

NEWS LETTER

July 2020 Issue 6



The Social Initiative of Pokhara Christian Community

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असल छिमेकी नेपाल
ASAL CHHIMEKEE NEPAL

Dear Friends

Along with the global community, we are suffering from the worldwide pandemic, COVID-19. The 120 day lockdown enforced by the Government of Nepal starting from 24th March 2020 affected all spectrums of life. The impact of this global pandemic is clearly felt and visible in economic, physical, social and spiritual aspects everywhere around the globe. The stories of struggles of migrant workers in other countries breaks our hearts. Children, elderly people, single mother led families, people living with disabilities and daily wage-labourers became immediately vulnerable to the consequences of this pandemic and soon experienced hunger. We at ACN also experienced confusion, uncertainty and challenges regarding how to manage the consequences of the pandemic and our regular work. In addition to COVID-19, Nepal is suffering from intense disasters of flash floods in the hills and floods in Terai. The death toll from these disasters is over 200 and the monsoon is still to reach its peak. Thousands of families have lost their homes, livestock and belongings, and have been displaced. Increased spread of Coronavirus and other diseases are becoming great threats as people have lost toilets and safe water sources and are living in overcrowded conditions. We hear every day on the news about suicide cases. Within 80 days of lockdown, such cases crossed 1600.



We have always been blessed by generous supporters enabling us to help needy people in our communities both in regular and disaster response projects. The global pandemic has hit all of us, reducing the capacity to give as some people are losing jobs, facing limited resources and additional challenges and expenses such as health. However, ACN with PCC leadership, is trying our best to communicate well with supporters regarding the emerging needs and to respond to the needs effectively for the survival of the most vulnerable people. The continued giving of people to help us even amidst their own needs amazed us and was absolutely beyond our imagination. We are so grateful. We are trying to minimise the impact of COVID-19 and disasters on the regular work of ACN by finding options to keep in contact with beneficiaries and run the activities we can with appropriate precautions.

Time for all of us has come to continue journeying together even stronger than before at this time of crisis. There are always strengths and challenges to share and support each other as we can perceive a future filled with even more struggles for survival. Time has come for His body not to miss any opportunity to serve people in need and to be a light of hope in such days of darkness, by feeling the pains that people are going through and sharing what we have with needy and vulnerable people.

Let's stay safe by applying the health advice - social distancing, washing hands and using sanitizer, wearing masks and avoiding crowds. Let's acknowledge the sacrificial service of the frontline people. Let's be wise while we demonstrate our faith in God. Let's continue in prayer for God's wisdom for world leaders to make wise decisions and know the right things to do and to the scientists to invent vaccinations and keep pleading Him for the end of this crisis.

Raju Adhikari
Executive Director

It was 23rd of March 2020, I had returned home late from the office after packaging the posters and pamphlets ACN had printed for awareness on COVID-19 that were also meant to be sent to other districts where ACN has been working. I stood in front of the stove, preparing food and scrolling down through the news updates when I came to know that the Nepal Government had announced lockdown starting from 24th of March, just like that! I immediately called my colleagues who had gone to deliver the posters and pamphlets to other districts via transport which was not possible because of the announcement. All the efforts went in vain, I thought.

From the day of lockdown, we started to contact each other through Facebook and Messenger group. It is most effective and easiest way to remain in contact to each other, because every one of us do not have good internet facility at our home. ACN's two staffs had been locked in the field away from their home where they were stationed. Thankfully, our good relation with the government helped them to be escorted safely to their home.

Asal Chhimekee Nepal had halted all the field works and activities which included large groups, few weeks before the lockdown like, children clubs, awareness and training sessions, adult literacy classes and reduced movements to other districts. Before the announcement day of lockdown, all the field staff had been asked to prepare their individual plans for the works that

they would do from home with their line manager. So, the sudden announcement did not leave us confused for taking the next step.

Everyone has a daily plan and most of the time of lockdown has been utilized for our documentation parts, development of training materials and reflecting our works.

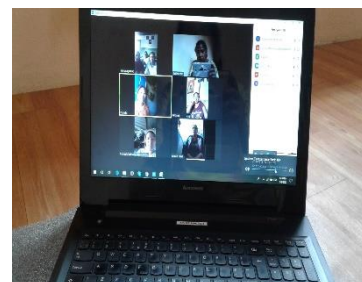
Restriction of movement and on gatherings have certainly developed some knowledge and skills of our staffs. We have been using the internet and technology like never before. There were times when we spent hours discussing about our works! Staff have been doing wonderful job in keeping in contact with the beneficiaries who are also learning to utilize the internet in keeping connected.

