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SUCCESS STORY

Reaching Consensus to Improve Health Service Delivery



Photo: An Axillary Health worker washing hands in a newly installed wash basin at the Karagithi Health Post

With USAID Swachchhata project support, 63 health posts in Dolpa, Jajarkot, Salyan, West Rukum and East Rukum, now have functioning, safely managed water supply systems and disable and gender-friendly latrine facilities.

The Karagithi Health Post in Salyan, Nepal is testament to how perseverance can pay off in securing much needed water to a health post. Prior to receiving a piped water connection, the health post had no direct water supply. Health post support staff had to fetch water from community taps. Without sufficient water, the health post could not maintain good sanitation conditions or properly sterilize medical equipment. Recognizing these challenges, USAID/Nepal's Health Hygiene Activity ("Swachchhata" in Nepali) selected the Karagithi Health Post to provide WASH technical and financial support.

Together with Swachchhata Project Staff, the Health Facility Operation and Management Committee (HFOMC) and Rural Municipality representatives searched for a water source to supply the health post. After an extensive search, the Committee found a water source a kilometer from the health post on public land and prepared a water source improvement plan.

However, while conducting a detailed survey of the water source, a dispute between the HFOMC and community regarding the use of the water source for the health post arose. At least 10 households in the community were also using the water source, and they did not agree to share the water with the health post. A consensus could not be reached for a month during which time the HFOMC made several rounds of meetings with the community. The HFOMC shared the detailed survey and showed that there was sufficient water for both the health post and the community. Finally, the community came to realize the importance of water for the health post and the HFOMC agreed to provide a tap to upgrade the community's access to the water source.

The Karagithi Health Post has since completed construction work of its water intake, pipeline, water storage tanks and chlorination system for water treatment, and plumbing system connected to each procedure room and toilet. Water is now accessible 24 hours a day at the health post with a noticeable improvement in both water sanitation and hygiene measures being practiced at the facility. With Swachchhata Project Staff support, the Health Post also conducts regular meetings and conducts self-assessments, instilling a sense of ownership and motivating staff to be pro-active to continue to meet, discuss and assure continuous quality of health services.