

# 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.<sup>1</sup>



**43%** of currently married women are using a modern method of contraception.<sup>2</sup>



**21%** of currently married women have an unmet need for family planning services.<sup>2</sup>



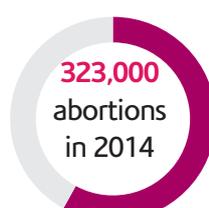
**2 in 5** women of reproductive age are aware about the legalization of abortion in Nepal.<sup>3</sup>



**29%** of facilities that offers normal vaginal delivery services have medical abortion service and **11%** offers comprehensive abortion care service.<sup>4</sup>



**50%** of pregnancies are unintended and among them **62%** ended in abortion.<sup>5</sup>



It is estimated that **323,000** abortions were conducted in 2014, **58%** of them were conducted in clandestine manner.<sup>5</sup>

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
- **Provincial Level:** Ministry of Health, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Social Development, Provincial Health Directorates, Provincial Health Training Centers, Provincial Human Resource Development Center, Provincial Health Logistic Management Centers, Health Office: Districts

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 Health 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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2. Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal; New ERA; and ICF. 2022. Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022: Key Indicators Report. Kathmandu, Nepal: Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal

3. Ministry of Health, Nepal; New ERA; and ICF. 2017. Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Kathmandu, Nepal: Ministry of Health, Nepal.

4. Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal; New ERA, Nepal; and ICF. Nepal Health Facility Survey 2021 Final Report. 2022. Kathmandu, Nepal: Ministry of Health and Population, Kathmandu; New ERA, Nepal; and ICF, Rockville, Maryland, USA.

5. Puri M, Singh S, Sundaram A, Hussain R, Tamang A, Crowell M. Abortion Incidence and Unintended Pregnancy in Nepal. Int Perspect Sex Reprod Health. 2016 Dec 1;42(4):197-209. doi: 10.1363/42e2116. PMID: 28825899; PMCID: PMC5568822.

# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION MILESTONES

2019

2020

2021

2022

## OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR STRENGTHENING AND INTEGRATING SRHR INTO UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

### Leadership and Governance

 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

### Health Workforce

 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

#### 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 4: SRHR ESSENTIAL SERVICES INCLUDED IN THE BENEFITS PACKAGE OF MAJOR NATIONAL HEALTH FINANCING MECHANISMS

### Health Financing

 Assessment of health financing mechanism including free schemes for sexual and reproductive health completed

#### OUTCOME

Strengthening health financing and reducing Out of Pocket (OOP) expenditure for SRHR services were recommended

## OBJECTIVE 5: STRENGTHEN HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR SRHR INDICATORS

### Health Information

 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

### Medical Products and technologies

 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
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Social Behavior Change Communication Strategy 2022-2026



### ASSESSMENT REPORTS

- Strengthening SRHR in Pre-service Education of Doctor, Nurse and Midwives: 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



Leadership for achieving universal access to SRHR

National SRHR TWC

Provincial SRHR TWC, Bagmati Province

Stakeholders to strengthen pre-service education

Manikins and equipments handover for setting up simulation labs

Faculties' training on simulation based education at Purbanchal University

Government officials at skills lab, Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences

Students practicing SRHR skills on simulation modules, Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences