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# Together for advancing health

A decade of Nepal Red Cross Society and Canadian Red Cross work



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# Preface from the Nepal Red Cross Society

The Nepal Red Cross Society highly values its partnership with the Canadian Red Cross. This partnership has always remained harmonious and both the National Societies enjoy this special relationship. This partnership, now reaching its 10-year milestone, has been instrumental in jointly planning numerous initiatives and carrying out several development activities. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Canadian Red Cross.

On 25 April 2015 (12th of Baisakh, 2072 BS), Nepal was struck by a devastating earthquake with its epicenter in Gorkha district. This led to a severe crisis across many districts. During this challenging time, numerous partner National Societies, including the Canadian Red Cross, provided significant support to the Nepal Red Cross Society to deliver immediate relief to the people affected by this devastating earthquake.

One of the key areas of support from the Canadian Red Cross was the deployment of the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) field hospital in Dhunche, Rasuwa district. This hospital played an instrumental role in delivering health services to thousands of people affected and other local inhabitants needing health support. As the district hospital was damaged by the earthquake, deployment of the ERU was highly instrumental in addressing the health gaps.

The Canadian Red Cross not only deployed the ERU but also provided support for construction of a prefabricated hospital with 15 beds and accommodation facilities for the staff. Assistance was made available for the procurement of necessary equipment for the hospital as well.

In the post-earthquake situation, the Canadian Red Cross Society's support has further been extended to strengthen the capacity of Nepal Red Cross Society in health. This support has been there for the development of plans, strategies, operational guidelines etc. To further enhance our capacity in emergency health response, a fully-equipped Red Cross Emergency Clinic has been established.

Support has also been extended for the implementation of various projects in the field of Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence prevention etc. In addition, a unique project called Rural Trauma System Strengthening (RETSS) was implemented in partnership between the Canadian Red Cross, Nepal Red Cross and selected hospitals. Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health (RMNCH), COVID-19 response, Comprehensive Community-Based Health (CCBH), Strengthening Climate Resilience Health System (SCRHS) are other projects have been implemented in partnership between the two National Societies. Likewise, the Canadian Red Cross has also supported project related Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). Therefore, the support from the Canadian Red Cross has been instrumental in strengthening capacity, developing tools and mechanisms, institutionalizing health programmes, developing resources etc.

While appreciating the support provided by the Canadian Red Cross Society over the years, we look forward to continued support and cooperation.



**Umesh Prasad Dhakal**

*Executive Director  
Nepal Red Cross Society*

# Acknowledgement from Canadian Red Cross

On behalf of the Canadian Red Cross Society, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) staff, and volunteers for the incredible partnership we have shared during the past 10 years. This significant milestone marks mutual success and fosters the Movement's mission to relieve human suffering and reduce vulnerability. I want to take a moment to acknowledge and celebrate this achievement with you.

The Canadian Red Cross has a long history of providing support to people impacted by emergencies or due to changing trends in society. Canadian Red Cross provided humanitarian services in Nepal immediately after the devastating earthquake in 2015 through the deployment of its Health Emergency Response Unit, in the form of a field hospital to Rasuwa. Over 5,000 people benefited from the ERU health services provided for four months.

Since then, the Canadian Red Cross has supported the Nepal Red Cross Society and the Government of Nepal with strengthening health services in emergency and non-emergency periods. Over the 10 years the Canadian Red Cross has supported with improving maternal, newborn and child health, strengthening the health system and prehospital care services, managing communicable and non-communicable disease, providing mental health and psychosocial support. We have also worked together to enhance the Nepal Red Cross Society's capacities at national, provincial and local levels through developing policies, guidelines, strategies and manuals. With the support of the Canadian Red Cross, the Nepal Red Cross Society has reached 300 health facilities, and more than 2.5 million people have benefited from programming to date.

The collaboration between the Nepal Red Cross Society and the Canadian Red Cross has been instrumental in creating a strong foundation, particularly in the areas of preparedness, response and risk reduction initiatives for supporting the health and wellbeing of communities.

Lastly, I would like to thank those who have supported this work. Thank you to all the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners for their commitment and the tremendous work they have done in Nepal. Thank you also to people in Canada who donated to the Red Cross after the 2015 earthquake and during the COVID-19 pandemic, for supporting people in Nepal.

I look forward to the next chapter of our partnership with optimism and enthusiasm. Together, I am confident that we will continue to provide vital support to communities across Nepal.



**Carla Taylor,**  
*Head of Region, Asia Pacific  
Canadian Red Cross Society*

# List of abbreviations

**BLS:** Basic Life Saving

**CB-IMNCI:** Community Based Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness

**CCBHP:** Comprehensive Community Based Health Project

**CD:** Communicable Diseases

**CFS:** Child Friendly Space

**CPR:** Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation

**CRC:** Canadian Red Cross

**ERU:** Emergency Response Unit

**FCHVs:** Female Community Health Volunteers

**MHPSS:** Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

**MoHP:** Ministry of Health and Population

**NAMS:** National Academy of Medical Sciences

**NCD:** Non-Communicable Diseases

**NHEOC:** National Health Emergency Operation Center

**NHTC:** National Health Training Centre

**NRCS:** Nepal Red Cross Society

**OGPs:** Oxygen Generating Plants

**PGI:** Protection, Gender, and Inclusion

**PSEA:** Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

**RCEC:** Red Cross Emergency Clinic

**RETSS:** Rural Emergency Trauma System Strengthening

**RMNCAH:** Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent Health

**VPCP:** Violence Prevention and Child Protection

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# Program delivery

The Canadian Red Cross and the Nepal Red Cross Society signed an agreement on April 25, 2018 to help Nepal Red Cross Society build their capacity, with a focus on health program and services, including health in emergencies. The agreement aligned with the framework of the Nepal Red Cross Society development plans 2016-21, 2021-25, and the health strategy and operational plan 2018-20, 2022-30.

