Psychological first aid increases hope

Hari Kumar Mala, 43, is a longtime migrant worker from Mugu district, Karnali Province. He has been working in Bengaluru, India at a restaurant and is the sole breadwinner for his family. When the second wave of COVID-19 hit India and the government started restricting people's movements, Hari lost his job. Being unemployed and living in a distant city away from family would only mean more frustration and challenges. He therefore decided to return home for good.

Hari traveled straight for two and a half days to arrive at Gaddachauki Ground Crossing Point (GCP). He was exhausted from a long travel and the health check-up at the GCP further stressed him out.

Contrary to his fear, the health desk staff received him warmly. He was offered a place to sit and rest until it was his turn . He was offered a glass of water and the staff listened to him attentively. He shared that a group of burglars took everything from him including his belongings, money, and a mobile phone. He was threatened for life if he disclosed information about the loot to anyone. He didn't even have money to travel back home.

The Psychological First Aid, supported by International Organization for Migration's project, was a stress reliever. The responders not only listened to him patiently but also offered suggestions on how to stay safe during COVID-19, helped report his case to Nepal Police, contacted his family, and offered him a bus ticket for this journey. He returned home safely thanks to the help from IOM.