



Comprehensive School Safety

Campaign Effectiveness, Lesson Learnt and Reflections





About the program

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This joint initiative between United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Nepal and National Disaster Risk Reduction (NDRC) Nepal aims to provide technical assistance to Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) for the following three outputs: (i) Revision of the CSS Implementation Guideline to fully align it with the approved CSS documents – the Minimum Package and the Master Plan, (ii) Development of a communication and dissemination strategy; and (iii) Implementation of CSS Campaign based on the strategy in Output 2, in 7 provinces and 14 earthquake-affected districts. The overall strategic approach and implementation modality of this assignment is to carry out all the tasks under each of the output in the lead role of MOEST through coordination, collaboration and alliance building with Comprehensive School Safety Technical Working Group (CSSTWG) and Child-Centered Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR) consortium along with stakeholders at federal, provincial, local and school levels. The products developed under each of the output will fully align with the approved “CSS Minimum Package”.

The issue of Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) has become an agenda for the schools nationwide. The nation has initiated a policy provision to combat disaster challenges and to ensure safety of students. Organized in the 14 earthquake-affected districts, the CSS campaign has transferred issue of comprehensive school safety from schools to the community. Different activities to increase awareness were conducted at different schools under this campaign. The case stories and lessons learnt have been documented here.



CASE 1:

ECA as a means to disseminate the concept of CSS

Extra Curricular Activities (ECA) have been effective tools to make the students aware of comprehensive school safety theme. It has a great impact from the classroom to community. The comprehensive safety package gives the students an opportunity to internalize its need and importance and to express their views through debate, art, speech, rally, folk songs, hoarding board, wall painting and making CSS action plan and so on in school. This campaign was launched by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) with financial support from USAID and technical support from UNICEF and National Disaster Risk Reduction Center (NDRC). Community School Management Committees Federation (SMCF) played the role of coordination in this campaign.

Roshi Secondary school conducted safety campaigns in school. Speech program on Comprehensive Safety School was one of the major activities. Teachers, students and

community participated in this program and sent positive message of this event. Students from seven schools participated in the event. The views expressed by the students on school safety made the school realize that such programs are important to enhance quality of education. Debate competition organized by the school is an example.

Bindu Prasad Dhungana, the Principal, shared his experience: "We have realized that in addition to extracurricular activities, topics of disaster management and climate change must be incorporated in the school curriculum. The idea of school safety must be extended from school family to a broader community."

Disaster is a serious concern not only for school but for the whole society. Students must be made aware about this and it can be done only by educating them on the subject. The school has realized that if this subject is incorporated in school curriculum, it will raise awareness among students and support

in finding causes and prevention measures of disaster. "Students are the major source of spreading awareness in the community. Since they can gain information, knowledge and skills regarding disaster preparedness from the school they can bring change in the society by spreading awareness," said Dhungana.

Impact in the community

Principal Dhungana further adds that the discussion and interaction among students on sensitive issues like disaster and climate change helps them keep away from potential risks. The teachers' meeting has also realized the need to focus on topic of disaster as part of extra-curricular activities. Last month, the school organized a debate competition inviting other schools from Roshi Rural Municipality. The views expressed by the students in the competition show the level of awareness among students regarding disaster.

Discussing disaster in the classroom has positive influence on students. "This has helped us realize the need to incorporate this topic in the curriculum itself," added Dhungana. "This serious topic must be addressed for it is important for school, society and nation. It will be more effective if it is included in the school curriculum."

Students' knowledge on disaster does not remain limited to classrooms or school premises but spreads in the community. "We share our school learning at home and society. It would be best if school curriculum includes it", said Yujen Tamang, a student of Roshi Secondary School. Since the knowledge

obtained via extra-curricular activities or at classroom is transferred to the community by students, he claims, everyone should work for this cause.

Sangam Lama, a champion of Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) campaign, remarks that this is an educational program that transfers knowledge of school safety from the school to the community. As the government has made school safety a part of the policy, such campaign will be an important step for all the schools across the country. This will help disseminate issues of disasters outside the classroom.

