Achieving Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Nepal 
2019-2022

Background

The Right to Safe motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, 2018 underlines the access to sexual and reproductive health services including safe abortion services as a fundamental right of women in Nepal.1

- 43% of currently married women are using a modern method of contraception.2
- 21% of currently married women have an unmet need for family planning services.2
- 2 in 5 women of reproductive age are aware about the legalization of abortion in Nepal.3
- 29% of facilities that offers normal vaginal delivery services have medical abortion service and 11% offers comprehensive abortion care service.4
- 50% of pregnancies are unintended and among them 62% ended in abortion.5
- It is estimated that 323,000 abortions were conducted in 2014, 58% of them were conducted in clandestine manner.5

Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) with support from World Health Organization (WHO) and partners launched a time-bound (2019-2022) project “Achieving Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)” to attain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a health system strengthening approach. The project aimed to reduce maternal mortality (SDG 3.1); achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services (SDG 3.7) and reproductive rights (SDG 5.6).

PROJECT ALLIES

1. Government
   - Federal Level: Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, Family Welfare Division, National Health Education Information Communication Center, National Health Training Center, Management Division, Nursing and Social Security Division, Curative Service Division, Medical Education Commission, Department of Drug Administration

2. *Medical and Academic Institutions: B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Institute of Medicine, Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences, Karnali Academy of Health Sciences, National Academy of Medical Sciences, Patan Academy of Heath Sciences, Pokhara University, Purbanchal University

3. UN Agencies: UNFPA, WHO

4. International/National Non-government Agencies: FPAN, IPAS, Laerdal, MSI, NESOG, PSI

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### Project Implementation Milestones

#### Objective 1: Develop Institutional Mechanisms for Strengthening and Integrating SRHR into Universal Health Coverage
- **SRHR project launched in Nepal in July 2019**
- National level SRHR: Steering Committee (SC) and Technical Working Committee (TWC) formed
- **Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Regulation 2020 endorsed**
- WHO support initiated at provincial and local level
- **Safe Abortion Service (SAS) Guidelines and Emergency Contraceptives program facilitation guide endorsed and disseminated**
- Provincial SRHR TWC/ Reproductive Health Coordination Committee formed and supported by the government budget
- Provincial action plans to improve access to SRHR services developed and implemented
- Listing of SAS sites and providers started in all the provinces and many local levels. 136 sites and 300 providers are listed at provincial/local level between September 2021 - July 2022
- SRHR Social Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) strategy (2022-2026) endorsed
- Technical support to strengthen SRHR at federal and provincial level continued

#### Outcome
1. SRHR committees at the federal and provincial level provide a common platform for the stakeholders to move SRHR agenda forward without duplicating the efforts
2. Prioritization of safe abortion services at the national and sub-national level
3. Expansion of service delivery base at all levels
4. Emergency Contraceptives Pills (ECPs) introduced in the public health programs

#### Objective 2: Strengthen Medical, Nursing and Midwifery Pre-service Education to Develop Competent Human Resource to Provide SRHR Services
- **SRHR component of medical, nursing and midwifery curriculum reviewed; capacity assessment for imparting competencies based trainings conducted at 08 medical and academic institutions***
- **Guidelines for setting up simulation lab and faculty development training package developed***
- 10 simulation labs established at 08 medical and academic institutions
- **170 faculty members trained on simulation-based education***
- Implementation research conducted

#### Objective 3: Strengthen the Quality of SRHR In-service Training to Strengthen Capacity of Health Workers to Provide SRHR Services
- **Situation assessment of in-service SRHR training sites of federal and provincial level completed***
- **Action plan to strengthen SRHR in-service training sites developed***
- Second trimester safe abortion service training conducted

#### Objective 4: SRHR Essential Services Included in the Benefits Package of Major National Health Financing Mechanisms
- **Assessment of health financing mechanism including free schemes for sexual and reproductive health completed***

#### Outcome
- SRHR competencies are being imparted through simulation based trainings at selected 08 medical, nursing and midwifery academic institutions
- SRHR competencies integrated in medical curriculum framework which is being developed by Medical Education Commission (MEC)

#### Objective 5: Strengthen Health Information System for SRHR Indicators
- **Systematic review of health information system on SRH services and rights completed***
- **Web-based tracking system for Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) service sites and providers developed and implemented***

#### Outcome
- Data of RMNCAH service sites and providers are reported, analyzed, and utilized at all levels

#### Objective 6: Improve Access to Quality Assured Essential SRH Medicines and Health Products
- **Surveillance System of Medical Abortion (MA) drugs in Nepal assessed***
- Quality of MA drugs available in the market assessed
- Regulatory action was taken by Department of Drug Administration for non compliant product
- **Forecasting, procurement, and supply chain management mechanism of ECPs and SAS equipment and drugs assessed***
- **Quality of ECPs available in the market assessed***

#### Outcome
- Government continue to strengthen drug regulatory system and supply chain mechanism to ensure uninterrupted supply of good quality medicines including MA drugs

### Way Forward
1. Government to continue prioritizing SRHR and sustaining stakeholders' platforms
2. MEC to replicate the learnings and integrate competencies based curricula across all courses in pre-service education for all medical, nursing and midwifery academic institutions.
3. Government and partners to have policy dialogues to strengthen health financing mechanism and reducing OOP expenditure for SRH services
4. Government and stakeholders to continue using the web based data platform and other data sources for monitoring, supervision and further planning to strengthen SRHR
5. Government and partners to implement targeted behavioral change communication interventions as recommended in SBCC strategy for improving awareness regarding SRH services and rights.
AVAILABLE RESOURCES

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE TOOLS
- Safe Abortion Services Program Management Guidelines 2021
- Emergency Contraceptive Program Implementation Facilitation Guide 2021
- Web-database for Tracking RMNCAH Service Sites and Providers

ASSESSMENT REPORTS
- Strengthening SRHR in Pre-service Education of Doctor, Nurse and Midwife: Curriculum Review and Baseline Assessment
- Strengthening Information System on SRH Services and Rights: A Systematic Review
- Surveillance System of MA Drugs in Nepal: A Rapid Assessment
- Health Financing Mechanism Including Free Schemes for SRH Services in Nepal
- Quality Assessment of MA Drugs Available in the Market
- Situation Update of In-Service SRHR Training in Nepal
- Study on Situational Analysis of Forecasting Mechanisms, Procurement and Supply Chain Management of MA Drugs, ECPs and Manual Vacuum Aspiration set
- Quality Assessment of ECPs Available in the Market

RESOURCES TO STRENGTHEN SRHR PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION
- Integration of Simulation for SRHR Components in Pre-service Medical, Nursing and Midwifery Education in Nepal: A Baseline Assessment
- One day Orientation Package on Integration of Simulation for SRHR Components in Pre-service Medical, Nursing and Midwifery Education
- 5-days' Training Package on Integration of Simulation for SRHR Components in Pre-service Medical, Nursing and Midwifery Education
- SRHR Competency Teaching Tools
- Guidelines for Setting up Healthcare Simulation Lab

GLIMPSES OF THE PROJECT

[Images of various activities related to SRHR education and simulation labs]