The Canadian Red Cross engaged with the Nepal Red Cross Society and the Red Cross Movement in Nepal for resource mobilization, supporting innovation, partnership development, and humanitarian diplomacy. This engagement also helped create metrics for program quality and accountability, gender and diversity work, and programming in the last mile.



## Red Cross Emergency Clinic

With the technical input from the Canadian Red Cross, the Nepal Red Cross Society has established a Red Cross Emergency Clinic. This rapid deployment team is used to quickly intervene in health emergencies. The team has been deployed 13 times to different emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic, Doti and Jajarkot earthquakes, dengue outbreaks, and to support at religious events.

From these deployments, more than **17,500** patients received essential health services, and over **200,000** benefited from health awareness messages.

The clinic has 59 people with different role profiles (including doctor, paramedic, public health, PGI, logistics, finance, and technicians) ready for immediate deployment alongside ready-to-move medical items and medicines. The Nepal Red Cross Society signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health and Population to be able to jointly deploy the Emergency Clinic and to support on emergency health response.



## Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH)

The RMNCAH project was implemented to improve maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health in Sindhuli District, Nepal, by improving the availability, quality, knowledge, and ability to access essential RMNCAH health services at community and district levels.

The key intervention areas of the project included: basic emergency obstetric care and birthing centre support; maternal and newborn care; community-based integrated management of newborn and childhood illness (CB-IMNCI); and health promotion and prevention with a special focus on RMNCAH. The project has trained more than 300 health workers and 495 female community health volunteers on CB-IMNCI. More than 10,500 mothers and 900 students from 17 schools benefited from health awareness sessions related to RMNCAH services.

The project strengthened **23** birthing centers to be able to provide quality delivery services.

The RMNCAH project made important contributions toward reducing maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity in Sindhuli district. Evidence shows that the maternal mortality ratio in that district dropped from 93 per 100,000 live births in 2017 to 0 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019. Similarly, the mortality rate of children under 5 decreased from 23 per 1,000 live births in 2017 to 4 per 1,000 live births in 2019. The number of births in health care facilities increased by 28 per cent in 2020 (from a baseline established in 2018) and significant progress has been reported in antenatal and post-natal care.

## Rural Emergency Trauma System Strengthening (RETSS)

With the RETSS project, the Nepal Red Cross Society was able to streamline use of type-B ambulances, a larger vehicle able to provide more comprehensive emergency care. Previously, the Nepal Red Cross Society had used a smaller ambulance that did not have medicine or paramedics. The project established the dispatch center in Dhulikhel Hospital Kathmandu University, and in Gandaki province in coordination with Ministry of Health and Population.

More than **70** ambulances are now linked into the dispatch center and can access people in need more easily.

Furthermore, over 175 health facilities, 1,500 health workers and 1,000 Nepal Red Cross Society volunteers are equipped with the medical skills, knowledge, and equipment needed for providing timely, quality emergency and trauma care. The trained health workers and volunteers have provided life-saving services to more than 1,000 people with their newly acquired skills, and continue to provide support even after the project period. The project advocated for and supported the Ministry of Health and Population/National Health Training Center (NHTC) development of the National Basic Life Saving (BLS) Curriculum, and an ambulance management policy focused on type-B services with dispatch center.

The positive results of this program led the Ministry of Health and Population to roll out basic life support training to health workers, allocate budget to establish dispatch centers in each province, and direct districts to procure a type-B ambulances. The success of this project was thanks in part to a partnership with McGill University, Canada, National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS), Nepal, and Dhulikhel Hospital Kathmandu University.



## Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) – Violence Prevention and Child Protection (VPCP)

While PGI is at the center of every project, the Violence Prevention and Child Protection project takes this commitment even further.

The project established child-friendly spaces in **12** health facilities in the Kavrepalanchok district to support mothers who need to access healthcare services.

Nepal Red Cross Society also designed lesson cards to provide information and inform communities about violence prevention and gender equality, as well as recruited “gender champions” who are mobilized to raise awareness of these issues in their communities. PGI components are mainstreamed in each project and program of the Nepal Red Cross Society. Further, a survivor-centered approach referral pathway, the Nepal Red Cross Society child protection policy, and child-friendly space guideline have been developed.

## Comprehensive Community Based Health Program (CCBHP)

The Comprehensive Community Based Health Program, which began in 2020, aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people through a community-based approach to health. It is expected that the project will strengthen local and national health systems of Nepal. It works through providing equipment to health facilities, enhancing the capacity of government health workers, and increasing the emergency health preparedness and response capacity of local government, and Nepal Red Cross Society and its branches. The project intends to provide equitable access to health care services, promote gender equity and healthy gender norms. The program implementation is in partnership with Swiss Red Cross.

# COVID-19 preparedness and response

Canadian Red Cross extended support to the Nepal Red Cross Society for COVID-19 preparedness and response immediately in early 2020. The support was provided to initiate a community-based surveillance system, infection prevention and control, case investigation and contact tracing, vaccination rollout, and volunteer mobilization for health and hygiene awareness, which included a Red Cross Emergency Clinic deployment.

Further to these initiatives, Canadian Red Cross provided oxygen generating plants to two district hospitals as lifesaving interventions. These provided vital support as an acute shortage of **oxygen supplies** was impacting patient care in Nepal.



## Construction of Dhunche Semi-Permanent Hospital

The reconstruction of the District Hospital of Rasuwa was a key priority to strengthen the health care system in the district. The District Hospital was destroyed in the 2015 earthquake.

Canadian Red Cross supported construction of the Rasuwa District Hospital and staff quarters over the period of 2016-18.

The hospital was handed over to the Ministry of Health and Population on April 23, 2018.



## No health without mental health: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

The National Mental Health Survey in Nepal (2019-2020) reported that 10 per cent of respondents had a mental illness in their lifetime and 4.3 per cent had a current mental illness. The prevalence of mental illness and suicidal thoughts among adolescents was 3.9 per cent according to the survey.

