Saath-Saath Bulletin
Volume 7 | March 2015

International Women's Day 2015 Special Issue

Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it !

लैङ्गिक मैत्री संविधान: महिला हिंसाको निदान !

When women progress, countries progress. USAID, thus, believes all development investments need to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment to bring about transformational change. USAID's global Gender and Women's Empowerment Policy of 2012 and USAID Nepal's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2014-18 cements our commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of women and girls. Building on this critical foundation and decades of development experience, USAID is ensuring that all strategies and programs are shaped by evidence-based gender analysis and measured according to established gender metrics for greater development impact.

The USAID-funded Saath-Saath Project (SSP) has improved the health of Female Sex Workers (FSWs) by giving them the necessary skills and tools to negotiate consistent condom use, and access SSP's facilities for HIV testing and STI treatment. These more than 21,000 FSWs (since September 2011) have become stronger and more confident when it comes to controlling their lives and protecting themselves against HIV and STI infections. HIV prevalence among FSWs has remained low in Nepal because of the increased empowerment among these women.

As we celebrate International Women's Day 2015, I would like to reflect on President Barack Obama's words, "When women succeed, nations are more safe, more secure, and more prosperous."

Shanda Steimer
Director, Office of Health and Education
USAID Nepal

Message from the Chief of Party

Hello everyone!

How time flies! It wasn't very long ago when we exchanged New Year greetings and now, it's already March. We are very happy to bring this first issue of 2015 to you and are excited that we can coincide this with the very important International Women's Day.

This has given us a valuable opportunity to applaud and credit the very worthy work that women leaders have been doing to make Saath-Saath Project (SSP) such a success. In this issue, we are bringing to you profiles of very brave, committed and successful women leaders whose stories are very inspiring. In addition, their very useful words of advice can work as a catalyst for us to strive even harder than we already do. I would like to thank the women leaders for having have provided us their valuable thoughts.

SSP works very closely with and for the vulnerable and marginalized women who are having to work as sex workers by providing direct HIV, STI, Family Planning and Gender-based Violence related services and by supporting their national network. We are very happy that, at the time of writing our latest Semi-Annual Report for the period ending in January 2015, 76% of HIV prevention field level staff, 57% of clinical staff, 60% of CHBC staff and 50% of MIS/M&E staff within SSP NGO partners were women. Similarly, 44% SSP NGO partners were led by women.

I sincerely hope that you will enjoy this Women's Day Special Issue and will provide us your continuous feedback which we always value very much.

Happy International Women's Day 2015!

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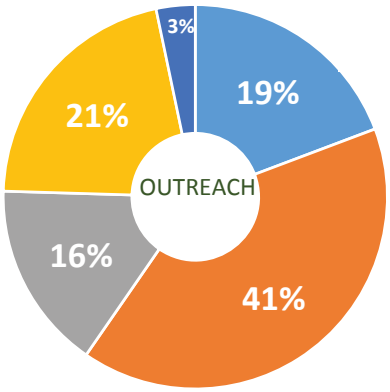
Key SSP Achievements from October 2014 - January 2015

KAPs reached by Outreach Activities

68,713 KAPs were reached through various outreach activities of which over 42% were women.



13,237
FSWs

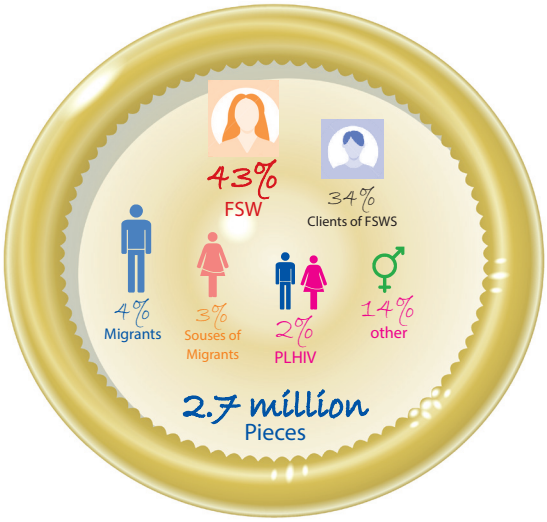
27,729
Clients of FSWs

10,889
Migrants

14,602
Spouses of Migrants

2,256
PLHIV (more than 55% were women)

