

HEALTH RESEARCH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM (HERD)

Progression

A HERD Tri-monthly Newsletter



Experiencing Earthquake



Nepal was hit by a massive earthquake of 7.8 magnitude on the afternoon of April 25. Over 8,700 people died while many are still unaccounted for. Over 20,000 people have sustained injuries among which many require long-term rehabilitation. As strong aftershocks continue to jolt the nation people are still struggling to get back to normal life and meet their basic necessities.

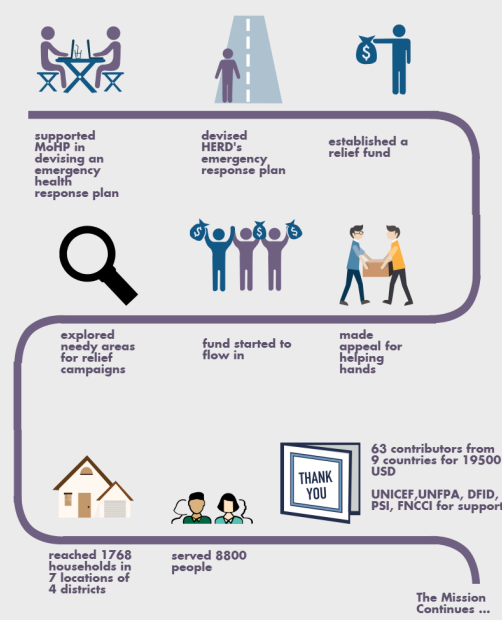
Responding to the crisis, HERD on April 27, made a request through its social media sites for **'Pledge for Public Health Action'** and initiated relief campaigns. An emergency earthquake desk communications unit was established. A fund raising initiative: **Helping Hands for Humanity** was developed in our website with the slogan, **"every penny raised on relief, community gets 100 percent"**. HERD management decided that whatever amount of money comes to the fund, all goes to the needy people and all management costs (transportation, logistics, food for the volunteers and the staff) will be borne by HERD.

From April 30, daily **media monitoring** of earthquake related news was initiated for a period of one month. Daily analytical report of the monitoring was prepared and published on the website and social media sites. The relief operation began from May 2, in coordination with the district administra-

tion officials, VDCs and health officials, Nepal Army as well as local leaders. Organisations such as UNICEF, UNFPA, DFID PSI, FNCCI among others provided us relief materials.

Meanwhile, with the support of Ministry of Education and UNICEF, HERD is conducting structural school assessment in 11 earthquake affected districts. It will be done using the **green or the red flag** – whether the schools are safe or unsafe to be used for teaching-learning purposes.

HERD team further provided its technical support to Ministry of Health and Population by deploying 2 public health officers for information collection at **Health Emergency Operation Centre (HEOC)**.

QUAKE RELIEF PROGRAMMES
(A HERD Initiative)

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World No Tobacco Day Award 2015

HERD was awarded with World No Tobacco Award 2015 by World Health Organisation on June 5 at WHO Nepal Headquarters in Kathmandu.

"We have been working very closely in the sector of tobacco control in close coordination with the Ministry of Health and Population since our establishment in 2004. We started with the inter-linkage of tobacco users being vulnerable to tuberculosis. That was the inspiration for us to start the self-initiation towards working more in tobacco control activities. Our approach basically has been generating the evidence, informing the policy and changing the practice. We are proud that our small effort through the feasibility study intervention in the primary health care settings has been acknowledged by the ministry and the WHO" **Dr. Sushil Baral, Executive Director HERD**



Acting WHO Representative presenting the award to Dr. Sushil Baral, Executive Director, HERD

"It is a great moment for us as all the effort we have put in for tobacco control initiatives has finally paid off" – **Sudeepa Khanal, Project Coordinator for tobacco control related projects at HERD**

"It was challenging as it was behaviour change and we had to counsel the patients and at the same time coordinate with the health workers in their health facilities. We had to conduct several meetings and follow up sessions to finally come up with a successful result - 37% quit rate among smokers who received the intervention support. The wait has been worthwhile" – **Shraddha Manandhar, Research Officer at HERD**

Dhaka Urban Health Conference



HERD team at 12th International Conference on Urban Health

The 12th International Conference on Urban Health was held at Dhaka, Bangladesh from May 24 to May 27 with the theme, 'Urban Health for A Sustainable Future: The Post 2015 Agenda'.

HERD team members – Hom Nath Subedi, Sudeepa Khanal, Uden Maharjan and Sudeep Uprety participated in the conference to present a paper on policy development context in Nepal and for a poster presentation on Essential Health Care Services in an urban slum of Kathmandu.

"It was an opportunity for us to showcase the urban health work HERD has been doing in Nepal. Not only limited to presentations and discussions, the conference gave us the platform for networking with various regional and international agencies" – **Uden Maharjan, Project Coordinator-Urban Health.**

TB Reach: Reaching Unreached



TB REACH project team conducted TB screening programme on May 19 and 20. In coordination with Nepal Army, outreach workers of HERD conducted TB screening and collected sputum sample of those who showed symptoms of tuberculosis. Mr. Shyam Lal Kandel, Project Coordinator of TB REACH project shared,

"A large number of people had gathered in Tundikhel – an open ground at the heart of Kathmandu where most public events are held. Being knowledgeable about the public health hazards with the spread of communicable diseases due to the overcrowding, sanitation and settlement in open spaces, we came up with this plan of conducting the TB screening camp."

Around 200 people were screened for tuberculosis and 35 sputum samples were collected. The collected sputum sample was put under test in the advanced HERD laboratory with GeneXpert technology. No positive cases were detected. Similarly, another TB screening camp was initiated from May 25, upon the request made by the Nepal Army working in Tundikhel. The screening is still ongoing as numerous NA Officials have been sending samples for test. Till June 22, 272 suspected were screened of which 85 were symptomatic and one was tested positive.

Practicing Positivity

With the motive of sharing our pain and struggles and relieving ourselves from the mental stress caused by the earthquake and subsequent after-shocks, HERD organized a training session on 'Positive Thinking and Group Counselling' on May 20. 110 participants including HERD board members, staff as well as their family members attended the event. Facilitating the event, Nar Bahadur Karki, psychosocial counsellor and life skills coach rendered a message for new hope and meaning to life. His session helped the participants to

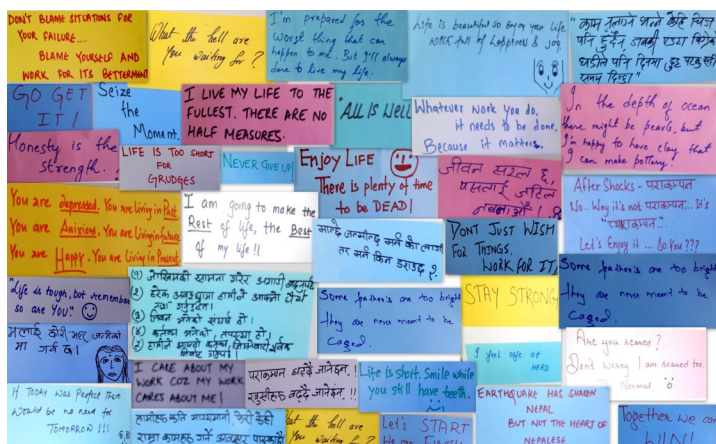
see life in a different way, which was lost somewhere, amidst fear, anxiety and helplessness. In the counselling session when Mr. Karki started speaking, it was worth all our time and attention. Most of us didn't take life that way. He showed a new light, and made us realise how lucky we are. Not a single participant returned dissatisfied; they took a lot of courage, hope and a positivity to see life in a different way. The session definitely inspired all of us in various ways and we are thankful to Mr. Karki for the opportunity.



Mr. Nar Bahadur Karki facilitating the session

*Enjoy Life!!
There is plenty of
time to be dead*

Rewinding Ourselves for Rejuvenation



A collage of messages posted in walls of HERD office at Thapathali, Kathmandu

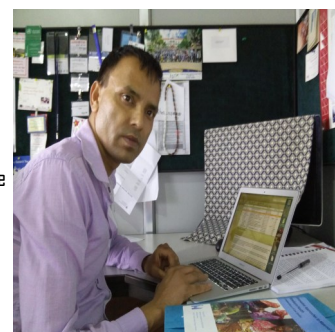
On June 1, when the clock struck 10 in the morning with our Executive Director calling for the usual weekly staff meeting, we had no expectations of it being a different one. After the usual project specific summaries by project leads and operations unit, it was the turn of Sushil Sir (HERD's Executive Director) with a surprise in store for us when he uttered, "Let's play a game". Everyone was confused, could be football or some musical games as he is fond of singing and dancing. But it was something else, a mind game. He asked us to get a paper and express five inspirational messages - anything that pops

up in our mind. We had to paste the paper on the walls of our partly damaged office building to rewind and rejuvenate ourselves from the earthquake aftermath. In no time the walls of HERD office were filled with people's emotions. It was an art of expression which didn't just inspire one but many. Now that the messages are seen everywhere, it brings smiles in everyone's face and also takes away the boredom and the fear.

From the Director's Desk

We have just completed 10 years of meaningful engagement in the health and development sector. We are now embarking on a new journey with renewed energy and hope, contributing more towards ensuring better and healthier lives. Particularly with the changed context of the earthquake that devastated many lives and hopes, as a responsible national institution, we would like to make a sincere effort to contribute as much as possible on rebuilding and reconstruction efforts.

From an organizational perspective, with the strategic headway provided through Strategy Development Workshop held in December 2014, we are now remodeling our working modality to Business Development approach. As an early step, we are now working on establishing a Centre for Development Communications that embodies our organizational value of 'EVIDENCE to POLICY and PRACTICE' thereby making meaningful contribution to the works that we do. Our contribution in the Nepal Urban Health Policy and Nepal Health Sector Strategy development process are some of the instances of our efforts towards translation of evidence into policy formulation for systemic change and sustainability.





Volunteers' Voice

Govinda Prasad Pant and Seema Giri from B P Koirala Institute of Health Sciences recently completed their three months of internship/elective placement at HERD. They reflect upon their work experience at HERD:



Govinda Prasad Pant

During my internship period, I got involved in a range of projects and got an opportunity to be a part of earthquake relief campaigns with the energetic HERD team at different places; reaching the unreached. My capacity as a public health researcher was enhanced as I had the opportunity to attend various training and workshops. The experience has given me a thorough understanding of the employer etiquette - working in an organization with diverse professionals and insight into the operation of projects. I enjoyed the opportunities to learn from and work with individuals of a variety of backgrounds with lots of experiences. I enjoyed being a part of such a diverse, friendly, energetic and motivating team. It was so nice to meet such a motivating and inspiring faces at HERD. HERD is a wonderful place to intern/contribute in the sector of health research and social development sector. Thank You HERD!!!



Seema Giri

The internship period was very fruitful as I learnt many things. It helped me to uplift my theoretical knowledge, made me more responsible and hardworking. I got an opportunity to take part in various trainings and learn about tool design, research methodology, report writing, analysis and many other nuances of research. I found HERD team hard working, responsible and energetic with an inspirational and motivating leader. I would like to thank my supervisor Ms Nabita Sharma who supported in my whole internship period along with WaterAid team. HERD is a good platform for the new learners. Thank you very much HERD team for making my internship period worthy.

Projects in Brief

Research and Development

⇒ **Formative Research on Fertility Awareness for Community Transformation (FACT)** project has been started from April 2015 with the support of Institute of Reproductive Health, Georgetown University and Save the Children. This project looks into exploring the awareness of fertility and family planning, barriers and facilitators of family planning use and cultural factors including the gender norms affecting the motivation and ability to use family planning.

⇒ The UNICEF funded **District Investment Case (DIC)** project has been recently completed in April 2015. The objectives of the project were to implement the investment case and facilitate decentralized planning, budgeting and management in seven UNICEF working districts as well as provide support for monitoring and supervision to the two districts to successfully implement the action plan.

⇒ Report finalisation of Process Evaluation of **Suaahara Front Line Worker (FLW) Study** project is ongoing. This 8-month long study is being conducted with the support of Save the Children to determine the effectiveness of *Suaahara's* methods to improve the knowledge and skills of the FLWs and at sending the messages to the community via the FLWs. It also looked at the extent to which the *Suaahara* interventions, including the mass media campaigns, were reaching the beneficiaries.

Monitoring and Evaluation Projects

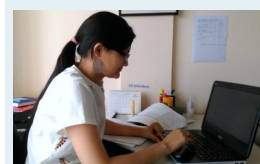
⇒ Monitoring and Evaluation of DFID and USAID funded **Nepal Family Planning Project** is currently being conducted from October 2014 with the technical support of Mott MacDonald and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to monitor and evaluate the pilots implemented by Nepal Health Sector Support Programme (NHSSP) and Health Communication Capacity Collaborative (HCC3). Under this project, we also undertake analytical studies to understand the gaps and barriers related to family planning among Muslim, migrants, youth and urban poor population. This project ends in April 2016.

⇒ Monitoring and Evaluation of **Remote Areas Maternal and Newborn Health Pilot** is being conducted from November 2014 with the support of NHSSP to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the pilot. The project mainly measures the extent of increment in use and access to maternal and newborn health services through supply side interventions and also understands whether the demand-side interventions complement the supply side interventions to work together promoting greater accessibility and use of services.

Implementers' Insights



"The Nepal Family Planning Project with the introduction of 3 pilots has a national significance given that if the pilots are proven effective, it will strengthen the national family planning programme. As an independent M&E agency, we are undertaking monitoring and evaluation in 3 phases—baseline study, process monitoring and final evaluation. We are documenting issues that we have observed during our M&E through our progress reports to inform gaps, barriers and strategies to strengthen the national programme. Our district field based monitors are the cornerstone of our project as they feed us with all field based information. They have been working hard in difficult circumstances, particularly in quake affected districts such as Ramechhap." - Shophika Regmi, Project Manager-Nepal Family Planning Project



"While conducting the Suaahara FLW Study, we applied a new method—shadowing. As we were applying a new method, there were lot of speculations. As generally when interviews are taken, consent is taken from participants but during the course of shadowing, when we had to follow the FLWs, we were looked upon as 'spies'. Especially in our context, shadowing without interacting with the participants is difficult. We also had a challenge to conduct a mixed group FGD of social mobilizer and people engaged in agriculture, livestock and different other categories. Interactions between FGD participants gave us an insight of how hierarchy comes into play when there are mixed groups of participants." - Rekha Khatri, Project Lead—Suaahara Front Line Worker Study