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Advocacy and Capacity Enhancement for Sustainable Faecal Sludge Management

Increasing access and safely managed sanitation is a global priority. Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) is a neglected issue but a crucial one to be addressed. FSM is one of the solutions for sustainable sanitation and achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets 6.2, 6.3 and many other related targets by 2030. In order to achieve this target, capacity building of the human resources along with the local government bodies is crucial.

In Nepal, especially the urban and semi-urban areas are facing the enormous challenges in the management of faecal sludge management. Considering this fact, ENPHO in collaboration with Municipal Association of Nepal (MuAN) and United Cities and Local Government Asia Pacific (UCLG/ASPAC), is implementing the project “Municipalities Network Advocacy on Sanitation in South Asia”. For this, ENPHO is working as a technical partner who focuses on capacity building of human resources of Municipalities and Municipal Association for designing and implementing sanitation policies and strategies on sanitation highlighting the faecal sludge management and Non-Sewered Sanitation (NSS).

The project is designed for the piloting in five municipalities of Nepal. Feasibility study was carried out to develop a sustainable detailed project plan and action plan for the improvement of accessibility on financial option through different funding mechanisms such as public-private partnership, cooperation with banks, development agencies and communities. Rapid sanitation assessment was conducted in 42 municipalities representing all the seven provinces. Then on the basis of different criteria five municipalities were selected for the piloting.



The five municipalities include Lahan, Waling, Bhimdatta, Lamahi and Dhulikhel. Memorandum of understanding has been signed with all the five Municipalities.



Interview with Mr. Bipin Dangol, Executive Director of ENPHO

Why FSM is contextual in Nepal?

Nepal is in the verge of open defecation free declaration as 98% of households have access toilet. Most of them are using onsite sanitation system. But, when the septic tanks and pit latrines get full, these systems need to be emptied. Safe desludging, transport and disposal of faecal sludge are emerging issue. Thus FSM is a crucial and relevant in the context of Nepal and needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

What kind of contribution will 'Municipalities Network Advocacy on Sanitation in South Asia' project make in the sector of FSM?

This project works on two dimensions. The first is, the project focuses on advocacy to raise awareness on importance of FSM among local stakeholders and sensitize them. Secondly, capacity building through various trainings at municipal level is emphasized to capacitate local bodies so that they themselves can address the problems related to FSM in future. The project will also support in designing and implementing policies and strategies on sanitation integrating issues related to FSM.

What are the expected outcomes of this project?

Piloting will be done at five selected municipalities to achieve sustainable FSM and address the issue at local level. Formulation, implementation and regulation of FSM related policies are targeted to provide guideline for the stakeholders. Also, engagement of private sectors in Faecal Sludge Management business is another objective of this project.

What role can the government play to achieve sustainable FSM?

When we are talking about policy level interventions, we need the best support and active engagement of government stakeholders at all levels. On the other hand, business of private sectors engaged in the faecal sludge desludging is not properly regulated. Providing proper registration and license to the private operators can help regulating this business, which is not possible without government support. Additionally, there is a very vital role of local government in the 'Institutional Regulatory Framework of FSM.

FSM is not just a problem of one or two municipalities but is of everyone. Thus, all the stakeholders should come together and contribute to combat this issue. It is essential that we apply the learning from other countries in order to attain Sustainable Faecal Sludge Management.

BISWASH Project to Capacitate People on Urban WASH Resilience

ENPHO in partnership with Practical Action Nepal and financial support from ECHO, piloted “Building back better, Institutionalizing and Strengthening WASH Sector for Urban Resilience – BISWASH” project from May 2016 to December 2017 with the aim to strengthen capacity of stakeholders in creating disaster resilient municipalities in Nepal focusing on WASH in all wards of Panauti Municipality of Kavrepalanchowk District.

Considering the need to develop and integrate disaster risk management at all levels (from the central to the local level) through development plans, policies and programs and to ensure actions taken by a community to mitigate the effects of potential disasters, the project helped to form a Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMC) and Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC). Women, elderly people, marginalized and vulnerable people were given priorities for the membership in CDMC and LDMC in all wards of Panauti and Panchkhal Municipality.

With the notion of community resilience, CDMC was formed. This team is supposed to be the first to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of a disaster. Furthermore, the project succeeded identifying the risks, vulnerabilities and developing disaster risk management plan (DRMP) with active participation of the community people. After its formation, community people are now convinced that CDMC will assist them at the time of disaster.