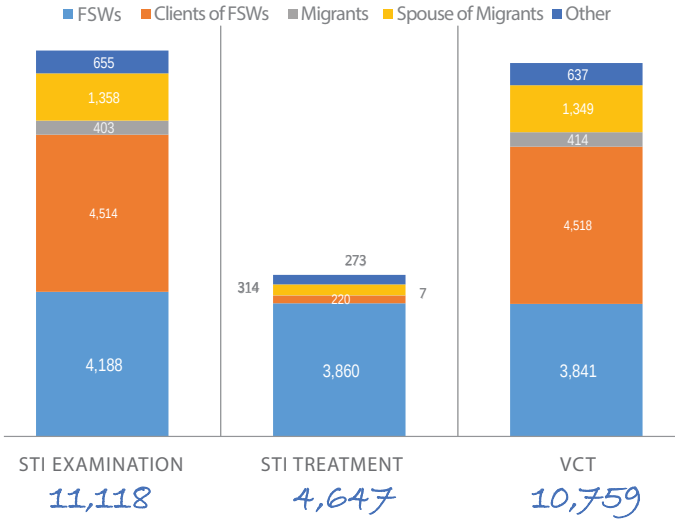
Total Condom Distributed



2.7 million condoms were distributed to the KAPs for HIV prevention and family planning.

Number of individuals reached from different services during October 2014 - January 2015

11,118 people were examined for STI, of which almost 55% were female. Around 42% of the examined, received STI treatment (including presumptive treatment for FSWs)



Out of **10,759** people received HIV test results after post-test counseling, almost 53% were female.

Palliative Care

5,838 PLHIV received palliative care through SSP's Essential Package of Care (EPC) or Community and Home-Based Care (CHBC) services or both

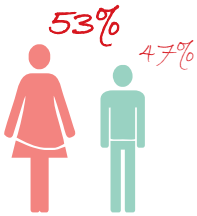
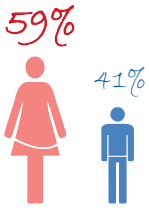


Photo credit: www.dreamstime.com

Capacity Building

5,305 individuals received various capacity building trainings.



4,412
S&D Reduction

494
HIV Prevention

171
Institutional Capacity Building

112
Family Planning

200
GBV Prevention and Mitigation

87
Strategic Information

51
HIV Clinical Management and Lab

25
Medical Injection Safety

23
HIV Counseling and Testing

http://lamontcounty.ca/community/

Saath-Saath Project's Gender Strategy

The USAID-funded Saath-Saath Project (SSP) aligns its activities and approaches with the priorities and strategic directions set by the Government of Nepal (GoN) in its National HIV/AIDS Strategy (2011-2016) and the principles of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework, particularly those relating to gender equality, developed by the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP). SSP also embraces the US Global Health Initiative (GHI) principles, among which is a focus on empowering girls and women and promoting gender equality. The Nepal GHI Strategy (2010) has identified three focus areas for the national health sector programming. One focus area is to improve health care and opportunities for women, children, and marginalized populations in the context of extending services to all.

One of the key principles of USAID Policy Framework (2011-2015) was developed into the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, March 2012. This policy is intended to be implemented by integrating approaches and actions to advance gender equality and female empowerment throughout USAID's program cycle.

SSP is committed to advancing gender equality and apart from USAID policies and guidelines, is also guided by FHI 360 Gender Integration Framework developed by the USAID Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG), called the Gender Integration Continuum. The framework categorizes approaches (Gender exploitative, gender accommodating and gender transformative approaches) on how they treat gender norms and inequality in the planning, designing, implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of a program or policy.

