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Migrants at a holding centre in Kathmandu providing their full address to Nepal Army officials who are responsible to maintain records, supervise and monitor holding centres and quarantine facilities across the country in coordination with local Governments (11 June 2020).

Overview

Thousands of Nepali migrants are returning from India every day following the relaxation of lockdown by the Government of India effective 1 June 2020. Similarly, the Government of Nepal has initiated repatriation of migrants from abroad in early June with a total of 15,481 arrivals as of 2 July 2020. Due to these factors among others, Nepal saw a significant increase in COVID-19 cases in the month of June. The confirmed number of cases stands at 14,519 with 31 deaths as of 2 July 2020.

With regards to repatriation from abroad, the Government of Nepal has prioritized the most vulnerable groups including pregnant and lactating women, children, elderly, people with disability, individuals who have lost their jobs, who were released from detention centers and have obtained approval to return. Among others, one of the major concerns of the

migrants released from detention centers was having neither a family nor a house to return to.

To address this situation, IOM Nepal, in coordination and collaboration with partner agencies, has been supporting the Government to ensure that returnees are included in all aspects of COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts.

IOM's approach is aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and, in Nepal, it comprises six thematic areas: 1) Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE); 2) Surveillance; 3) Point of Entry (POE); 4) Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM); 5) Protection; 6) Socio-Economic Recovery. Planned and ongoing activities are described in the sections below.



I. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

On 16 June 2020, to mark the International Day of Family Remittances', an op-ed by IOM Chief of Mission was featured by two media sources: [The Himalayan Times](#) and [My Republica](#). Similarly, an exclusive interview by IOM Chief of Mission was published on [Karoobar English Daily](#). Testimonies of returnee migrants who have been successfully running small scale business in their origin country were collected and shared through social media to celebrate the use of remittances. Additionally, a webinar on 'Impacts of COVID-19 on remittances and Nepali economy' was organized.

In coordination with the National Health Education Information Communication Centre (NHEICC), IOM has developed two one-minute culturally and linguistically tailored [animated videos](#).

The first animated video was produced on **facility based quarantine** in six different languages: Nepali, Newari, Tamang, Maithali, Bhojpuri and Doteli, and has been broadcasted thrice a week through Image Channel Television, as well as through three social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The second animated video was developed on anti-stigma and discrimination, where IOM involved a returnee migrant who has recently recovered from COVID-19. Similarly, the video has been shared through three social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The **reach** of the video in Facebook is **145k**.

IOM Nepal mobilized Ujyaalo radio network (having more than 250 radio stations in Nepal) to broadcast:

a) **Radio-jingles** on COVID-19 related stigma, discrimination and xenophobia reduction were developed and broadcasted until 22 June 2020 with the aim to reduce the anti-migrant sentiments in the communities. The jingles were developed in six different local languages (Nepali, Tamang, Tharu, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, and Maithali). The jingles in local languages were broadcasted in 20 FM stations in 20 districts; whereas the Nepali version of the jingle was broadcasted through more than 200 FM radio



An IOM-developed radio jingle with stigma, discrimination and fear related messages against migrants.

stations across the country. The overall **estimated reach** of the radio jingles was **10 million** nationwide.

- b) **Six migration-focused radio programs** (one on migration and health). As of 2 July 2020, a total of six radio programs have been broadcasted. The estimated **reach** of the programs is **1 million**.
- **First episode** – Theme: when will the rescue of millions of workers stranded abroad begin? Cumulative Facebook reach: 286k; Views: 52k; Engagement: 14.5k.
 - **Second episode** – Theme: problems and stress management of workers working abroad. Cumulative Facebook reach: 269k; Views: 63.4k; Engagement: 6k.
 - **Third episode** – Theme: treatment of returnees from the community and the work being done by the municipality and the central government to reduce discrimination in the society. Cumulative Facebook reach: 367k; Views: 92k; Engagement: 2k.
 - **Fourth episode** – Theme: repatriation plan, priorities and process. Cumulative Facebook reach: 466k; Views: 53k; Engagement: 668k.
 - **Fifth episode** – Theme: the impact of the Corona epidemic on remittances and Nepal's economy, what can be the current source of income for a family that is running on money from abroad? (International Day of Family Remittances) Cumulative Facebook reach: 181k; Views: 25k; Engagement: 3.5k.
 - **Sixth episode** – Theme: the health condition and health problems of Nepalis working abroad and the



- work being done by the government to solve it. Cumulative Facebook reach: 138k; Views: 18k; Engagement: 3k.

IOM Nepal also developed an [online platform “One Stop COVID-19 Information Solution for Migrants”](#) for migrants living abroad in two languages: Nepali and English.

Additionally, IOM Nepal developed and broadcasted weekly TV episodes focusing on COVID-19 preparedness and

response as a part of IOM Nepal's ongoing media action program. Seven episodes were dedicated to cover the efforts of federal, provincial and local governments for COVID-19 preparedness and response, awareness message to public and key suggestions to the government from experts on COVID-19 preparedness and response.

