



GENDER EQUALITY UPDATE - 33

YOUTH INNOVATION AND
INTERVENTION IN THE TIMES
OF COVID-19

2021

INTRODUCTION

During the pandemic, youth networks, groups and individuals have continuously worked to address the needs of communities across Nepal. During the Gender in Humanitarian Action Task Team (GiHA- TT) meeting on 1 July 2021, youth networks, activists and development practitioners discussed how they are responding to the challenges posed by COVID-19 through pioneering interventions. The meeting included governmental organisations, such as the National Youth Council and the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC), development partners and several UN agencies. Envoys from civil society organisations, international non-governmental organisations and diverse networks representing youth, LGBTIQ+ communities, children, Dalit women, women with disabilities, Muslim women, women engaged in sex work, rural women, indigenous communities and Madhesi women were present. This Gender Equality Update highlights some of the innovative solutions Nepal's youth have designed and executed during the COVID-19 crisis, such as creating informative podcasts, distributing medical equipment, running awareness campaigns and taking part in government-funded start-ups. This update also captures information on the Generation Equality Forum and campaign, which brought together the next generation of women's rights activists with veteran gender equality advocates and visionaries.

COVID-19 Highlights from 6 September 2021

 31,248
ACTIVE CASES

 10,838
TOTAL DEATHS

 18.8%
CASE POSITIVITY

Sources:
Office of the UN Resident Coordinator Situation Report
No. 46 available at: [RCOSitRep46](#)

World Health Organization Situational Update Nepal
Report No. 73 available at: [WHOSitRep73](#)

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Let's support a dignified,
menstruation-friendly society.

Samir Pariyar,
Gift for Girls Campaign

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Youth are the leaders of tomorrow,
and it is in their hands to set a
direction for society. We should
motivate them, provide support and
encourage them to participate.

Sita Niroula, Ministry of Women
Children and Senior Citizens



Sankatma Sathi

Sankatma Sathi (A Friend in Distress) is a podcast aimed at addressing COVID-19 rumours and misinformation. Created by a group of young disaster management students, the podcast began, following the national lockdown in March 2020. It highlights stories of disaster-affected communities across Nepal, giving a platform to the voices of women and vulnerable groups, such as Dalit, Janajati and Madhesi communities, as well as rural communities, despite being created and produced in Kathmandu. Sankatma Sathi focuses mostly on solution-oriented content. It provides information about COVID-19 prevention to young people and spreads awareness about the differing situations of marginalised communities across Nepal, bridging the gap between urban and rural communities. So far, Sankatma Sathi has aired across 20 radio networks covering 47 districts and 116 radio channels. Given its medium, the podcast mostly targets people in their late twenties and mid to late forties. To prepare for a possible third wave of COVID-19, the podcast will soon cover more child-centric content and target a demographic of young mothers and parents.

More information is available at: [Sankatma Sathi](#)

The Joint Commission International (JCI) Nepal

JCI Nepal is a membership-based non-profit organization comprised of young, active volunteers (aged 18 to 40 years) who focus on developing the leadership and soft skills of Nepal's youth and creating positive change. During the COVID-19 crisis, JCI Nepal has undertaken both physical and virtual interventions. Their physical interventions have included distributing masks and sanitizers, donating oxygen cylinders to Hetauda Hospital, providing spaces for COVID-19 patients to safely quarantine, providing hot meals to vulnerable communities and providing free ambulance services. Their virtual interventions have included creating and hosting social media awareness campaigns, Google Meet sessions on COVID-19 awareness, mental health awareness programmes, child health awareness programmes, anti-sexual violence programmes, entrepreneurship sessions, self-development sessions and virtual LGBTIQ+ Pride Month celebrations. During the pandemic, JCI has conducted their activities with the goal of reducing anxiety and stress in society and empowering Nepal's youth to actively play a role in addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis.

More information is available at: [JCI Nepal](#)

The National Youth Council

The National Youth Council (NYC) is a subsection of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. During the pandemic, the National Planning Commission issued a notice requesting that entrepreneurs apply for startup support provided by the government. The National Youth Council used their platform to galvanize young people into participating in this scheme. Innovators, entrepreneurs, individuals and institutions were invited to submit proposals for capital grants of Rs. 500,000 to Rs. 5,000,000. The NYC also supported startups by producing and conducting trainings in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation and the National Federation of Saving and Credit Cooperative Unions Limited. Seventy trainers delivered the programme to entrepreneurs from over 700 startup companies. The NYC also conducted a review of 379 startup companies and eight women-led startups in the Terai region to assess the effects and challenges they have faced during the pandemic. The study found that lockdown restrictions impacted businesses, resulting in a loss of income. Following this, the NYC created a mobile market and outlet service for these startup businesses to allow them to continue selling their products safely, despite restrictions.

