

One Day Sensitization Program for Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) on Safe Abortion at Lubhu, Lalitpur District of Nepal

4th September, 2017



Acknowledgements

In December 2015, two youth champions, Bonita Sharma and Bidhya Basnet had planned and implemented a sensitization program for Female Community Health Volunteers on Safe Abortion at Dumkhauli PHCC of Nawalparasi District in Nepal. This project was a part of the small grant project, funded by Asia Safe Abortion Partnership.

Reckoning the importance of educating and empowering the grassroot level health workers like FCHVs, Youth CAN conducted another Sensitization Program for FCHVs on Safe Abortion in coordination with Primary Health Centre, Lubhu of Lalitpur district on 4th September, 2017.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the PHCC incharge Dr. Abhishek Suman and the entire Lubhu PHCC family, whose support made this sensitization program a success. We would also like to thank all the FCHVs who participated in our program for their enthusiasm and eagerness towards safe abortion issues. Our gratitude towards the people of Lubhu community for sharing their perspectives and stories regarding abortion.

We are forever grateful towards ASAP for their guidance and support throughout the program implementation process. Lastly, we would like to thank each and every one who were directly/indirectly involved in successful completion of this program.

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Background

In December 2015, two youth champions, Bonita Sharma and Bidhya Basnet had planned and implemented a sensitization program for Female Community Health Volunteers on Safe Abortion at Dumkhauli PHCC of Nawalparasi District in Nepal. This project was a part of the small grant project, funded by Asia Safe Abortion Partnership.

FCHV being a change agent in their local area were capable of effectively circulate the information received through this program to those adolescent girls and women who are in need of these services or seeking professional services regarding their sexual and reproductive health.

Reckoning the importance of educating and empowering the grassroot level health workers like FCHVs, Youth CAN conducted another Sensitization Program targeting the FCHVs on Safe Abortion. This program was conducted in Lubhu community of Lalitpur district in coordination with Primary Health Care Centre, Lubhu on 4th September, 2017. A total number of 25 participants were oriented in the program (25 FCHVs from Imadol, Tikathali, Siddipur and Lamatar).

Program Area

Lubhu lies under Mahalakshi Municipality in Lalitpur District of central Nepal. Lubhu is a sub-urban Newar village situated seven kilometers east of Kathmandu in northern part of Lalitpur. Lubhu is a historic village which means Golden plate in Newari language. Although the community is composed of people from mixed ethnic background, but most of people in this area are Newars. Both literate and illiterate group of people reside in this area belonging from lower to higher socio economic status.

Lubhu is near from the capital city Kathmandu but it was a village development community. Only two years ago, it had been recognized as a municipality. Lubhu is an urban remote area as it is neglected in terms of health programs and projects. The people also lack health education and awareness in the community.

Lubhu PHCC was established in 2036 B.S. Initially, it used to function as a health post and was upgraded to a PHCC in 2052. Currently, the services that are being provided through this health center are OPD services, CBIMCI program, Pharmacy, ECG, 24 hours emergency service, Safe Abortion services, Birthing center, ANC PNC counseling, Adolescent counseling center etc.

Target Group

Female Community Health Volunteers Program was implemented in 1988 by the Government of Nepal. Since its inception, FCHVs have served as frontline local health resource persons who provide community-based health education and services in rural areas, with a special focus on maternal and child health and family planning. With their unique and close proximity to the community, FCHVs form the foundation of Nepal's community-based primary health care system and are the key referral link between health services and community members.

FCHV are selected by members of mother's group for health (MG-H) with the help of local health facility staff and each ward within the VDC typically has one FCHV. They are provided with 18 days basic training in two phases (9+9 days) on selected primary health care components. The major role of FCHV is to promote health and healthy behaviors of mothers and community people to promote safe motherhood, childbirth, family planning and community health services. Female community health volunteers (FCHVs) are a possible entry point for Nepali women to access timely reproductive health services at the village level.

