

PROJECT REPORT

Assisting individuals, pedestrians, and households to meet their immediate food needs through distributing cooked food in response to Second Wave Coronavirus Outbreak in Nepal.



SUBMITTED BY VOLUNTEER CORPS NEPAL



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From the President

On behalf of Volunteer Corps Nepal, I would like to thank Sowers Action for your generous contribution of NPR. 1,425,000, which made it possible for us to successfully complete "Cooked Food Distribution project" in Kathmandu valley and Sarlahi district. Total 12,800 people received cooked meal once a day in the morning from two regions.

Food insecurity during the emergency period like COVID-19 pandemic is common occurrence and mostly it affects the vulnerable group of population. It was very kind of you to support us in our cause of lessening the effect of food insecurity and inadequacy for the individuals in need.

The expressions of satisfaction of our food recipients were priceless. Our food distribution project served variety of people like parents, where were in the line to save food for their children at home, parents who were securing a meal for their children, and individuals who would otherwise have to remain hungry for days. This hope of protecting people and the immense level of love and care between them is what keep us going.

Thus, we appreciate your effort on supporting us that enabled us to continue what we had started in 2020 lockdown. Previous year, we had started a campaign to feed people with no source of income during pandemic and this year it has been possible only because of you.

Thank you once again in the interests of VCN and the people who were able to have food through our project. We look forward to continuing to work together to help those in need.

With all our gratitude,
Deepak Chapagain
President,
Volunteer Corps Nepal

Project Summary

PROJECT TITLE: Assisting individuals, pedestrians', and household people to meet their immediate food needs through distributing cooked food in response to Second Wave-Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV second wave) outbreak in Nepal.

DONOR: Sowers Action, Hong Kong, China

TARGET AREA: Province 2 (Sarlahi District) and Province 3 (Kathmandu District)

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: Volunteer Corps Nepal

PROJECT PERIOD: 1 Month (13 June 2021 to 16 July 2021)

TOTAL BENEFICIARIES: 12,800

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET: NRs. 1,425,000

Executive Summary

The coronavirus pandemic has threatened the food security and nutrition of millions of people globally. In a survey conducted by WFP in Nepal to determine food security during COVID in December 2020, it was found that 16.8% of households in Nepal had inadequate food consumption and 2.5% had poor dietary diversity. About 42.7 percent of the children between 6-23 months of age did not meet the minimum recommended dietary diversity. Additionally, the pandemic has intensified poverty as we had 7 million children living in poverty in August 2020.

The pandemic has resulted into increased food insecurity in Nepal, and this has impacted the population of low-income category. And especially, the wage workers who solely depend upon their daily income. Due to lockdown, the day-to-day activities in Nepal was intensely affected causing diminished income opportunities for them. This eventually instigated their lowered capacity to buy food for them to consume, which posed the increased risk of famine and malnutrition among the families of low income.

Considering the same and to lessen the impact of lockdown on vulnerable group of population, Volunteer Corps Nepal (VCN) together with the support of Sowers Action, Hong Kong, China executed a "Cooked Food Distribution Project" in June/July. The areas targeted were three districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) of Kathmandu valley as a whole and Haripur-04, Sarlahi district. Total 12,000 people were targeted to be fed. However, the beneficiaries reached more than the target as more than 400 people were provided with meal per day.

The overall fund for the project was NPR. 1,425,000, contributed by Sowers Action to Volunteer Corps Nepal as a local implementing partner in Nepal. The project was officially started on 13 June and lasted till 30 days, feeding about 12,800 people throughout.