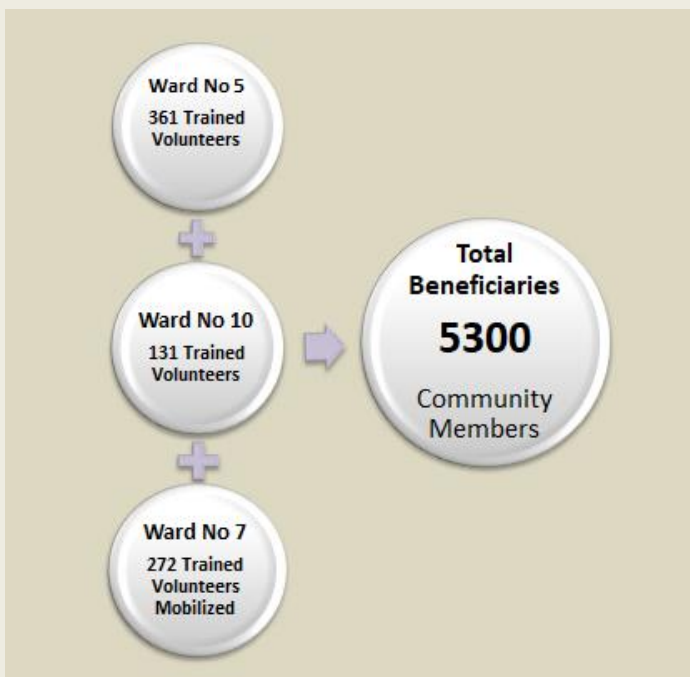
The project helped to form Municipal level Local Disaster Risk Management plan (LDRMP) on 12th November 2017. There was active community participation which helped to portray the suitable scenario and make participants learn effective and appropriate responses during the time of Disaster.

“LDRMP is very useful as it works as a guide for us. People are now aware about how to respond during and after disaster. After the intervention of ENPHO, other organizations are also willing to contribute additional tools for the Stockpile Centre.”

- Mr. Bhim Neupane, Chief, Panauti Municipality

Earthquake Simulation for community sensitization

To decrease the risk of earthquake due to unmanaged settlement and old masonry houses and to aware people about the importance of Earthquake preparedness, ENPHO in collaboration with Panauti Municipality, CDMC, Nepal Police, Nepal Army, and



Health Professional of Health Posts conducted earthquake simulation both in the Ward number 5, 10 and 7 of Panchkhal Municipality and Panauti Municipality.

The simulations included a scenario of mass casualties caused by earthquake and followed by fire where community people were then mobilized for immediate response. The exercise mobilized trained volunteers for simulation, benefiting

community members who witnessed the event. This simulation was the first of its kind ever in Panauti. LDMC members, CDMC members, vulnerable people, government agencies, local NGOs and Red Cross Society will respond and work for rescue operation if any disaster would occur in future.

“I used to be scared to see wounds and bleeding. But after getting involved in first aid training and simulation exercise, I am now confident to provide first aid services to the needy.”

- Ms. **Baijanti Banjara**

First Aid trained volunteer, Panauti Municipality

Thus, this exercise helped to sensitize community people and build their capacity to fight and efficiently respond at the time of a natural disaster. A national television channel 'Sagarmatha Television', broadcasted a video documentary of Earthquake Simulation on 21st December 2017.

Street Drama: An effective method to raise awareness among people

The total population of the Panauti Municipality is 58,913. Thus, it was challenging to reach the entire population of Panauti Municipality to raise awareness on Disaster Risk Reduction of Panauti Municipality. But the street drama entitled “*Yamalok Ko Yatra*”, performed by the Paschim Paaila volunteers of ENPHO, was well observed by the community people.

The drama highlighted the importance of earthquake preparedness and water purification method during emergency and monsoon time at household and community. A total of 10 youth volunteers experienced on performing street drama executed all the plays. Altogether 13 drama events, covering all the wards of Panauti Municipality were conducted reaching 11,780 community people and school students.