Key areas to Integrate Gender in SSP

Broadly, the framework promotes advocacy, equity and leadership as three key channels through which gender can be integrated into health and HIV programs. SSP integrates gender through these three key areas in the following manner:

- Building advocacy skills – SSP works closely with marginalized women engaged in behaviors that put them at high risk for HIV transmission.
- Promoting equitable relationships – SSP promotes Gender-integrated programs that focus on building equitable relationships between sexual partners, among community members and between clients and health providers.
- Encouraging equitable leadership - SSP encourages gender-integrated programs that emphasize the equitable participation of underrepresented groups in leadership positions.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The project's M&E plan includes tracking activities with respect to their adherence to gender strategy and has identified gender-sensitive indicators that provide sex-disaggregated data wherever appropriate and feasible. The project team works with implementing partners and counterparts to gather and analyze information to document activities related to GESI.

SSP and Himalayan Bank Limited Leveraged Resources through Public-Private-Partnership to Encourage the Migrant Workers to Contribute towards An AIDS-Free Generation

As a contribution towards creating an AIDS-free Generation, the USAID-funded SSP and the Himalayan Bank Limited (HBL) leveraged resources through the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) initiative to jointly place HIV prevention messages (in English and in Nepali) at the departure area of Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) during the month of January 2015. This was aimed at raising awareness about the importance of getting tested for HIV and of practicing safe behaviors among the migrant workers leaving the country for employment abroad.

The HBL, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) made 12 of their existing light-boards available at the airport free-of-cost and prevention messages were placed in English (six light-boards) and in Nepali (six light-boards). Through this collaboration, both the USAID-funded SSP and HBL have leveraged their resources for the benefit of their stakeholders – the migrant workers. SSP has pooled in its expertise on HIV as SSP has been implementing HIV prevention, care and treatment activities targeting migrants and their spouses since 2011. Likewise, the migrant workers are HBL's important stakeholders as they use the remittance services of HBL.

"Awareness message on the board is good to emphasize staying safe from HIV and more information at the airport will be useful especially for those who are careless in spite of knowing the possible risk" said one of the migrant workers at the airport waiting to board the flight to India.

SSP Admires the Contributions of the Women

Dristi Nepal envisions a country where female drug user lives with quality and dignity by fulfilling their basic needs and by reducing harms caused by drug use by the females in society. Dristi Nepal supports reducing stigma and discrimination, gender-based violence and HIV transmission among women who use drugs and promotes reintegration of the women who use drugs in society. Network strengthening and capacity building, service delivery/ integration/intervention and sustainability are strategic areas of interventions

Parina Subba Limbu, 35 is the founder (in 2006) and currently the Program Director of Dristi Nepal, established in 2006 by female former drug users to provide treatment and support for their community. Ms. Limbu is extremely passionate about her work and helping female drug users is very close to her heart. This lady – an epitome of endurance, believes in leading by example and has successfully demonstrated how this belief can be converted to action.

With much courage, she recalls the glimpse of her precarious past. *"I experienced physical and emotional abuse from the man I loved and was abandoned in middle of nowhere. Dejection, guilt and shame pushed me to using drugs. I did not return to my parents. I felt vulnerable to physical and emotional abuse and felt like giving up on life. In desolation, I even attempted suicide many times,"* she says showing the scar on her wrist.

But destiny had better plans for her. She met Ms. Lilian Fitz Gerald in 2005, who helped her with the seed money of NRs. 50,000 for Dristi Nepal. *"And there has been no looking back since then"* she states with the sense of achievement." *I dream of a shelter for women that provides a complete package of preventing women from falling prey to substance abuse, providing treatment and care to women who are already using drugs, for, being a woman drug-user, the harassment and humiliation that I had to go through is beyond-belief,"* she adds. Amidst all the heartbreaks that life offered her, she completed Bachelors of Business Studies. Under her leadership, Dristi Nepal has won the Red Ribbon Award 2014 from UNAIDS.