Awareness up to Community Level

During the campaign, students from different villages and communities presented thoughtful views on Comprehensive School Safety (CSS). It helped spread awareness outside of schools as well. General Secretary of School Management Committee Federation, Guna Raj Moktan, said: "The knowledge obtained by the students will get disseminated to the community and this, in turn, will create a discourse in the community itself."

School has benefitted from this campaign conducted as part of ECA. Tanka Prasad Dahal, Principal of Manthali Secondary School, said: "This is emerging component for school. Many students and teachers benefitted from extra-curricular activities. CSS action plan, DRR components, wall painting, school as zone of peace and other activities resulted in important learning for school."





CASE 2:

CSS : Priority for the Local Government

Comprehensive School Safety cannot be smoothly implemented without the support from local authorities which play vital role in policy/law formulation and monitoring. The local governments have been largely supportive in this campaign and they have even taken initiative to implement CSS campaign in schools.

No doubt, local governments should be concerned to make schools safe and secured. With Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) campaign conducted in two schools in Sindhuli, school safety has become a subject of discussion among local governments there. Besides, the campaign has also conveyed the message of comprehensive school safety in the whole district.

People have realized that municipalities have to bring their policies in line with school safety standards in their educational programs. The representatives of local governments have realized that proper schooling cannot be thought of without giving due importance to safety, which is the main issue for the community as well.

School Safety First

Deputy Mayor of Kamalamai Municipality, Manju Devkota, says that Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) campaign is a must in his district. And according to him, not just schools and students, even guardians and the members of the community should become part of the campaign. The topics raised by Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) campaign are today's burning challenges in the education sector since the children cannot obtain quality education in a terrified environment. A first step to a good educational environment is safety of schools. For this, we need to see the physical infrastructures, the design of classrooms and other environmental aspects as well, Devkota said.

Local government representatives argue that after learning from CSS campaign, they should start working to create a better school environment for the future. As the federal government has brought in effect the Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Guideline, says Devkota, the local governments need to align their policy accordingly and implement

it at schools. “We have been working in schools within the municipality prioritizing the same. We need to work on this,” he said.

In addition to safety, there are a lot of other issues. Deputy Mayor says that school needs to consider female students too while conducting its activities. A girl student should be taught skills to combat violence against women from school level itself. According to him, municipality is focusing on this issue as well. “Since education is also the responsibility of the local government, we need to be proactive to address all the visible issues in the school premises and even in the community,” he said.

CSS campaign has also raised the need to bring out programs by respective schools on violence against girls and women at schools. The campaigners have demanded for the provision of a focal teacher to address gender and inclusion issues at schools. The schools with a female focal teacher which organized many programs targeting female students have experienced the positive changes. Schools have realized that female students have poor attendance and poor learning achievements especially during their menstrual periods. They have realized that ignoring such problems is like ignoring violence against women. “Such issues too need to be addressed at school level so that it can help solve the problem in the community,” said Devkota.

Schools represent the community for it is where students, guardians and the whole community intermingle. A school gets better with their suggestion, support and coordination. A school alone cannot achieve safety and make progress on other issues if the community is not concerned or interested in schools. Sindhuli Ujjwal Bhandari, a campaigner of safe school campaign, asserts that problems of schools cannot be solved without consideration and concern of the community.

The local government has its policy on education and its implementation and school safety is a major component. “Since the federal government has brought a policy on school safety, we have to align our policy with the same,” said Deputy Mayor Devkota.

National Disaster Risk Reduction Center (NDRC) organized different discussions and orientation programs in local level on CSS issue. Following this, many schools started initiatives for school safety. Local governments of project districts have made people aware about school safety program.

During the project implementation, programs such as rally, art competition, hoarding board installation, wall paintings and CSS action plan were organized. These activities raised school safety issues at local level. Schools and its all stakeholders also played equally important role to change the situation.





CASE 3:

A Champion's Story

The champion working for the comprehensive school safety feels that there are lots of things to do at schools and the community. CSS champions have been really supportive for ensuring CSS within school premises.

