



ADARA
GROUP
— BRIDGING WORLDS —

Impact Report

Remote Community
Development

January to June 2021

COVID-19 in Nepal

The past six months have been a time of compounding crises for the people of Nepal. The nation's terrible second wave begun in April 2021 and is still far from over.

At the peak of the crisis, 9,000 new infections were being reported daily, hospitals and ICUs were over capacity and lacked oxygen supply, and higher rates of young people were becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. In early June, despite including some of the most remote communities in Nepal, the Karnali province where Humla is located had the highest COVID test positivity rate in the world. Whilst mass testing could not be carried out, approximately 263 Humla and 179 Ghyangfedi residents tested positive for COVID-19 during this second wave. The national death toll in Nepal has now surpassed 10,000.

Whilst the past few weeks have seen a brief reprieve in cases, Nepal's COVID-19 infections have started to climb rapidly in the previous few days, with an average of 2,500 new cases daily. These infection rates are likely to continue to increase, as only 15% of the population have received at least one dose of a vaccine, and vaccine supply is very uncertain.

To compound this medical crisis, the monsoon season in Nepal begun in mid-June, with flooding beginning earlier than usual. Already in Humla, several homes have been destroyed by flooding and landslides, and several roads and schools have been badly damaged. Because of the increased risk of flooding and landslides, Ghyangfedi schools also remain closed, however Adara is working with the local government and schools to resume teaching when it is safe to do so.

These challenges have underscored the importance of Adara's remote community development work. Secondary impacts such as increased risks of child trafficking and early marriage have increased throughout Nepal's second wave. Food insecurity is rising in Nepal, particularly in the Karnali province where a third of households report not having enough food*. Nepal's border with China remains closed due to the pandemic, limiting the quantity of essential goods that can reach Humla, and heavy snow in late April destroyed many of the region's winter crops.

*According to a [report](#) by Mercy Corps



Female community health volunteers in Ghyangfedi



FCHV's session on hand washing



Nurses' accommodation in Kathmandu



Children's ward in Ghyangfedi

With your support, Adara's teams have worked tirelessly this year to support the already vulnerable communities in Nepal throughout the second wave.

This has included:

- Securing and transporting countless boxes of face masks, face shields, hand sanitiser and other PPE to ensure that Adara-supported health posts and the District Hospital for Humla in Simikot were equipped with all the supplies they needed. We also provided Simikot Hospital with fuel for their generators and supported the setup of an isolation centre and delivered numerous oxygen cylinders and pulse oximeters to the hospital. We revived handwashing stations and awareness posters in Nepalgunj airport and ensured airport staff were equipped with PPE.
- Mobilizing 13 female community health volunteers (FCHVs) in Ghyangfedi to run training sessions in their local communities on important topics such as personal hygiene, social distancing measures, and proper hand washing techniques. These FCHV's, and 79 others across the district, were equipped with health kits that contained essential PPE, pulse oximeters, thermometers and gumboots that allow them to support the home-based care of COVID-19 patients. We have also supported 82 FCHVs in Humla with these kits, and are now working with UNICEF to advocate to the national government to equip the 52,700 FCHVs nationally with these kits.
- Spreading COVID-19 prevention and awareness messages in the community, including broadcasting messages via radio, loudspeakers and posters. Our Health Programme Manager delivered training sessions across the Kermi, Yalbang, Muchu, Dharapuri and Chuganpahaya districts to child clubs, girls clubs and teachers on the most up-to-date COVID-19 prevention and treatment methods.
- Working in partnership with a number of organisations at the Nepalgunj border to coordinate strong border management to minimise the transmission of COVID-19 from India to Nepal. Since May, we have supported more than 120,000 Nepalis returning home by supplying them with drinking water, handwashing stations, dignified menstruation kits and health kits for those who test positive to COVID-19.
- Providing support to frontline health workers in Kathmandu by offering safe accommodation, meals and medical attention to nurses who were unable to return home due to the risk of transmitting COVID-19 to their loved ones. In partnership with the Nepal Medical Association, the Karuna Foundation, Kings College and the Nursing Association of Nepal, we have been able to support a number of nurses while they are away from their families by providing this accommodation at Kings College in Kathmandu. This accommodation is ready to support more nurses if case numbers rise again.
- Working with the Ghyangfedi local government to set up a Children's Ward within an unused floor of the existing isolation centre. The ward includes 10 child-safe beds, each with their own teddy bear and bedding decorated with popular cartoon characters, a range of toys and a television. In addition to creating this child-friendly space for younger COVID-19 patients, our team provided numerous medical kits for future patients that include necessities such as toothbrushes, toothpastes, and water purification tablets.