"I am a simple person, I do not want to be known as a leader. I feel strong now and being able to voice for such issue is a great achievement." She modestly says when asked about her feeling of being a woman leader. She feels that women need to be strong and take pride in their own existence. Furthermore, she adds that her experience has taught her to be consistent with one's work, not allowing difficulties to distract us. She emphasizes being a visionary as a key to success. Parina's message to other women: *"Always help others in every possible ways, especially those who have experienced pain and difficulty in life."*

Jagriti Mahila Maha Sangh (JMMS) strives for ensuring safe and healthy life of vulnerable women affiliated with the federation through increased access to sexual and reproductive health. JMMS works for organizing and empowering vulnerable women to enhance their capacity for their meaningful participation in and generate access to the State's mechanism, policy, plan and resources. Sustainable institutional development, capacity and leadership development, creating enabling environment, access to prevention, treatment, care and support program for HIV and sexual and reproductive health, resource mobilization and partnership development are the strategic areas for interventions.

Bijaya Dhakal, 37, is the President of JMMS. This young and confident woman has been leading the organization for nearly a decade now. She has made crucial contributions to raise awareness among FSWs about the possible risks of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and has encouraged them to uptake health services and adopt safer and healthier choices in life. *"When I started working in this arena, things were not same, FSWs were very reluctant to visit clinics and uptake services for HIV/STI counseling and testing due to the fear of disclosure and discrimination, which made them and their clients more vulnerable."*

She feels fortunate to be in a leadership position to address women's issues and opines that women are more capable of understanding and addressing the issues faced by other women. *"Sometimes I feel people try to belittle me because of the issues that I'm working to address but I don't blame them, its largely due to their ignorance about the complexity of the issues",* she says. She's only completed grade X and is actively leading the organization that works in 23 districts in the country through its 25 Community Based Organizations (CBOs). In addition to helping FSWs make safer choices, she also helps them to acquire skills and knowledge to identify and address gender-based violence cases. *"The trust other women have shown towards me, is a conviction that I'm doing a good work and I am proud of my contributions."*

She envisions a society that does not stigmatize and discriminate FSWs. She believes that media has an important role to play to achieve this. According to her, providing alternative sources of livelihoods for the FSWs; the psychological and physical well-being of their children and the difficulties related to the citizenship of the FSWs and their children are some of the pertinent issues that need to be addressed. Bijaya's message to other women: *"You should not refrain from pursuing your goals, being a woman, you are capable of doing almost everything."*

SSP's support to the National Networks of Key Affected Populations (KAPs)

Building the capacities of National Networks of the KAPs is an important element of USAID-funded SSP's Capacity Building Framework. SSP has been playing a crucial role in establishing and strengthening the capacity of these networks. Dristi Nepal, Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities Nepal (FSGMN), JMMS, NAP+N, NFWLHA and Recovering Nepal are the national networks of KAPs and these communities are among the key to the HIV response. Their involvement are specifically important in policy advocacy and programing around HIV. These communities commonly experience high levels of stigma and discrimination and are disproportionately infected with and affected by HIV. USAID-funded projects' support, in addition to supporting the establishment and strengthening institutional capacity of these networks, have also focused on providing support for operation of national secretariat, board meetings, various need-based training and continuous supportive supervision.

Leaders of the National Networks

National Association of People Living with HIV/ AIDS in Nepal (NAP+N) an umbrella organization for PLHIV, strives for creating enabling environment where PLHIV can lead life without stigma and discrimination, enjoying full rights and meaningful involvement in National HIV response. NAP+N works to raise awareness on fundamental rights of PLHIV through formation and strengthening of PLHIV organizations. It advocates for the access to treatment and care, meaningful involvement of PLHIV and access to livelihood support and microfinance for PLHIV. Social research, policy advocacy, networking, capacity building and resource mobilization are the key strategic areas for interventions.

Natisara Rai, 37, Immediate Past President was elected as President of the NAP+N in 2012. For the first ever woman President, she led the Executive team comprising mostly women. Natisara very successfully completed her tenure and handed over the leadership of the Association in February 2015.

For Natisara, leading the complex organization with very important responsibilities was not free of challenges but success came gradually. The accomplishments under her leadership include leading the development of operational plan and undertakings of the assessment of the technical and organizational capacity. Likewise, the Association successfully accessed funds for implementing three major projects and continued to advocate for the rights of all PLHIV. Hailing from the Eastern Hill marginalized community, Natisara has struggled but resolutely moved her way up. *"PLHIV including women voiced doubts about my abilities to run an organization when I was planning to establish Shakti Milan Samaj",* she recalls. She proved them wrong through a very successfully stint. She also helped in establishing the first help center for HIV-positive women.

