

# Saath-Saath Bulletin

Volume 2 | November 2012

"USAID's Saath-Saath Project was launched with a vision to sustainably reduce HIV transmission and spread of HIV/AIDS, and improve reproductive health among the most-at-risk group. USAID is proud to have made a smooth transition from a highly successful ASHA Project to Saath-Saath Project, especially without any gaps in the delivery of critical services.

Saath-Saath has accomplished major milestones for an exciting new initiatives in a short span of time such as integrating family planning and HIV/AIDS services components, and building local organization's capacity. USAID is committed to the National HIV and AIDS strategy and together in partnership with the Government of Nepal; we are determined to move towards reaching the MDG 6, which is to 'halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV by 2015'. We would like to commend the project team, especially our local NGO partners working hard out in the field, for a successful first year and we continue to look forward for many more accomplishment in the days to come."

Shanta Maya Gurung  
Program Coordinator HIV/AIDS  
USAID/Nepal



## Inside...

Message from the Chief of Party	1
Success from the field	2
Capacity strengthening	2
Innovation	2
XIX International AIDS Conference Hub concludes successfully in Nepal	3
Reflecting upon a year since USAID's Saath-Saath Project commenced in Nepal	4
Family planning services integrated into SSP clinic sites	4
Saath-Saath Project Summary of Fiscal Year 2012 Achievement (October 2011-July 2012)	5
News	6-7
• 18 <sup>th</sup> National Condom Day commemorated in Nepal	6
• Baseline Family Planning (FP) survey nears completion	6
• Innovative model "HIV-free Village" in capital enthalls visiting renowned HIV advocate	6
• HIV: Somewhere, in so many ways	6
• SSP supports Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry-Business Coalition on AIDS in Nepal (FNCCI-BCAN) HIV orientation training at workplaces	7
• National coordination meeting on trafficking in person conducted	7
• National workshop on FP/HIV integration	7
Visitor's log	8

## Message from the Chief of Party

"We are extremely happy to bring another issue of Saath-Saath Bulletin to you. This issue provides you an excellent snapshot of the successes Saath-Saath Project has had in its remarkable first year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support.

As I write this the project is well into its second year. There are more exciting activities and events to look forward to as we work very closely with National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC) and Family Health Division (FHD) to expand the integration of FP/HIV in Nepal. As the expansion of this integration gathers momentum, we are looking forward to learning valuable lessons on its impact on a low-resource setting country Nepal that faces concentrated HIV epidemic and traditionally has a strong Family Planning program.

In year 2 of the project, we will be bringing the phase 2 of the Technical and Organization Capacity Assessment Tool (TOCAT) exercise to an end resulting in a detailed action plan for all of our NGO partners. This will further help us to define capacity building activities for these NGOs further developing the local capacity for better sustainability.

In addition, SSP will generate valuable learning experience of reaching the migrants and their spouses, a very important area for HIV prevention in Nepal. Our activities in four districts will further add to the understanding on how best to attain high program coverage among the mobile population making migration safer for this key population.

We will continue to partner with our valued civil society partners and work closely with NCASC and FHD in expanding and improving prevention support care and treatment for selected key populations, make available need based technical assistance in surveillance, research, monitoring and evaluation, continue support for local capacity building and system development, improve overall quality of services available for key populations and continue to collaborate with key national and local stakeholders.

Wishing you all our best wishes for 2013!"



**USAID | NEPAL**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Saath-Saath Project**

## Success from the field: I finally understood but have you?

***Condoms might appear small but plays a huge role. It is a great preventive tool, especially for those who have multiple partners***

(A famous local Nepali song plays in the background “झाडभर दाइ मन फयो मलाई, लैजाउ न पोखरा घुमलाई” wherein a girl expresses her interest towards the vehicle driver and asks him to take her on a ride). “For many like me, working in the transport business has its perks. However, our carelessness can have severe consequences. I am Suroj Pandey (name changed) and this is my story.”