More information is available at: [NYC Nepal](#)

The Gift for Girls Campaign

The Gift for Girls Campaign, founded by Samir Pariyar, is a social initiative aimed at changing the social and cultural ideas about menstruation that make it a difficult topic for Nepal's youth to speak about openly. The goal of this campaign is to dignify menstruation in Nepali society by introducing practices to celebrate it, in order to decrease the stigma surrounding it. The campaign runs in 77 districts under a team of 17 members, and is led by men in an effort to encourage other men to be involved in gender equality initiatives. The campaign also targets girls with virtual awareness sessions to inform them about menstruation and encourage open discussions in an effort to eradicate taboos. During Tihar and Rakshya Bandhan festivals, the campaign runs a programme called '*Daju Bhai ko Marma, Tapaiko Bichar Hamro Samartha*,' in which it facilitates discussions between brothers and sisters and offers coaching and education. The campaign will be expanded to incorporate menopause education, in the future.

More information is available at: [Gift for Girls Campaign](#)

Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC)

Ms. Sita Niroula highlighted the importance of youth during the COVID-19 crisis, and commended their involvement in matters regarding women's rights, gender equality and reducing sexual violence. Ms. Niroula emphasized that sexual violence against women has increased during the pandemic and highlighted that this issue, as well as other gender inequality issues, will never be tackled without coordination among men and young people. She encouraged the youth groups involved in the GiHA-TT platform meeting to support campaigning and increasing awareness about the negative effects of COVID-19 on women's mental health due to increased workloads at home.



Relief Distribution at CAC Nepal. Photo: UN Women/Uma Bista



Relief Distribution at CAC Nepal. Photo: UN Women/Uma Bista

GENERATION EQUALITY

The Generation Equality Forum kicked off in Mexico City in March 2021 and culminated in Paris (30 June to 2 July 2021). The Forum launched a series of concrete, ambitious and transformative actions to achieve immediate and irreversible progress towards gender equality. It brought together the next generation of women's rights activists with the gender equality advocates and visionaries who were instrumental in creating the Beijing Platform for Action more than two decades ago. Together, they plan to tackle the unfinished business of empowering women through a new, groundbreaking, multigenerational campaign called "Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future." The Generation Equality campaign demands equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end to sexual harassment and all forms of violence against women and girls, healthcare services that respond to their needs, and their equal participation in political life and decision-making in all areas of life. Convened by UN Women and co-hosted by the governments of Mexico and France, in partnership with youth and civil society, the Forum brought together governments, feminist leaders, youth and changemakers from every sector, to announce trailblazing gender equality investments, programmes and policies. It marked the beginning of a five-year action journey led by six Action Coalitions¹ and a Compact on Women, Peace and Security, and Humanitarian Action. The Forum comes at a critical moment to reverse rising gender inequality caused by COVID-19. Even before COVID-19, almost one in three women worldwide experienced abuse² during the pandemic, calls to helplines increased five-fold in some countries.

More information available at: [Generation Equality](#)

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Sushila Mishra Bhatta,

the Deputy Mayor of Dhangadhi Sub- Metropolitan City of Sudurpashchim Province, on Generation Equality:

[Remarks by Sushila Mishra Bhatta](#)



¹ Action Coalitions are global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that are mobilizing governments, civil society, international organizations and the private sector. Information on coalition themes and how to become an Action Coalition Commitment Maker is available at: <https://forum.generationequality.org/action-coalitions>

² The Shadow Pandemic, Violence Against Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>

HELPLINE NUMBERS

COVID-19-Related Information from Ministry of Health and Population:

1133 (24 hours)
1115 (6 AM to 10 PM)

Gender-Based Violence and Psychosocial Counselling:

Nepal Police: 100 (Available 24 hours)
National Women's Commission: 1145 (Available 24 hours)

Helpline Dedicated to Support the LGBTIQ+ Community:

Blue Diamond Society 9841 313 377, 9849 027 019
Support Love 9821 987 952, 9847 498 849

Forum for Women, Law and Development Legal Counselling for Gender-Based Violence:

Province 1: Advocate Mina Giri 9842 045 843
Province 2: Advocate Om Kumari Sah 9841 747 032
Bagmati Province: Advocate Lalita Shrestha 9845 031 945
Gandaki Province: Advocate Kalpana Bhandari 9856 008 973
Lumbini Province: Advocate Sushma Gautam 9851 120 060
Karnali Province: Advocate Gita Koirala 9863 126 060
Sudurpashchim Province: Advocate Kaushila Yogi 9868 002 020

Cyber Violence Helpline Number (Available 24 hours)

Nepal Police Cyber Bureau 9851 286 770, 9851 286 770

Mental Health:

The Centre for Mental Health and Counselling-Nepal 1660 018 5080
Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Nepal 1660 010 2005
Koshish Nepal 1660 012 2322
Women's Rehabilitation Center 1660 017 8910
Tarangini Foundation 1660 012 0004
Teaching Hospital 9849 630 430

Suicide Helpline (Available 24 hours)

Teaching Hospital 9840 021 6000
Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation Nepal 1166



Relief Distribution at CAC Nepal. Photos: UN Women/Uma Bista

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