NDRC initiated selection of champions in each project district. They were provided training from the project and made aware about different approaches and intervention about the comprehensive school safety program. Total of 28 champions were selected from the project districts and they were given training and exposure about the campaigns. After the training, they initiated different activities in project districts, which changed their own perceptions about the campaign.

Nilkantha Secondary School at Rasuwa is the oldest school in the district. It has also stepped forth in the campaign of safe schools. Om Prasad Acharya, Chairman of School Management Committee for two years, is one of the champions of CSS campaign.

The campaign selected two campaigners in each district from among teachers, management committee and local education

campaigners in 28 schools at 14 earthquake affected districts. In the process, Acharya, 59, was selected as a campaigner.

Acharya is an experienced school management committee member but he did not have much knowledge on comprehensive school safety before he took the training. Like many other participants, Acharya also had a notion that safe schools means having strong school building. But the two-days training changed this perception. After learning about the three pillars and 16 action plans under Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) minimum package, Acharya realized a lot more needs to be done in schools.

About the Three Pillars

Having learnt the sixteen minimum activities under the three pillars for safe learning (vis-à-vis physical infrastructure, disaster management and risk reduction at school and progressive education), the chairman of School Management Committee, Om Prasad Acharya, realized that lot more needs to be done to make the school safe. "Previously, I thought



pillar-based structure was enough to make schools safe, but now I have realized a lot of other things are required for safe schools,” said Acharya.

Acharya was probably one of the senior most among all the participants of the training, but he learnt a lot there. In the capacity of Chairman of School Management Committee, he learnt of many things to be undertaken to make the schools safe that he did not know before. A few months upon the completion of the training, the school organized a two-day program to develop Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Action Plan. He learnt much more about the disaster risk of the school under his leadership in this program.

Acharya was not alone in not knowing school safety issues. Many participants were like him. During the training, they were able to get new knowledge about school safety. During the three pillars training, points to be considered about disaster were discussed. In the two-days training, many participants gained clear idea about the three pillars concept and things to undertake for school safety.

Madhusudhan Acharya of Uttarganga Rural Municipality-5 said that he learnt how to make schools safe and how to be prepared. Chameli Bishwakarma expressed the need to work for safety of children as human lives are the most important.

Then and Now

Acharya states that learning from the training was beneficial to develop Action Plan. During

the training, there was a long discussion on probable disaster risk for the school, which has approximately 500 students. Babu Ram Khanal, resource person at Uttarganga Municipality, shared that participants were told how students must be safe in any situation of disaster. He also accorded important role to champions in the district and the community level.

According to Khanal, different activities like rally, Deusi-Bhailo program, interactions between students and teachers, Action Plan formulation, wall painting and hoarding board placement were conducted in the school as part of the campaign. These activities spread awareness among students, teachers and even guardians.

Chairman of School Management Committee, Acharya, states that these activities directed the future action plans. Action Plan thus made and implemented, he says, will help convert other schools into safe schools.

The campaign has changed the perception of many others. The action plan has brought to the fore many issues previously not thought of and has brought to light many other areas to be worked upon. The school also organized a Deusi-Bhailo program during last Tihar to spread awareness obtained from the program to the community. Members of the school student club led this program in which students, teachers and guardians participated. The Deusi-song delivered the messages of safety schools. The student club collected around Rs 19 000 from Deusi-Bhailo program. Also, it spread awareness from school to community.

Says Acharya: “This is a good example of how awareness spreads from students to community. Safe schools are a matter of concern for not just students and teachers, but also community. It should not be compromised.” For this, Acharya says, everyone should be responsible. “Human lives are the most important, therefore we need to follow the principle of safety first and implement it with action plan,” said Acharya.



CASE 4

School Safety Action Plan

Foundation for CSS

The school has worked to achieve comprehensive school safety. This is appreciable for it has been successful in mobilizing all the stakeholders from the community to ensure sense of safety and quality education.

Bagh Bhairav Secondary School, located at Champadevi in Kirtipur Municipality-4, has developed a Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Action Plan. It did so for the first time during the Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) campaign organized in 28 schools in 14 earthquake affected districts with support from National Disaster Risk Reduction Center (NDRC). Bagh Bhairav is one of the 28 schools to develop CSS Action Plan.