This was around November-December of 2011. I was working as a bus conductor with aspirations to soon become a driver myself. It's been 5 years I have been working regularly on the Pokhara-Kathmandu bus route. It was quite common to occasionally meet a girl on the bus. Some would be interested in me and we would date for a while. I was living the life most only dreamt of; at least that's what I thought back then. One day while traveling to Pokhara, a girl got on the bus at Dhadhing. We started talking, even had lunch together. As we talked more I learned her name was Sushma. She hailed from Dang district and was returning after meeting her relatives. It was nightfall by the time we reached Pokhara. While all the passengers left, Sushma stayed back. She wanted to stay with me. Running a bit

low on cash, I asked the bus driver for some money, he agreed but on the condition that he will also stay with us. I agreed, what else could have I done. The three of us spent the night together. In the morning she left and we returned to ferrying passengers. All seemed fine until I reached Kathmandu. While at a place called Jadibudi to repair the bus, I met Roshan. Roshan worked for STEP Nepal, a local NGO partner for Saath-Saath Project. We sat down and started talking about HIV and STIs and its prevention. As Roshan continues informing me of the risks, the night at Pokhara flashed before my eyes. The question “What if...” started echoing in my head. I told him the same. He immediately referred me to SACTS, Saath-Saath Project local NGO partner, to get myself tested. Luckily my HIV test came out negative. But I had contracted a venereal disease and was given a shot for it. This was a close call. By carelessness could have easily resulted in a more severe outcome. Thanks to Saath-Saath Project, I now understand the importance of condoms. Small as they seem, they are a true life saver. Plus those with multiple partners should routinely get tested for HIV and STIs. I have altered by lifestyle and always carry a condom with me. I finally understood but have you?

## Capacity strengthening

***Technical Assistance to implementing agencies to apply for PEPFAR Gender-Based Violence Small Grant***

Saath-Saath Project provided technical assistance to three of its implementing agencies (IAs) to submit a proposal for the PEPFAR small grants initiative for programs addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Community Action Center (CAC-Nepal), Child and Women Empowerment Society (CWES), and Jagriti Mahila Maha Sangh (JMMS) were among the three IAs supported. This technical assistance was part of SSP's capacity building activities designed to contribute to organizational sustainability through diversification of their funding portfolio. The selected IAs represent network NGOs (JMMS) which serves network of female sex workers and the other

two are from different regions: CAC is based in Kathmandu valley in central region and CWES is from Kaski in western region.

The team from SSP – consisting of staff representing functional departments in program, capacity building, strategic information, and contract management services – worked together with the IAs to help them put together a proposal. This was also an excellent opportunity to directly apply in a real life situation the skills learnt in the recently concluded proposal writing related workshop conducted by SSP.

## Innovation

***Edutainment activities keep visitors returning to DIC***

Saath-Saath Project (SSP) currently has 46 Drop-in Centers (DIC). These DIC are designed as a safe place for key population to visit regularly and access vital HIV, STIs and family planning (FP) services. All DIC are co-located with SSP's Expanded Integrated Health Service (EIHS) site and carry the BISHWAS brand; assuring quality and standardized services at all sites throughout the project districts. These centers have remained a vital component in mitigating the effect of HIV through the use of “edutainment” activities planned by project staff to deliver valuable knowledge to the key population and also increase visitor flow at the DIC.

Edutainment, a blend of education and entertainment, is a refreshing break from the monotonous one-way delivery of information. At SSP's DIC, the visitors engage proactively to learn more about HIV, STIs and FP. More importantly, such activities have shown increased retention of the information provided, by the key population. These centers have a wide array of games, publications and audio/visual produced by SSP that help deliver vital messages in a fun and interesting manner. In addition, the monthly planned activities also



include a variety of arts and craft activities, beauty tips, makeovers, celebrating festivals and holidays, competitions, etc. SSP's local NGO partners have also been planning separate creative activities regularly that utilized new and innovative programs to deliver HIV, STIs and FP messages effectively. The golden rule here is to ensure the key population is having fun while they learn. This ensures their regular visit at the DIC while many even motivate their peers to come along.



# XIX International AIDS Conference Hub concludes successfully in Nepal

*Nepal's maiden conference hub shares latest developments from International AIDS 2012 Conference*



United States Agency for International Development (USAID)- funded Saath-Saath Project and UNAIDS, under the leadership of Nepal's National Center for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), successfully organized a XIX International AIDS Conference 2012 Hub titled *Understanding Global and National HIV Epidemic* from August 14-16, 2012 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The three day long hub, endorsed by the XIX International AIDS 2012 Committee, was planned

primarily for government agencies and local non-governmental organizations that were unable to participate physically in the XIX International AIDS Conference 2012 in Washington DC, USA. The hub also aimed at strengthening the local HIV and AIDS response, create new opportunities for partnerships and help disseminate the latest research among stakeholders. In total, the hub saw active participation from around 150 participants from government agencies, civil society, hospitals, UN agencies and beneficiary group networks. The hub primarily focused on screening pre-recorded videos from the main International AIDS Conference followed by discussions on related topics with the help of Chair and Panel member.