Recognizing her contribution, she was felicitated by *"Tito Satya"* a popular television show and by Nepal Police Hospital. Natisara is a proud woman leader and thinks that much is still left to be done to realize her vision of making HIV-positive women and children self-reliant. According to her, both infected women and children should be provided with equal opportunity for being economically empowered. *"If women are economically empowered, they will be accepted and appreciated because they earn",* she says. Her message to other women leaders is that they should be selfless, helpful and should do what they promise. *"She should not think that everyone should show respect to her. And she should also provide opportunities to others",* she says.

Meera Kunwar, 40, was recently re-elected as Secretary General of NAP+N for a second term after a very successful two and a half years in the same position. Meera started as a volunteer in a child care center, worked in Family Planning Association of Nepal, as a social mobilizer before took over the Vice Chairperson position of Shakti Milan Samaj.

A patriarchal society presents its own challenges to women leaders. For HIV-positive women, especially to ones that have disclosed, there is an even bigger mountain to climb. *"The husband's family stigmatizes us and denies rights to property leaving leaves us the responsibility of the children but no income",* she says. Determined, after disclosing her HIV-positive status, she has become an inspiration in her fight for the rights of the women. Meera brought 28 orphan children from the Far-Western Region, where she hails from, and enabled them to study and take ARV drugs. Recognizing her work and contributions, organizations such as ActionAid and Prasamsha Samuha have felicitated her.

For her, being a woman leader has been a good experience. *"But women leaders are stigmatized. People are skeptical about what we do. Women leaders in Nepal can and should fight wrong and unjust traditions to help other women to come forward"* she says. She thinks the (women) leaders should be honest, selfless, remain committed and keep good public relations. Meera's vision is to rehabilitate HIV-infected women in the society for a dignified life. She envisions a situation of no new infections among woman and ART access to every infected woman. *"It is very important that women are economically empowered. The government should bring programs and provide quotas through which women can become economically independent",* she opines. She has a strong resolve to continue her struggle in an attempt to realize her vision.

National Federation of Women Living with HIV & AIDS (NFWLHA) envisions a just and equitable society where HIV infected and affected women and their children live productive, empowered, and dignified lives free from stigma and discrimination. NFWLHA advocates for meaningful involvement of women living with HIV (WLHIV) in national HIV response, particularly for WLHIV and children affected by AIDS (CABA) and promotes sensitive and friendly policies and interventions for better access to the services for health and well-being. Strengthening capacity, knowledge management for evidence-based policy advocacy and community system strengthening are the key strategic areas for interventions.

Mathura Kunwar, 55, President of NFWLHA, was first diagnosed HIV-positive 17 years ago. Showing a lot of grit, she started working as a social volunteer. She has endured in her long and successful journey from local NGOs to the national network. She is proud to have made positive impact in the sector. She has been recognized with many awards including "Shakti" of Nava Devi Award, the most prestigious award celebrating womanhood in 2007. She opines that the status of women living with HIV and AIDS has improved in the recent years but not yet significantly in the rural areas. *"Women should be economically independent while fighting the discrimination that we face,"* she says. Her dream is to see every Village Development Committee (VDC) and every ward of Nepal to have the facility of ARV drugs so that people do not have to suffer due to lack of medication.

Sita Shahi is a founding member and General Secretary of NFWLHA. Also the founding President of *Srijansheel Mahila Samuha,* Shahi says that there is still discrimination towards women who are living with HIV compared to men. She thinks economic dependency is the major reason for it and women empowerment initiative plans should be strengthened to tackle this serious problem. She is a student of Sociology and says that education has played a very important role in her life and work. She is proud to be a woman and a mother and says that in order to make the society free of discrimination, women have to, at first, stop discriminating themselves. *"We are too dependent upon development and donor agencies. Projects come to a zero when donor support ends. Though the projects like Saath-Saath, have impacted the society in terms of awareness and advocacy, the Government should also make yearly plans, allocate their own budget and work round of the year to accomplish the goal"* she says.

