

Reaching the Vulnerable Groups at Brick Kiln

Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the British Red Cross, has been implementing Covid-19 preparedness and response operation since the beginning of the pandemic. As part of the operation, the Red Cross conducts risk communication, community engagement, and accountability activities, including vaccination programs.

Like every day, Sudima, a Nepal Red Cross volunteer, was on duty disseminating the Covid-19 related information and collecting feedback from communities. When she reached a brick kiln in Dadhikot, Bhaktapur, she learned that many laborers were unvaccinated against Covid-19.

"I am not vaccinated because I don't know where to go for vaccination," said one of the female laborers.



Red Cross volunteers interacting with the female laborers at the brick kiln in Bhaktapur, Nepal.

Around 70 daily waged laborers from different parts of the country (Ramechhap, Sindhupalchowk, Nepalgunj, and Dang districts) have been working in the kiln. Many laborers lived in a hut made of bricks in impoverished situations.

Though the nearest vaccination center was only 30 minutes away from the brick kiln, it was not feasible for the workers to leave their work to visit the vaccination center. They could not afford to wait in queues to get the vaccine since their earnings were directly linked to the number of bricks, they made daily. Besides, they were worried about the effects of the vaccination. Even minor effects such as body aches or fever after vaccination

would impact their earning, which they found hard to compromise. It created hesitancy among the workers to get vaccinated.

When the Red Cross volunteers knew about it, the NRCS, Bhaktapur District Chapter coordinated with the District Health Office and provided the vaccination service at the kiln.



A medical volunteer from the Nepal Red Cross Society vaccinating laborers on the premises of the brick kiln.

The District Health Office provided the Covid-19 vaccines, and the Red Cross team mobilized its medical team for the vaccination.

The team vaccinated 31 laborers (15 males and 16 females, including six pregnant and lactating women). The team also communicated the importance of getting vaccinated to the workers and collected their feedback. The laborers were grateful for the vaccination support provided.

"I am yet to get the Covid-19 booster dose. I didn't know where to get the vaccination before, but I am aware of it after interacting with the Red Cross volunteer. I will go for the next vaccination soon," said a male laborer.