The hub was officially inaugurated by Dr. Praveen Mishra, Secretary of MoHP during a formal ceremony on day one. Also present as special guests were Ms. Shanda Steimer, Director at USAID/Nepal's Office of Health and Family Planning Office, Mr. Thomas Sinkovits, Co-Chairperson of UN theme

group on AIDS and Dr. Krishna Kumar Rai, Director at NCASC.

The hub comprised of 33 video presentations, three oral presentations and one poster presentation which were arranged under 10 technical sessions. The session themes ranged from targeted intervention, prevention of mothers to child transmission, antiretroviral treatment, care and support for HIV-infected people, HIV-related stigma and discrimination reduction, health system strengthening and cross cutting issues which were in line with Nepal's National HIV/AIDS strategy 2011-2016. All session and its discussions were moderated by a Chair with assistance from a team of panel members. Both the session chairs and panel members were distinguished government, I/NGO and beneficiary network representatives and are experts in the field of HIV and AIDS.



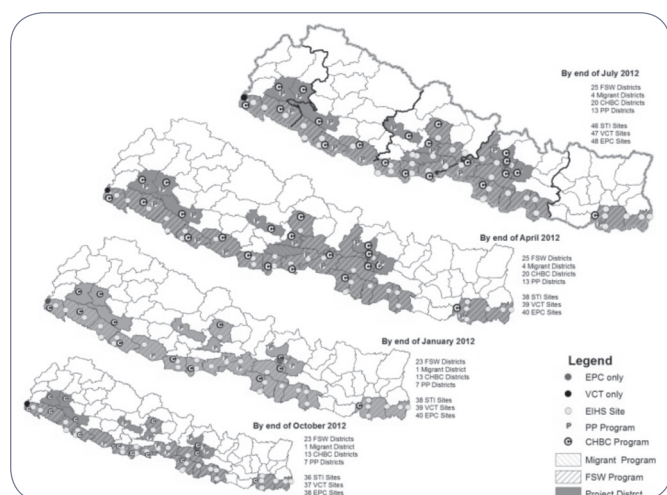
First of its kind in Nepal, the hub successfully managed to increased awareness among participants regarding the latest breakthroughs in the field of HIV and AIDS and also provided a platform for organizations to explore new opportunities to support the national HIV response.



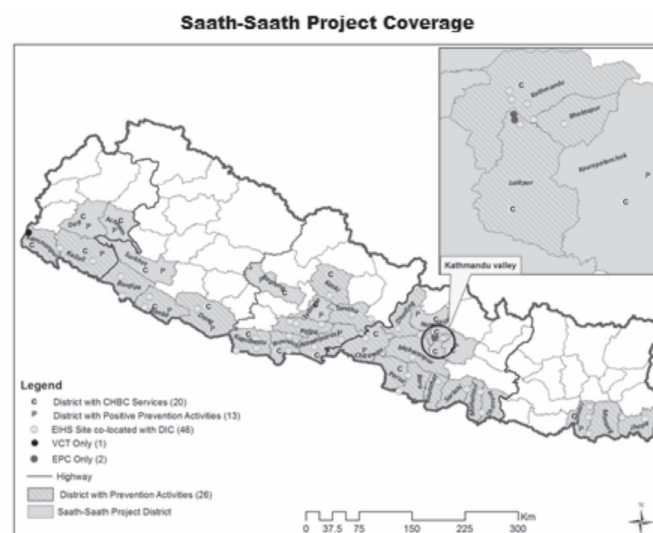
## Additional Conference Hub pictures



# Reflecting upon a year since USAID's Saath-Saath Project commenced in Nepal



Saath-Saath successfully closed its first fiscal year on July 2012 with huge successes. Within a year of its launch, the project has managed to ensure uninterrupted HIV prevention to care support and treatment services to its project beneficiaries as ASHA Project closed in September 2011 and also gradually integrated family planning services in 33 districts across the country. The project expanded its community and home based care services and positive prevention program to 20 and 13 districts respectively. New districts Kapilvastu, Palpa, Nawalparasi and Bara have already started reaching migrant



population with HIV and family planning services. Also, our new radio program “Sancho Bisancho” has been operationalized and currently providing key HIV and FP messages to migrant population in the 4 migrant program districts. At the year-end, the project currently manages 48 sites providing HIV care and treatment, 46 sites are providing HIV counseling and testing and STIs diagnosis and treatment (one additional site only provides HIV counseling and testing services). The project has effectively managed to support the national HIV and FP responses as reflected in the project achievements on page 5.

## Family planning services integrated into SSP clinic sites

Within the first fiscal year, Saath-Saath has successfully managed to fully integrate family planning (FP) services at its expanded integrated health services (EIHS) sites. 26 such sites provide HIV-related care, support and treatment services along with family planning services and referrals with the aim of increasing access of its target population to both HIV and FP services.

To ensure smooth operation of the FP services, the project development and revised key documents including FP integrated guidelines, SOPs and recording and reporting tools and trained outreach and clinic staff. Additionally, SSP coordinated with the National Health Training Center (NHTC) for the Comprehensive Family Planning and Counseling (COFP) training; Family Health Division (FHD) for the supply of FP commodities from the National logistics management system and also conducted a national workshop of FP and HIV integration. Similarly, existing prevention guidelines were revised to include FP activities through outreach and peer education.

Service roll-out: FP services at the outreach and the EIHS sites were initiated following the roll out of the training. SSP now provides the following FP services:

- **Through outreach educators and community mobilizers**
  - Comprehensive information on FP methods emphasizing the importance of dual method use.
  - screening target groups using the standard FP need screening tool to assess their FP need and

- Referral for further FP counseling and services.
- Clients are referred either to the SSP EIHS sites or the site convenient to the client including government sites.
- **AT EIHS sites**
  - FP counseling and referral services are provided through EIHS sites from 11 project districts that overlapped with Nepal Family Health Program II districts
  - FP counseling along with the commodities (condoms, OCPs and injectable) are provided from 15 project districts in non-NFHP districts

All FP commodities are secured through the national logistics system in coordination with FHD and the District Public Health Office.

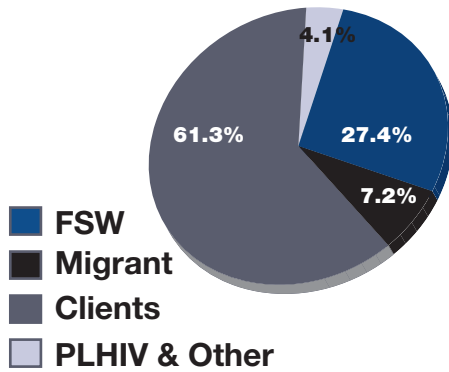
### Saath-Saath Project's efforts to integrate Family planning and HIV at the National level:

Saath-Saath Project collaborated with National Centre for AIDS and STD Control and FHD to conduct a National workshop on FP and HIV integration. The main objective of the workshop was to explore the current status of integration of FP into HIV services in Nepal and to identify the potential areas of integration of FP into HIV and way forward. The workshop decided on forming a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) bringing together expertise of relevant stakeholder to coordinate and provide support in the process of integration.

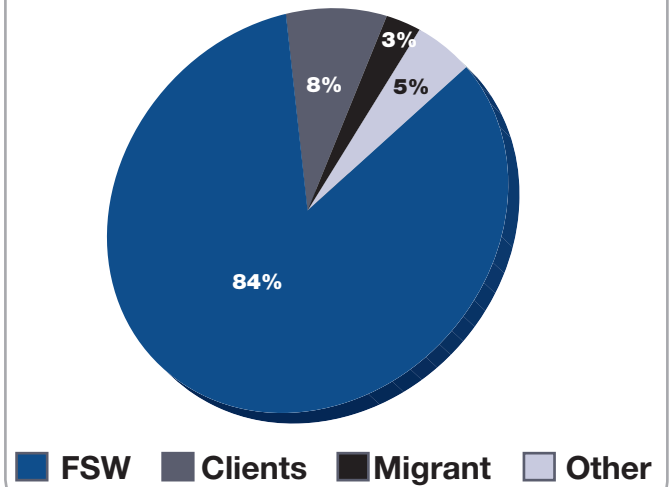
# Saath-Saath Project

## Summary of Fiscal Year 2012 Achievement (October 2011-July 2012)

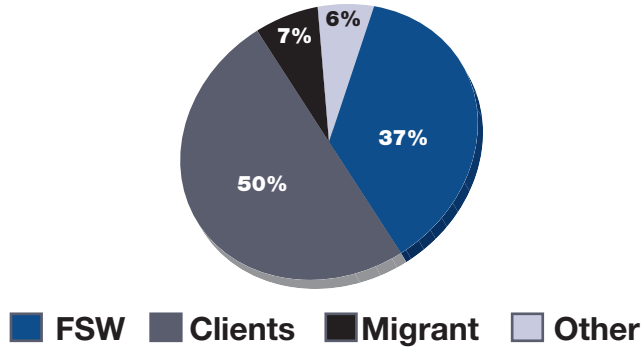
**Total people reached with HIV Prevention activities  
(N = 80,451)**



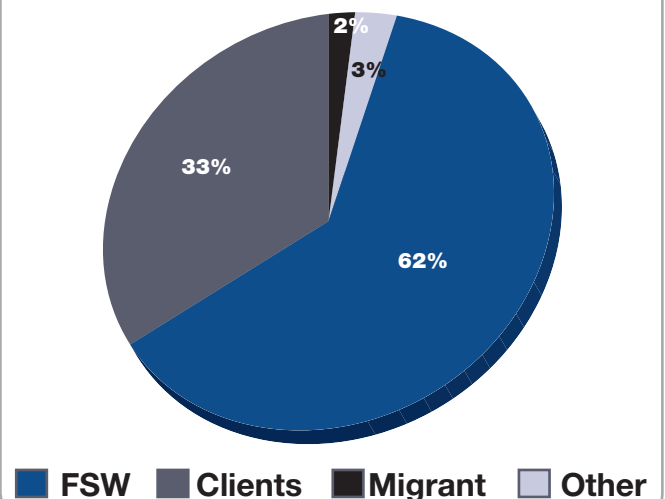
**Total people treated for STIs  
(N = 7,224)**



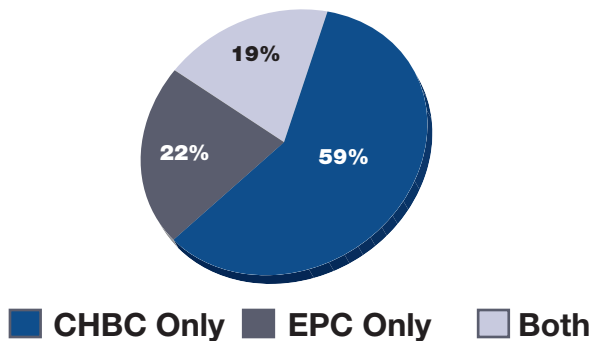
**Total people who received results with post-test counseling  
(N = 16,310)**



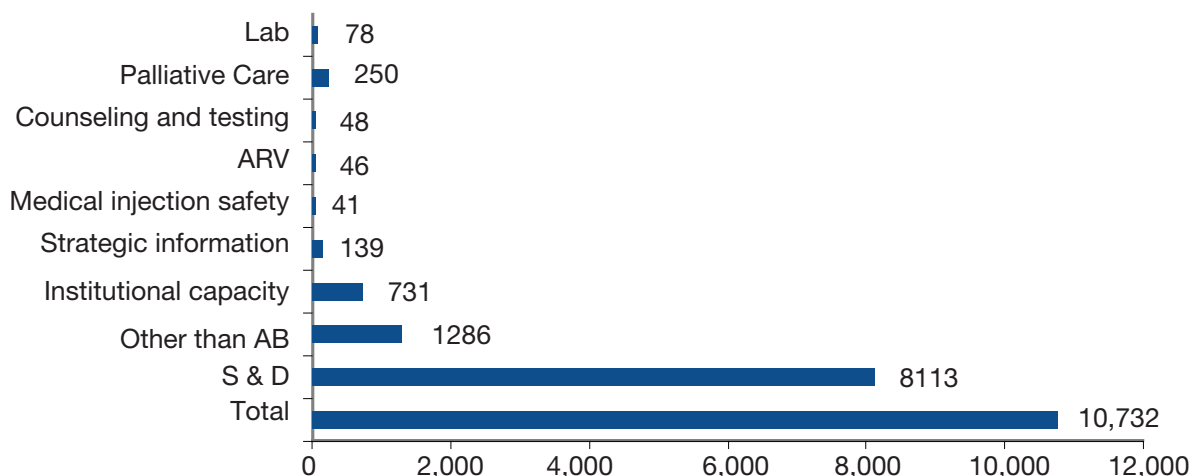
**Total number of condoms distributed  
(N = 31,93,975)**



