

CS:MAP Working Areas:

USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Districts: Kapilvastu, Palpa, Arghakanchi, Gulmi, Dang, Salyan, Pyuthan, Rukum, Rolpa, Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Kailali, Doti, Achham, Kanchanpur, Dadeldhura, and Baitadi

Earthquake-affected Districts: Okhaldhunga, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Sindhuli, Sindhupalchowk, Kavrepalanchowk, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Dhading, Gorkha, and Makwanpur

Local Government Units: Amargadhi, Badhaiyatal, Banfikot, Bannigadhi Jaygadh, Barhabise, Bheri, Bheriganga, Bhotekoshi, Bijaynagar, Birendranagar, Budhanilkantha, Changunarayan, Chhatradev, Chhatreshwari, Chhedagad, Chisankhugadhi, Dashrath Chand, Dipayal Silgadhi, Duduwa, Fikkal, Gauriganga, Ghorahi, Godawari, Golanjor, Gorkha, Gulmidarbar, Guransh, Isma, Kageshori Manohara, Kalika, Kapurkot, Khadadevi, KI Singh, Konjyosom, Krishnapur, Lekbesi, Likhu, Likhu Tamakoshi, Manahari, Megyang, Molung, Narayan, Naubaini, Neelkantha, Panauti, Roshi, Sandhikharka, Sanfegagar, Shahid Lakhani, Shailung, Saruma Rani, Siddhalek, Suryabinayak, Tamakoshi, Tinau, Tribeni, Triveni and Uttargaya

Trained journalists in COVID-19 reporting

CS:MAP-trained journalists published at least 26 articles from July 16-31, 2020. They covered COVID-19 related issues, mostly those related to post-lockdown challenges, increasing risk of infection in urban centres like the Kathmandu valley, and the government response to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Their stories also advocated for greater awareness on, and increased practice of use of masks and sanitizers. The journalist based in Kathmandu reported about the increasing number of cases on a daily basis in the Kathmandu valley (<https://bit.ly/3hV4tR2>). Likewise, the journalist based in Kavrepalanchok reported about the lack of strict measures and check-point facilities for COVID-19 at entry points to Kathmandu, like in Sanga - the eastern entry point to the Kathmandu valley. The other journalists covered issues such as the impact of the COVID-19 on agriculture, on tourism sector, revenue collection, and on schools.

'Mero Palika Mero Chaso' – SMS My Voice (SMV) campaign encouraging youth participation in COVID-19 response

SMV campaign through its Facebook page *Ma Khaandina* and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system has motivated youth in various parts of the country to initiate and share about the COVID-19 response in their communities. From July 16-31, the campaign received over 44 messages in IVR and one video message through the Facebook page (<https://bit.ly/2DCeFif>). In this video, the youth group has shared about their initiative in ensuring women-friendly environment in quarantine centers in Banke district. The Facebook page, with promotional video messages on the campaign, reached over 35,506 people in this period. The youth have highlighted about their experience of collaborative efforts in quarantine management, promotion of safety measures, ensuring availability of medical supplies to frontline responders, ambulance services and other initiatives.

MeroReport offers a common platform for discussion on COVID-19 issues

A total of 142 blogs were published in the *MeroReport* platform from July 16-31 covering COVID-19 related issues and impacts of natural disasters such as floods and landslides. As an online platform, *MeroReport* has currently proved to be an important platform for both sharing and discussion of crucial information related to COVID-19, and how it has affected essential services such as health, education, agriculture, and disaster risk reduction. The platform was visited 3,236 times in this period, with each visit lasting for around 4 minutes 15 seconds on average. The platform can be accessed here: <https://www.meroreport.net/> The Facebook page of the *MeroReport* platform which is used to share the selected blogs from the web platform, and to enhance audience interactivity, reached over 33,431 people in this period.

मेरो पालिका
मेरो चसो

अब हामी पनि केही गर्ने कि ?

श्वेता गुरुङ

सृजना जोशी

“सभ्यता रक्षक युवा साथीहरू मिलेर वापसलाई बसेका महिलाहरूको स्वास्थ्य अवस्थालाई मध्यमजर गरी सेलेन्ट्री प्याड वितरण गर्नुमा साथै स्वास्थ्य कार्यकर्ताको आयोजना गरेका छौं ।”

“ज्याता मजदुरी गरेर काम गर्ने व्यक्तिहरू सामाजिक व्यवस्था गर्छौं । अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्ति (मोचकहरूको समावेश) हरूको पहिचान गरी नेपाल पत्रा औद्योगिक कर्मिटी सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेशका अग्रगण्य रोगको रोकथाममा अग्रगण्य सहित् गरी उहाँहरूलाई हस्तागत गर्छौं ।”

<https://www.facebook.com/MaKhaandina/>

Innovative radio programs on COVID-19 issues

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal faced another challenge in the form of natural disasters such as floods and landslides. The ten episodes of *Sajha Boli* radio programs produced at the sub-national level highlighted natural disasters like floods and landslides caused by the incessant monsoon downpours, local level responses, and the critical role of civil society and media in addressing both the natural disasters and the COVID-19 situation. The local partners at the sub-national level have continued collaborative efforts with the local government by producing innovative and informative radio programs. Parivartan FM and Voice FM in Kapilvastu district have been producing radio programs and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) based on interviews with public health experts about quarantine management, relief distribution and testing facilities.

Meanwhile, the central version of the *Sajha Boli* radio program covered issues related to mental health and the gender-based violence. In the COVID-19 situation, the number of cases of violence against women, and harassment against sexual minorities have been reported to have increased significantly, and many of these cases have led to suicides. Amidst this context, the radio program promoted awareness about the need to stop these forms of violence and harassment, and hence, need to address related psychosocial issues. These radio programs have received over 338 feedback messages from the callers through the IVR system.

