

# NEWS LETTER

March 2021, Issue 8





## Dear Friends !

It is our pleasure to be able to share this Newsletter. ACN is the social initiative of Pokhara Christian Community (PCC) (a platform of 52 churches) committed to witness faith through demonstrating God's love by serving people and communities in need. We acknowledge all prayers and support, both financial and in many other ways of our partners and global families of His household and the leadership of PCC and ACN. Special thanks to the ACN team for your dedication in serving people despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and many other obstacles. This Newsletter, I trust will be able to give some ideas to thank our God who is our enabler for what has been happening and to pray for our future plans.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rajendra Kumar Adhikari'.

**Rajendra Kumar Adhikari (Raju)**  
**Executive Director**

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## BHIRSINGH COMMUNITY HEALTH UNIT HANDOVER IN GORKHA

On 19th February 2021, ACN handed over the newly constructed Bhirsingh Community Health Unit building with essential medicines, equipment and furniture to the local health post, Siranchowk Rural Municipality and community in Gorkha District.

The building was jointly inaugurated by Chief Guest Mr. Ashok Kumar Gurung, (Chief Officer of the District Coordination Committee), Mr. Raju Gurung (Chairman of Siranchowk RM), Ps. Hari Ram Ghimire (Chairman of Pokhara Christian Community) and Mr. Bharat Bahadur Gurung (Chairman of Asal Chhimekee Nepal) in the presence of other government officials and representatives, ACN Executive Board members, Executive Director and community people. Immediately after the inauguration and handover of the building, Bhirsingh Community Health Unit commenced health services by checking blood pressures of the Chief Guest and elderly people of the local community. It was so special to see the building immediately in use. ACN have constructed 5 schools, 8 Health Posts, 1 Municipality Ward Office, 270 houses and this is the final reconstruction project that we promised to do. These were in addition to construction trainings, livelihood, health and educational support. health and educational support.

All the community people expressed much appreciation, with great relief from the trouble of having been deprived of access to health services especially at the time of emergencies. They shared stories of people who had fallen from trees/cliffs, got injured, pregnant women who were in labour while being carried to hospital. During monsoon season, the road is blocked until August for around 4 months. There are 170 households (around 700 people) in the local village and also around 500 households in the neighboring villages located further on the hills from this village. This event, as usual, provided us wonderful opportunities to share about ourselves, our faith and love of the people who love God and people who are in need of such basic health services and gave generously for this project.

The Chair of the Rural Municipality commended the work of ACN and PCC from the relief phase of Earthquake 2015 and invited us to continue working for poor communities saying that there will be possibility for partnership with the local government.

**TOP :** During inauguration of community health unit building by unveiling the curtain.

**BOTTOM :** Checking blood pressure of elderly lady on handover day.





## CHILDREN FOCUSED COVID-19 RESPONSE

After the early relief support to COVID-19 lockdown affected families, ACN has been focusing on the most vulnerable people in the post-COVID-19 recovery. For this, ACN has designed programs considering the needs of the most vulnerable groups. The 'Children Focused COVID-19 Response' project aims to meet the immediate nutritional needs and hygiene awareness among children of Shreenathkot, Gorkha and Pokhara. According to the plan, ACN provided nutrition and learning materials with hygiene awareness sessions among children and installed hand washing stations in schools.

### HAND WASHING STATIONS INSTALLATION

Handwashing is a very important key for good health and sanitation. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a reminder for the importance of handwashing around the globe. Handwashing remains one of the major recommendations of WHO to protect ourselves and others from COVID-19 infection. In Nepal, after a long nation-wide lockdown, schools reopened with health safety measures. But many schools lack hand washing facilities. ACN has been providing handwashing stations to the schools and health units which are located in poor and marginalized communities, after considering their requests and needs.

**ACN Hand washing station installation includes the following:**

**Shreenathkot, Gorkha:** 6 hand washing stations in 6 schools

**Ghyalchowk, Gorkha:** 13 hand washing stations in 11 schools and 2 hand washing stations in two health posts.

**Pokhara:** 2 hand washing stations in 2 schools.

2578 pupils and community people have benefitted from these hand washing stations. Hand washing stations not only help reduce the spread of COVID-19, but also protect children from other WASH-related diseases and other health issues so that children can continue with their studies. We have observed that these hand washing stations are being well used.

**TOP:** Girls washing their hands, Arkul Primary School.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Children washing hands during school hours, Janakalyan school.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Children washing hands in Shreenathkot school.