Project Background

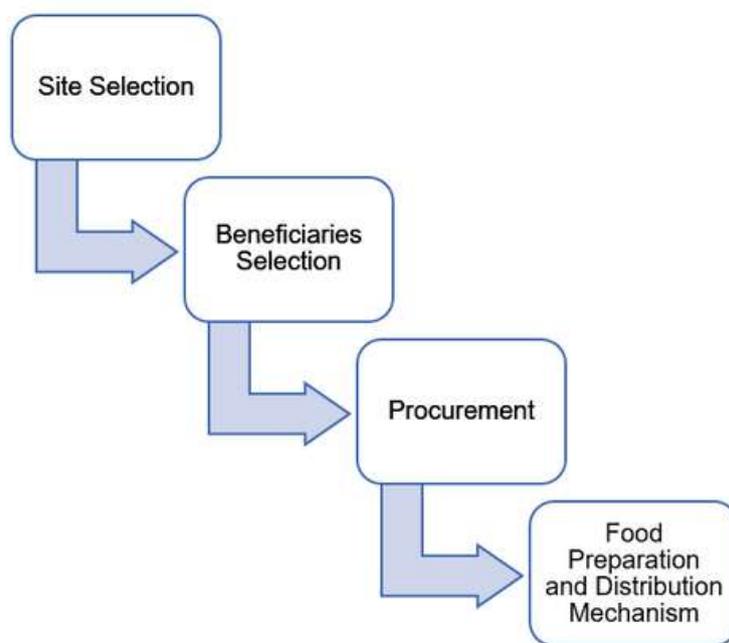
When the surge in cases of new variant of COVID-19 was evident, Government of Nepal decided to introduce the restrictions in mobility one more time to contain the virus from spreading. The transmissibility of this variant was high and higher was the infectivity, which can be noted by the data we have on morbidity and mortality during the second wave of the pandemic. People had already faced difficulty in obtaining food due to lack of income during the first wave of the virus. Thus, along with the disease and its risk, people were worried about food this time also. The government was capable to manage the situation quite a bit by giving people time to get to their home, however many were strangled to the city as earlier. Rural Nepal was already facing crisis economically and the situation has now compounded the poverty, which means people will have to struggle to have a proper meal. During the pandemic about 1.6 to 2 million people lost their jobs in Nepal and most of them were daily wage workers, who had to depend to their daily earnings to feed themselves. The pandemic has intensified poverty as we had 7 million children living in poverty in August 2020. This suggests diminished opportunity to nutritious food and education as well as other facilities to children.

Pandemics like this may result to increased food insecurity and cooked food distribution has been advised as an immediate life-saving food security activity, especially following an emergency. Thus, to attenuate the situation of food shortage especially to the vulnerable group of population with low-income capacity, Volunteer Corps Nepal decided to continue the support, it had implemented in the first wave of pandemic. Together with Sowers Action, Hong Kong, China VCN implemented a project to assist individuals, pedestrians, and households to meet their immediate food needs by distributing cooked food through the second wave of the pandemic. The project was determined to be implemented in two parts of two different provinces: Kathmandu valley from Bagmati province and Sarlahi from province 2 for 30 days. For the same, the fund of NPR. 1,425,000 was contributed by Sowers Action, Hong Kong, China.

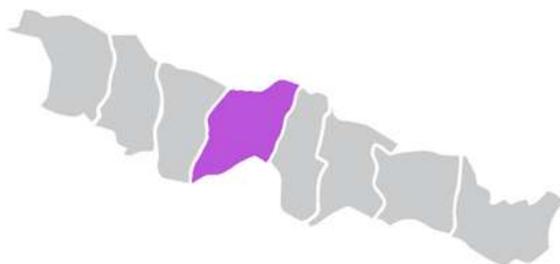
Project Goal

The goal of this project was to contribute to reduce morbidity of the 2019-nCoV second-wave outbreak by distributing cooked food to people who have lost their daily wages jobs.

Project Methodology



1. Site Selection



Province 2: Sarlahi District.



Province 3: Kathmandu Valley

Kathmandu valley has the highest number of wage workers in the country. These workers' sole source of income is daily labor, which was completely stopped in the lockdown. This had caused a critical shortage of food for them and other basic needs. Taking into account the state of people being unable to eat two meals a day, we selected Kathmandu valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) as our project implementation site. Along with Kathmandu valley, Musahar basti in Haripur-04, Sarlahi was chosen as the project implementation site. Musahar basti is one of the most underprivileged community in Nepal and are mostly landless agricultural laborers. Considering the same the Haripur-04, Sarlahi was preferred. Previously, during the first wave of COVID-19 similar assistance was carried out by VCN and our target areas were also the same. So, we continued our cooked food assistance in Kathmandu valley and Sarlahi.