27th World AIDS Day 2014, December 1

"Getting to Zero: Zero New HIV Infections, Zero discrimination, Zero AIDS-related deaths"

SSP actively supported the commemoration of the 27th World AIDS Day (WAD) 2014 organized under the 2011-15 global theme of *"Getting to Zero: Zero New HIV Infections. Zero discrimination, Zero AIDS-related deaths"* and a sub-theme of *"Closing the Gap"* for this year. Working under the leadership of National Center for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), SSP team provided significant contributions to the planning and organizing of the National WAD 2014 events.

The national event was organized at the scenic and historic location Basantapur Durbar Square, Kathmandu on December 1, 2014 and saw thousands of participant from all walks of life including all stakeholders of the national HIV program. The delegates included the Honorable Minister of Health and Population; Honorable Constituent Assembly Member, prominent personalities from the GoN's MoHP; representatives from External Development Partners (EDPs) including USAID Nepal, UNAIDS, WHO among others; National Networks of KAPs and PLHIV and civil society organizations.

The event provided a platform for various HIV-related partners to disseminate information related to HIV prevention and treatment in an entertaining manner. Free HIV testing and counseling camp was also the highlight of the program. In addition, the WAD 2014 was commemorated throughout 33 SSP districts in collaboration with local government authorities and NGO partners.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2014 November 25 – December 10

घर शन्ति नै विश्व शान्तिको आधार: महिला हिंसा विरुद्ध शुन्य सहिष्णुता कायम गरौं ।

"From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Zero Tolerance towards Violence Against Women"

To support the international call for elimination of all forms of violence against women, SSP commemorated the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) from November 25 to December 10, 2014 under the leadership of National Women Commission (NWC). The campaign was officially launched nationwide on November 23. On December 9, SSP participated in the national rally that included participation of over 1,000 individuals representing organizations working to combat GBV. SSP contributed to the distribution of t-shirts and caps carrying slogans "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Zero Tolerance towards Violence Against Women". As part of the event, SSP NGO partners organized interaction programs on GBV-related topics with women's group, PLHIV and FSWs among others in Bhaktapur, Kailali, Kaski, Kathmandu, Laitpur and Sunsari districts and also participated in the orientation on "Effects of GBV and Child Marriage" organized by Women Development Office (WDO) and local stakeholders. These activities were organized in collaboration with the WDO, District Police Office, District Development Committee and prominent NGOs.

International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers 2014 – December 17

Following the initiation of SSP's GBV program targeted towards the FSWs and Transgender sex workers (TG SWs), SSP, marked the International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers in Bhaktapur, Kailali, Kaski, Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Sunsari districts. SSP NGO partners in collaboration with national networks, JMMS and FSGMN organized sensitization and interaction program on sex work and violence with FSWs and TG SWs. The events highlighted the meaning of violence; key messages to prevent such violence; significance of the Day to over 150 FSWs and TG SWs. The participants shared their experience of violence in their lives and enthusiastically agreed to work together to end violence against sex workers, especially in their workplace.

International Migrants Day 2014 – December 18

'सुरक्षित आप्रवासनको आवश्यकता हामी सबैको प्रतिबद्धता'

SSP commemorated the International Migrants Day in Bara, Kapilbastu, Nawalparasi and Palpa districts in coordination with the local government authorities and NGOs to disseminate information on safer migration, STI and HIV to migrant workers. Mass awareness rally, dissemination of IEC materials on safer migration, HIV and STI prevention, interaction programs with migrant workers and their families, candle light memorial, awareness programs at schools and colleges were organized to mark the day. SSP NGO partner in Kapilbastu district also coordinated with Migrants' Resource Center of International Organization for Migration (IOM) and distributed IEC materials on safer migration.