All episodes can be accessed here: [Episode 1](#); [Episode 2](#); [Episode 3](#); [Episode 5](#); [Episode 6](#); [Episode 7](#).



2. Surveillance

As of 30 June 2020, IOM has completed more than half of the total of rapid **phone surveys** in 753 municipalities (Palikas) in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) aimed to understand the migration and migration health situation in Nepal. The final outcome will be shared in the next SitRep.

IOM is preparing for the **Population Mobility Mapping (PMM)** in 9 selected municipalities (as shown in Figure 1) in three

provinces of Nepal, namely Province 1, 5 and Sudurpashchim Province, in partnership with Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS). The PMM is already one priority of the health emergency response plan of COVID-19 pandemic of MoHP. As of 30 June 2020, three meetings have been conducted with NRCS and the PMM team to develop data collection tools and finalize the methodology.

The PMM data collection will be divided in three stages, as shown below (Figure 2).



FIGURE 1: MAP OF NEPAL WITH HIGHLIGHTED PROVINCES AND POES TO BE ADDRESSED BY PMM

This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.



1 : Participatory Mapping Exercise

Conducted through: Facilitated group discussion with key informants (using a discussion guide, reporting table and base maps).

Outputs:

- Information on the type and locations of points of entry, population gathering sites, vulnerable hotspots and at-risk communities for public health interventions.
- Population mobility dynamics and characteristics (patterns, routes, reasons for travel, flow of travellers, etc)

FIGURE 2: DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND OUTPUTS FOR THE 3 STAGES OF DMM

2 : Site Evaluations

Conducted through: Direct observations and key informant interviews on site (using an evaluation questionnaire/form).

Outputs:

- GPS coordinates of prioritized vulnerable sites
- Estimated volume of travellers
- Additional information, depending on objectives (accessibility, existing public health measures and capacities, etc.).

3 : Flow Monitoring

Conducted through: direct interview with travellers (using a questionnaire/form)

Outputs:

- Data on the demographic and socio-economic profiles of travelers, travel intentions, health screening information (temperature, etc)

The outputs and findings of the PMM will help to:

- a) Identify all points of entry (POEs) and priority locations that are most vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 and any other health threats, as a result of trans-border flow of migrants.
- b) Identify the health and operational resources by distributing and collecting data from PMM that contain 11 groups of indicators (including border crossing points, main roads, markets, migrant

worksites, traditional healers, health facilities, transport stations, schools, places of worship, etc.) with health being central in it.

- c) Present the informants a public health message on the COVID-19 related risks and inform when, where and how to seek assistance if symptomatic, as well as to raise community awareness on public health, stigma, racism and xenophobia caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



3. Point of Entry (POE)

In order to strengthen the **capacity of the Points of Entry (POEs)** located at the three major POEs of Province 1 for screening of returning migrants from India, IOM has procured 60 units of non-touch infra-red thermometer; 3,000 coveralls; 1,000 goggles; 10,000 units of surgical masks; and 3,000 units of N95 mask and gloves.

On 18 June 2020, IOM donated a total of 25,000 units of surgical masks and 275 liters of hand sanitizer to the provincial

government of Province 1 and one local municipality, to support the POEs and holding centers.

IOM conducted a field visit on 21 June 2020 in two major POEs of Province 1 including the three major holding sites. During the visit, an assessment was done on **Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**, specifically water availability, handwashing stations, toilets, etc.



4. Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

IOM, as the leading UN agency for Province 1, supported UNRCO in conducting **rapid assessments of quarantine centres** in Province 1. In total, with the support of other agencies, IOM reached up to 130 quarantine centres in Province 1. IOM also supported UNRCO in conducting assessments of quarantine centres in Province 3.

IOM, as a member of the technical working group under **Shelter Cluster**, provided inputs and supported in developing a checklist and IEC materials on quarantine centres. The checklist is based on the Government of Nepal's standards on management and operations of quarantine centres in Nepal and WHO guidance. The checklist has been submitted to the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC) and the Ministry of Urban Development, and to be submitted to COVID-19 Crisis Management Centre (CCMC) for their consideration. The aim of this illustrative checklist is to provide guidance and support to the local levels and committees being involved in quarantine management and operations to consider key elements while establishing or upgrading existing quarantine centres.

Upon endorsement of the checklist by CCMC, the illustrative checklist will be printed out and sent to all local levels across seven provinces. IOM is also supporting to respond to the



An illustration from an IOM-developed animated video on importance of quarantine for returnee migrants and protocols to follow while in quarantine.

emerging needs and gaps on the ground and support the Government in managing the quarantine and holding centres at the POEs, while specifically targeting vulnerable populations. This will mainly be achieved through the following outputs:

- o Technical assistance to the government to manage the quarantine and holding centres through institutional and human capacity enhancement in line with global standards.
- o Distribution of essential Non-Food Items (NFIs).
- o Immediate cash support to 2,000 vulnerable migrants for travel and immediate food need.