Thank you for standing with Adara and the people of Nepal during this turbulent time. With your support, we will continue working to ensure that our communities can access vital health and education services.

Project Highlights

Despite the impacts of Nepal's terrible second wave of COVID-19, some remarkable achievements were achieved from January to June 2021.

These included:



Despite the intermittent lockdowns, enrolments in Humla & Ghyangfedi schools continue to grow and student engagement remains very high. As of June 2021, there are **1,637 students enrolled in the 16 Adara-supported schools in Nepal, 53% of whom are girls**. 20% of these students are studying at a secondary level.



In partnership with the Nepali police and UNICEF, Adara contributed to vital border management work and **supported more than 120,000 Nepali migrants** returning home across the Indian border. One of the largest components of our COVID-19 response work, our teams supported those migrants who tested positive by providing fresh water, dignified menstruation kits and PPE while they completed their quarantine.



There has been a **173% increase in the number of patients** visiting the Adara-supported health posts in Humla and Ghyangfedi since 2013. These numbers have grown an average of 24% every year. From January to June this year, all health posts remained open, serving **4,600 patients in total**.



Students at the Yalbang School and the Shree Ghyangfedi School who completed their School Education Examination (SEE) in 2021 received outstanding academic results. At Yalbang the **average score was 80%**, and at the Shree Ghyangfedi School, all students **scored higher than a B+**. More than half of these students were girls.



Despite the increased risks posed by the pandemic, there were **no recorded incidents of child trafficking** in Humla or Ghyangfedi throughout January to June 2021.



Education Activities: Humla

As of July 2021, 1,034 students are currently enrolled in the eight Adara-supported schools in Humla. 714 of these students are receiving scholarships from Adara, in the form of school stationery, bags and uniforms.

Throughout Nepal's first wave of COVID-19 in 2020, our team worked hard to create a distance learning programme that would allow these students to continue their education from home, safely. In Humla, this involved providing every student in the Adara-supported schools with home learning kits and launching a radio programme that ran four hours of classes, six days a week. With local teachers broadcasting classes on topics such as Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies, students were able to keep stay engaged with their studies and dial in to ask their teachers questions. Reaching an estimated 17,000 students in the Humla region, this programme was very well received by the community.

When schools were closed in April to protect students from the second wave of COVID-19, Adara re-launched this programme. Over the past several months, our team members have regularly monitored students in Adara-supported communities to ensure they are engaging with the radio classes and have regularly resupplied students with exercise books and stationery that can be used either in the classroom, or at home. Additionally, local teachers have been mobilised to conduct follow up visits with students where safe to do so. These socially-distanced visits allow students to ask questions about their studies and teachers the opportunity to monitor their students' progress. This is especially important as COVID-19 has disrupted annual examinations in Nepal – and this gives teachers a means to assess their student's performance as they progress to the next grade.

Despite these disruptions, students in Humla have continued achieving some amazing academic results. At the Yalbang School, the 2021 cohort of School Education Examination (SEE) graduates achieved an average score of 80%, with 1/3 of these students received an A-result or higher. More than half of these students were girls, and 100% of students passed the exam.

As student engagement and academic results continue to improve, so does the learning environment and school infrastructure in Humla. Earlier this year, Adara utilised the period of school closures to complete some improvements to the toilet blocks in the Chauganfaya School. When the Kholsi School completes some minor repairs to their toilet blocks later this year, all Adara-supported schools in Humla will have separate, well-functioning toilets for boys and girls – which is vital to maintaining the high attendance of female students.



Schools were regularly supplied with PPE



Radio classes



SEE Graduates from the Yalbang School

Education Activities: Ghyangfedi

Distance learning programme

In 2020, Adara ensured that the distance learning programme was adapted to be as effective as possible for the varying communities we support. In Ghyangfedi, this meant the creation of 'learning units' made of five to six students from each village in the region. These groups met for up to three hours a day, working together to complete their schoolwork. Thanks to the radios that the Adara team distributed, and the school classes broadcast on FM radio for two hours every day, students were also able to participate in classes and continue receiving instruction on subjects such as mathematics and science.

There were 33 learning units in total in Ghyangfedi, and Adara mobilised local teachers to conduct regular, socially-distanced visits to each unit throughout the lockdown, ensuring that students were engaging with the radio classes and their schoolwork, and allowing teachers to monitor their students' development as they progress to the next grade.

