



District-level Collaborations for WASH Systems and COVID-19 Response

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Photo: Handwashing demonstration in Thantikandh municipality, SNV



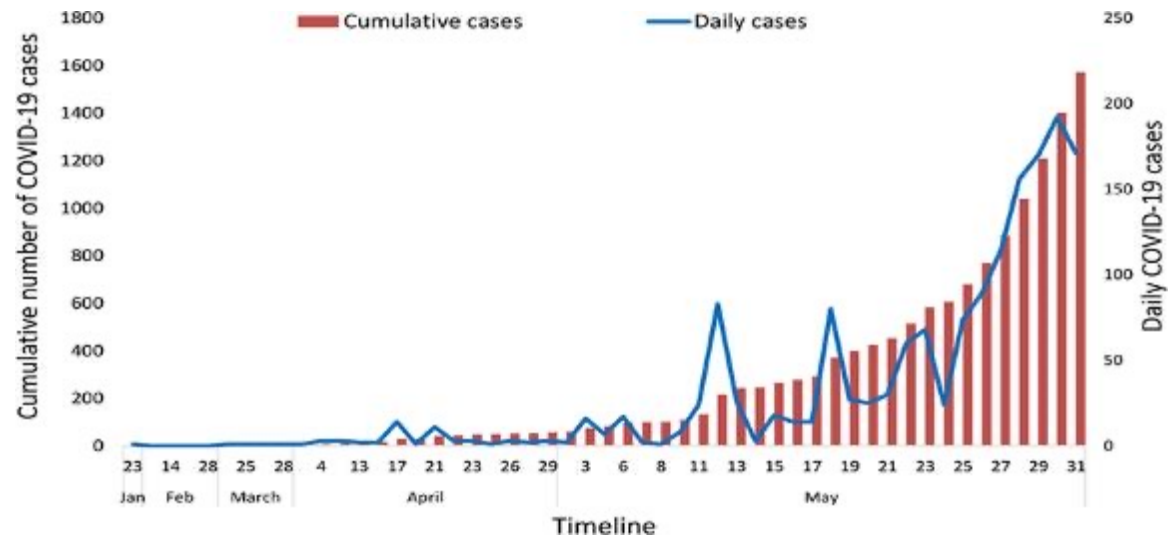
COVID-19 in Nepal

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected Nepal since February 2020, with the commencement of a nation-wide lockdown in March 2020

The pandemic led to the return of many Nepalese back to the country

The government, WASH sector stakeholders had a challenging first few weeks.

This necessitated a coordinated effort to respond to the associated challenges.



Source: Dhakal, S. ET AL (2020), Early Epidemiological Features of COVID-19 in Nepal and Public Health Response, Frontiers in Medicine



Collaborations for resilient and healthy people: WASH systems and COVID-19 response
WASH & The COVID-19 Pandemic Virtual Symposium



COVID-19 Preparedness and Response

- On 17 March 2020 the first WASH Cluster meeting on COVID-19 was held
- On 20 March 2020 the COVID-19 preparedness and response plan was drafted
- On 01 April 2020 the Ministry of Water Supply approved the guidance note on minimum WASH requirements in COVID-19 quarantine and isolation centres, and
- Provincial and district WASH Clusters also initiated COVID-19 preparedness and response plans
- SNV received multiple requests from local governments (for emergency support), and “pivoted” budget for BCC activities.

Approaches and Activities

- SNV Nepal, as a members of the WASH Clusters at the national, provincial and district levels, coordinated the COVID-19 WASH response with the (8) rural municipalities and district-level stakeholders
- SNV supported the district WASH Coordination Committees with BCC interventions such as jingles (audio) in local languages with **BCC messages on HWWS**
- SNV also supported the RMs with WASH infrastructure such as **locally-made pedal-operated HWS** in key quarantine centres/ locations (health facilities, schools)
- Mobilised partners/LRPs to provide **counselling to persons with disabilities** and their family members on their specific WASH needs and ways to address the same.



Photo: A person with disability using a HW facility in Quarantine Sarlah, SNV



Photo: A woman in Sarlahi district using a locally-made hand washing station, SNV



Results

- The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how the needs of persons with disabilities have been recognised at the RM levels.
- The formation of inclusive RM- and ward-level WASH CCs enabled this process.
- The RMs made special efforts to build inclusive WASH facilities, particularly handwashing stations in the quarantine facilities and isolation centres.
- These RMs now has plan all government institution



Learning

- **Coordinated effort** of the government, donors, development partners, media and local networks (NGOs, DPOs, private sectors) **created an enabling environment** for responding to the local needs during the pandemic.
- The efforts of local agencies and institutions, complementing the national government's efforts, in reaching out to communities, minority groups and persons with disabilities with **hygiene promotion messages and the need for masking and personal distance yield good results.**
- Through these partnerships the **local governments were able to focus on priorities** such as provisioning of disability-friendly HW stations in quarantine/isolation centres, etc.