Participation of All

In developing Action Plan, the school had given due importance to the participation of all stakeholders. School principal, teachers, guardians, students and other stakeholders participated in the meeting, which discussed disaster risks at school for two days. In the process, everyone gained knowledge of school safety. Shiva Hari Giri, the school Principal says, “Earlier we thought safe school is all about having concrete building but after learning about three pillars and 16 minimum activities, we learnt Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) means much more.” He further stated that the school had addressed concerns of all stakeholders while developing action plan.

The Action Plan was developed under

Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) campaign organized by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) with financial support from USAID and technical support from UNICEF Nepal and National Disaster Risk Reduction Center (NDRC) Nepal. The Association of School Management Committees had also played a coordinatory role in this campaign. One of the main activities of the campaign was to support in School Safety Action Plan. Tibendra Baskota, who was involved in facilitation work of the campaign, said: "This action plan was a new exercise for the school. Before this, the topics of disaster had not been discussed in such serious manner. Building a plan was a far cry." Another facilitator, Bhupa Mani Dahal, said action plan was made with everyone's support at the school.

Outline of the Action Plan

According to Shiva Hari Giri, Principal of the school, Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Action Plan has outlined a plan for disaster preparedness and has incorporated many things previously not thought of by the school. The disaster identification and leveling of the school, probable disaster status and school capacity were analyzed while developing the action plan.

During the process, action plan for risk reduction, preparedness and response, child protection and school as peace zone, educational continuity, implementation and monitoring was also formulated. Action Plan includes what we should do in case of disaster and ways to combat it. Previously there was no such thing, we no longer live with fear and risks, said the principal.

School teachers, students and guardians have felt a relief that the school has an action plan on what to do during the disaster. The school also has a provision of a focal teacher to work on issues of disaster, gender equality and inclusiveness. Asim Lama, one of school teachers, is also working as a champion of safe school. "The School Safety Action Plan has provided a way to combat disaster for Bagh Bhairav School. This document is important for future," Lama said.

Something Can Be Done

Principal Giri states that the School Safety Action Plan gives the school inspiration to work not just in the disaster situation but also in its preparedness and to work with sensitivity in disaster related issue. He is integrating extra-curricular activities into regular activities. "A team of teachers has been formed at school. Different committees have been formed. A provision of focal teacher has been made. Teachers see issues of gender equity and inclusiveness. A record of contact details of individuals involved in all committees has been maintained. Students' records too have been updated. Because of this, we are now confident that we too can do something on our own," said Giri.

Without the Action Plan, nothing of these would have been possible, he added. We would have been in doubts. Now we have knowledge and skill of disaster preparedness and to combat disaster situation. This has given school family a power to face disaster situation. It has been experienced that students have been more aware as disaster has become one of the important topics in the extra-curricular activities.

Principal Giri acknowledges that the school has been able to do this with the knowledge, skill and support obtained from National Disaster Risk Reduction Center (NDRC). The number of students involved in the school is decreasing. The school has experienced the challenge of low enrollment as parents consider private schools offer quality of education. The teachers state that these works and campaigns help in developing an environment of quality education at school. The Action Plan also states plans for quality education.

The school has realized that emphasizing three pillars (physical infrastructure, disaster management and risk reduction at school and progressive education), school safety has incorporated the overall development of the school. All the stakeholders expect that successful implementation of the Action Plan will play an important role to make the school better.

CASE 5:

Lessons Learnt

CSS campaign created discourse and debate from the local to national level and there have been learnings and reflections from different sector. For one, schools have become the grounds to spread awareness about safety among students, teachers, parents and the community. Besides, the school teachers have also gained wealth of knowledge and experience on this issue. Most of all, local governments have come to realize the importance of safety and are working on this area.

Learning

The NDRC had organized an orientation program for the local journalists in last week of October. Journalists from project districts who participated in the program have benefitted from the program and are using the knowledge and skills gained from the program while reporting for their respective media outlets.