When schools resumed after the first lockdown ended, our team ensured that students in the Adara-supported schools were regularly supplied with exercise books, textbooks and stationery that students could use in the classroom, or at home. When Nepal went back into lockdown in April this year, students, school and teachers were prepared and able to switch back to the distance learning programme. With radios already distributed and students supplied with their learning materials, teachers were able to resume their check-ins and ensure that students were engaging with the radio classes.

School improvement

Despite the disruptions caused by lockdowns in the past 12-months, Adara has been able to make great progress in upgrading the infrastructure and improving the learning environment of the eight Adara-supported schools in Ghyangfedi.

With growing enrolment numbers in these schools, Adara has been lobbying the local government for several years to build a new primary school block at the Shree Ghyangfedi school. This new block has now been constructed, and painting and other finishing touches were completed in April of this year, ready for the next academic year. Other infrastructure projects have included the construction of two toilets at the Mangyen Basic School in Chetang, as well as the construction of two toilets and a water stand each at the Mangaladevi School, Nava Sikchya Nietan School, and the Suryamati School.

We have also worked hard to ensure that schools and students were supplied with the necessary learning resources throughout the year. In February, our team provided a complete set of musical instruments to the Shree Ghyangfedi School – including a guitar, flute, drum set and wireless microphones. More than 700 sets of winter fleece sets were distributed to all students in the Adara-supported schools in the past 12-months.

Adara Youth – Humla and Ghyangfedi

With your support, Adara has been able to increase the number of young people we provide scholarships to for their vocational and tertiary education. As of July 21, 11 youths are currently receiving this support – six of whom are girls. These amazing young people are studying science, law, business management, nursing, ophthalmology and health science. The Adara team have regularly checked in on these students throughout Nepal's second wave as they switched to remote learning. Thanks to increasing internet access within homes, schools and health posts in the Ghyangfedi villages, they are all participating well in their online courses.

To ensure these youths are protected from COVID-19, Adara's Health Manager, Menuka, ran 3 online sessions in May and June this year on a range of topics including COVID-19 prevention, and stress management in lockdown. The students were able to ask questions and participate in discussions on topics such as staying active, eating nutritious food and being aware of COVID-19 symptoms.



New toilets at the Nava Sikchya Niketan school



Teacher Konchok Penpa preparing learning materials for his students



Teacher visits

The student becomes the master

Manish Tamang is from the village of Kermi in the Humla region, where Adara has been specialising in remote community development for more than 23-years. Manish came from a family of farmers and did not live within walking distance of a nearby school. Thankfully, the student hostel provided by the Himalayan Children's Society (HCS) and Adara at the Yalbang School allowed him to attend the Yalbang School, where he first enrolled in 2007.

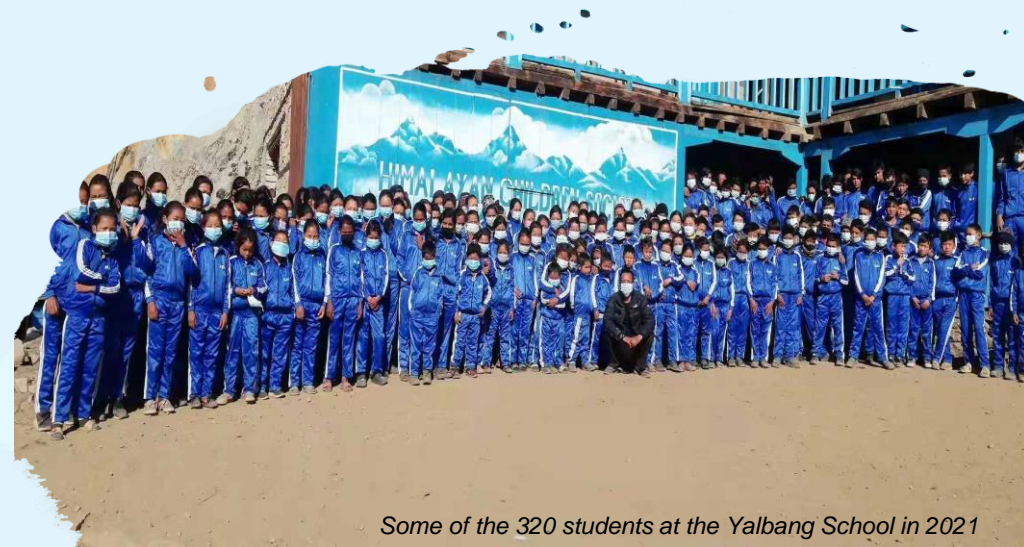
Manish was academically very gifted – in 2014, he was the second highest academic achiever in Humla. After completing secondary school, he went on to study a Bachelor of Environmental Science at the Xavier International School in Kathmandu, working as a waiter to earn money while he studied.