FCHV are trusted enough to be approached by women. As they are highly trusted in community, they can play an effective role in improving access to reproductive health information including safe abortion.

Objectives

- To create awareness among FCHVs regarding safe abortion
- To sensitize FCHVs regarding consequences of unsafe abortion and abortion stigmas
- To make the FCHVs understand about the concept of abortion from gender perspective
- To provide information on emergency contraceptive pill and other various contraceptive devices
- To make the FCHVs understand about their roles in the community for improving women's reproductive health status
- To develop a video documentary "Empowering Grassroots for Safe Abortion" for documentation and for using it as awareness raising tool on safe abortion

Rationale

According to National Demographic Health Survey (2011), 38% of Nepalese women were not aware that abortion is now legal in Nepal and about two-fifths (38.3%) did not know of

the specific legal conditions required for safe abortion in Nepal. Given this lack of knowledge, many of these women are highly likely to have an unsafe abortion.

FCHV are the first source of contact for maternal and child health service in every communities of Nepal and can play an effective role in improving access to reproductive health information. FCHVs can undertake urine pregnancy tests and refer women for safe abortion services or give counseling on ECP. FCHVs through BCC approaches can also helping in reduction of unsafe abortion, abortion stigmas as well as gender inequality in the community.

Besides this, according to the PHCC incharge of Lubhu, some women in the community are still going for illegal and unsafe abortion instead of coming to the certified primary health care center. Hence there is also a need to orient, sensitize and motivate FCHVs on the timely referral of client seeking abortion service at Lubhu.

Program Implementation

Preliminary Phase

During the planning phase of the program, series of meetings, discussions and field visits were conducted. A discussion program was held at the Lubhu PHCC to identify the situation of abortion in the community. Interviews were conducted with the PHCC incharge, service providers, medical professionals, FCHVs as well as community people to find out the the challenges in Lubhu area for women to get access to safe abortion services.

Incharge of Lubhu PHCC shared that although Lubhu community is near from the capital city Kathmandu, it is an urban rural area. Hence, it is neglected in terms of health as majority of the programs are focused in the rural remote areas. He also added that, the PHCC lies within the community so women generally hesitate to come to get safe abortion services. Due to this, women have medical abortion without taking advice of a service provider/health professional and end up with a complication in their reproductive health.

During the meetings and interviews prior to the program, all the individuals consulted felt programs on safe abortion targeting FCHVs is much needed in the community and it can be very beneficial in removing barriers for women's access to safe abortion services in Lubhu.

All these meetings, discussion and field visits were extremely essential for identification of the real problems and needs of women in the community regarding safe abortion. These activities in the preliminary phase helped us in shaping the content for the program. These

activities were also an essential prerequisite for the production of our video documentary “Empowering Grassroots for Safe Abortion”.

Youth CAN team meetings were also held to discuss and decide roles and responsibilities of the team members for smooth implementation of the program. IEC materials and program content were developed by the team members during this phase.

Implementation Phase

The sensitization program was scheduled for 4th September, 2017 from 11 am to 3 pm at the Lubhu PHCC training hall. A total of 25 FCHVs participated in the program (25 FCHVs from Imadol, Tikathali, Siddipur and Lamatar). President of Youth CAN Smriti Thapa and Youth Champions Bonita Sharma, Swikriti Thapa and Puja Karki facilitated the program. The photography and videography was taken by media person Aasutosh Dhoj Karki.

The sensitization program highlighted the right based approach towards Safe Abortion Services with practical background and essential components such as; ***Understanding Sex and Gender, Reproductive Rights of Women, Abortion Laws in Nepal, Pregnancy , Contraceptives and Safe Abortion, Provisions of Services related to safe abortion in Nepal, Role of FCHVs in Safe Abortion Services.*** Methods used in dissemination of the content were Mini-lectures, Group Discussions, Role Play and Documentary screening.

