

# SENSITISING URBAN HEALTH

*Engaging journalists for improved urban health coverage*



## *Journalists reliving last 6 years of experiencing health related incidents (2010-15)*

*Journalists share their personal experiences of health related illnesses and incidents that occurred to them or family members during last 6 years*

### **Media Workshop on Urban Health**

A media workshop on urban health was organized in March, 2015 in Nepalgunj to discuss on the major underlying problems related to health reporting practice in Nepal and bridge the gap between media and health sector for improved coverage on urban health matters. This workshop is a part of the project, 'Strengthening Media Response to Urban Health Issues in Nepal' funded by COMDIS-HSD, University of Leeds with implementation support from Primary Health Care Revitalization Division (PHCRD) of Ministry of Health (MoH).

*"In 2013, my sister suffered from Japanese Encephalitis. By the grace of God, she was saved from that illness after treatment at Nepalgunj Medical College in Kohalpur", a journalist during Media Workshop in Nepalgunj*



## Reliving last 6 years

HERD team led by Dr Sushil Baral facilitated a session during the workshop where the journalists were asked to recall any major health related incident that had a major effect in their lives. In this exercise, the journalists wrote down the events that occurred in different time periods from 2010 to 2015.

## How this exercise helped

This exercise was really helpful in terms of understanding the major health problems that the common people face which is really important for the policy makers to design the interventions based on prioritizing the needs.

## Identifying the problems

Dr Sushil Baral categorized the health problems into majorly reported health problems, the nature of the problems and the associated barriers and facilitators causing such problems. The major health problems were related to immunisation, antenatal and prenatal care, respiratory illnesses, waterborne diseases, eye infections, tuberculosis, malnutrition, burn injuries, sexually transmitted infections, mental illness, drug abuse and alcoholism.



*“The health dimension of urban well-being is an important but so far neglected in policy and practice. It is high time, we focus through better engagement between media and the health sector”,  
Dr Sushil Baral, HERD*

Dr Baral linked these problems with various social determinants that play a part in causing such health problems.

## Journalists share impact of their stories

Journalists during the workshop also shared some of the positive impact of their stories. A journalist shared how his story about high prevalence of sickle cell anemia in the Tharu community came to the attention of the government and therefore now it is one of the diseases that government has kept under high priority. Another journalist shared an interesting incident of a zonal



hospital charging fees for a vaccine that were available free of cost. After that story got published, the hospital had started the vaccination free of cost to the service seekers.

## Sensitising for policy uptake

Dr Ramesh Kharel, Director of Primary Health Care Revitalization Division (PHCRD) during the workshop emphasized on the need for the media to prioritize coverage of major health problems that affect the public health on a daily basis.



Dr Kharel stressed on the fact that when these problems are highlighted in the media linking with the socio-cultural conditions, there is wider attention and thereby becomes convenient for policy development.

For official correspondence, email:  
sudeep.uprety@herd.org.np