2. Beneficiaries Selection

Individuals, pedestrians, families with no access and much food and daily wage workers were selected beneficiaries in Kathmandu valley. However, Musahar families in Haripur-04, Sarlahi were chosen as the beneficiaries in Sarlahi. They were picked considering their income status and the fact that they are landless and struggling destitution since centuries. Musahar literally means "rat-eater". 400 recipients (200 from Kathmandu valley and 200 from Haripur, Sarlahi) of food were targeted by the project, but when implemented more than 400 people received food per day.

3. Procurement

All the items required for the preparation of the food was procured from Solu Kirana Pasal, which is our vendor for food items. The products were directly delivered to the target areas by Solu Kirana Pasal at the point of preparation. The necessary equipments like gas stove, gas cylinders and serving packets were also delivered by Solu Kirana Pasal.

4. Food Preparation and Distribution Mechanism

A need-based distribution mechanism was adopted in Kathmandu valley, where different distribution points were selected according to the need of people. In Sarlahi, a uniform mechanism for distribution was implemented. Meals were prepared in priorly decided preparation point and delivered to the distribution point. The project lasted for 30 days, and same procedure was followed every day

4.1 Coordination

For the implementation of the project, we set up a team of volunteers and coordinated with the same team throughout the period. Two teams of volunteers were designated to prepare and distribute the meals at Kathmandu valley and Sarlahi respectively.

4.2 Preparation of Meal

The food items supplied by Solu Kirana Pasal were cooked and packed for the distribution by our volunteer teams. The utensils required for preparation and storage of food was contributed voluntarily by the volunteers themselves. One of the volunteer's houses was set as a preparation point respectively in Kathmandu valley and Sarlahi, where food was prepared and packed for the recipients. It was well ensured that no source of contamination was near the place of food preparation and packaging to maintain the hygiene.

4.3 Composition of Meal

Meal was provided one time a day in the morning to the recipients. Considering the need of nutritious food during the time of crisis, to maintain the food security a whole meal was organized for each recipient. The meal was composed of following:

- Rice
- Lentil (daal)
- Vegetable curry
- Egg (1)
- Seasonal Fruit (1)
- Salad
- Water (1 Liter Bottle for 2 People)

4.4 Distribution

As an immediate food security activity during the second wave of COVID-19, the distribution of cooked meal was carried out to more than 400 people a day combinedly in Kathmandu valley and Sarlahi district at morning for 30 days continuously. The distribution was started on 13 June 2021 in Sarlahi and ended on 12 July 2021 whereas in Kathmandu it was started on 16 June and ended on 15 July 2021. In Kathmandu valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) the distribution point was not constant for all 30 days. The project was aimed to benefit people in need around the valley, and because of that the distribution point was decided to the magnitude of amount of people in need. The distribution of food in Sarlahi however was carried out from one definite place. The food packets were delivered to the Musahar basti and distributed to the people. People were made to stand in a row in order to receive the food. Masks were also handed over to the receiver of the meal pack and standard procedures of social distancing was followed to prevent the infection of COVID-19.

Learning

With 16.8% of households having inadequate food consumption in Nepal, through the pandemic, cooked food distribution was an appropriate step to be taken to compensate for the inadequate general food rations. It is an immediate life-saving food security activity, especially followed an emergency such as COVID-19. For 30 days of our project of distributing cooked food to the people in need, around 12,800 people were served with meal once a day. This project did help us to relieve the ongoing inadequacy of food consumption by people, but this is certainly not the solution for long term. There are some learnings we have acquired through this project, and they are mentioned below:

1. Supporting local food production and vegetable gardens improve nutrition and enhance resilience. Community production groups and private agricultural input dealers can be used to augment the supply of seed and fertilizer to boost cereal production. This in turn increase the supply to the storage unit and to the market, preparing the community better for emergencies like the current pandemic.

2. Strengthening risk surveillance and early warning systems is essential for responding quickly and effectively to food crises situations. Disaster recovery contingency funds can be established which can be triggered in natural disaster. Additionally, surveillance operations should be maintained when the perceived threats are low, avoiding the complacency is an important lesson learned. This pandemic has reassured us about the vitality of preparedness for preemptive risk.
3. Building resilience in food security requires investing in food production, food storage, distribution and marketing systems that enhance resilience to shocks. Improved land management practices, rehabilitation of essential irrigation, investing in rural infrastructure to increase local food production can be adopted to improve food security.
4. Improving local food markets. If local food markets will have stocks and storage, a better approach to help during crises, can be embraced. In such situation, targeted cash transfer programs can be more efficient than distributing food in improving food security.