In order to address the issue, Canadian Red Cross has supported the Nepal Red Cross Society to implement programmes for improving mental health care in the Chitwan district. These programs aim to support aim to support the mental health needs of youth and adolescents by decreasing mental health-related stigma and increasing their mental health care-seeking behaviour.

This project builds on a child-focused mental health project with the Korean Red Cross. It extends reach to youth and adolescents beyond schools and provides mental health supports into the community.

In addition, the project aims to reach and engage adolescents and youth through different social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp), and promote the National Suicide Prevention toll-free helpline.

## Strengthening Climate Resilient Health System Project

Climate change is a major global threat to human health and puts tremendous pressure on health systems. A health system should be capable of responding to the healthcare needs of people affected by climate change. Therefore, a resilient health system is crucial to enhancing, maintaining, and restoring people's health.

Since 2024, Canadian Red Cross has supported Nepal Red Cross Society with implementing the Climate Resilient Health System project.

The project aims to increase resilience and improve readiness of healthcare systems to be able to provide quality healthcare services during and after disasters.

The project is expected to strengthen health system capacities to ensure quality of health services in disasters, as well as reduce the incidence of diseases through appropriate early detection, preventive, and curative services.

# Conclusion

The Canadian Red Cross has provided approximately \$27 million in support of Nepal Red Cross Society response and recovery projects and programs, either bilaterally or through a consortium with other Red Cross National Societies. Canadian Red Cross has worked with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and partner National Societies, including Swiss Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Korean National Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and others to implement this programming.

Through the Nepal Red Cross Society and Canadian Red Cross partnership, health interventions during earthquake response and recovery phases have played a critical role in reducing mortality and morbidity associated with emergencies and crises in target communities. Further, the Rural Emergency and Trauma System Strengthening (RETSS), the Reproductive Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) and the Red Cross Emergency Clinic (RCEC) projects were instrumental in creating a strong foundation for preparedness, response, and risk reduction initiatives to build the health and wellbeing of communities in vulnerable situations.

The technical and physical capacities of government health facilities are enhanced and as a result are better equipped to respond to health emergencies in an effective and efficient manner. Nepal Red Cross Society has been well positioned, having essential manuals, guidelines, a pool of trained health professionals, essential equipment, and institutional mechanisms for responding to health emergencies. Further, the Nepal Red Cross Society-Canadian Red Cross partnership was vital in increasing access to reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health services in remote parts of project districts.

The projects have reached more than **300 health facilities** in six earthquake-affected districts, and more than **2.5 million people** have benefited.

Work being done through the partnership has been appreciated and acknowledged by stakeholders, including Ministry of Health of Population. The projects have been able to achieve remarkable milestones in health. The image of the Nepal Red Cross Society at the local, national, and international levels has been raised. However, there are still unmet needs in health and emerging issues yet to be addressed. To help address this, the Canadian Red Cross is looking for funding from Movement partners, governments, individuals and other donor communities to help enable continued programming with Nepal Red Cross Society. Continued programming will aim to address the unmet needs of the population and sustain outcomes that have been achieved to date, including:



**Improve maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health**



**Strengthen prehospital care services and manage the ambulance services effectively**



**Train emergency response teams in disease outbreak management to support responding during health and other emergencies.**



**Manage communicable and non-communicable disease**



**Strengthen the Nepal Red Cross Society volunteer and staff capacity to carry out effective health operations**



**Focus on health impacts of climate change**



**Contribute to develop resilient communities**



**Strengthen the healthcare system**

## Story 1

# How the skills of Basic Life Support helped an Auxiliary Nurse Mid-wife from rural Nepal to save lives



Rama Devi Neupane, 33, is an Auxiliary Nurse Mid-wife working at Fatakshila Health Post in Sindhupalchowk district of Nepal. On December 3, 2019, Rama Devi and colleagues from the Fatakshila Health Post received BLS training organized by the Nepal Red Cross Society with support from Canadian Red Cross.

One year after the training, Rama shares two cases where she successfully performed CPR on patients and saved their lives.

One day, Rama was walking along a street with her child. While passing by a house she noticed a person lying on the floor of a house, she approached the site and realized that the person was unconscious. The person had no pulse and was not breathing. From her basic life-saving training, Rama knew that it was a case of cardiac arrest. She asked her child to take a few steps backward and started to perform CPR. After some rounds of CPR, the person started to breathe. She immediately called an ambulance and requested to transfer the person to the nearby health facility.

Rama's child proudly shared this story of their "super-mother" with friends and teachers at school. Rama says she was happy to be able to save a life and also make her child proud of her.

**"I was so thankful to the Nepal Red Cross Society that day for empowering me with such life-saving skills."**

**– Rama Devi Neupane, Auxiliary Nurse Mid-wife**

In another incident, Rama encountered a case where an infant choked on mother's milk while breast-feeding. During the basic life-saving training, Rama had also learned how to handle cases of choking in an infant. Therefore, with confidence, Rama performed the skills she had learned and was able to save the baby.

These two events have filled Rama with joy and satisfaction about her job and her contribution to the community.

She highly recommends that health workers at all health facilities should be trained in essential life-saving skills. The training would empower them to be able to improve the health condition of people in the community and save lives in case of emergency.

## Story 2

# The importance of type-B ambulance to save lives during transportation to hospital

*The below story comes from a paramedic with the Nepal Red Cross Society.*



Photo credit: Bhojraj Ojha, NRCS

It was the cold month of Magh; I was at home keeping myself warm with burning wood. At around 6:30 p.m. I got a call asking about the availability of an ambulance. When I confirmed that an ambulance was available, I was told that the caller's father fell and had his head severely injured. I informed him that we would reach there as soon as possible and told him not to panic.

After ending the phone call, I called the ambulance driver Mr. Ganesh and started towards the informed location. The location was nearby, yet due to bad road conditions, we reached there after an hour.

We rushed towards the place where the incident took place and saw blood coming out from the head of the shivering patient.

With the help of the driver, the injured patient was transferred to the ambulance.

