



SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN AFTER EARTHQUAKE – NEPAL

The earthquake in Nepal, April 2015, had devastating physical and psychosocial consequences on children. The deconstruction of schools and homes lead to the displacement of families and had a severe negative impact on the learning environment of students. Finn Church Aid (FCA) and its implementing partner Centre for Mental Health and Counselling – Nepal (CMC-Nepal) assessed the needs, targeting affected children, teachers and parents. The assessment provided evidence of a negative impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of the children. More than 60% suffered from sleep problems along with other expressions of distress, such as bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, anxiousness, and bed-wetting.

Between July 2016 and March 2017 CMC-Nepal **engaged with students, teachers, representatives from school management committees, and parents** in 61 schools in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Gorkha, Makwanpur, and Sindhuli district. A **female and male teacher** at each school **received training** to become psychosocial focal teachers. They then shared their new skills to other teachers, always keeping in mind the need to engage both female and male teacher.

Teachers were **trained on how to identify children with emotional and behavioral problems**, provide psychosocial support, on **tools to practice psychosocial intervention in the classrooms**. The teachers also learned how to do child-friendly classroom management and use a positive disciplinary approach to promote positive manner in the students without giving punishment, and **became aware of gender issues, abusive behavior by parents, social stigma and mental health issues**. To support of teachers, a **peer support network for teachers** was created targeting all 61 schools, and **supervision and monitoring** provided by programme facilitators. Students with a need for individual support could receive this from the psychosocial focal teachers, and identify **children in need of more specialized support were referred to specialists** at CMC – Nepal in Kathmandu.

Within the projects holistic perspective, activities were conducted to support the **shaping of child-friendly families and communities**. **Parents received psycho-education on how to support their children**, enhancing their knowledge about their responsibility for the children and how they could have an important role in positively impacting the children's education. Family members and community members indirectly benefitted from these training, shaping a knowledge of how to minimize



conflicts in family and community, and of positive behaviour to each other.

The joint actions have led to **improved students learning, more regular attendance** and students being more willing to share their feelings. As a result, parents, teachers and the school administration have realized that psychosocial support is always necessary for schools, for the psychosocial wellbeing of children, and ultimately for quality learning. The changes and **understandings of the stakeholders on psychosocial support serve as preparedness** for responding to future disasters and consequences to children.

Sustainability can be seen in that 20 of the program-implemented schools **established psychosocial counseling units** within the project's short duration, while most of the schools committed to continue with psychosocial support and provide additional support to students with emotional and behavioral problems and learning difficulties. The activities will also be replicated in other schools.

Lessons learned

- It is essential to include Psychosocial support at schools, to increase the wellbeing of the students, along with improving the education quality of the students.
- It is important to establish local ownership of the activities, to build sustainability so that activities can continue after the completion of a program period.
- Monitoring, visits, and supervisions are essential to keep track of progress and motivate participants to continue. Psychoeducation is an important aspect of the awareness raising. Parents have important roles to play to support their children, and their proper care is required for holistic development of children.
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ACT Regional Psychosocial Community of Practice in South East Asia

You have just read a good practice of Community Based Psychosocial support, from the ACT Regional community of practice in South East Asia.

The Regional Psychosocial Community of Practice (PS CoP) is a group of people joined together by common issues of working in the field of community based psychosocial support, as part of the ACT Alliance humanitarian response to emergency and disaster situations that took place in a given place in the region. Through the regional PS CoP, the aim is to strengthen the capacities and practices of community based psychosocial support of ACT members, by sharing good practices appropriate to local cultures, share expertise and experiences.

How to join and get in touch

The regional PS CoP community of practice is opened to ACT partners working on psychosocial support.

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