Since earning his degree, Manish has taught mathematics and science to primary and secondary school students, helping students from some of the poorest regions in Nepal gain essential skills and education, like he did. In March this year, Manish's career came full circle when he was appointed as a Mathematics teacher at the Yalbang School, giving him the opportunity to give back to the school and community that nurtured him as a young boy.

Thanks to Adara and HCS, thousands of children from Humla and Ghyangfedi will receive a quality education and go on to make a positive impact in their communities, just like Manish.



Manish Tamang, Yalbang's new mathematics teacher



Some of the 320 students at the Yalbang School in 2021

Health Activities

In addition to our direct COVID-19 response work, the five Adara-supported health posts in Humla have provided vital healthcare to thousands of patients in the January-June period this year. More than 4,600 patients sought care from across these five health posts, including 41 pregnant women seeking antenatal care – a pleasing increase in the number of pregnant women seeking this form of care. Each year, the number of patients visiting the Adara-supported health posts grows by 24% – a sign of just how needed these health services are. Other key health activities have included:

Providing Emergency Medical Care

Adara has an emergency medical programme in Humla and Ghyangfedi to support villagers who are unable to access lifesaving care in their own communities. This year in Ghyangfedi, Adara's emergency medical fund proved to be lifesaving when two young girls from the region developed serious medical conditions this year. Amaanat Sharma developed an acute kidney condition that required surgery in Kathmandu, and Adara supported her family by paying for the ambulance, medical and food bills that were necessary while she received treatment and follow up appointments. Laxmi Thapa* similarly had a serious liver condition that required surgery, and without the emergency support of Adara, might not have survived. Both young girls have made complete recoveries and their families are very grateful for the financial support of Adara.

*Names have been changed.

Agricultural Education in Ghyangfedi Schools

We distributed more than 1,000 packets of vegetable seeds to the eight Adara-supported schools in Ghyangfedi the past year, which students are growing at school in order to consume as part of their midday meal whilst also learning about nutrition and farming techniques. With Adara giving each school an allotment of UV plastic, many schools have built 'tunnel farms' that will be a new site of learning for students, with many households from the region contributing manure to help with the farming process. 10 different kinds of vegetable seeds were distributed, and whilst school meals were unable to be consumed due to lockdown, students were able to harvest the produce and take it home to their families.

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Workshops

In February 2021, Adara organized a series of workshops for 45 female students in Ghyangfedi between Years 5-10 on the topics of puberty and menstrual hygiene. They were pleased to hear that the girls are increasingly becoming more confident in attending school whilst on their periods and are always able to access menstrual hygiene products when they ask. Toilet blocks and running water at each school is greatly improving the ability of these students to practice sound menstrual hygiene management. To further support young girls in the region, Adara's health programme manager distributed sanitary pads and other dignified menstruation resources in March to more than 160 female students in Humla. As these products were distributed, girls were also taught about personal hygiene and how to wash their garments properly.



Amaanat, after recovering from her kidney condition



Emergency food basket support to landslide victims of Ghyangfedi



Agricultural education in Ghyangfedi

No mountain high enough



Palden, receiving a check-up

Healthcare workers at Adara-supported health posts are incredibly committed to their patients. Their dedication to improving the health of their communities can be seen in the care that Palden (left) received earlier this year.

Palden Lama is 71 years old and from the Kermi village in Humla. Despite her age, Palden and her husband still spend up to six months every year in the mountains, away from the main village, grazing and herding yaks in order to make butter and cheese. It takes them about 10-hours to walk to where the yaks graze, reaching an altitude of almost 5,000 meters. Early in 2021, whilst away from home working with the yaks, Palden started feeling unwell – she had high blood pressure, joint pains, and asthma.

Luckily, the Adara-supported health post in Kermi was able to send one of their workers to care for Palden. After a full day's walk, the worker reached Palden and her husband and provided treatment for her numerous conditions. The worker was able to assess that the high altitude and cold weather conditions, in addition to her consumption of high-sodium Yak batter and salt tea, was worsening Palden's health. She was brought back to the Kermi village where she could recover, and now is regularly receiving care from the Kermi health post.