The members of Shelter and CCCM Clusters also supported in sharing the [PSA on quarantine centres](#) with local levels across seven Provinces.



5. Protection

IOM leads the 'Migrants and POEs subgroup' under the **National Protection Cluster**. The subgroup meeting platform has brought in a range of key experts and speakers from the Government of Nepal, National Human Rights Commission, the private sector, CSOs and NGOs. As a result of the subgroup work meetings, all the protection members and participants had an opportunity to learn and become aware of migrants protection concerns related to efforts/initiatives, data and study findings, situation/challenges of labour migrants, analysis, planning and response from the institutions in relation

to migrants affected by COVID19 in the countries of destination and origin.

IOM Nepal participated in the regional labour recruiter's survey targeting **Private Recruitment Agencies (PRAs)** to better understand the COVID-19 impacts on Nepali migrant workers in major labour destination countries and PRAs in Nepal. The survey was undertaken with the objective to assist and better address the protection needs of vulnerable migrants and their families in origin and destination countries,

and also to support the private sector during and after the pandemic. IOM developed and disseminated the document **Employer and Recruiter's Guidance for Protection of Migrant Workers** during the pandemic targeting individual PRA's and Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies.

IOM Nepal continues to coordinate with IOM destination Missions especially in **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** Countries and Malaysia to support with the immediate assistance of vulnerable migrants in need in destination countries. This support includes disseminating COVID-19 awareness materials, including coordinating and mobilizing support for shelter/food/counselling to vulnerable migrants in destination countries.

IOM conducted **observation site visits** from 11 – 15 June 2020, targeting nine holding centres managed by the COVID-19 Crisis Management Committee (CCMC), in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur district. The overall objective of the visits was to observe the centres' procedure in receiving returnee migrants from the International TIA airport, including the assessment of the protection needs and concerns at the holding centres. The site visits' observations and findings will be shared amongst relevant stakeholders, including the protection cluster/subgroups, for possible interventions on the gaps, and to mobilize support and services from the concerned stakeholders and service providers.



A Nepal Army personnel assigned at a civil society organization in Kathmandu that shelters vulnerable women returnee migrants, poses with an anti-stigma placard – an IOM initiative to raise awareness against stigma (24 June 2020).

IOM has drafted the curriculum to orient frontline workers on COVID-19, prevention and protection measures, stigma discrimination, waste management, etc., to protect and raise awareness of **frontline workers (FLW)** and the returnee migrants. As of 30 June, IOM has conducted **3 training sessions** where 40 FLW (5 men and 35 women) from the shelter homes for the vulnerable female migrants and children have been oriented. Additionally, 6,000 units of masks and 30 liters of hand sanitizer were provided to protect their health and wellbeing.



6. Socio-Economic Recovery

In coordination with the UN, IOM Nepal is planning to provide immediate one-time **cash support** to 200 most vulnerable migrants with an equivalent of Nepal's minimum one month salary (approximately USD 111). In addition to this, IOM will provide recovery support of approximately USD 350 to 360 migrant families (each) in the province with the highest migration flow – Province 1. Such activities will be combined with the **mapping of private sector** companies that will hire returnee migrant workers in Province 1.

A 'Return Intention Survey' is underway to understand migrants' return intention, vulnerabilities, skills, and interest of work upon return. Furthermore, the promotion of **ethical recruitment** will be encouraged through capacity building activities of recruitment agencies on IRIS.

As part of the programme '**Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development (MM3)**', IOM aims to assist the socio-economic reintegration for migrants in Province 1 through:

- o Working with Rural Enterprise Remittances Program (RERP/SAMBRIDDHI) of MOICS, MEDPA and SAMI projects at provincial level.
- o Continuing discussions with the Program Manager/ Under Secretary of the RERP to have a joint approach to support migrants and their families.
- o Bringing the private sector and diasporas onboard to support migrants and their families.
- o Developing a reintegration policy and country policy coherence plan.
- o Supporting the creation of migration coordination group at the federal and provincial levels. The Technical Working Group formed for the development of the Migration Profile has agreed to

continue supporting the programme under the lead of Mr. Umesh Dhungana, Joint Secretary, MoLESS.

- o Providing support to MOLESS and related government institutions with its migration and development related regional and global forums.

In addition to these activities, an assessment will be conducted to understand the immediate vulnerabilities and risks faced by migrant workers and their communities, as well as the impacts of COVID-19 on socio-economic response and recovery on migrants and their communities in Province 1 and Karnali Province. A guideline was developed in alignment with the project 'Mainstreaming Migration into COVID-19 response interventions'. [Click here](#) to access the guideline: 'Making Migration Work for Development'.

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