Support to GoN for National Consolidated Guidelines for Treating and Preventing HIV in Nepal, 2014

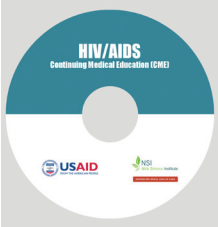
SSP provided technical support to NCASC for developing the National Consolidated Guidelines for Treating and Preventing HIV in Nepal, 2014 through the National HIV Technical Working Group (TWG). The guidelines are based on the WHO Consolidated Guidelines on the use of Antiretroviral (ARV) Drugs for Treating and Preventing HIV Infection, Recommendations for a Public Health Approach, 2013. The revised guidelines include early initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) in adults and in children, simplified regimen with once daily fixed dose combination of ARV, ART for HIV positive partner of HIV negative individual, lifelong ART for HIV positive pregnant women and prevention of unintended pregnancy among PLHIV.

Establishing a Referral System and Engaging in Facilitated Referrals for KAPs

SSP collaborated with Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN) and Sunaulo Pariwar Nepal (SPN)/Marie Stopes International (MSI Nepal) to establish a functional referral system for providing Family Planning (FP) services for FSWs and their clients, migrant workers and their spouses, as well as for PLHIV with the aim to increase use of FP services among KAPs. This helps to address a long term approach for mainstreaming KAP services into existing FP service delivery sites. As SSP NGO-run HIV clinics, are now providing facilitated referrals for FP services to FPAN and SPN/MSI sites in 10 project districts. A focal person designated as the Referral Facilitator at SSP NGO-run HIV clinics helps facilitate these referrals.

Continuous Professional Development Package in HIV

USAID-funded SSP collaborated with Nick Simons Institute (NSI), Nepal to develop a Continuing Medical Education (CME) package on HIV "Introduction of HIV/AIDS 2015". SSP provided technical support to develop this package, which contributes to the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on HIV. The package is available online at NSI, Nepal's website http://cpd.nsi.edu.np and as interactive CD-ROM. Medical professionals working in the field of HIV or anyone interested can register and log on to the package for free from their own workplace. After the successful completion, NSI, Nepal provides a certificate and awards three credit hours for the course.



Round table meeting to discuss the findings of the Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance (IBBS) Survey conducted among FSWs

SSP supported the NCASC to organize a round table meeting in Kathmandu to discuss the findings of the IBBS Survey conducted among FSW in 22 Terai Highway Districts of Nepal in 2012. Participants were from the GoN, MoHP, NCASC, UNAIDS, UNODC, National Networks and SSP Implementing Partner NGOs. Findings of the further analysis of IBBS survey were shared and program implications were drawn up. As the next rounds of IBBS surveys are already planned, the meeting helped the key stakeholders to understand the scope of IBBS survey data and how best to use the data for effective decision makings process. Since 1999, under the leadership of NCASC, USAID-funded ASHA, IMPACT and AIDSCAP projects have supported several rounds of IBBS Surveys.

Integration of Community and Home-Based Care (CHBC) and Positive Prevention (PP) at National Level

SSP provided technical support on integration of CHBC and PP during a meeting of CHBC stakeholders organized by NCASC. The meeting was held to discuss the need and importance of integrating CHBC and PP services. SSP as the only project actively integrating CHBC and PP activities, shared its experience and lessons learned to guide the discussions on strategies at the national level. NCASC is devising future strategies for the integration. The meeting stressed on the need to integrate CHBC and PP at all levels. The recommendations of the meeting was shared in National HIV Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting and the TWG meeting endorsed the recommendations for integrating CHBC and PP at the national level.

Review of Sustainability Plan of District AIDS Coordination Committee (DACC), Dang

USAID-funded SSP supported DACC of Dang district to organize a two-day Sustainability Plan Review Workshop in February 2015 with the purpose to review progress of Sustainability Plan of HIV and AIDS program highlighting lessons learned, and key challenges faced and best practices. Dang's Sustainability Plan was developed in September 2013 with support from SSP, following which, DACC Dang developed District HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (FY 2013-2017); expanded Village AIDS Coordination Committees (VACCs) in 16 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and allocated resources for the treatment, care and support of PLHIV. Furthermore, resources have also been allocated for supporting Children Affected by AIDS (CABA) and HIV-related diagnostics and clinical services have been expanded.