Gauge padding and bandaging was used to try and stop the bleeding. Due to the bleeding, the patient's blood pressure was low. The patient was covered with a blanket and injected with Diclofenac, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug, to minimize pain.

With the patient and his son, we started moving towards the hospital. The bumpy road caused the bleeding to increase. I was scared to see the condition, yet I consoled the patient's son on the way.

At around 9 p.m., poor visibility and difficult roads caused the driver to lose his way. The patient's

bleeding was worsening. I checked his blood pressure, which was dangerously low. I started an IV and gave him oxygen. I was continuously compressing the bleeding. The patient's son was panicking and crying, while whispering that we wouldn't make it in time.

I requested the Dispatch center for help with our location. The Dispatch center located our ambulance near Dolalghat area and gave us directions.

**The bleeding wasn't stopping, so I used what I was taught in EMT training and injected Tranzemic acid IV to the patient. It was already 10:30 p.m. Slowly the bleeding stopped, which gave us a little bit of hope.**

At 11:00 p.m., we finally reached Dhulikhel Hospital and rushed towards the Emergency Ward.

I provided all the history and transportation details to the doctor. My clothes were covered in the patient's blood. The doctor was happy to see the procedures I had done and the stable patient condition.

The patient was out of danger and further care was ongoing at this hospital. I was satisfied with the patient's care and the good comments by the doctor. Then I realized that if the Patient's attendant's call was answered by a smaller ambulance without medical staff, the patient would have most likely not survived.

## Story 3

# Creating child-friendly environments in rural Nepal

*The below story was written by Kathy Mueller from the Canadian Red Cross*

Colourful mats line the floor, dolls sit in anticipation of being played with, building blocks stand at the ready, and puzzles lay piled waiting to be put together.

These are rooms any child would want to play in – brightly painted Child Friendly Spaces, created by the Nepal Red Cross Society following the 2015 earthquake, with funding support from the Canadian Red Cross.

A component of the Violence Prevention and Response Project, there are 12 Child Friendly Spaces in total, located in rural health posts which were rebuilt by the Red Cross in Kavre District after the deadly quake. The spaces were established in the hopes of encouraging more regular visits to rural health posts by parents and their children and were constructed following consultation and coordination with the Ministry of Health at the district level, managers of the health posts, and communities themselves – including children, to ensure they would meet local needs.

**“Before, the children were scared of us. They saw us only as an immunization centre where they would get needles,”** said Yadunath Chapagain, a Senior Auxiliary Health Worker at the health post in Jyamdi. **“But now, with so many toys to play with, they are happy to see us.”**

The spaces are a hit. An average of 2 to 3 children use the inside facilities daily where there are more than 30 toys and learning materials for them to use. During times of immunization, that can jump up

to 15 children a day. There is also complementary outdoor equipment that includes a swing and slide which are used by children in the area, whether they are patients or not. The Child Friendly Spaces also provide a venue for mothers to come together and chat.

“Mothers now find it much easier to manage their children when they’re visiting a health post because there are activities to keep them occupied and engaged. This also helps to improve the health care service provided and results in people coming in more often,” said health care workers, who also received training on child rights, child protection, and how to maintain a child-friendly environment at the clinics.

With visits to the health facilities now occurring more frequently, health workers are also able to more regularly assess the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of the children, and offer advice to parents.

One challenge facing the Red Cross is identifying permanent locations for the Child Friendly Spaces. Currently, toys and learning materials are spread out in delivery rooms, but new areas will need to be identified once those delivery rooms become operational.

The Red Cross isn’t worried. “We have already succeeded in that we have more people coming more regularly to the health posts. This is improving access to maternal and child health care”. “Our goal is to ensure these Child Friendly Spaces continue to provide their valuable service. The people of rural Nepal are counting on it.” “The children often don’t want to return the toys, dolls, or colouring books once they’ve played with them,” said Ramesh Neupane, Programme Manager with the Canadian Red Cross. “We can live with that challenge if it means more children are coming to health posts.”

## Story 4

# Red Cross helped to understand waste management



The Dole village is situated in a remote community in one of the rural municipalities of Aishelukhara in the Khotang district. Like other villages in Nepal, Dole villagers were not aware of recycled waste and non-biodegradable waste.

Staff from the Nepal Red Cross Society organized an orientation session during the sanitation campaign week among the health mothers' group, a group of mothers recognized by the authority. The locals took part in the meeting as well. The Nepal Red Cross Society personnel covered the many trash categories in the campaign. The team's primary focus was on recyclable and non-recyclable garbage, and how these distinct types of waste ultimately require time to break down and cause environmental degradation.

“During the discussion in that campaign, the Nepal Red Cross Society team gave an idea of making a dustbin using bamboo and placing it in different prime location of the community where [trash is]. I liked the idea so during the same campaign, I along with the other active members of the community, prepared five bamboo dustbins. These dustbins are used by all the communities' people thus improving our surroundings and environment. Now, we are happy at least that this waste is not ending up in our fields, roads, and everywhere.

I have also heard **another municipality adopted this idea** as they learned we succeed in collecting the waste.”  
- Ishak Rai, community volunteer

All waste is placed in the dustbin, and some assigned active members to empty the dustbins often. This campaign helped improve the situation or a rural community with no proper waste management system for recyclable and non-biodegradable waste. Advocacy from the Nepal Red Cross Society and the community are being made to local government to find permanent sustainable waste management solutions for the future

“**We are very thankful** that the Nepal Red Cross Society team gave us the idea, which was local and easily accessible. The team is planning to add a few more dustbins in other prime locations too. Thus, we would like to thank the CCBHP program for this initiation.” - Chairman Aishelukhara rural municipalities



## Story 5

# Fearful bystander becomes a confident and capable first-aid responder

Esha Nepal (name changed), 22, resides in Diktel RM with her family. Where they live is a remote area, taking two hours by foot for her family to reach the nearest hospital. Living on a beautiful yet secluded hill, Esha faced the constant worry of emergencies, amplified by the remote location of the district hospital.