**Palliative Care by types of services  
(N = 5,531)**



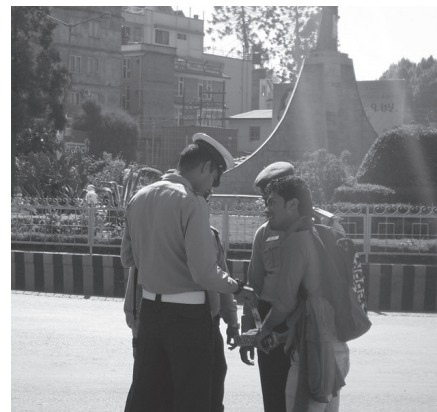
**Total number of people trained**





## 18<sup>th</sup> National Condom Day commemorated in Nepal

On November 3, 2012 Saath-Saath collaborated with the National Center for AIDS and STD Control and other local government agencies and stakeholders to organize a series of events across its project districts to promote the message of dual protection provided by condoms. Commemorated with the theme of Universal Access to Condom for Dual Protection, SSP was part of the national planning committee responsible in developing publicity materials and organizing a national event in Kathmandu. Additionally, SSP NGO partners organized multiple programs in coordination with local government agencies and other stakeholders in respective project districts. Some key activities conducted included distribution of condoms and prevention messages, information stalls, condom awareness rallies, street dramas, cultural programs, blood donation program, documentary shows and advocacy for condom promotion via local media. SSP NGO partners also organized quiz contests; debates; and other varied competitions to actively involve the public in the National Condom Day commemoration.



## Baseline Family Planning (FP) survey nears completion

Saath-Saath and its local NGO partner New Era continues its baseline survey as it heads towards the final lap. We had talked of the baseline survey in our volume 1 of our newsletter. Field work has already started for data collection for the baseline FP survey including rapid assessment of HIV, STIs and FP situation among migrant couples in Bara, Kapilvastu, Nawalparasi and Palpa district from 22 August 2012. Prior to this household survey, a rapid assessment (mapping) was conducted which provided detailed information for sampling and other information as required by mapping guideline. Till date a total of 41 trained researchers have been deployed for this field research work. The field work has continuously been monitored by New ERA, SSP research unit and also USAID team. For now all household survey, key informant and FGD have been completed and Male data analysis and report writing has already begun. Similarly, field data entry for female informants has also started.

It is anticipated that this study will help inform effective design of program interventions on integrated HIV and FP services in the migrant program districts.

## Innovative model “HIV-free Village” in capital enthalls visiting renowned HIV advocate

On October 12, 2012 renowned HIV rights advocate and Olympic multi-gold medalist Mr. Greg Louganis attended a special program organized by Saath-Saath Project (SSP). Also present were Dr. Krishna Kumar Rai, Director of National Center for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC) and other US embassy staff. As part of the special program, a model “HIV-free Village” was designed to showcase USAID’s continued support to the Government of Nepal to help build an HIV-free country through a continuum of HIV-related prevention to care services. The model village, organized at SSP’s implementing partner SPARSHA Nepal contained a wide array of publications, games and audio/visuals along with mockups of its service sites including HIV counseling and testing clinic. In total 12 NGO partners working at national level or in Kathmandu valley contributed in the program. Prior to departing, Mr. Louganis showed solidarity with SSP’s efforts and urged all to continue working towards an AIDS-free generation. He further emphasized that to prevent HIV, awareness and education is a must. “When I first came to know of my HIV status, I felt numb, felt it was the end, but my passion for sports gave me the inspiration to continue on and I recommend the same to others, find an inspiration and you can overcome anything, including HIV.”



## HIV: Somewhere, in so many ways

Somewhere, in the sound of unheard tears,  
In the depth of ignorance, at the height of fears,  
An unsuspecting child is born.

Somewhere, in the joys of reckless salad days,  
In the awkward feelings that perplex in many ways,  
An errant life is torn.

Somewhere, in the frail gestures of questioning eyes,  
In the mute emotions, in the heavy sighs,  
The freshest fragility is worn.

Somewhere, in stigma’s hurtful smears,  
In the faultless stains, in the constant sneers,  
Is a future forsaken, a life forlorn.

If only there was – everywhere,  
A touch of love, a word of care,  
The pain of HIV would be shorn.