During the program sessions, one of the FCHVs shared, *“Despite of availability of safe abortion services in the PHCC, many women go for illegal and unsafe option fearing that their family will learn about it.”*

The screening of Achham video documentary on unsafe abortion made the FCHVs quite emotional as well as motivated. After the documentary they shared their commitment to do their best to prevent cases of unsafe abortion in their community.

The participants also said that one of the main reason women go for unsafe abortion is due to lack of awareness. Many are unaware of where the service is available. Another FCHV shared, *“Few years ago I met a woman seeking abortion. She had 5 children (girls) and was pregnant with the 6th. Since she did not want another girl child, she had gone to the ‘Sudeni’ (backstreet abortion service provider) to get rid of her pregnancy. She shared that the illegal service provider had given her a rod like object to insert in the vagina so that the pregnancy is aborted. I was shocked and scared when I heard this. I immediately told her the risk of having an unsafe abortion and also took her to the hospital. I felt relieved and happy after that as I was able to help the woman and prevent possible complications.”*

A role play session was also conducted to depict the real scenario of abortion stigmas. This session was very interesting as the FCHVs themselves performed the roles of a woman seeking an abortion. They were able to contemplate the feelings of women seeking an abortion and walk in their shoes during the roleplay. This exercise was also successful in making the FCHVs realize their vital role in reducing abortion stigmas and ensuring women's access to safe abortion.

The FCHVs also participated in the photo campaign initiated by Youth CAN targeting the September 28 campaigns where the FCHVs gave out messages on women's right to Safe Abortion. Three FCHVs - Urmila Sharma Dahal, Urmila Thapa and Gayatri Ghimire also created and performed a beautiful abortion song and made the concluding session more entertaining as well as informative.

(Link to the song performed by FCHVs:

<https://www.facebook.com/youthcann/videos/1726230914340065/>)

At the end of the session, the FCHVs said, *"We had not received training like this before. We were unaware about so many things. Now we feel confident to provide correct information to women seeking abortion in the community."*

Evaluation Phase

The participating FCHVs in the program were both literate and illiterate, so mood-meter chart was used as a tool for immediate program evaluation. The participants were asked to select the mood drawn on the chart, based on how they found the program to be i.e. whether it was 'Good', 'Satisfactory' or 'Poor'. Majority of the participants (89%) evaluated that the program was satisfactory, whereas 11% felt the program was good.

A pre and post program analysis of the participant was also done through true and false statements where the participants were asked to raise their hands depending on their opinion on each statement. Based on the evaluation of the pre and post-test findings below, it is evident that almost all the participants were able to correctly answer the questions after the program.

Statements	Pretest (%)			Post-test (%)		
	True	False	Don't know	True	False	Don't know
1. Nepal has not legalized safe abortion	100	0	0	100	0	0
2. By legalizing safe abortion in Nepal, there has been	100	0	0	100	0	0

significant reduction in Maternal Mortality						
3. There are two methods for carrying out safe abortion in Nepal	80	0	20	100	0	0
4. An unmarried girl/woman do not require safe abortion services	100	0	0	100	0	0
5. The decision of keeping or aborting pregnancy can be taken by husband and family	0	100	0	0	100	0
6. It is important to provide information on contraceptives along with safe abortion services	100	0	0	100	0	0
7. Inspite of using contraceptives, there can be chances of unwanted pregnancy	60	40	0	100	100	0
8. Carrying out repeated safe abortion can result in infertility	100	0	0	100	0	0
9. Stigmatization of abortion in our communities must be removed	100	0	0	100	0	0
10. FCHVs can play an important role in reducing unsafe abortion, stigma to ensure women's access to safe abortion	100	0	0	100	0	0

Video documentary

A video documentary regarding importance of educating and empowering community health workers is being developed by the Youth CAN team. The video documentary **“Empowering Grassroots for Safe Abortion”** which is a part of this sensitization program will be released online very soon.