The Comprehensive Community Based Health Program (CCBHP) implemented in her municipality marked a turning point in her life, offering her the chance to participate in **first aid training**.

Esha was eager to empower herself and her community and she enrolled in the training. Little she did know was that this newfound skill would soon be tested in an emergency at home. One day her younger brother began to choke, and everyone around started panicking. The hospital was far, and there was no time to get there.

Esha, with her new first aid skills stepped confidently forward, executed the lifesaving skill, cleared her brother's airway, and **saved his life**.

Her journey started with this personal triumph which then expanded to providing first aid in several emergencies in her community, including to people with broken bones. She also ensured timely referral of the cases to hospitals. Her transformation from a fearful bystander into a confident and capable first responder was a huge achievement for the CCBHP.

Recognizing the need for change, Esha took on the role of an educator in her community. She addressed prevalent misconceptions in administering first aid by sharing her knowledge and encouraging others to adopt proper techniques.

Her efforts sparked a positive shift in the community's approach to first aid, **touching the lives of many**.

A local hero was born through the first-aid training provided by the CCBHP. Her story shows that with the right skills and determination, fear transforms to confidence and uncertainty into empowerment. Esha not only saved a life within her family, but also became a catalyst for positive change.

## Story 6

# CCBHP helped in reviving and regularizing Health Mother's Group meeting



Photo credit: Prabin Shrestha, NRCS

My name is Goma Adhikari. For the past 22 years, I have been working as a community health volunteer in Diktel Rupakot Majhuwagadi Municipality ward 4 of Khotang district. My mother's group is called Pancharangi Health Mother's Group and is affiliated with the Khalle Health Post. The Health Mother's Group consists of 31 members.

This **Health Mother's Group** was formed with the purpose of conducting regular meetings to discuss Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) related issues, and other health-related topics, including vaccinations and more.

On March 22, 2022, the Comprehensive Community Based Health Program (CCBHP) implemented by the Nepal Red Cross Society Khotang conducted an awareness session for us. This session focused on the purposes and importance of regular Health Mother's Group meetings. The CCBHP team also discussed some important topics, like danger signs during pregnancy and postpartum, Acute Respiratory Infection, and vaccine-preventable diseases. They also discussed how sharing experiences can help other mothers with decision-making, so have included this in every meeting. The sessions are facilitated by the CCBHP staff and trained volunteers.

Since that first awareness session, we have been meeting regularly and discussing many health issues and vaccine related campaigns which have aided in raising awareness and supporting health-seeking behaviour of the women and their households. We started discussing all the possible health issues, and ongoing health- and vaccine-related campaigns, which have aided in raising awareness and health-seeking behaviour of the women and their households. In addition, I regularly consult with a CCBHP social mobilizer and health post for any problems that are difficult to address.

Despite years of experience as a volunteer, I have **learned many new things** from the CCBHP and its team to support the Health Mother's Group.

This project assisted us in reviving and standardizing our Health Mother's Group, which had been inactive for some time. These changes were possible with the help of the CCBHP, and we would like to thank the team and expect innovative activities to further support and strengthen the Health Mother's Group in the future.

## Story 7

# Fight for justice

I am Pushpa (name changed), a 22-year resident of Diktel Rupakot Majhuwagadhi Municipality-1, Matikore. I am an unmarried girl studying for my Bachelor degree and in my second year.

I am a member of Sakriye Health Mother group at Matikore. The Red Cross had conducted many awareness sessions for the Health Mother's Group including on sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV). I am aware about the way of getting justice in cases of violence because of the session. One day I was sexually abused by a close relative, which was difficult for me to tolerate.

I was in the session conducted by Nepal Red Cross Society and aware of the One Stop Crisis Management Centre and the referral pathway. I used the services, and the perpetrator was punished.

**I feel I got justice.**

In many similar situations, I had seen cases dismissed, but the session conducted by the Nepal Red Cross Society made me brave enough to report my concerns to the authority.

**I would like to thank the Nepal Red Cross Society** for the awareness created by them and request to reach out to society too.



Photo credit: NRCS DC, Khotang

## Story 8

# Thanks to the Nepal Red Cross Society Cash Support Program!

Srijan, 32, lives with her 15-year-old son, and three daughters, 15, 13, and 4, in Diktel Rupakot Majhuwagadhi-1, Diktel, Khotang.

“I am a single mother. Our only income generator, my husband, passed away a few months back due to electrical short circuits; he was a carpenter. **After the death of my husband, I had to struggle to look after my four children and for my livelihood.**”



I had to rely fully on agriculture, despite it being insufficient and food lasted only three months for our family. I was compelled to work as a laborer to meet my family’s basic needs.”

The Nepal Red Cross Society cash support program from early 2024 provided a cash grant of 10,000 Nepalese Rupees (CAD 1,000) to her. This money helped her buy livestock to improve her livelihood. Srijana B.K. bought a goat and a pig.

“Being a Dalit single woman with no continuous source of income, it is an everyday challenge for me to raise the children and meet the minimum standard of my family including food security. After support from Nepal Red Cross Society to buy livestock, I plan to generate income by rearing this goat and pig. I am hopeful that this support will make major changes in my life. I am very thankful to Nepal Red Cross Society for supporting without discrimination. This improves my livelihood in long run, and I can take care of myself and my children.”

Sirjana is just one among many people who have received cash support through the CCBHP run by the Nepal Red Cross Society in six municipalities of three districts of Nepal. Such programs can bring significant change to people’s lives.

## Story 9

# A triumph of light: Bandana Pun's journey to vision



Photo credit: Gokarna Shrestha, NRCS

In the quaint village of Tarakhola, a remarkable success story unfolded during a health and screening campaign organized by the Nepal Red Cross CCBHP team in June 2023. Among the participants was one-year-old Bandana Pun, a child whose world was shrouded in darkness due to congenital cataracts.

The screening campaign's mission was to **identify and address health issues** within the community.