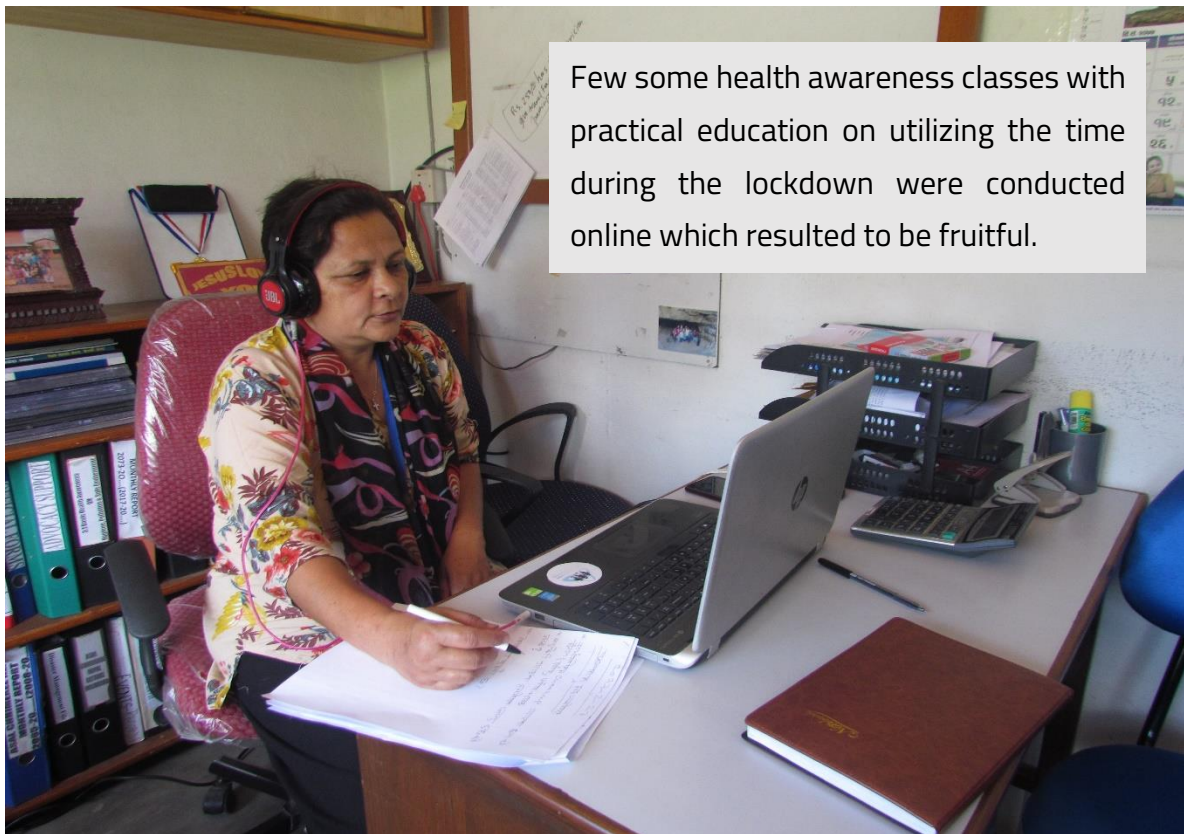
The lockdown has affected the small business worldwide and similar case in the Nepalese market. Which has made it harder for the ones who had utilized revolving fund to start or expand their business to repay the amount on time.

Regular online meeting with the Self Help Group Facilitators are ongoing.



Roshni Gurung Tiwari
Program Coordinator





Few some health awareness classes with practical education on utilizing the time during the lockdown were conducted online which resulted to be fruitful.

The children of child clubs are kept informed and engaged through online groups. In every end of the year, child club would have an annual day presenting their talents, graduating the matured members and celebrations. This year the annual day was marked by distribution of stationeries and certificates with reminder of their involvement in the club (which was carried out in very small group with following the precautions to prevent spread of COVID-19).