Challenges

Executing a project amid the pandemic and its risk was a challenging task and there were few challenges, we had to overcome in order to complete the project. They are listed below:

1. Procurement, and transportation challenge: Amid strict lockdown, when government of Nepal had applied stern mobility restrictions procuring food and need items was difficult. The items had to be supplied to different places of Kathmandu valley and to Sarlahi.
2. Maintaining Social Distance: It was an exacting task to maintain 2 meters between more than 200 people at once. The insufficiency of health education about COVID-19 among people and hunger were the major cause for the haphazard crowd.

Budget Overview

The project's overall budget was NPR.1,425,000. The contribution to the initiative from Sowers Action, Hong Kong, China, amounted to 99.84% of the budget. The funds were mostly used for food items and gas, required for cooking and logistics costs, as well as human resource mobilization and branding costs. The procurement food supplies, and gas cylinders consumed 93.07% of the budget. Logistics, human resource mobilization, and branding made up 6.77% of the entire fund.

The detailed breakdown of expenses born during the project implementation is provided in the table below:

S.N.	Items Description	Rate Per Unit (NPR)	Quantity	Amount (NPR)
Food Related Items				
1.	Jeera Masino Chamal	1375	470 Packets	646,250
2.	Moong Daal	200	230 Kgs	46,000
3.	Gas	1425	10 Cylinders	14,250
4.	Salt	20	35 Kgs	700
5.	Oil	250	60 Litres	15,000
6.	Jeera Powder	450	50 Kgs	22,500
7.	Turmeric Powder	370	20 Kgs	7,400
8.	Chilli Powder	370	20 Kgs	7,400
9.	Onion	55	300 Kgs	16,500
10.	Garlic	220	30 Kgs	6,600
11.	Ginger	90	30 Kgs	2,700
12.	Potato	70	400 Kgs	28,000
13.	Green Veg	60	200 Kgs	12,000
14.	Apple	200	160 Kgs	32,000
15.	Banana	10	5,000 Units	50,000
16.	Egg	400	430 Crates	172,000
17.	Water	20	6,500 Litres	130,000
18.	Aluminium Box	9	13,000 Units	11,7000
Sub Total				1,326,300
Logistic Costs				
19.	Transportation	1,500	30 days	45,000
20.	Volunteer	1,000	30 days	30,000
21.	Branding			21,470
Grand Total				1,422,770

Financial Summary: Total Fund Received: NPR. 1,425,000
 Total Expenses: NPR. 1,422,770 Surplus: NPR. 2,230

Stories of Beneficiaries



Shanta Tamang is a 65-year-old elderly woman living currently in Mahalaxmasthan, Lalitpur. She moved there 2 years ago to live with her son and family, when her husband died leaving her alone in a village in Ramechhap. Her son was a driver, and the daughter-in-law was an office assistant; they were doing well before the lockdown. Shanta was one of the regular recipients of our cooked food and one day while talking to the beneficiaries we interacted with her.

She said, "Things were fine until the lockdown started. But now there is limited amount of food in our room and my children are not earning. As a parent, all I want is their happiness and sated stomach. Thinking this I come here to eat, so that they can save my part of food for themselves for some other day. And I will continue to do so till the situation gets normal. I cannot help them in other ways, but this way I feel like I am contributing."



Bipul Majhi, a resident of Haripur-04, Sarlahi, never had a stable job. He did whatever came his way, from ploughing fields to carrying loads. This was his sole source of income. Life was hard for his family of 6 (he, his spouse and 4 children), but it took a turn for the worse when the country went on a lockdown on March 24, 2020. They did not have enough to eat and one day when working outside on an empty stomach, he collapsed. He took his last breath that day due to poverty and hunger.

This year during our food distribution in Sarlahi, his wife talked to us when receiving food about that incident. She said, "we were going through the same struggle as the previous year, when the government announced lockdown. My children were worried that I would also die like their father. But with your support, hopefully no one will die this year. I wish we had similar help last year, and I wish that our government would worry about our lives during these times."

Project Gallery



Kathmandu Distribution



Sarlahi Distribution



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