It had a special focus on people in vulnerable situations like Bandana. During this campaign, medical professionals discovered Bandana's condition.

Many partners worked together to bring rapid treatment to young Bandana. With the diagnosis in hand, the medical team arranged for Bandana to receive the necessary treatment. Only a week later, the doors of Himalayan Hospital Pokhara welcomed Bandana ready to perform the procedure that would change her life forever.

**The journey towards restoration did not end with surgery.** Understanding the significance of regular follow-ups, the medical team scheduled the first one for early July, with further follow-ups planned for the following weeks.

The dedication of the team ensured that Bandana received the necessary care and attention on her path to recovery. Bandana's mother, Bhima Pun, could not contain her gratitude and respect for all those who played a part in her child's transformation.

With a heart full of appreciation, Bhima Pun said, "Before, she couldn't identify and play with her friends; nowadays, she started seeing slowly."

The Nepal Red Cross Society CCBHP Baglung, Tarakhola rural municipality and Ward Office, Netra Jyoti Sang, and Hila Health Post were the driving forces behind the success of this journey, and support from various organizations, including Canadian Red Cross, Nepal Red Cross Society Head Quarters, and District Chapter.

Their collective support made it possible for Bandana to embrace a new phase in her life. This success story stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and community-driven healthcare initiatives. The unity and dedication of the organizations involved in the campaign exemplify the impact that can be achieved when people come together for a common cause.

As Bandana's mother, Bhima Pun, extends her heartfelt appreciation, she vows never to forget the invaluable contribution made by the Nepal Red Cross Society.



Photo credit: Tilak Shrestha, NRCS

## Story 10

# Working during COVID-19

*Lok Maya Thapa is the focal person for the Comprehensive Community-Based Health Program (CCBHP) in the Khotang District for the Nepal Red Cross Society.*

I've worked in the Nepal Red Cross Society Khotang District Chapter for 16 years and have been involved in many disaster responses, with water, sanitation and hygiene related projects and programs. **Responding to COVID-19 was something completely new to me.**

In August 2020, the COVID-19 case load was rapidly increasing in the district. Work was being done to try to contain the virus, but one crucial step hadn't yet been taken: contact tracing. Realizing its importance — during festival season, 22 positive COVID-19 cases were found — the Nepal Red Cross Society held a virtual orientation for program staff.

The two-hour orientation helped me, seven volunteers, and health personnel from municipalities understand the process of contact tracing. Together we formed the Case Investigation and Contact Tracing team. Each of us did contact tracing and follow up for eight cases during the festival seasons in the district. Even as the cases rose to 62 over the next two weeks, we were able to track the contacts of people with symptoms and refer them for testing.

**We managed to contain the cases** through regular follow up with those in isolation at home, by quarantining close contacts, and communicating with the health coordinator in the municipality if further support was needed.

Those who tested positive and their contacts were provided with psychosocial support throughout their quarantine period. They told me this helped ease their stress and reduced the fear of the disease. Some even invented a new term for us: a "COVID-19 capsule," meaning that a few minutes of talking with us helped them heal their mind like a medicinal pill does for the body.

This was a very new experience for me and a new approach for the Nepal Red Cross Society. It was effective, but not without its challenges. Everyone was scared of the risks posed by COVID-19.

"Our neighbors had started neglecting us. They wouldn't even come up to our doorsteps. That made me and my family very depressed. I thought I would die from this deadly disease," said one of the people the volunteers supported. "But me and my family felt good when you came regularly to talk with us. I felt cared for and learned a lot about the diseases and our responsibility to control its spread."

Those who tested positive weren't the only people to struggle with distrust from the community. The other volunteers and I began to be seen as a possible threat too because of our regular contact with people who had COVID-19. We have a great team though that met regularly to talk about how everyone was coping and to share tips on dealing with any issues that came up.

**Also, by providing information to communities about COVID-19 we started seeing less fear and stigma.**

Khotang District is doing well, thanks in part to our team of volunteers. The voices of the people we serve are my constant motivation. While it hasn't been easy, the COVID-19 response showed me that I can learn how to adapt and work in challenging environments with increased risks. It's shown me that we all can.

## Story 11

# Nepal Red Cross Society Comprehensive Community Based Health Program (CCBHP) innovative solution

In the rural district of Nawalparasi-west, the Nepal Red Cross Society and the CCBHP are actively involved in community-level activities aimed at promoting health, hygiene, and overall well-being. However, during the working session that coincides with the rice-planting season in the Ashar month, the teams faced difficulties in gathering community members for their activities and meetings. As more than 90 per cent of the community members were busy with planting rice crops, it was challenging to find individuals to participate in scheduled sessions.

In response, the Nepal Red Cross Society and the CCBHP Nawalparasi-west team came up with an **innovative solution**.

They decided to organize their community sessions and mother group meetings directly in the farming fields where community members were actively working. By conducting sessions amidst the farmers' activities, the team ensured maximum participation and engagement.

The Nepal Red Cross Society and the CCBHP team used time during the resting and snack breaks that naturally occur during fieldwork to deliver sessions on important topics such as safe drinking water, handwashing, and personal hygiene. This strategic decision not only made the sessions more accessible, but also enhanced effectiveness. Community members could immediately apply the knowledge they gained to their work practices and daily lives.

The sessions conducted in the farming areas provided a **unique opportunity** for the Nepal Red Cross Society and CCBHP team to connect with the community on a more personal level.

The farmers appreciated the teams' efforts to reach out to them in their working environment, actively participating in the discussions, and sharing their experiences and challenges. This collaborative approach fostered a sense of ownership among the community members, who realized the relevance and importance of the topics discussed.

Furthermore, conducting sessions in the farming areas allowed the Nepal Red Cross Society and CCBHP team to observe and assess the actual working conditions and practices of the farmers. This first-hand experience provided valuable insights that could be incorporated into future interventions and programs, ensuring they are tailored to the specific needs and realities of the community.