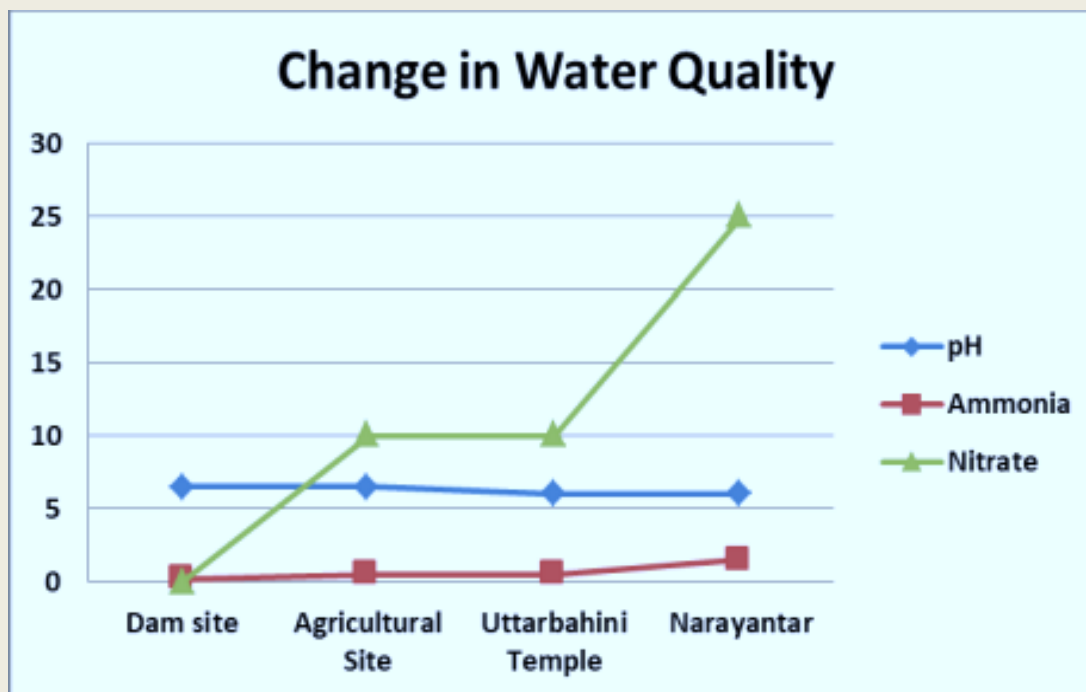
When Nature Calls- We Need a Safe Toilet

World Toilet Day is globally celebrated on 19 November to advocate people on safely managed sanitation services. The theme for this year was 'When Nature Calls' with a strong message for construction of eco- friendly toilet. Worldwide, 4.5 billion people live without a safe toilet - a toilet connected to a sewer or pit or septic tank that treats the human waste. The exposure to open sewer and human faeces would cause devastating impact on environment and public health.

On this occasion, Paschim Paaila and ENPHO organized a 'Hiking along Bagmati Corridor' event on 17 November, 2018 with the aim to unite the students and young professionals to talk and act about the safely managed sanitation services. As this year's World Toilet Day celebration was based on toilet and nature, this program aimed to elaborate the status of Bagmati River and changes from the main source flowing to core city. Furthermore, it focused more on the importance of treatment of wastewater and faecal sludge.



Water quality testing was one of the major activities of the event where participants tested pH, ammonia and nitrate of water from Bagmati River using ENPHO Field Water Test Kit. The results showed the degrading water quality of Bagmati River as the human settlements increase at the core city areas.



As shown in the graph the trend line shows the change in pH, ammonia and nitrate level at four different point of the river. The level of pH was changing more acidic with the increase of human settlement. Similarly, slight increase in the amount of ammonia was seen compared to the agricultural site. And, nitrate seemed to be absent at dam site but was visible at the agricultural site which was constant till Uttarbahini temple and exponentially increased when reaching to the city.

These situations were also portrayed through the photo stories shared by three of the participants amongst 17 participants including students and WASH activists who joined hiking.

Piloting of Sanitation Safety Planning (SSP) for the first time in Nepal

- A step towards safe and sustainable sanitation

Sanitation is not limited to toilets but also includes providing safe and clean environment to minimize public health risks. Any sanitation system starts with generation, its conveyance, treatment and safe disposal to environment.

Nepal has five centralized wastewater treatment systems of which only one system is functioning. Talking about other treatment systems, there are more than 60 decentralized wastewater treatment systems and two faecal sludge treatment plants in Nepal. However, most of the wastewater and faecal sludge goes untreated in local water bodies and environment, heavily polluting them. Using wastewater and faecal sludge for irrigation is also quite popular in Nepal considering the nutritional values beneficial for agriculture. However, this also has a downside, because these products also contain harmful pathogens which can pose health risks for people.

Sanitation safety planning (SSP) is an essential management tool in any sanitation system in order to minimize the possible health risk and maximize its economic benefit to the environment and the individual. SSP ensures safety to community, workers and farmers from toilet to table. It means the foods grown by using end products like water, compost, biogas from sanitation system are ensured to be safe to eat.