**A poem by Dr. Bisika Thapa  
Capacity Building Advisor  
Saath-Saath Project**

## **SSP supports Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry-Business Coalition on AIDS in Nepal (FNCCI-BCAN) HIV orientation training at workplaces**

SSP provided IEC material support during the workplace trainings organized by FNCCI/BCAN at various prominent private companies as well as associations/unions in Kathmandu valley between September 10-13, 2012. The training was financed by UNAIDS and was conducted in partnership with NCASC. The training helped to raise HIV awareness among business leaders, executives, employers and workers. The training also focused on a special training for HR managers regarding HIV sensitization. The overall objective of the training was to change the behaviors of business people on TB/HIV/AIDS at the workplaces and their communities. At the end of the training, a package comprising of various SSP-produced IEC materials was also provided to HR managers to display in their offices for employees to refer to. The initiative supports both SSP's Public Private Partnership initiative as well as Safer Workplace.

## **National workshop on FP/HIV integration**

SSP in coordination with FHD and NCASC organized a National workshop on family planning (FP)/HIV integration in July 2012. The workshop aimed to explore the current status of integration of FP into HIV settings in Nepal and to identify the potential areas of integration of FP into HIV and way forward. Drawing upon the examples of FP/HIV integration around the world, the workshop highlighted on the importance of FP/HIV integration, coordination and cooperation required for quality integration, and efforts required in laying out modalities for integration in Nepal. The workshop formulated a FP/HIV integration Task Force chaired by the Deputy Director General for Department of Health Services, MoHP. SSP will serve as the secretariat of the Task Force. The Task Force is mandated to work out modalities for integration of both the services for effective delivery of FP/HIV services in the country. Representatives from DoHS, NCASC, FHD, Regional Health Directorate Central Region, UN agencies, USAID, DHOs and SSP National partners were present during the workshop.

## **National coordination meeting on trafficking in person conducted**

As part of the US Government's unified policy on trafficking and HIV/AIDS, SSP has established and maintained a system for its local NGO partners or Implementing Agencies (IAs) to increase awareness, record and report, service delivery, referral and follow-up of suspected trafficked in persons (TIP) cases. SSP IAs are providing HIV-related prevention to care, support and treatment services to TIP cases as required, in coordination with the organizations working in TIP at national and local level. In addition, SSP IAs are also providing referral services so that the suspected TIP cases can access other relevant services available in the respective districts or other districts.

To support its ongoing TIP activities, SSP conducted the National Coordination Meeting with agencies working in the field of Anti Trafficking in July 2012. The objectives of the meeting were to share Government of Nepal's policies and programs on combating TIP and HIV issues; to update on key prevalent issues related to HIV and trafficking and to discuss potential program options, including ways to establish improved coordination and to chart out steps to expand and ensure effective coordination among stakeholders working on anti-trafficking activities. The meeting was chaired by Director General of Department of Health Services (DoHS), Dr. Mingma G. Sherpa. Other key personnel who contributed in meeting objectives were Dr. Ganesh Gurung, former member of the National Planning Commission and chairperson of the high level task force on labor migration, NCASC Director Dr. Krishna Kumar Rai, Dr. Kiran Rupakheta, Under Secretary at Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare; Mr. Surya Prasad Bhandari, Director, Department of Foreign Employment and DoHS Deputy Director Dr. Guna Raj Lohani. The national level meeting successfully helped bring together stakeholders working in the field of TIP to share their successes and challenges and develop a joint way forward to facilitate a coordinated effort at combating TIP from all sectors.

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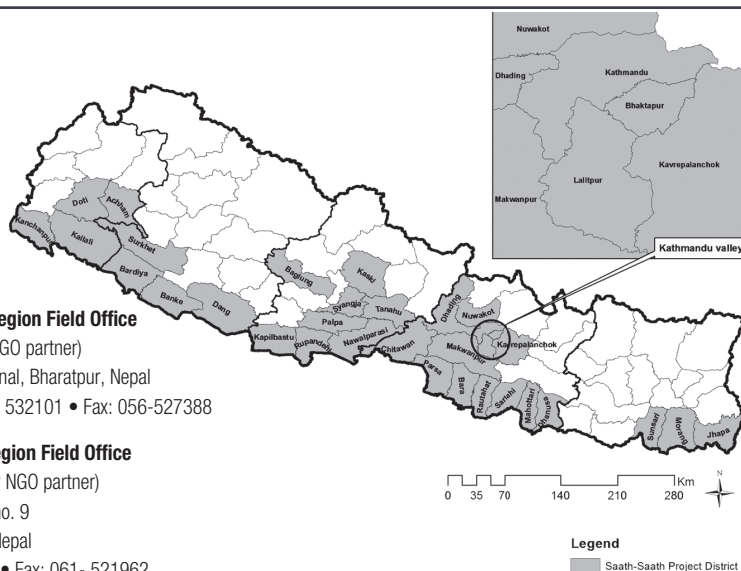
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## Visitor's log



**1. Visitor(s):** *Todd Sorenson, Deputy Director of Bureau for Asia (ASIA/SCAA) & USAID/Nepal Office of Health and Family Planning Director Shanda Steimer and DLI Jessica Healey*

**Venue:** Bhaktapur district

**Date:** July 12, 2012

**Objective:** Observe SSP's integrated family planning, HIV prevention, care, treatment services for FSWs, clients of FSWs and PLHIV in Bhaktapur district implemented by local NGO partner Community Action Center.

