

Project Compilation Report

Safe Abortion Service (SAS) Project

Supported/Funded by: IPAS Nepal

Duration: 15th January 2023 to 30th June 2023

Report Date: 10th July 2023

1. Executive Summary

FAYA Nepal, in partnership with Ipas Nepal, implemented the Safe Abortion Service (SAS) Project across Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City and Chure Rural Municipality (RM) in Kailali District. This trimester report highlights significant strides in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), safe abortion access, and climate-resilient healthcare systems. Key achievements include:

- **1,102 individuals** educated through **74 community sessions** led by Natural Leaders.
 - **30 marginalized individuals** empowered with seed funding for income-generating activities.
 - **206 community members** served through a specialized health camp.
 - **Local governments** committing to budget allocations for SRHR and safe abortion services.
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2. Introduction

The Safe Abortion Ecosystem is a dynamic state where resilient local stakeholders and systems actively take responsibility and demonstrate a commitment to abortion rights while being responsive to the abortion needs of all individuals.

To achieve equilibrium and ensure a dedicated and responsive system for abortion care, eight key programming components have been identified for action and evaluation. These components are derived from and aligned with the abortion ecosystem surrounding everyone. The eight key programming components that correspond to the abortion ecosystem include individual empowerment and knowledge, community support and adherence to social norms, political backing and leadership, policy and legislative frameworks, funding, availability of necessary resources, a capable health workforce for service delivery, and access to comprehensive health information.

On a global scale, women encounter numerous barriers when it comes to accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Since the legalization of abortion in Nepal in 2002, significant progress has been made in expanding safe abortion and family planning services.

2.1 Background and Context

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, serve as a shared vision and comprehensive plan for global progress. They encompass various objectives such as poverty eradication, reducing inequalities, and ensuring universal health and well-being. Through the SDGs, every member state of the UN has committed to a collective call to action, holding themselves accountable for overcoming challenges that hinder progress towards these goals. One ongoing challenge pertains to the lack of confidence and safety in terminating unwanted pregnancies. In order to promote autonomy and gender equality, the SDGs require governments worldwide to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH) by 2030. Failure to provide sustainable access to high-quality abortion care to those in need prevents a government from claiming compliance with this requirement.

In Nepal, safe abortion is legally permitted under specific conditions since 2059 B.S. The government estimated the provision of safe abortion services in 75 districts, with approximately 1000 safe abortion service sites. Nepal recognizes health as a fundamental right and considers safe abortion and its treatment for complications as essential elements of healthcare. The country has enacted the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Right Act 2075 and Regulation 2077, as well as the Public Health Service Act 2075 and Regulation 2077, to guide the provision of safe abortion. The Constitution of Nepal 2072 also declares health as a fundamental right.

However, despite these efforts, unwanted pregnancies and preventable deaths resulting from pregnancy, abortion, and its complications persist. This is due to the stigma surrounding abortion in our country, leading women and girls to choose unsafe but seemingly "easier" methods rather than legal and safe options.

The Nepal's legalization of abortion in 2002 marked progress, yet barriers like stigma and resource gaps persist. FAYA Nepal's SAS Project aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 (Health) and 5 (Gender Equality), focusing on:

- Strengthening healthcare systems.
- Community empowerment through education and advocacy.
- Integrating climate resilience into SRHR programs.

FAYA Nepal, in collaboration with Ipas Nepal, has been working to strengthen the abortion ecosystem in Nepal by raising awareness, advocating for change, and enhancing the healthcare system in Dhangadhi Sub Metropolitan City and Chure RM of Kailali district.

2.2 Objectives

- **General Objective:** Advocate for SRHR and strengthen healthcare systems.
- **Specific Objectives:**
 - Raise awareness on safe abortion and dispel myths.

- Influence local policies and budget allocations for SRHR.
 - Enhance service delivery at health facilities.
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3. Major Progresses

3.1 Community Engagement and Natural Leaders

- **Natural Leaders (NLs):**
 - 9 NLs conducted **74 sessions** across 4 wards, reaching **1,102 participants** (85% female).
 - Topics: Safe abortion, menstrual hygiene, GBV, and climate impacts on health.
 - **Youth Mobilization:** 50 adolescents trained in SRHR, leading peer-led sessions.

Infographic: Breakdown of community sessions by ward and gender.

3.2 Advocacy and Policy Influence

- **Policy Dialogues:**
 - 79 elected representatives engaged in workshops on SRHR policies.
 - **Budget Commitments:** Local governments pledged funds for health infrastructure and training.
- **Media Collaboration:**
 - Roundtable discussions with 22 journalists to promote accurate reporting on SRHR.

3.3 Capacity Building and Training

- **Healthcare Providers:**
 - 27 Medical Abortion (MA) providers trained in post-abortion care and GBV response.
 - **FCHVs:** 41 volunteers oriented on SRHR and safe abortion referrals.
- **Disaster Preparedness:**
 - 24 community members trained in first aid and search/rescue operations.

3.4 Health System Strengthening

- **Facility Upgrades:**

- ANC rooms and equipment (autoclaves, surgical tools) provided to Urma and Dhurjanna health centers.
- **Health Camps:** 206 individuals received free check-ups, including 20 Pap smears.

3.5 Climate Change and SRHR Integration

- **Local Adaptation Plans (LAPAs):**
 - 86 stakeholders trained in climate impacts on reproductive health.
 - LAPA documents revised to prioritize vulnerable communities.

4. Target vs Achievement

4.1 Comparative Analysis

Activity	Target	Achieved	Variance
Community Sessions (NLs)	135	75	-60
FCHV Orientations	2	4	+2
Income-Generating Activities	30	30	0
Policy Dialogues	2	2	0

5. Conclusion and Challenges

5.1 Key Outcomes

- Strengthened local governance through policy engagement.
- Improved healthcare access via facility upgrades and training.
- Enhanced community agency through NLs and youth advocates.

5.2 Challenges

- **Time Constraints:** High activity volume limited follow-up efficiency.
- **Resource Gaps:** MA providers reported shortages of forms and equipment.

5.3 Recommendations

- Allocate dedicated staff for activity monitoring.

- Expand partnerships for sustained funding.
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6. Case Stories

1. Health Camp Impact:

- Three women identified with abnormal Pap smears received referrals for advanced care.

This report encapsulates FAYA Nepal's commitment to creating an equitable, resilient ecosystem for SRHR in Nepal.