Newsletter July-September 2020

Nuwakot (Shivapuri) Education Scholarship Program

Dear Sponsors,

We hope you are all staying safe and well and adapting to the new normal of life with Covid-19 – with some positives in that!

Amidst the many disruptions to regular life caused by the Covid-19 virus in Nepal, our team have remained dedicated to carrying out our work and continue to be an inspiration to us. We have continued to educate children, families and their communities about the prevention and control of this global crisis through **home visits, monitoring, savings group meetings and phone communication** on a monthly basis to help them stay safe and adapt their lives harmoniously.

Whilst we have not been able to run some activities such as youth club or large group team building/awareness programs, and schooling has been delayed, we have **not had to cancel any of our key program activities** as yet. Instead we have just been adapting the way we do some things. The virtual medium has become a bigger part of everyone's lives, and has brought about some more positive developments for the staff teams and some of the youth in the more urban areas, such as webinars, which have boosted learnings from having greater access to various experts to join online. Our team has adapted very well to using various new technology platforms.

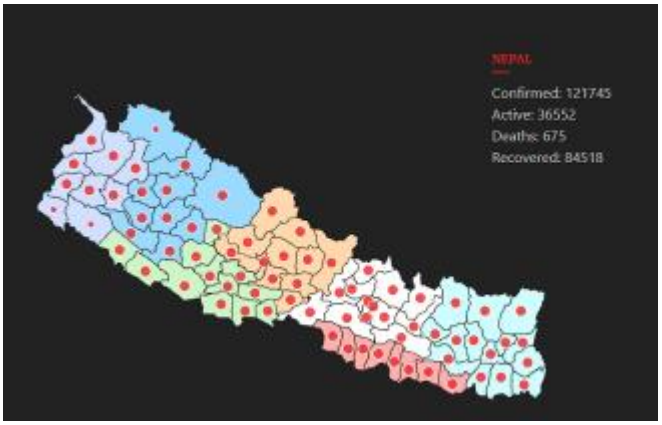
COVID19 status in Nepal

Nepal has been impacted heavily by this global pandemic. Nepal's national Covid-19 tally climbed to **121,745** with 3,749 new infections reported on Thursday, 15th October 2020. All 77 districts of the country have COVID19 positive cases; the Kathmandu valley being the hotspot for COVID19.

36,533 Active cases

84,518 People recovered

694 Death toll



Above: COVID19 status of Nepal
(Source: https://tkpo.st/354E2nf)

The new normal in Nepal

Lockdown was imposed from 24th March till 22nd July in Nepal. Again, as the COVID19 cases increased, the government-imposed lockdown in Kathmandu valley and areas where there was high infection rate from the 19th August to the 16th of September. Since then, everybody has been adapting to what has become the new normal.

As public health experts suggested that ongoing lockdown is not a permanent solution to fight

this pandemic, several schools and universities started conducting physical and virtual classes and exams, businesses reopened, people went back to work and held some of the meetings and events that had been postponed from earlier months. Without adequate planning and controls in place, this again led to a rapid increase in positive cases, so the Government is encouraging people to work from home and connect digitally as far as possible on an ongoing basis.

The Government has increased the number of PCR tests, provided relief materials to the needy and marginalized and is continually advocating the public to adopt public health protocols to slow the spread of the virus.

As in many communities around the world, it has been very encouraging to see **so many helping hands from social clubs and local groups extending services such as feeding the hungry people** in the streets and street animals.

The use of masks is mandatory, but as anywhere some people are not strictly adhering to this as they should. Soap, sanitizers and clean water are valued more highly than ever before. Physical distancing of at least 2 meters and use of Namaste rather than handshake are prioritized.

Above: One of our sponsor children; Usha and her family recent during home visit

Key highlights of this quarter:

- Home visits of 48 students
- Schools resume part time
- Secondary School Result 2020
- Savings group meetings
- COVID19 response support program
- Highlights of family progress

More home visits and close monitoring

This quarter our team conducted **48 children's home visits** and undertook **1 school visit**.

Since vulnerable populations are more likely to suffer from pandemics and emergencies, our **team has been vigilant in monitoring the children we support and their families** - to ensure they are fulfilling their basic needs and taking prevention measures. For those families, who ran out of food or other basic goods, we have **coordinated with local governments to be accountable** and support these families, and **we provided some relief materials if the local government has failed to respond on time**.

The ongoing contact and support from our team has helped keep the families positive and safe - until now, we are pleased to share that our team are following strict protocols and that **none of our children and their families or our team in Nepal have been infected**.

Above: Chameli with her mother

Above: Justina with her grandmother

Above: Nishan with his grandmother

Above: Rajkumar with his mother

Above: Kriti with her mother

Above: Shanti with her grandmother

Above: Puja with her grandmother

Above: Kanchan with her mother

Above: Samikshya with her grandfather

Above: Sabina with her mother and younger brother

Above: Prabin with his grandmother

School resumes in limited capacity

Virtual platforms have been capitalized on in the cities and urban areas but unfortunately due to the geographical challenges, lack of internet and communication networks, our rural project areas where most of the children we support reside, have not had the opportunity of digital learning.