## NUTRITION, LEARNING MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION AND HYGIENE AWARENESS SESSIONS

ACN has distributed nutrition and learning materials packages to children from poor and marginalized families in Gorkha district. Distribution programmes were conducted in eight schools with 367 children receiving packages. 659 school children from eight schools participated in appropriate handwashing practice teaching sessions. 28 Balsewa children of Gorkha and Pokhara received nutrition, learning materials, and a family package.

ACN's nutrition package consists of 2 kg of wheat flour, 1 kg of lentils, 500 gm of peanuts, 1 kg of beaten rice, 1 kg of roasted soybeans, 200 gm of dry nuts, 500 gm of Horlicks, 1 kg of Salt, 1 kg of sugar and 500 gm of Suji. Learning materials package consist of 1 copy, 1 exercise book, crayons, educational posters and a geometry box. While receiving nutrition and learning materials packages, students were very happy. In addition, ACN conducted awareness sessions on good handwashing practice and preventive health measures to protect children from COVID-19 and other diseases. The Family package provided to Balsewa children consists of 25 kg of rice, 2 liters of cooking oil, 2 kg of lentils, 500 gm of ghee (butter), 100 gm of Thyme seeds, 2 pieces of hand washing soap, 2 pieces of bathing soap and one light double blanket.



**TOP:** Group photo of teachers and children after distribution completion in Jana Jagriti Primary School, Gorkha.

**LEFT:** Children with learning materials.

**RIGHT:** During awareness session on hand washing practice.



## RELIEF AND WINTERIZATION SUPPORT TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

ACN has supported people living with disabilities (PLWD) with food supplies and warm material packages in Gorkha District. These people are from poor family backgrounds who have been severely affected due to the COVID-19 crisis and are struggling hard to manage their daily needs.

ACN organized distribution program for essential food and non-food supplies in coordination with Gorkha Blind Association and local government authorities. The package consisted of 25 kg of Rice, 5 kg of wheat flour, 2 kg of lentils, 1 kg of salt, 2 liters of cooking oil, 2 pieces of handwashing soap, 2 pieces of bath soap, 4 toothbrushes, and toothpaste. Warm material package consisted of one single and one double blanket. The distribution program went well and 83 households with 46 males and 37 females living with disabilities received support. All the beneficiaries were appreciative as the support came to them when they needed it desperately.



**LEFT :** Raju Adhikari (Executive Director) and Mukti Dhakal (ACN's Vice Chairman) at physical disability person's family with relief and winterization support packages.

**RIGHT :** Mukti Dhakal (ACN's Vice Chairman) and Prakash Bhujel (ACN's Secretary), giving warm blanket packages to a physically disability person (who has an artificial right hand).



## WINTERIZATION SUPPORT TO COVID-19 AFFECTED CHEPANG HOUSEHOLDS

On 22 January 2021, ACN provided packages of food and warm clothes to 170 poor Chepang families in Raksirang Rural Municipality, Makwanpur district in cooperation with the local government.

The Chepang community is known as a marginalized ethnic group in Nepal and this most vulnerable marginalized ethnic group was also impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown. Raksirang is a village located in the north of the East-West highway. Most Chepang families of Raksirang collect wild potatoes for food. Their living standard is very low. Raksirang has 44% people living below the poverty line. This Chepang community has one of the lowest literacy rates and lack of access to basic public services such as drinking water, electricity, education, and health care. In this context, the COVID-19 lockdown had a big impact on this vulnerable marginalized community. Therefore, the local government of Raksirang village requested ACN for support to poor Chepang families of Raksirang. As per the need assessment, we (ACN) have been able to support 170 poor Chepang families in wards no 2 & 5 of Raksirang Rural Municipality. We see future possibilities to work for such communities in Raksirang.

Each family received food packages including 25 kg of rice, 3 kg of lentils, 2 kg of beans, 1 kg of salt, 2 liters of oil, 2 pcs of laundry washing soap, 2 pcs of handwashing soap, 4 pcs of toothbrushes, and toothpaste. In addition, each family received warm clothes packages including 2 blankets, a muffler (Dhaka Shawl) and a cap. Help has been much appreciated for both the quantity and quality of the supplies we provided.