Shyam Khatiwada was one of the journalists who participated in the orientation program. He has been using the new skills and knowledge obtained from orientation program while writing news stories – dozens of them related to earthquakes – for national dailies. "We were not aware about comprehensive school safety and its major components. After participating in orientation we clearly understood about the disaster reporting, its ethics and values," said Khatiwada.

Anita Thapa Magar is radio program producer and reporter based in Ramechhap district. She has applied new knowledge and skill while making radio reports on education and

disaster risk. The report was broadcasted from community radio broadcasting transmission as well. After orientation program, she went on the field to cover school safety in Manthali Secondary School, Saraswoti Secondary School and Harisiddhi Secondary School in Ramechhap. "I understood the importance and need of comprehensive school safety. And while reporting I felt greater sense of responsibility," said Anita.

Kunjala Pulamai of Sindhuli also feels similar. Kunjala, the radio producer, benefitted from skills and knowledge gained from orientation program. This has helped her while working on radio magazine on disaster issue. "I am producing radio stories on disaster theme and



I am applying the knowledge gained from that forum in this," said Kunjala.

Janajyoti Secondary School is one among 28 schools where the safe school campaign was conducted. Many activities were conducted in this school during the campaign. Last Dashain, a cultural program was organized by the students incorporating the theme of disasters. A rally was organized on the occasion of International Disaster Day with participant students also from a school nearby. Activities like wall painting, hoarding

boards, inter-secondary school level painting competition were also organized. All these campaign activities helped raise awareness on disaster and concept of school safety. Bhim Bikram Thapa, Principal of the school, shares his experience: "We learned a lot from this campaign. Now we will use this knowledge in CSS planning, for CSS plan was one of the major outputs during the campaign."

The school has developed a CSS action plan addressing the theme of disaster. Over 50 stakeholders including school management committee, teachers, guardians, representatives from Education Coordination Unit, local intellectuals and experts participated in the making of this action plan. "It has addressed all the challenges of disaster and presents plans on what to do during the disaster," said Thapa.

Though safety is the first priority, the issue did not find major space in reform plan in the past. "Safety was not an issue in the past. The school safety campaign has given ways and action plan towards school safety, quality education and disaster management," Thapa added. "By school safety, we largely understood only physical infrastructures. We came to know that it is much more than that."

The program has also contributed to enhancing teaching and learning. Ujjwal Dhakal, one champion of the campaign, stated that CSS program conducted at two schools in Sindhuli district has taught them important lessons including on developing schools as safe zones. And it has been possible within the period of short time. According to Chandra Prasad Dhakal, the facilitator of the program, the lessons learned from action plan at two schools can be transferred to other schools as well.

Important Lessons

Chairman of School Management Committee, Manik Kumar Dhakal, states that the

Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) action plan is a new step for the school and this helps the school step forth for school safety, delivery of quality education and disaster management. For him, this is not only a model work for the school, but also for Sindhuli district. "This is an important lesson for us", he said. "We now have planned actions for giving continuity to educational activities on disaster issues and we will keep updating it periodically in the future."

Chief of Education Coordination Unit, Ramesh Singh Thapa, states that the issue of school safety now is a national priority after the government has adopted a guideline and the lessons of CSS action plan at Sindhuli and other districts will be shared nationally. He further adds that CSS action plan is an important step to mitigate disaster risks at schools and that the action plan will serve as important learning for schools all over the nation.

Khadga Bahadur Khatri, Mayor of Kamala Mai Municipality of Sindhuli, is of the view that such programs should be conducted in other schools of the district as well. "Endeavors were made at two schools during the campaign. Now this needs to be taken to other schools. Schools now need to work by prioritizing both safety and quality," he said.

Not only schools but the whole community has learnt a lot from this campaign. Champion of safe school campaign at Sindhuli district, Ujjwal Dhakal, shares, "Previously, the focus was only on quality of education. Security issue was neglected. Now the concept of safe school also includes good teaching-learning environment and this has incorporated everything required for a school." He believes that the campaign and the safety action plan developed by the school is an important learning for safe school campaign and that it will be even more effective in the days to come because the school is implementing the action plan.