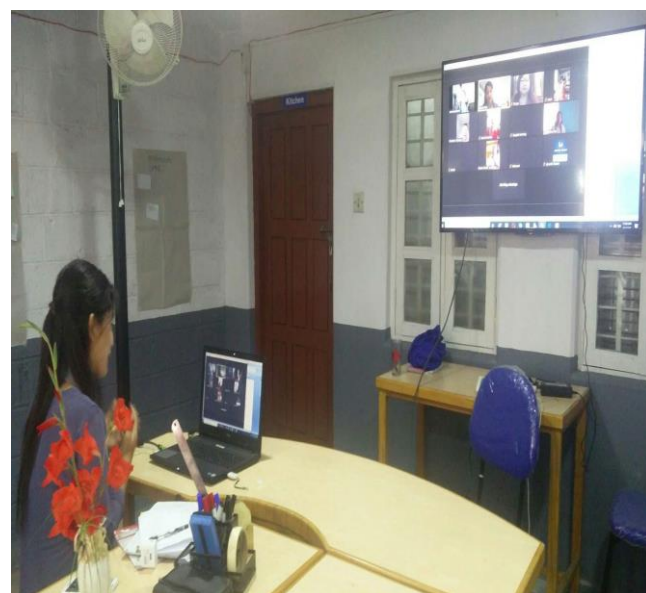


An activity of orienting the community about roof top gardening was carried out in one of the target groups of ACN. People were called in small groups of 10 at a time and oriented about the roof top gardening and provided with the seeds, grow- bags and plants. They have been growing the seeds very well.



Nawajeewan Treatment and Rehabilitation Program

ACN's has been running Nawajeewan treatment and rehabilitation program for female drug and alcohol user since 2004. With the sudden announcement of the lockdown, Nawajeewan had to face challenge in mobilizing their staffs on daily basis. But I am very thankful that, Mrs. Pratima Basnet (program in-charge) who managed the situation and run the rehabilitation center smoothly during the COVID-19 lockdown. Many thanks to her and her team who continue providing service to the clients in the pandemic situation. She and her team member have health personnel license so their movement was allowed even during the lockdown! Some of them however had problems in reaching the center as they did not have their own vehicle and had to walk for an hour. One of the staff's of Nawajeewan who lived in Begnas (about 17 km from rehab center) moved Pokhara to her relative's family house so that she could come for duty. But the landlord did not let her stay long thinking she would bring COVID-19 to the house. The duty was arranged considering the requirements in the rehabilitation center and flexibility for the staffs. It was good that we had arranged for enough stock required for the rehabilitation center to run for more than a month beforehand and we had 12 clients in the house.



Soon the lockdown was easing but Nawajeewan had to face another challenge. The land where the rehabilitation center was running now belongs to Pokhara Academy of Health Sciences. They wanted us to move immediately to another place as they planned to use that place as quarantine area for their health workers. Then we moved to a rented place owned by INF Nepal which needed good repair work, which is still going on. The clients who were ready to be sent home have been sent and no new admissions were taken. Now, there are 6 clients residing in the rehabilitation center.

▲ Top: Ongoing repair work of new rented place of Nawajeewan, Bottom: Conducting community support group meeting through online.

Asal Chhimekee Nepal COVID-19 Relief



2,049

Households supported
with food packages
and hand soap



2,000

Mask
distributed



2,000

Disposable gloves
distributed



16,500

Poster and pamphlet
distributed

Our Beneficiaries

Daily wage worker
Poor and marginalized
Women headed family
People with disability
Elderly

Our Approach

Target beneficiaries focused
Contributing to Govt.'s One
Door System of distribution
in close coordination with
the government

Area Coverage

Kaski district
Nawalparasi district
Gorkha district

Duration

April - June

The Social Initiative of Pokhara Christian Community



COVID-19 outbreak has been affected the lives of people around the world, and Nepal is no exception. With the identification of 2nd positive case of COVID-19, Nepal government enforced the nationwide lockdown on 24th March 2020, which continued almost three months. In these months, This COVID-19 lockdown has deprived the livelihoods of those who rely on daily labor, small business, poor, and marginalized. They were in fear of hunger more than virus. In addition, all the migrant labor returned home when there is no job in the market.