In Nepal, Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS) in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO), WaterAid Nepal and ENPHO has initiated piloting of Sanitation Safety Planning at three sanitation systems namely Srikhandapur Wastewater Treatment Plant (Kavre), Nala Wastewater Treatment Plant (Kavre) and Lubhu Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (Lalitpur) to form SSP team and implement SSP in the respective treatment plants.

Mr. Sudan Raj Panthi, National Professional Officer-Environment Health, WHO

“Sanitation Safety Planning (SSP) in Nepal is piloted based on Manual of SSP which was developed by WHO in order to enlighten public on the need of safe use of end products from sanitation system based on WHO guidelines for use of wastewater, grey water and excreta published on 2006. Like Water Safety Plan (WSP), SSP should be disseminated by developing national level programs.”

Mr. Sunil Kumar Das, Director General, DWSS

“We have initiated Sanitation Safety Planning in sanitation systems in Srikhandapur, Nala and Lubhu. It is an effective tool where hazards are identified in every step of sanitation System and incremental improvement plan is developed to mitigate those hazards.”



Fig: Six Modules on Sanitation safety Planning



Mr. Kabindra Pudasaini, Program Manager, WaterAid Nepal

“SSP is very important for sustainability of sanitation systems. Furthermore there is the need of national guidelines for SSP for its further development and dissemination. Advocacy for our own standards for domestic wastewater and faecal sludge treatment is a must. Lastly, SSP can be useful tool in any sanitation system on its sustainability.”

Mr. Rajendra Shrestha, Program Director, ENPHO

“Learning from implementing SSP in Nepal is that it has been effective platform to aware community about health risks and benefits of sanitation system in their community. It is not only tool for public health protection but also acts as a mechanism for regular monitoring and sustainability.”



No More Limits to Menstrual Hygiene



Poor menstrual hygiene challenges the educational opportunities, health and overall social status of women and girls around the world. With an objective of breaking the silence, raising awareness and promoting proper menstrual hygiene management (MHM) for all women and girls, World Menstrual Hygiene Day is celebrated annually on 28 May. In Nepal, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics 2015, 2.3% women from age 15 to 29 are absent in school or work and 57.6% of women avoid social gatherings during the menstruating days. Seeing the importance of educating people about menstruation, this year, ENPHO under the theme “No More Limits-Empowering Women and Girls through Good Menstrual Hygiene” has organized various events within the organization, in schools and reached out to general public delivering information on menstrual hygiene to mark the special day.

Futsal Match - Wearing a Sanitary Pad

Women need to face lots of dares and uneasiness during menstruating days. Some days can be awful with physical and mental stress. As men don't need to go through these experiences, they might be unaware of the fact how a woman or girl feels and faces the difficulties during these days. ENPHO organized a futsal match where the male players wore the sanitary pads throughout the match to feel the discomfort women and girls face during their menstruation. Collectively, 29 staff members avidly joined the match organized on 28th May 2018 which included 14 male and 2 female staff members participated as the players.



Mr. Anil Maharjan, Project Officer, ENPHO shared, *"It's been a different and new experience for me. I felt very uncomfortable to play futsal wearing the sanitary pad. It was irritating and always kept me conscious that something is at my back."*

Orientation on MHM for the School Students

The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey of 2011 revealed that of the top ten sexual and reproductive health issues of concern identified by teenage girls, seven were menstruation-related. In addition, almost a quarter of teenage girls had no idea about the age of their menarche (first menstruation) was prior to its onset.

The lack of menstrual education being one of the major reasons for poor menstrual hygiene management a week long



campaign on 'Menstrual Hygiene Management' was organized where school students of 30 different schools were sensitized on the importance of menstrual hygiene management.

The campaign aimed to orient students on benefits of proper menstrual hygiene management and discuss the preference of sanitary pads. Altogether, 943 school students were oriented on the safe and healthy habits to be practiced during Menstruation. With 38% of male participation, the campaign magnificently sensitized male students as well making them understand the importance of MHM and realize their important role at household and society.

Exhibition at the First National Level Celebration

National Level Menstrual Hygiene Day was celebrated by the Government of Nepal which was jointly organized by Ministry of Water Supply, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen and, Ministry of Education in coordination with Menstrual Hygiene Management Practitioners Alliance. Likewise, ENPHO joined the event and participated as an exhibitor showcasing various IEC materials on menstrual hygiene management including home-made sanitary pads to highlight the importance of MHM. More than 100 visitors visited ENPHO's Stall to learn and get information regarding MHM issues and practices.



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