Palden's son, who cares for his mother, was grateful for the health post and its health workers. Without them, he might not be able to afford the cost of his mother's treatments and medication. Palden's health is steadily improving, and she is very thankful for being able to access healthcare in her own village. "When I was growing up, we didn't have any health posts or health workers in the village," Palden shared. "If someone was seriously sick, they would try to seek treatment by walking several days to the nearest facility."

Adara's support of local health posts in Humla and Ghyangfedi is vital to ensuring that members of these communities can access essential health services, no matter where they live or how remote their communities are. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to continue working to expand access to healthcare has become clearer than ever before.

Child Protection Work

With prolonged periods of intermittent lockdown over the last year, children and young girls in Humla and Ghyangfedi have faced an increased risk of child trafficking and early marriage.

Adara has been proactive in working to mitigate these risks by:

- Mobilising teacher visits, which are allowing teachers to monitor young girls for any risks relating to early marriage or child trafficking. Teachers have been strategic in collecting the mobile numbers of several children's parents, and the phone numbers of their neighbours and other community members, in order to ensure no child slips through the cracks. Through these in-person or phone call check-ups, teachers can check in with the girls and ask them questions about their studies, ensuring they remain engaged with their education and are reminded regularly of how to stay safe from child trafficking and early marriage. The team are prioritising their regular visits to female students in Years 5-10, and are categorising the students based on their level of risk to ensure the more vulnerable students receive regular check ins.
- Running workshops with more than 300 Ghyangfedi Year 7-10 students in December and April on the importance of education, being a role model and being independent. Hosted by Nepal Country Director Pralhad Dhakal, these workshops aimed to inspire students by sharing the success stories of the 36 youths that received scholarships from Adara to pursue tertiary education. The team also distributed hundreds of pamphlets within the eight Adara-supported schools that contained the phone numbers of the Child Helpline and Nepal Police, who can intervene in instances of child trafficking or early marriage.
- Supporting school leaders and students to have more active discussions on these topics, which are often considered 'taboo'. In January and February this year, the principal of the Ghyangfedi School organised a play on the impact of child marriage, child trafficking and the importance of education, which students performed over several weeks. In April, a Child Club in Ghyangfedi performed a similar drama to raise awareness about early marriage and the importance of girl's education. The drama was performed every Saturday for a month across a number of villages, with the students encouraging their parents to attend and engage in an interactive discussion of the drama afterwards.

In December 2020, two young girls were trafficked from Ghyangfedi. Thankfully, Nepali police found them in the hands of traffickers on the Nepal-India border and the culprits have been charged with trafficking. The girls have been safely returned to their villages, and Adara is supporting them to re-enrol in school, and providing them with additional skill-based training. There were no reported incidents of child trafficking from Humla in the last six months.



Performance of Child Club drama



Child Club moving to new villages for a drama performance

Highlights From Our Partners

Himalayan Children's Society

As of July 2021, there are 320 students enrolled at the Yalbang School, which is supported by the HCS and Adara partnership. In the beginning of 2021, HCS ensured that teachers and hostel staff were diligent in following COVID-19 prevention protocols, ensuring that PPE usage and social distancing was maintained. HCS also formed a Safe Environment for Girls Club in the Yalbang Hostel, holding their inaugural meeting in March this year, where they discussed topics such as menstrual hygiene management (MHM).

Despite the school closing in April with Nepal's fierce second wave of COVID-19, the HCS team worked hard to only maintain the hostel while students were away, but also supported hundreds of patients at their local health posts, ensuring health workers were equipped to manage COVID-19 patients safely. In June, HCS ran an awareness-raising programme in Kermi village on the topic of early marriage – discussing with the 25 participants about how to prevent early marriage and protect young girls from abuse.

Himalayan Medical Foundation (HMF)

In order to safely support their health workers and local communities during lockdown, HMF conducted hundreds of telemedicine appointments since April this year, supporting 611 patients in total since January.

All patients at the HMF-supported clinics in Kathmandu and its outskirts were able to access free medicine based on their needs, and for more vulnerable patients, this included a service where medicine was delivered to their homes after their telemedicine appointment. Throughout Nepal's lockdown, HMF also provided medicinal and food support to 25 elderly women who are residents of the Matatirtha Old Age Home



HMF delivers Subhadra's medicine to her home



A patient having her blood taken at the Pharping clinic



Children receiving toothbrushes and toothpaste at the Yalbang School

Hands in Outreach (HIO)

Before Nepal went back into lockdown in April, HIO hosted a joyful International Women’s Day celebration on 8 March 2021, where they celebrated the importance of female entrepreneurship and providing training for local women on how to make liquid soap. Six of the women who participated in this training are now running small businesses selling these soaps.

