

Exploring the Youth: Strengthening Youth Network through Stigma Free & Accessible Sexual & Reproductive Health Services



Background

“Strengthening Young People's Access to Stigma-Free Abortion Information and Services” project is an undertaking of IPPF, supported by David and Lucile Packard Foundation in line with STIGMA III project. The project was operational from November 2018 till January 2021, in three districts of Nepal mainly, Kavre, Morang and Palpa.

The overall objective of the project was to strengthen young peoples access to stigma free abortion, information and services. It aimed to increase information and services to stigma free abortion by increasing accessibility and availability of quality preventive and curative services for hard to reach, disadvantaged, migrants and young population.

This undertaking has had the option to make astounding accomplishments to reinforce youth network by activating number of youth volunteers and educators in their own society and community as a Youth Champion. 100s of youth were mobilized, oriented and trained on sexual and reproductive health rights including



stigma free safe abortion services. Youths are better experienced in organizing and actively participating in grassroots level movement. Along with the advocacy, youth have been regularly providing the referral services for the needy one. They got the opportunity to explore themselves in national as well as global stage.

CASE STUDY

During project period various kinds of intervention activities such as campaigning and street drama were coordinated in project districts to bring awareness to thousands of people. When gathering was strictly prohibited, different informative materials as well as videos were shared with the social media so that, it could reach to many people. Not with standing that correct messages were broadcasted through nearby FM/Radio as well as local print media. Similarly, youth educators were mobilized for door to door campaigning to raise the community awareness and clear the myths and misconception prevalent in the communities.



Statistical Figure of project Achievement

Street Drama	More than 10,000 participants
Campaigning	14 events organize in different locations
RHFV & FCHV Orientation	180+ participants oriented
Media People Orientation	Nearly 100 media people oriented on right messaging
Capacity Building Training	More than 500 youth trained
Youth dialogue	210+ participants
VCAT Training	15+ service providers
Sensitization for medical/para medics students	200+ participants
Client Interview Conducted (n)	700
Referral service provided	50+

This is a story about Malati (name changed), a young village girl aged 22 years. She was 5 weeks pregnant and yet unmarried. She came to know about her pregnancy after she missed her periods, because she had unsafe physical relation with her boyfriend. As the whole country was underlockdown due to covid-19 pandemic, she was unable to seek professional medical services.

There was nothing she could think of, since there were crises everywhere, she was single and a month pregnant. The pattern of the circumstances struck her mind hard and she was unable to think about it.

She drew the strength and decided to confideto her best friend Sajina (name changed). In this case, Malati said she decided to abort because she wasn't married. With all her heart, Sajina listened to Malati, comforted her not to worry, and resolved to think about what she might do for her. Sajina went via social media and then hit my post and realized I was FPAN's youth champion, Palpa, and I was able to support her friend.

I went through my inbox the next day, and I saw a message about what I could do for Malati, a pregnant, unmarried teen. I told her that safe abortion is a woman's right, and I'll support you.

After that, I contacted and outlined the situation to Mr. Shobakanta Neupane, Branch Manager (FPAN, Palpa). FPAN offers all the necessary resources to individuals about family planning and safe abortions with proper protection of health workers as well as customers even in lockdown condition, services are delivered door-to-door where possible. So I, along with BM and the health staff, went to her house which was nearby village.

Health workers properly guided her about the medicines that should be taken at the proper way and time along with the nutritious food and asked her to take rest. I consoled her about her situations and asked to remain calm and keep her positive during this condition. We returned from there, providing her counselling and phone numbers of health workers in case of any deformity or problems.

After a month she called me and thanked all of us from FPAN for helping her in this pandemic. She told that she had started to have her menstruation cycle normal and doing very well. She was so happy with the services and she too willed to be the youth member of FPAN. I am so glad to write the success story of her, that our services helped her to deal the situation physically as well as spiritually.

Youth Champion's Voice

Resha Shilpakar



Youth Champion of Kavre district

“My Right My Decision”

I have been occupied with FPAN, Kavre branch since last 3 years as a youth member. Functioning as a youth member in this undertaking for a very long time has been exceptionally productive all through the excursion. This platform has assisted me with building my ability, initiative quality, proficient relationship and organization with local area individuals, focal office staff and youngsters to deal with the pressing issues amongst the youth.

