunteers). The cycle was only half-way through placement when WHO declared the crisis of Covid-19 as a pandemic in March 2020. The ICS program was halted and all volunteers were repatriated to the UK and to their hometowns considering the national level lockdowns, travel restrictions, and safety of the volunteers. Due to the pandemic, the program was briefly halted however the ICS II pivot program was introduced to actively engage young local people to respond to the pandemic.

Some of the learning of the ICS program included:

1. Importance of inclusion of physical resources in addition to soft skills: In addition to providing knowledge through training, the project identified that adding some hardware/material support can significantly contribute to the sustainability of the project.
2. Community-led approaches were effective in responding to the pandemic in the community: Through the program, the local youth have collaborated and engaged local stakeholders to ensure the actions are owned by the community. Intervention that is led locally has a higher success ratio.
3. Need for employment-focused programs: The activities carried out under ICS II pivot were focused on youth leadership development and Covid-19 response. However, the sharp rise in unemployment has concerned the stakeholders who have recommended the design and implementation of vocational training and employability programs to support the livelihood of the youth and the wider community in the future.



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