In this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the social initiative of Pokhara Christian Community, Asal Chhimekee Nepal (ACN) stands with the needy and most vulnerable people and communities in order to help them sustain in this crisis. From the 11th day of lockdown, we have started to reach out the doorsteps of people in need with relief packages in coordination with the local governments. Our relief package consists of essential food supplies (rice, lentil, oil, salt etc. and handwashing soap etc).

We carried out our COVID-19 relief work in our regular working areas Kaski, Nawalparasi and Gorkha district.



▲ Relief distribution in Pokhara 16, Khaltemasina, Kaski.

KASKI

We were able to provide the recommended relief package of Pokhara Metropolitan Office to 703 needy families including 273 with people living with disability in Pokhara, Kaski district in coordination with the local government. Our relief package of Kaski consist of essential food supplies that would last a month for the family of four-member. We contributed financially to the Pokhara Metropolitan COVID-19 Relief Fund by handing a cheque of NPR 25,000. In addition, we also distributed informative pamphlets and posters of COVID-19.



▲ Top left: Carrying relief food items to the doorsteps of beneficiary in Kaski district, Top right – A Lady carrying relief items, Bottom left: Delivery relief items to the doorsteps, Bottom right: Posting informative poster of COVID-19.

NAWALPARASI

In Nawalparasi we provided relief packages of essential food supplies as per the recommendation of local governments to 1,340 needy families in coordination with the local government in two phases. We provided 100 sets of Virus Transport Medium (VTM) kits to Kawasoti Municipality. In addition, we also distributed informative posters and pamphlets of COVID-19.

I PHASE

180 needy families received relief packages in Kawasoti Municipality, Nawalparasi. Our relief packages consist of 15 kg of rice, 2 kg of lentil, 1 kg of salt, 500 ml oil and one handwashing soap.

155 needy families received relief packages in Madhyabindu Municipality, Nawalparasi. Our relief packages consist of 20 kg of rice, 3 kg of lentil, 1 kg of salt, 2 ltr oil, and 3 handwashing soaps.

400 needy families received relief packages in Palhinandan, Rural Municipality, Nawalparasi. Our relief packages consists of 10 kg of rice, 1 kg of lentil, 1 kg of salt, 1 kg of sugar, and 1 lit of oil.

II phase

We were able to provide relief packages to 605 needy families in Nawalparasi in 2nd phase in coordination with the local government. 103 needy families in Kawasoti Municipality, 102 needy families in Madhyabindu Municipality, and 400 needy families in Palhinandan Rural Municipality. Our relief packages consist of 20 kg of rice, 2 kg of lentil, 1 kg of salt, 1 kg of sugar, 1 ltr oil, and 1 hand washing soap.



- ▲ Top: Beneficiary received COVID-19 food items relief in Kawasoti Municipality (I phase), Middle: Beneficiary received COVID-19 food items relief in Palhinandan Municipality (II phase), Bottom: On the way to Palhinandan Rural Municipality with relief supplies.



▲ Siranchowk Municipality, Gorkha received face masks and disposable gloves.

We were able to provide 2000 face masks and 2000 pairs of disposable gloves to Siranchowk Municipality, Gorkha district as per the request received, though we faced difficulties to deliver the supplies due to lockdown. Siranchowk is one of the locations where we built schools, health posts and ward office building as response to Earthquake 2015. The objective of sending these items was to support Siranchowk Municipality to carry out immunization services regularly. We provided informative posters and pamphlets of COVID-19 to the municipality. In addition, we also provided essential food supplies to 6 families with disabilities who spent their life on street in Gorkha.

So far we have reached out to the 2,049 most vulnerable families with the relief packages for their support to basic needs in this lockdown.

LOCKDOWN STORY



▲ Prem Lama Pun with his wife in his house.

Prem Lama Pun (60), lives in a one-room tinned house in slum area in Pokhara. His wife has physical disabilities caused by paralysis 20 years ago. He needs to take care of his wife (She is unable to perform her personal work). He works as a daily wage laborer in the construction site to earn for the living. Due to his age, he could not hear properly and need to speak louder. In this lockdown of COVID-19, his situation is different because due to lockdown no work, and no earning.

ACN received a recommendation from his ward office for the relief packages due to his wife's disability and he is a daily wage laborer too. He received food packages that will last for more than a month for his family. He said, "I am so relieved of worrying of food for some days." He is so grateful to ACN for providing the food packages in this COVID-19 lockdown.



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Together we can make a difference.