Several of the schools in our project areas have resumed with classes being run for 2 hours per day. The wearing of masks is mandatory in the classroom.

Above: School resumed in many areas

Child Progress

Outstanding Secondary School Results 2020!

We are thrilled to share that all 6 youth passed year 10, the final year of school in Nepal with great results. This year, as lockdown

commenced just prior to their final exams, the schools based their results on internal assessment.

This is the 5th group of students to complete secondary school under the support of SCAI!

Congratulations to all!

Name	GPA	Grade
Sitaram Budhathoki	3.55	A
Rajendra Tamang	3.40	A
Pramila Tamang	3.30	A
Laxman Tamang	3.25	A
Dishan Tamang	3.10	B+
Srijana Tamang	2.95	B+

Above: Sitaram A (3.55 GPA)

Above: Rajendra A (3.30 GPA)

Above: Pramila A (3.30 GPA)

Above: Laxman A (3.25 GPA)

Above: Dishan B+ (3.10 GPA)

Above: Srijana B+ (2.95 GPA)

Livelihood program

Monthly Saving Group meetings

This quarter our **5 saving groups** with **63 members** conducted two meetings, in July and September. No meeting was held in August due to it being during lockdown.

Our team joined all 10 meetings to **record their savings, details of loans and monitor the progress of the families who have taken loans**.

Above: Monthly meeting of Gramindevi Savings Group

Above: Monthly meeting of Kalikadevi Savings Group

Above: Monthly meeting of Janagyan Savings Group

Progress through loans from savings groups

Several families have had the opportunity of taking loans to purchase animals or further grow their small business over the past 18 months since the groups were formed. This quarter **8 more families took loans to improve their livelihoods.**

Some of the highlights from this quarter's loan mobilization:

- Saru's mother bought a a new buffalo for rearing and breeding.
- Pramila's mother bought a new buffalo.
- Soniya's grandmother bought a new goat for rearing and breeding.
- Sabina's mother bought a new goat.

Above: Saru's mother and their new buffalo

Above: Pramila's mother and their new buffalo

Above: Sabina's mother and their new goat

Above: Soniya's grandmother and their new goat

Other family progress

- Menuka Tamang, Sabina Dhakal and Kriti Neupane shifted to new houses in August, after building new homes from funding they received from the government, after their homes were destroyed in the 2015 earthquake.
- Sandip's grandfather is now earning approx. 62,000 (AUD$1200/mth) by using their tractor for ploughing the field during peak crop season.

We are continually inspired by the resilience of the families in our program and the large and small improvements they make to their livelihoods with a little helping hand. The full rollout of the livelihood development program, which has been delayed due to Covid, will enable all families in the program to be able take a healthy loan over the next few years.

COVID19 Response program

Following an outbreak of the virus in our 2 main working areas of Shivapuri and Dupcheswor, **SCAI, in partnership with the local rural municipality offices, opened 2 Isolation centers** to accommodate people with symptoms and tested positive. After SCAI donors responded very generously with the $15,000 required, the centres were **inaugurated on 22nd September, marking 41st Social Service Day 2020.**

With cases increasing day by day and Covid-19 now rife in these areas where thousands of highly vulnerable families reside, the initiative is vitally important in helping contain the spread in our local areas.

A huge thank you again to everyone that responded so promptly and supported the new centres.

In Shivapuri we distributed:

Materials	Quantity
VTM testing kits	750 pcs
Semi fold beds (3x6 hospital bed), mattress, bedding	8 sets
Infrared Thermometer (USFDA approved Swiss)	10 pcs
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)- Face shield, Eye glass, disposable cap, boot cover, mask NS standard	20 sets
Oxygen machine NS standard USA brand	1 pc
Water poly tank with tap for hand wash (500l)	1 pc
Washable mask	500 pcs
Chlorine water with spray	5 liter

Above: Inauguration of the SCAI supported Covid-19 Isolation Centres

Above: Use of SCAI's PPE and swab collection in newly formed isolation center

Above and below: Health material distribution

Webinar "Consultation on ALTERNATIVE CARE options and Child Care Homes as the last resort"

In times of crisis, **the risk of children being separated from their families increases**. To help build awareness and curb this trend, our team conducted this important webinar, with **40 participants from schools, local governments, staff from our partner NGOs and Sunrise youth present**. The program was moderated by our SCAI Nepal Program Officer, **Mansingh Aidee** and the formal vote of thanks was given by our SCAI Nepal Country Manager, **Raj Kumar Lama Tamang.** The session was facilitated by key speakers from the **National Child Rights' Council (NCRC)**.

We would like to thank you all again for your ongoing support through this challenging time and beyond. Please stay safe and well.

Emma, Raj and Mansingh
SCAI Australia/Nepal