**2. Visitor(s):** *Government of Bhutan, Ministry of Health*

**Venue:** Bhaktapur district

**Date:** August 8, 2012

**Objective:** Observe SSP's integrated family planning, HIV prevention, care, treatment services for FSWs, clients of FSWs and PLHIV in Bhaktapur district implemented by local NGO partner Community Action Center.

**3. Visitor(s):** *Deepak Paudel, MNH Program Specialist and Jacob Mueller, Deputy Controller Officer, USAID/Nepal.*

**Venue:** Makwanpur district

**Date:** September 6, 2012

**Objective:** Observe SSP's Expanded Integrated Health Services (EIHS) and co-located Drop-in center (DIC) site in Hetauda implemented by SSP NGO partner General Welfare Pratisthan in Makwanpur district.



**4. Visitor(s):** *USAID/Nepal's Naramaya Limbu, Team Leader, FP/MNCH/Nutrition; Jacob Mueller, Deputy Controller Officer; and MahendraHada, Chief Accountant*

**Venue:** Morang district

**Date:** August 31, 2012

**Objective:** SSP's Expanded Integrated Health Services (EIHS) and co-located Drop-in center (DIC) site in Mahendra Chowk, Biratnagar, Morang implemented by SSP core partner AMDA Nepal and local NGO partner Sahara Nepal.

**5. Visitor(s):** *Han Kang, Deputy Director of Office of Health and Family Planning and Naramaya Limbu, Team Leader, FP/MNCH/Nutrition, USAID/Nepal.*

**Venue:** Banke district

**Date:** September 7, 2012

**Objective:** Observe SSP's Expanded Integrated Health Services (EIHS) and co-located Drop-in center (DIC) site and expanded community and home-based care services for PLHIV in Nepalgunj, Banke implemented by Nepal STD and AIDS Research Center, Institute of Community Health and Junkiree Banke respectively.

**6. Visitor(s):** *Amy Fawcett, Mission Controller, Rajiv Shakya, Financial Analyst, Srijana Rai, Administrative Assistant and Deepak Paudel, AID Development Program Specialist, USAID/Nepal*

**Venue:** Kaski district

**Date:** September 16, 2012

**Objective:** Observe SSP's Expanded Integrated Health Services (EIHS) and co-located Drop-in center (DIC) site and observe HIV-prevention outreach activities in Pokhara implemented by SSP NGO Partner Naulo Ghumti and Child and Women Empowerment Society Nepal.



**7. Visitor(s):** *Daniel Sinclair, Shanta Maya Gurung, Program Coordinator HIV/AIDS and Gajendra Rai, AID Development Program Assistant, USAID/Nepal*

**Venue:** Palpa and Kapilvastu districts

**Date:** September 27-29, 2012

**Objective:** Observe SSP's Expanded Integrated Health Services (EIHS) and co-located Drop-in center (DIC) site in Bishal Bazar, Tansen implemented by local NGO partner Indreni Samaj Kendra. Also observe SSP's HIV and STI Prevention and FP promotion among FSWs and their clients in Kapilvastu district implemented by local NGO partner Namuna. In Palpa, visitors also observed ongoing FP baseline survey activities.

**8. Visitor(s):** *Shanta Maya Gurung, Program Coordinator HIV/AIDS and Gajendra Rai, AID Development Program Assistant, USAID/Nepal*

**Venue:** Kailali and Kanchanpur districts

**Date:** October 1-3, 2012

**Objective:** Observe SSP's Expanded Integrated Health Services (EIHS) and co-located Drop-in center (DIC) site and observe HIV-prevention outreach activities in Kanchanpur implemented by SSP NGO partner Nepal National Social Welfare Association and Thagil Social Development Association. Visitors also observed SSP's expanded community and home-based care (CHBC) services for PLHIV in Kailali district implemented by local NGO partner Asha Kiran Pratisthan.

**Subject: Saath-Saath Bulletin November 2012**

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