**Thanks to our funding partners and Raksirang Rural Municipality for their cooperation and support.**

**RIGHT:** An Elderly lady received food packages.





## COVID-19 RESPONSE SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE

After completion of the COVID-19 immediate relief support, ACN supported the most vulnerable groups of people who are at risk of extreme deteriorating living conditions. ACN has identified four vulnerable groups for support, namely, children, new mothers and pregnant women, female-headed households (single women), and people living with disabilities. All the planned activities have been carried out.

### ACHIEVEMENT

**600** Children have received self-learning materials in Kaski and Nawalparasi districts to be engaged in learning while school were closed.

**400** children have received nutrition materials in Kaski and Nawalparasi to fill in the gap of nutrition food at home.

**150** People living with disabilities (PLWDs) have received food relief packages in Kaski District.

**150** Caregivers of people living with disabilities (PLWDs) have received hygiene kits and warm blankets.

**200** New mothers have received nutrition and hygiene kit packages in Kaski District.

**100** Single women have received seed support for kitchen gardening, to have their family needs fulfilled and also earn cash by selling the product.

**20** Single women have participated in slipper making (income generating) training.

**TOP LEFT:** Children received nutrition package.

**TOP RIGHT:** Children received self-learning materials package.

**MIDDLE LEFT:** Young girl with physical disability received food package.

**MIDDLE :** A lady with physical disability received hygiene kits with her caregivers. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** New mother received nutrition and hygiene kits

packages. **BOTTOM LEFT:** During slipper making training. **BOTTOM MIDDLE:** Single lady prepared slippers after training. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Single lady with filled tub of radish with seed support from ACN.





## ONLINE BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING

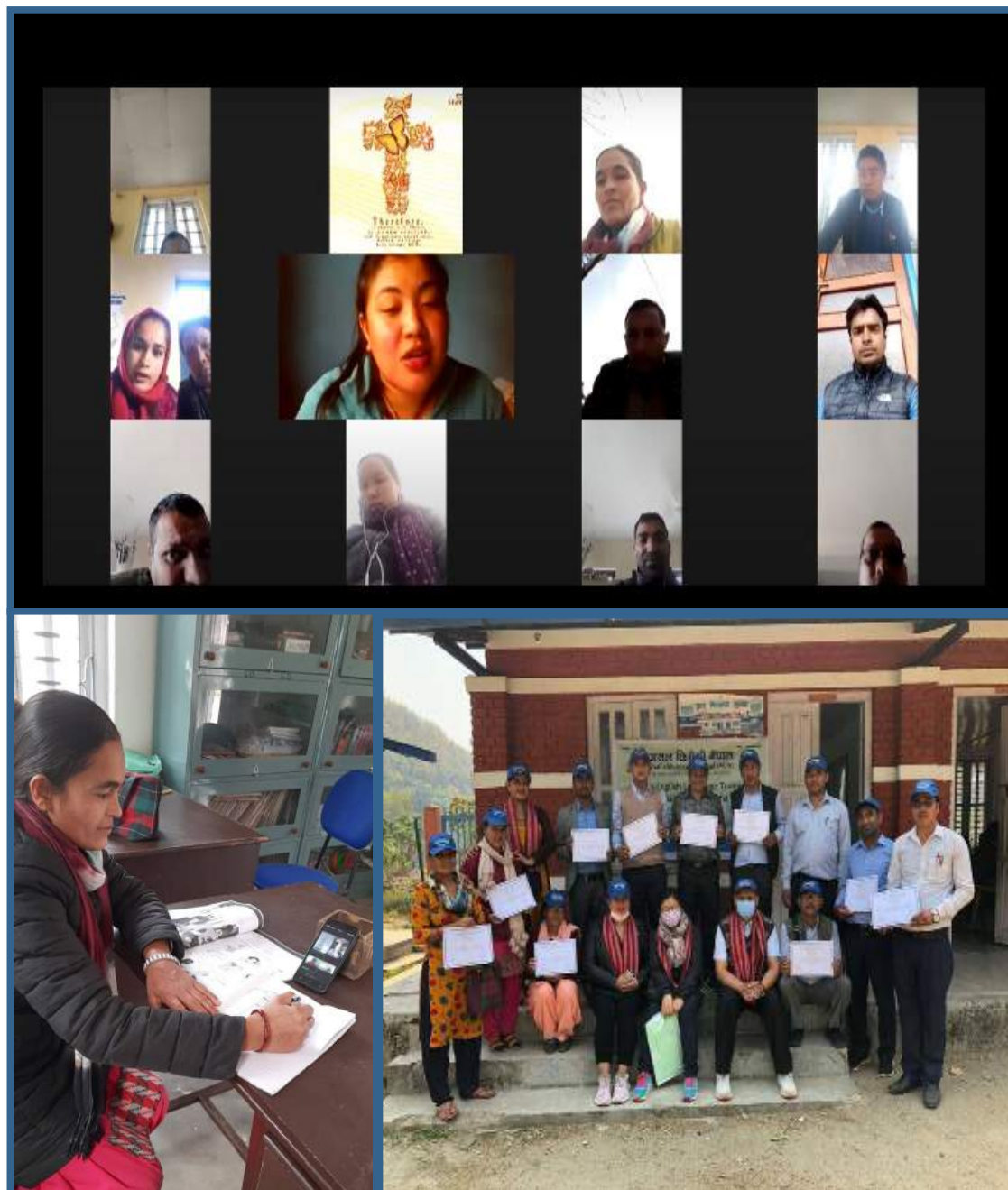
After the successful handover of the reconstructed four school buildings in Shreenathkot, Gorkha, ACN wanted to contribute towards improving the quality of education for a better future of earthquake-affected children in Shreenathkot, Gorkha. For this, ACN initiated an 'Enhancement of Capacity for Quality Education' program. Under this program, ACN has provided education awareness sessions among parents, school management training to the school management committee, motivational and child psychology training to teachers and materials support for library set up for seven schools in Shreenathkot, Gorkha.