# From disaster to development: Institutional capacity building through the Comprehensive Community Based Health Project (CCBHP)

*The below story was written by a Project Coordinator, CCBHP with the Nepal Red Cross Society.*

The Canadian Red Cross has supported the CCBHP, which has advanced activities by maintaining **close relationships with the community and local bodies.**

This includes significant support for the creation and implementation of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Framework, Health Policy 2022-2030, Health Strategy 2022-2030, and the Health Operational Plan 2022-2025. Additionally, support has been extended for the creation of the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy - 2022, and the implementation of the Nepal Red Cross Society's Safeguarding Mechanism. This support has greatly facilitated health-related activities conducted by the Nepal Red Cross Society.

Furthermore, the provincial offices, district branches, and sub-branches of the Nepal Red Cross Society have undertaken various activities, significantly enhancing their capacity in the health sector. Examples include constructing and maintaining training halls and warehouses in the district branches of Khotang, Baglung, and Nawalparasi districts, and supporting daily office operations. Volunteers have been trained for future deployment through various programs at the district level. The initiative has also fostered strong relationships between district branches and governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, aiding in future coordination and cooperation.

Through the CCBHP, capacity has grown in the communities where the program is implemented. The program has created and implemented emergency health preparedness and response plans at the municipal level, enhancing local response capabilities. Additionally, community access to health institutions has significantly increased by providing various health-related trainings for municipal health workers, supplying birthing centres with health equipment, and managing essential service facilities in health posts, such as child-friendly spaces and breastfeeding corners. This program has also streamlined coordination with agencies under the Ministry of Health across different levels of government.

Moreover, various community-level trainings have enhanced the capacity of local health mother's groups, health institution management committees, junior and youth Red Cross circles, teachers, women's health volunteers, and Red Cross sub-branches in health and sanitation, disease prevention, and emergency health preparedness.

Therefore, we highly respect and appreciate the financial and technical support provided by the Canadian Red Cross to the Nepal Red Cross Society Central Office, various districts, provinces, and communities, especially in the health sector, through the comprehensive community-based health program.

## Story 13

# A journey to wellness: The story of Anjali

Anjali (name changed), 16, is a bright, ambitious girl from the Chitwan district who is always keen to be studying. Her final exam of Class 10 (known as Secondary Education Examination) was approaching, and she was focusing on her studies.

However, one day while in the classroom, her heart started to beat faster, she felt heavy in her chest, had difficulty in breathing and **fainted**.

She was rushed to the hospital and her mother was informed. Anjali was examined in the hospital, but no physical abnormalities were identified.

Since then, her panic attacks became frequent and made it difficult for her to focus on her studies and prepare for the upcoming exams. They came suddenly with no clues, and left her breathless, sweating, scared, and unable to focus or do anything at all. She started to miss her classes and began to push away her family and friends. The stress of the fear of doing poorly in exams further contributed to her anxiety. Gradually she started having thoughts of suicide and found herself caught in a cycle that seemed impossible to break.

Anjali's teacher learned about the Psychological Support Services (PSS) and counselling offered by the Nepal Red Cross Society Chitwan, with financial and technical support from Korean Red Cross and Canadian Red Cross. With the consent from her mother, the schoolteacher made a call and arranged for an appointment with a Nepal Red Cross Society psychologist. Initially she was reluctant to participate. She had lots of questions and hesitation, but after two or three sessions she began her journey to recovery.

She shared that she had been sexually abused by relatives a few months earlier.

The Red Cross psychologist listened to her **empathetically and patiently**, helping her understand that panic attacks were a reaction to the trauma. She was taught techniques of managing anxiety through breathing, mindfulness, and positive visualization.

She was also helped to reach out for legal help from Chitwan Police office and was referred to the psychiatrist. She now has regular counselling sessions and other PSS support from the Red Cross team, including sensitization provided to her family.

Anjali started feeling a change. She learned to recognize her triggers and build coping mechanisms to overcome her anxiety. Gradually, her panic attacks have become less frequent and intense.

With the stability, Anjali went back to her studies. She planned out a schedule for studying, balancing the workload against the relaxation techniques and self-care skills learned from her counsellor.

The Red Cross team followed up, further guiding and encouraging her. Today, Anjali plans to raise awareness regarding mental health issues in the community through sharing her story with people.

She has the dream to work in the humanitarian sector and **wants to help others the way Red Cross helped her**.

## Story 14

# The Evolution of Red Cross Emergency Clinic in Nepal

## Red Cross Society



In 2015, Nepal faced the devastating 7.8-magnitude earthquake that shook the nation to its core and left behind widespread destruction of buildings and infrastructure. The disaster underscored Nepal's urgent need for disaster preparedness and infrastructure to protect vulnerable communities.

In response to this urgent call, the Nepal Red Cross Society, in collaboration with the Canadian Red Cross, embarked on a transformative journey.

The initial challenges highlighted the **critical need for emergency health services**, prompting the deployment of an emergency field hospital to bolster the Nepal Red Cross Society's capacity in health emergency response.

Learning from these experiences paved the way for innovation. The collaboration evolved the Basic Health Clinic-Light concept into the Red Cross Emergency Clinic (RCEC) in 2016. This new initiative was designed to swiftly address potential water-borne disease outbreaks and seamlessly integrate into disaster responses. Officially launched in January 2017, the RCEC marked a significant milestone in Nepal's healthcare, emergency preparedness, and response capabilities.

Equipped for rapid deployment within 24 to 48 hours across the country, the RCEC remained on standby throughout its operational phase, poised to respond to critical health emergencies. During this period there were no outbreaks of water-borne diseases, however the adaptability of the RCEC proved invaluable in responding to various other health crises.

The success of the RCEC was a testament to the Nepal Red Cross Society's commitment to proactive disaster preparedness and effective humanitarian response. It sets a benchmark for emergency healthcare provision not only in Nepal but also as a model for similar contexts worldwide. The modular customization of the RCEC further enhanced its versatility and readiness for future deployments.