HIO were successfully running two early learning centers that provided care for 120 children. Sadly, these were closed throughout Nepal’s second wave to protect these children and their families, and HIO’s regular work of providing medical and dental care to school children was unable to happen due to school closures. Thankfully, the team were able to conduct telemedicine check-ins for more vulnerable children, and they provided emergency food support for 215 families who were experiencing economic and food insecurity throughout the lockdown period.

The Himalayan Innovative Society (THIS)

THIS has worked extremely hard these past six months to reduce the risks of child trafficking in Humla. Incredibly, the team rescued nine children from Humla who were trafficked several years ago and have worked to re-integrate them into their communities.

To prevent further children from being trafficked from the region, THIS are working on establishing ‘watchdog committees’ in various villages in Humla that will be provided training on topics such as children’s rights, parental duty of care, and the legal frameworks related to child trafficking in Nepal. They have also coordinated with local communities to conduct risk assessments of young children in each village, ensuring that the most at-risk children from single-parent families receive frequent phone call or in-person check-ins. All year, THIS has been running a radio programme that broadcasts messages and jingles to the Humla community on topics such as child nutrition, child rights, and COVID-19 prevention protocols.

Women’s Foundation (WF)

Adara’s partnership with the Women’s Foundation has been vital throughout Nepal’s second wave of COVID-19. WF has received an unusually high volume of calls and emails from women seeking counselling and legal support for domestic violence situations. Courts have been closed in Nepal due to the lockdown, however WF has still been able to support 89 women through mediation and counselling, which were conducted via telephone calls during lockdown.



Emergency food support for 215 vulnerable families, distributed by HIO



Counselling services provided by the Women’s Foundation

The Road Ahead

With COVID-19 cases rising in Nepal, the road ahead for Adara's remote community development work in 2021 is potentially uncertain. Whatever lies ahead for the people of Nepal, Adara will keep working hard to ensure that everyone can access quality health, education, child protection and nutrition services, no matter where they live.

In the months ahead, Adara will continue being a local leader in Humla, Ghyangfedi and Kathmandu by proactively keeping our communities safe from COVID-19. Despite lockdown being lifted by the Nepali government, Adara will ensure everyone in our target communities remains diligent in following social distancing protocols and COVID-19 prevention methods. We will continue training local health workers and FCHVs in how to care for COVID-19 patients, to ensure that any future patients can receive care in their local community. Adara will continue working closely with our partners such as the Nepali police, UNICEF and Kings College London to ensure that our border management work and accommodation services for nurses can be relaunched as soon as it is needed. We will also work closely with local governments to ensure that schools re-open safely and recommence our education support when this does occur.

Depending on when the full force of the third wave of COVID-19 hits Nepal, Adara will make the most of the remaining months in 2021 by carrying out much of the work that was disrupted by the second wave. This includes:

- Launching the Agricultural and Farming Education Programme at the Yalbang School, including building a commercial greenhouse, compost pits and an agricultural lab that will be the learning sites used by the students who enroll in the program for the next academic year.
- Recommencing agricultural training throughout the Humla region, including constructing more greenhouses and conducting greenhouse training sessions. This will also include distributing seeds to local families to ensure food security remains high over the winter season.
- Forming child protection 'watchdog committees' in Ghyangfedi and Humla and organizing training to be delivered to these committees when formed.
- Continuing our work to improve health outcomes in our target communities. This will involve conducting maternal, newborn and child health training for local health workers, and doing a general medical examination of students in Ghyangfedi to monitor the status of their health and nutrition.
- In partnership with the Red Cross, carrying out disaster preparedness training and disaster mapping in Humla, to ensure our communities are resilient against future earthquakes, monsoons and natural disasters.
- Continue and complete our household survey in Humla, gathering data on nutrition, healthcare, education, and other household issues. 500 households have already been surveyed, with 150 more expected to be surveyed soon.



Thank you for continuing to stand with Adara during this period of uncertainty. With your generous support, Adara will continue working incredibly hard to ensure that these already vulnerable communities continue to thrive.

Thank You!



From everyone at Adara, thank you for standing with us to ensure remote communities in Nepal can continue to access quality education, health, and child protection services.

To discuss this report further or ask any questions, please contact us at:

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