In the context of COVID-19, schools were closed. ACN realized the importance of engaging teachers in education. On 15 Jan 2021, ACN started 'Online Basic English Language Training' for Primary Level School Teachers of Shreenathkot community schools. It was a joint effort together with Friends of Nepal, Sweden, Bethesda International Language Centre and the local rural municipality. This was ACN's first virtual training project where participants joined the class from Gorkha and the Trainer joined from Pokhara. We assessed participants pre training and all completed a post-test after the training. All the twelve participants improved a lot and passed the post-test very well. On 25 March 2021, we organized a graduation program for the participants. It was a great time to hear about the training, their good experience and to see their confidence growing. In future, we will be looking to develop this work further.

**TOP:** During Online Class.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Ms. Kopila Adhikari while attending an online class on her mobile.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Group photo of participants with a training completion certificate at graduation program in Gorkha.





ACN aims to contribute towards the 'end of poverty in all its forms' by adopting sustainable goals in its work. For this, ACN has been focusing on SDG Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 & 16. ACN implements various programs including community empowerment and livelihood, adult literacy, inclusive and equitable quality education, child protection, health awareness and promotion, Nawajeewan treatment and rehabilitation for female drug and alcohol users, and capacity building of communities to respond to disasters in Kaski, Nawalparasi and Gorkha districts. In addition, ACN becomes involved in other locations when disasters occur with priority to serve poor marginalized, and vulnerable groups.

### **PROMOTION OF PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY**

Formation and mobilization of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) is the main component of this sector. Now, ACN has 38 SHGs in Kaski and Nawalparasi districts. Each group consists of 25-35 women. In total around 1100 women are directly engaged in the SHGs. These groups start with regular saving from group members, gradually loan small amounts out to members, are engaged in solving social and environmental issues and responding to community needs such as water distribution. They are also engaged in vocational training and income generating activities. Kalpana who started humbly with an adult literacy education class conducted by ACN around 8 years ago, now is a well-known buffalo farmer/trader in her community.

**TOP RIGHT:** Women calculating their monthly savings at SHG monthly meeting in Sarawal Nawalparasi district.



### **SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING IN NAWALPARASI**

Two-day small business trainings were organized among Self-Help Group (SHG) members in Sarawal Rural Municipality and Kawasoti Municipality in Nawalparasi district. The training was facilitated by Ms. Tabita Pariyar and Ms. Pramila Moktan (SHG member of Kaski district) from ACN. In total, four events were conducted where 91 women participated in the training. The major objective of the training is to motivate women to become involved in small businesses/income generating activities and to provide guidance to those who are already involved in some sort of small business. The training focused on setting a goal/vision for the business and preparing a business plan. They were also encouraged by sharing their experiences with each other.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** During facilitation of training in Sarawal, Nawalparasi district.





## INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION

Inclusive and equitable quality education program is aiming to increase employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for young people and adults by providing vocational/technical business knowledge and skills. In addition, it also provides literacy and numerical knowledge and skill to adults.

### SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

According to our plan, we have completed the participant selection process for beautician and barista (coffee maker) training in Kaski district. Nine girls are selected for the three-month beautician training and twelve young people (male and female) are selected for one-month barista training. Both trainings have started. All these young people come from very low economic backgrounds from both church and non-church communities.

**LEFT:** Selected participants after orientation of Barista training.  
**RIGHT:** Selected participants after orientation of Beautician training.



## SUPPORT IN FORMATION OF SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

This program aims to create awareness and empower communities on disaster risk reduction and disaster management through various trainings and capacity building of our beneficiaries for safe and sustainable communities.

### TWO- DAY DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR) TRAINING

ACN continues to raise awareness on basic disaster risk reduction through trainings and capacity building programmes. ACN conducted Basic Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) training for self-help group members and community leaders in Sarawal, Nawalparasi district in coordination with Nepal Red Cross Society. 48 people participated in the two-day disaster risk reduction (DRR) training. Similar DRR training was conducted in other groups in Kawasoti, Nawalparasi. They now have good ideas, knowledge and an action plan to reduce the risk of potential floods mainly in these areas.



**LEFT:** Facilitator teaching on how to give first aid treatment for hand fracture.

**RIGHT:** Facilitator teaching on how to make stretcher with local materials and how to carry an injured person.



## NAWAJEEWAN TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION FOR FEMALE DRUG AND ALCOHOL USERS

Nawajeewan Treatment and Rehabilitation Program is for female drug and alcohol users. It has two sub-programs: residential program and outreach program. Nawajeewan has continued running its residential services for female drug and alcohol users and helping them to recover from their addiction. Nawajeewan reaches out to female drug and alcohol users with education on drug and alcohol abuse, counseling and support under the outreach program. In addition, Nawajeewan organizes awareness programs among teenagers, mothers groups, and communities. We receive more demands for services these days at Nawajeewan programme. We have observed increasing of numbers of young girls using drugs and alcohol. One of the reasons for this is the impact of COVID-19 which has caused frustration in families, lack of job opportunities and increased cost of living. Nawajeewan is recognized as a successful programme with comprehensive support inputs for holistic recovery.

### CLIENT GET-TOGETHER PROGRAM

To encourage previous clients who have been rehabilitated back to their families and communities after treatment in Nawajeewan, and to know current situation of clients for further support and counseling if they are in need, Nawajeewan conducts client get-together programs. In this quarter Nawajeewan conducted one client get-together program. 11 clients participated in the program which went very well.



**LEFT:** Ms. Pratima Basnet (Nawajeewan Program Officer) facilitating client get-together program.

**RIGHT:** Clients playing during get-together program.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

ACN has conducted 5 days 'Strategic Planning Workshop' together with staff, ACN Board members and Advisors and Pokhara Christian Community representative leaders. The workshop went well and all the input from participants will be incorporated into ACN's upcoming interventions. In addition, we thank God for His guidance through the previous years.



## ACN'S TEAM HAS RECEIVED THE FIRST SHOT OF COVID-19 VACCINE



We are very happy to share with you that ACN's team in Pokhara, Kaski received the first shot of the COVID-19 vaccine.

**BOTH:** ACN's Pokhara team with COVID-19 vaccine card after receiving vaccination.



## ACN'S BOARD VISIT IN NAWALPARASI DISTRICT



In the first week of March, ACN executive board members and executive director with ACN's Pokhara staff team had a visit in Nawalparasi working area with the objective of observation of ongoing community development work, to know the situation of communities, and to explore possibilities areas for future work. In addition, to meet the beneficiaries, local stakeholders, and leaders of project areas. The overall visit went well. Our executive board members, executive director, and Pokhara staff team were able to meet Self-Help Groups, local stakeholders, and leaders and they were very glad to receive positive responses from the community and local stakeholders. They also got an opportunity to hear the beneficiary's success story at the field.

**TOP:** ACN board members and staff team with Sarawal Rural Municipality Self-Help Group in Nawalparasi district.



## PRAYER REQUEST

**Praise the Lord!**

**Together, we are making an impact in the lives of many needy people in Nepal.**

- Please pray for ongoing Beautician and Barista training; that participants can learn well for better future.
- Please pray that teachers who participated in Online English training will practice what they learnt in their daily activities in school.
- Please pray for the safety of ACN's team especially for the second wave of COVID-19.
- Please pray for regular activities and planning for new projects.





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