**Support from Canadian Red Cross was instrumental** in providing both financial backing and technical expertise.

This support facilitated an eight-year transition process that enabled the Nepal Red Cross Society to become a local expert in emergency field deployments, capable of providing culturally sensitive, cost-effective, and rapid responses tailored to Nepal's unique context.

Today, the Nepal Red Cross Society boasts a well-equipped unit with 59-trained personnel ready to respond at a moment's notice. Since its inception in 2017, the RCEC has been deployed 14 times for example: in Earthquake, Dengue, and Festival to various emergencies, providing vital health services to more than 17,000 patients.

Looking ahead, continuous capacity-building efforts remain crucial for sustaining these achievements and reinforcing the RCEC's pivotal role in Nepal's emergency response framework. The Nepal Red Cross Society's ongoing commitment ensures that it remains a reliable and adaptive healthcare provider, ready to confront any future challenges with resilience and compassion.



Photo credit: NRCs Province Office, Gandaki

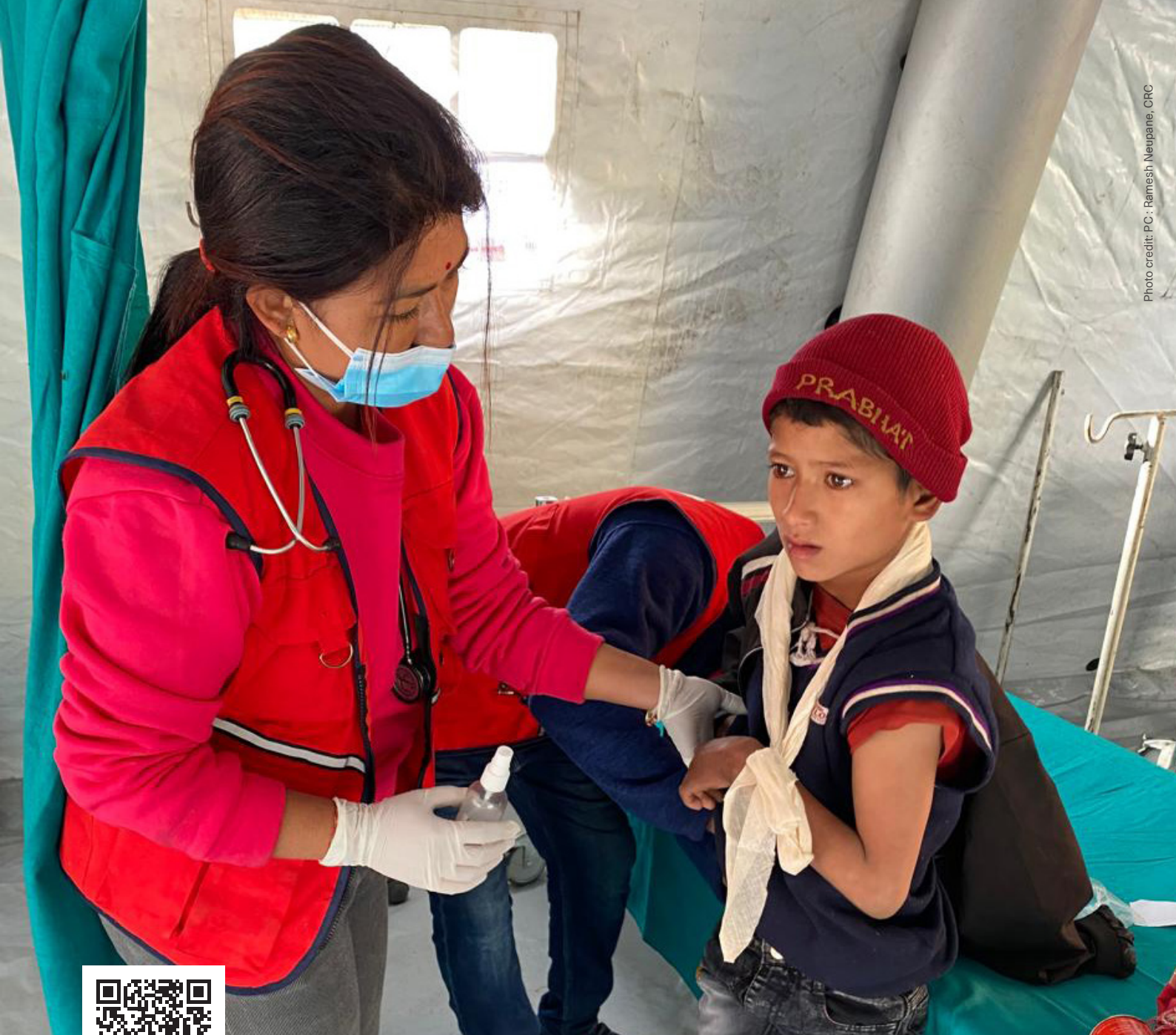


Photo credit: P.C.: Ramesh Neupane, CRC



For more stories

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The decade-long partnership between the Canadian Red Cross and the Nepal Red Cross Society has evolved into a deep and multi-dimensional relationship characterized by mutual support, shared responsibility, and a commitment to long-term sustainability. The impact of the Canadian Red Cross's initiatives in capacity building, health system strengthening, emergency response, and addressing emerging health challenges as a crucial partner to the Nepal Red Cross Society, enhancing both organizations' ability to respond to the needs of the Nepalese population. This strong foundation paves the way for continued collaboration and success in future endeavours.

**Mona Aryal,**  
Director Health Service Department  
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Photo credit: PC : Prabin Shrestha, NRCS



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Photo credit: PC: Deepak Pokhrel, NRCS

# FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Our network is vast, but our approach is simple.

All Red Cross programs and activities are guided by the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. These principles allow us to provide help immediately to whoever needs it, wherever they are, whatever their race, political beliefs, religion, social status, or culture.

## Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

## Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

## Neutrality

To continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

## Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

## Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

## Unity

There can only be one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

## Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is world-wide.

## GET IN TOUCH