Likewise, Saathi Sanga Maanka Kura (SSMK) radio program broadcast on July 18 highlighted the importance and efficiency of distance and online learning during the time of pandemic. The SSMK team also launched a Facebook poll to assess youth opinion on what can be done to establish effective distance and online education system initiated by the local level. The team also hosted online discussion through the SSMK Facebook page on the same topic. The episode also included opinions from the listeners on safety measures to be followed during the disasters such as flood and landslides.

Public Service Announcement (PSA) about misinformation and fake news

From July 25 onwards, EAI along with other radio partners produced and broadcast a PSA on misinformation and fake news. The PSA calls for listeners not to be misled by fake news and misinformation. The PSA also provides information on how to identify fake news. Produced in 10 different languages, these PSAs were broadcast 390 times daily by the radio partners, and were also shared through the social media platforms of CS:MAP (<https://bit.ly/33qpfUK>).

Common Assembly Sub-HEAD group prioritizes mental health

During this lockdown, 71 people, mostly youth, committed suicide in Dang district as per the Province Police Office. To draw the attention of the Ward Office towards mental health, the Sub - Health, Education, Agriculture and Disaster Risk Reduction (HEAD)

Committee of Laxmipur Common Assembly – Dang, organized a meeting on July 23, 2020. The Committee has decided to demand the budget from the Ward Office to conduct psychosocial counseling training by the Common Assembly as well as involve youth in various creative and recreational activities.

CS:MAP local structures discuss on their future and COVID-19

On July 17, 2020, the Institute of Human Rights and Communication, Nepal (IHRICON) organized a discussion program with the representatives of Listening, Discussion and Action Group (LDAG) and HEAD coalition in Bhaktapur. The discussion was coordinated by journalist Nagendra Sapkota, member of HEAD coalition.

The discussion helped collect information on the tasks performed by different local structures in Suryabinayak and Changunarayan municipalities as well as future tasks to be performed in response to COVID-19. The sustainability of local structures facilitated by CS:MAP in the municipalities was also discussed. The Coordinator of Gundu LDAG, Mr. Ganesh Wagle, urged that incentive training and increased exposure to LDAG members would make the structures more efficient.



LDAGs coordinate with civil society and local government in Dolakha



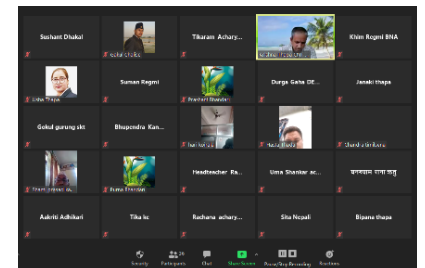
Discussion with the representative of LDAG and DHC Bhaktapur

The Listening, Discussion and Action Group (LDAG) Dolakha are actively supporting various Wards in the district during the pandemic. The Kamalamai Radio Listener Group Sailung *gaunpalika-04*, Maghapauwa organized various awareness programs against COVID-19 and supported the local government in relief distribution. The group was involved in the maintenance of drinking water supply source, road maintenance and organized different WASH activities, after the initial confusion during the lockdown. The group closely monitored the relief distributed by the local government. The group is working in close coordination with the civil societies and elected representatives during the pandemic.

Parents, students, and stakeholders discuss school reopening amid rising COVID-19 cases

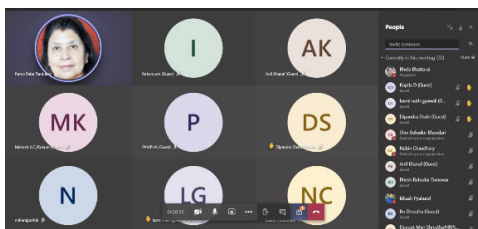
On July 28, 2020 Sundar Nepal, Surkhet organized a virtual meeting with 38 representatives of civil society, school officials, students and their parents to discuss school reopening. The long lockdown has hampered the education of students, but the rising COVID-19 cases are a challenge to school reopening. The virtual meeting aimed to address this problem.

It was agreed that the schools will be reopened after the discussion with the parents and other stakeholders in each school's catchment areas. A Toile Education Committee will be formed that will involve students in learning activities and provide education materials for self-study. A shift system based on student volume in school was also discussed as an alternative. Sanitization of schools used in quarantine and isolation was agreed as a must for school reopening. Overall, the meeting concluded with a consensus to prioritize the student's safety rather than mere school reopening.



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Orientation on policy review process for effective advocacy



On July 2, 2020, Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project (CS:MAP) organized a virtual orientation on policy review process and technique with the representatives of local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) partners. CS:MAP Advocacy Advisor shared a power point presentation on the policy review process including the objective, importance and significance of a policy review, policy review in advocacy, policy review process, methods and some examples of policy review at local level. CS:MAP partners are currently focused on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policy support activities at local level in the context of COVID-19.

After the presentation, participants shared their experiences and raised issues and challenges of policy review process at local level. They shared the current status of DRR policy, policy formulation process, use of evidence and policy review at local level. During discussion, participants highlighted the policy and practice gaps in DRR policy at local government level.

CS:MAP has been engaged in policy support activities in local, provincial and federal level. The local CSO partners have been engaged in formulation, revision, and effective implementation of Health, Education, Agriculture, DRR, and Governance policies at local level.

After the discussion, participants developed plan of action for the implementation of advocacy initiatives at local level. Thirty-two (32) participants attended the discussion.

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