Conclusion and learning

The one day sensitization program for FCHV on Safe Abortion was successfully implemented with active participation of all the FCHVs. The session content was easily understandable as it was prepared based on the feedback and interaction with health professionals.

Unsafe abortion still accounts for 7% of maternal mortality in Nepal and to tackle this, FCHVs are the vital emissary of the health sector. So, programs targeting the FCHVs is necessary, even in the urban areas. The prevalence of unsafe abortion in Lubhu area signifies self stigma, family stigma and societal stigma, lack of awareness, taboos etc. are putting lives of women at risk. Youths must be advocates for women's right to make informed choice about their sexual and reproductive health right beginning from the grass-root level to remove stigma and to ensure women's safety and well being at all level.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Participants

SN	Name	Phone number
1	Anita Maharjhan	+9779841338405
2	Laxmi Maharjhan	+9779860141990
3	Reshmi shrestha	+977984115646
4	Jayanti Karki	+9779860206200
5	Bidhya Laxmi Napit	+97798431325586
6	Prabhawati Shrestha	+977015580190
7	Ganga shrestha	+977015580314
8	Gyani Maharjhan	
9	Sanuchori Maharjhan	+9779810554007
10	Bina Maharjhan	+9779849189075
11	Rupa Basnet	+9779849053347
12	Malati Thapa	+9779841752118
13	Urmila Thapa	+9779808109319
14	Gamala Subedi	+9779849406572
15	Nanda Maharjan	+9779808021272
16	Radha Pokharel	+977015580143
17	Saraswati Kc	+9779818558703
18	Narayani Shrestha	+9779841849699
19	Rachana Napit	+9779841413752
20	Sunita Rajthala	+9779849688217
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22	Chandrabardan Kc	+9779813731941
23	Urmilla Sharma	+9779841501001
24	Gayatri Ghimire	+9779843095576

25	Ambhu Pokharel	+9779840380091
26	Kalpana Khadka	+9779841771390
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30	Kumar Chaubey	

Annex 2: Agenda

ONE DAY SENSITIZATION PROGRAM FOR FCHVS ON SAFE ABORTION

AGENDA

DATE: 4th SEPTEMBER, 2017

VENUE: LUBHU PHC, LALITPUR

TIME: 11 AM – 3 PM

Agenda	Time	Responsible Person	Method
Welcome and Objectives	11:00-11:05	BONITA	Mini lecture
Introduction	11:05-11:15		Interactive
Pretest evaluation of knowledge and attitude of the participants towards abortion	11:15-11:25		Question/Answer
Sex and Gender	11:25-11:55		Group Discussion, Lecture
Reproductive Rights of Women	11:55-12:10	SMRITI	Mini lecture, Discussion
Abortions Laws in Nepal	12:10-12:30	SMRITI	Mini lecture
Tea break	12:30-12:50		
Achham Documentary Screening	12:50-1:10	SWIKRITI	Video Screening
Pregnancy, Contraception and Abortion	1:10-1:40	PUJA	Fertility Dance, Mini lecture, Demonstration

Lunch	1:40-2:10		
Provision of Services related to Safe Abortion in Nepal	2:10-2:30	SWIKRITI	Mini lecture, Discussion
Role of FCHVs in Safe Abortion Services	2:30-2:50	BONITA/ SMRITI	Group Exercise Role Play
Review and Evaluation (Post-test)	2:50-2:55	BONITA	Question/Answer, Discussion, Mood meter
Closing	2:55-3:00	SMRITI/ BONITA	-

Annex 3 : Glimpse of the Project



Group picture after program conduction



Participating FCHVs in the program



Smriti leads session on reproductive rights



Session on abortion laws in Nepal



Lubhu PHC incharge Dr. Abhishek Suman



FCHVs during discussion on sex & gender



Bonita during role play session



Swikriti during video documentary screening



Puja leads session on pregnancy & contraception



FCHVs performing roleplay



FCHV sharing barriers of abortion in the community



FCHVs share message for photo campaign