Dynamic interest and contribution of youth volunteers of Kavre region all through the excursion was able to flow the positive information about comprehensive sexuality education, SRHR, safe abortion, access to quality services breaking stereotypes, myths and shaming women and young people. Street drama, door to door campaigning, orientation, training to young people, through social media like Facebook, Youtube, FM were carried out to reach target people.

I understood that undertaking like Packard appears to be truly productive and fundamental for Kavre.

Reshna Shrestha



Youth Champion of Palpa district

“Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Google, Yahoo. Let's unite global youth to reduce abortion taboo”

As there was hesitation and difficulties to access safe abortion and contraceptive services among the youth and women of reproductive age. Most of the incidents on deciding contraceptives choices and for the safe abortion services were linked with the decision of husband/sexual partners has been changed in the community and the independent deciding power is building up among young girls and women by the effective advocacy and information dissemination.

I and my colleagues at school and clubs did not have much knowledge on safe abortion and services, SRHR and other CSE components. Fortunately, we realized after the active participation and involvement in the training, seminar and orientation organized by the project.

Level of confidence, communication skill as well as social recognition has been gained as a youth champion by the project.

Shubha Dhungana



Youth Champion of Morang district

“My Body, My Rights”

Myself, a youth of FPAN Morang branch has been working as a volunteer for last 5 years and now, proud to work in Packard project to burst the myths about abortion stigma among the young people along with community. Initially, it was difficult to talk to people as they feel shy to talk about SRHR services and contraceptives but with the help of my fellow youth volunteers and office staff it helped us to access easily. With time people changed their thoughts towards their rights and choices towards reproductive health. We spread the information through social media, FM, newspaper, miking campaign, IEC materials and street drama. We also provided training to women, health workers, youths and some political and religion leaders.

Working as a youth champion has made some positive changes in me as I can speak proudly and confidently about safe abortion and reproductive health with community people, youths and also with my family without any hesitation.

After regular and nonstop intercession action, it was discovered that the degree of stigma prevalent in the community has been decreased from moderate to low moderate level. Likewise, percentage of youth seeking safe abortion services has been expanded by over 5% in each of the three districts. Youth Champion of the venture has been chosen at the IPPF Board of Trustees in central office London. In excess of 100 young people have been trained on Value Clarification and Attitude Transformation (VCAT) training. Similarly, more than 200 community people were oriented on stigma free safe abortion services as community level stigma was higher.

Packard project has contributed tremendously in reinforcing the adolescent organization in



operational districts. Packard project imagines that the endeavors made by the task over the course of the years would result to stigma free safe abortion services. The contributions of the project like capacity building training, trained youth volunteers, trained service providers are expected to sustain even after the completion of this project.

Early marriage and Teenage pregnancy

17 years old girl from rural area of Palpa district got married to the same age boy of her locality. They dropped out from their schooling after marriage and went to southern part of Nepal (Narayanghat) for labor work. Girl told that she was sexually exploited as well as mentally tortured after few months of marriage. She became pregnant at the age of 18. Her husband tortured was getting worse every day. It became very hard to manage. She ran away from him and came back to Palpa. She does not have any source of income to feed the growing fetus. She was an immature young girl. Her pregnancy was getting old and she does not have any option left than abortion. She heard about safe abortion services in Family Planning association of Nepal through radio messages. She came to FPAN with her elder sister and did her checkup, but unfortunately, she was 15 weeks pregnant. As FPAN was unable to provide safe abortion service beyond the 12 weeks gestation period. FPAN service provider referred her for 2nd trimester safe abortion service in provincial hospital Butwal. She was stigmatized by her family members after doing abortion.

She is living independently now. She has joined college and started teaching in Montessori school after taking training. She visited FPAN clinic after one month of her abortion and was very thankful to us and our services. She wants to work as a volunteer of FPAN. She is referring clients to FPAN clinics who are in need of SRH services.

“When I used safe abortion services I faced couple of challenges from family member, relatives & community people, but now the time has changed, people are much aware about the safe abortion services which has decrease the level of stigma & discrimination prevalent in the family & community”. – Client from Morang FHC.



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