GBV Prevention and Mitigation services for FSWs and TG SWs

SSP has initiated GBV prevention education and referral services in Bhaktapur, Kailali, Kaski, Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Sunsari districts for FSWs from December 2014 and screening, psychosocial counseling, treatment and referral services for FSWs from the EIHS sites from January 2015. Till January 2015, 655 FSWs attending EIHS sites were screened for GBV, out of which 48 GBV cases were identified and psychosocial counseling and treatment services were provided. Furthermore, to ensure providing GBV-related quality information and services, SSP conducted series of training to strengthen capacities of outreach staff, counselors and clinical staff of SSP NGO partners. The training helped the participants to provide education to and referral services for GBV to the FSWs and TG SWs; identify GBV survivors, provide basic psychosocial counseling, treatment and referral services. The trainings also aimed to enrich the knowledge and skills of staff and board members of FSGMN and JMMS on GBV recognition, prevention, mitigation and documentation of GBV case studies. SSP, furthermore, organized sensitization training to government and non-government GBV service providers including One-stop Crisis Management Center (OCMC) in Kathmandu valley.

Visitors Log

USAID Team

JuanCarlos M. Hunt, Director, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, Washington DC; Jannie Kwok, Deputy Director, Education and Family Planning, USAID Nepal and Ivana Lohar, Team Leader, HIV, Family Planning and Logistics visited the drop-in center (DIC) and outreach site of SSP in Thamel, Kathmandu and interacted with the project staff and beneficiaries on February 19, 2015. The team was accompanied by Chief of Party (CoP), SSP.

USAID Nepal Team - Nur Pant, Senior Health Technical Advisor and Ramraja Singh, Financial Analyst and Cory Coleman, Deputy Controller visited SSP sites in Jhapa and Sunsari on January 25-26, 2015 and observed EIHS sites in Birtamod, Jhapa and CHBC home visit in Sunsari.

The USAID Nepal Team–Ivana Lohar; Nur Pant and Nirupama Rai, AID Program Assistant visited SSP sites in Nepalgunj, Banke on November 4-5, 2014. The team observed N'SARC's EIHS site and outreach session and CHBC home visit conducted by Junkiree. The team was accompanied by the CoP, SSP.

Technical Assistance

Maryce G. Ramsey, Senior Gender Advisor, FHI 360 Headquarters, visited Nepal from January 26 to February 6, 2015 to provide technical assistance for SSP's GBV prevention and mitigation services.

Matt Avery, Technical Advisor- Strategic Behavioral Communications, Asia-Pacific Region, FHI 360, visited Nepal for technical assistance for SSP's Strategic Behavioral Communications (SBC) activities on February 3 - 4, 2015.

Monitoring Visits from the GoN

Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director, NCASC; Dr. GD Thakur, Chief of Public Health Monitoring and Evaluation Department and Dr. Kalu Sharma Subedi, Director, Western Regional Health Directorate visited SSP NGO partners Naulo Ghumti (NG) and Child and Women Empowerment Society Nepal (CWES) in Pokhara on December 9-10, 2014. The team observed DIC and EIHS activities, Health Management Information System (HMIS) recording and reporting mechanism and interacted with the staff.

The Director, NCASC and SSP CoP also visited the SSP EIHS site and observed CHBC home visit in Kailali on November 14-15, 2014. Dr. Bhesh Raj Pokharel, Senior Medical Officer, NCASC, visited AMDA EIHS site at Birtamod, Jhapa on January 7, 2015 and Naulo Ghumti, Kaski on January 19, 2015. Dr. Yadu Chandra Ghimire, Senior Medical Officer, NCASC visited Sahavagi DIC and EIHS site and Chhahari Mahila Samuha, Chitwan on February 15, 2015 .

Health Journalists

As part of the final visit of three-phase media project launched by USAID Nepal, the team of three health journalists visited the SSP partner NGO, STEP Nepal managed DIC in Thamel, Kathmandu on November 12, 2014. The team observed DIC and outreach session and interacted with the project staff and beneficiaries. The team also observed outlets for the social marketing family planning product and services provided by Nepal CRS Company through the USAID-funded *Ghar Ghar Maa Swasthya* (GGMS) Project.

For Further Information Contact

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