

PARTNER PLAN

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Dear Friends

There was a consultation meeting for mobilizing Faith based organization (FBOs) to start assessing their response to HIV/AIDS in Nepal. As globally efforts are getting momentum to encourage stronger partnership among key stakeholders for HIV/AIDS and FBOs in order to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, Care and support. This requires integration of FBOs in comprehensive national response. HIV/AIDS and STI control Board convened the meeting and showed willingness to recognize FBOs contribution. UMN and UNAIDS will conduct assessment of FBOs response to HIV/AIDS in Nepal and a 2 day national workshop will follow in June 2011 to develop a strategy plan.



My visit to Doti was successful and was able to meet women and men living positively. Doti District is a hill district in the Far-Western Region of Nepal. The neighbouring district of Accham has the highest HIV prevalence rates. Doti has great needs with minimal presence of other working agencies due to lack of basic infrastructure and nature of the terrain. The challenges include food insufficiency, poor education and lack of access to health care. Caste-based discrimination, negative cultural practices and violence against women are significant problems in Doti.

In the communities, virtually all the men had migrated predominantly to India for work and just women and children were left. The men return briefly to assist at the time of harvesting. Children drop out of school to migrate and even those with a good education also migrate. The groups of women who are HIV positive has been facing many challenges and somehow not particularly concerned about the longer term consequences of their HIV infection as their focus remains on the present and survival of each day.

However, it is not just those who are HIV positive that find themselves in desperate circumstances since many have no opportunities for income generation. Since most of people are affected by HIV, stigma and discrimination seem to reduce.

The greater need is to ensure improved sanitation, access to Antiretroviral Therapy (ARVs) and nutrition. United Mission to Nepal through its partner has been working to support people living with HIV to have access to ARVs. Due to remoteness support in transportation to the main hospital for treatment and for CD4 count remains an area of need. I saw very few toilets in the village and UMN has been encouraging communities to have toilets. It takes time to change people attitude towards that but I was glad to see one toilet being used. This could reduce other infections for both children and adults.

The HIV/AIDS training materials were distributed to 2 Bible Schools i.e. Nepal Ebenezer Bible College and Maranatha Mission College in Kathmandu. I had a follow up visit in Rupandehi and Sunsari Districts for UMN partners working on HIV/AIDS. People living with HIV/AIDS continues to

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access treatment, care and support such as income generation activities like goat keeping, vegetable selling business. It was also encouraging to see how partners have developed good working relationships with the beneficiaries and other stakeholders including the Government district line agencies. I visited PLHAs families and found out that some were engaged in positive prevention promotion and share their personal stories.

I facilitated training on HIV for 25 Christian leaders from 15 churches in Rupandehi District. They made action plans to continue to train congregation especially the youths in churches. During the quarter the annual planning for UMN and partners was completed and provided technical support to the health team and partners. On behalf of UMN and International Association of INGOs I attended a national workshop on stigma and discrimination and various recommendations were made that the government implement policies that protect children, train health workers, engagement of faith based leaders. The government made commitment to ensure multi-sectoral approach will be adapted to reduce the impact of HIV in the communities.

It was encouraging to see Nepali young men and women attend Bible studies in Patan Church and were studying the book of Acts. Asal Chhimeki Nepal (a Christian organization supported by INF in Pokhara) invited me to train on use of Logical framework as a tool in planning, implementation and monitoring. There were 18 participants that included Board members, staff and some church leaders. The church leaders recommended such training to be conducted for churches so that they can plan effectively.

Forth coming activities:

- Continue with assessment of FBOs response to HIV/AIDS.
- Support HIV technical officers in implementing their plans and activities.
- Attend technical planning and national meetings.
- Facilitate HIV/AIDS training for church in Doti.
- Attend UMN appointees retreat.
- Visit Dhading and Doti clusters to facilitate training for church leaders and people living with HIV/AIDS
- Follow up Bible Schools plans and support them to conduct HIV/AIDS orientation to students.

Prayer Items

- In Nepal there is shortage of fuel and movement of people and day to day activities is affected. India remained a big supplier of fuel to Nepal and has just cut 60% of the supplies. This may affect business and economy in general. Most of Nepali people migrate to India to look for jobs and many farmers depend on vehicular movement to ensure their farm produce reach on time to urban markets. Please pray that the situation will improve and that Nepal will be able to pay the accumulated bills.
- According to the national news, there will be strikes, load blockades due to political situation especially in the month of May. Nepalese eagerly anticipate that the Constitution will be finalized. Therefore there will be lobbying and negotiation among the political parties to meet the deadline. Please pray that there will be peace in the whole process.
- I will be travelling to India (Bangalore) with my 3 other colleagues for a visit to an organization that works on health programme that includes HIV issues. We will be accompanied by 2 staff from United Mission to Nepal partner. We hope that partners and staff will learn more about HIV and migration in the context of integration. Pray for our journey that will be on 1st May to 7th May 2011.
- Francis and Grace were on vacation and they are back to School for their final term this year. Give thanks to God for protecting them and providing for them.

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- I will give a talk on HIV mainstreaming in a workshop organized by FIDA International Regional office in Kathmandu. There will be 30-40 participants from all over Asia i.e. Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh etc on 9th May 2011. Please pray that God may touch the hearts of people to realize HIV can be an issue in development and that its causes and impact can be addressed through their development work.
- Give thanks to God that despite increased cases of insecurity in urban areas, the situation is under control. Cases of bomblast reported from passenger's vehicle reduced tremendously.

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