



Basic Training on Psychological First Aid for Young Scientists of Nepal

A BRIEF REPORT

Introduction

The COVID-19, a highly infectious disease caused by novel coronavirus (SARS-Cov-2) has become pandemic since it was first detected in Wuhan (China) on December 31, 2020. The disease has been reported across 188 countries and territories. The estimated cases of infection reported are 7.79 million, death 430,000 and recovered 3.71 million. Many countries have enacted lockdown debarring people from free movement. More than 90% of the schools were closed, almost all but essential services were halted. Though ‘work from home’ was promoted, many people lost their jobs as they had their field-based jobs or activities. All these in combination have brought a huge impact on social, economic and environmental aspects of life resulting into increased cases of psychological stress.

Many reports of psychological problems are accumulating since the COVID-19 outbreak. The total remedy of COVID-19 seems still far away as many drug laboratories are struggling to develop vaccines. Some countries have started lifting lockdown, but with great fear of recurrence or the second wave of Corona virus. Nepal followed the universal method of lockdown on March 24. It lifted the lockdown after 80 days, but partially. Now that many countries have allowed or asked external people to move out, many migrant workers are coming back, especially from India and Middle East where they had been locked for over two months since the pandemic. This has among others impacts on psychological health of the people, its level however is unknown but huge.

Environmental Graduates of Himalaya (EGH), a network of young environmental scientists supported by Resources Himalaya Foundation have been promoting scientific awareness and mobilizing its network members getting engaged in whatsoever possible activities in the global mission of combating COVID-19 since March 2020. The EGH affiliates formed a nationwide network of science volunteers reaching over 65 districts (out of 77). These volunteers educated

themselves with latest knowledge of COVID-19 and the science of Coronavirus, and engaged themselves in science awareness campaigns in the society by contributing science write-ups, producing video clips, posters, radio talks, besides preparing and distributing sanitizer and PPE, etc. In order to help their society cope with the impending psychological impacts, EGH-RHF organized a series of basic training on psychological first aid.

The Psychological First Aid (PFA) is a technique designed to reduce the occurrence of post-traumatic stress disorder. This training is very much needed in a pandemic situation as mental health of people is still a taboo in Nepali society. The EGH-RHF collaboration with the Department of Psychology, Tribhuvan University organized a basic training on Psychological First Aid to all the Province and District level volunteers. The training sessions were conducted from May 31 to June 5, 2020. The objective of the training was to assist the people during the shocks brought by COVID-19 pandemic. A total 124 participants from all seven provinces actively participated in the training. Dr Usha Kiran Subba, a professor of psychology at Tribhuvan University generously facilitated the overall training sessions. Five resource persons to familiarize the participants with the context of respective provinces were involved during the process. The training course is envisaged to capacitate the volunteers in assisting the local people and thereby reduce the probabilities of post traumatic disorder among the people in their respective localities.

The training was organized using Zoom cloud meeting facilities. The participants hooked to the facility by their lap-top computers using wifi where possible. The other participants used their smart phones and got to the session using data-pack, a special facility provided by the telecommunication companies. Most of the participants, including the resource persons were based on their home districts.

Table 1. Orientation on Psychological First Aid to Young Scientist Nepal

Date	Province	Resource Person	Number of participants
May 31, 2020	1	Suvanga Pyakurel	15
June 1, 2020	4 Gandaki	Suvanga Pyakurel	27
June 2, 2020	3 Bagmati	Dr Narendra Thagunna	21
June 3, 2020	6 Karnali and 7 Sudurpaschim	Dr Narendra Thagunna	19
June 4, 2020	5	Dr Narendra Thagunna	18
June 5, 2020	2	Ms Manisha Khadga & Mr Sailendra Sharma	24

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the basic training on PFA are:

- Building capacity among volunteers to provide psychological first aid to the local people in need
- Building networks of volunteers with the trained professionals involved in psychological counselling and medications

List of Participants in PFA:

1. **Province 1:** Nabin Basnet Sumnima Tumba, Asmita Chaudhary, Deepa Subedi, Pinky Mehta, Bina Rajbanshi, Banita Bajagain, Ayusha Shakya, Dikshya Banjara, Niru Puwar, Anish Magar, Sachin Shakya, Subekshya Subba, Ritika Banskota, Sharada Shrestha
2. **Province 2:** Aayush Shrestha, Aniska Sah, Pinky Mehta, Binu Rajbansi, Saurav Yadav, Pushpam, Nisha Jha, Prince Khanal, Shiv Kumar Shah, Dhirja Bhatta, Pradumna Upadhyay, Sunil Kumar Shah, Rajesh Yadav, Hira Lal Chaudhary, Arbind Yadav, Kaushalya Kushwaha, Bijay Gyawali, Bijay Thapa, Parbati Subba, Pinki Jha, Jyoti Thakur, Basanta Poudel, Pravin
3. **Province 3:** (Bagmati): Abhi Devkota, Anjali Thapa, Anusuya Dhungana, Basundhara Acharya, Binaya Humagain, Binita Luitel, Dipesh Tandukar, Madhu



Figure 1 PFA training for Province 1



Figure 2 PFA training for Province 2

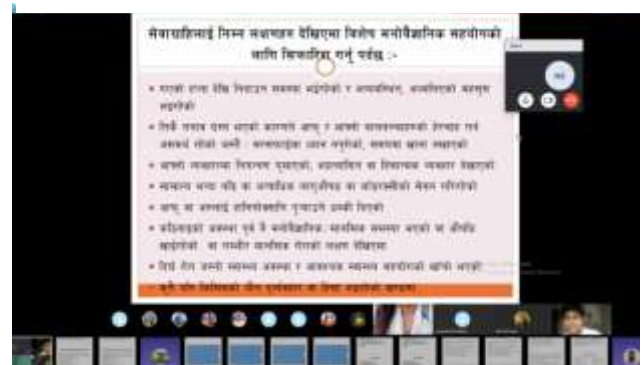


Figure 3 PFA training for Province 3

Maharjan, Mamata Aryal, Mamata Paudel, Pramisha Paudel, Prince Khanal, Rashmi Maharjan, Sajana Pandey, Sarita Chaulagain, Saugat Bolakhe, Shreesha Chhatkuli, Sujita Shrestha, Surakshya Paudel, Bhawana Sitaula, Salina Limbu



Figure 4 PFA training for Province 4

4. **Province 4:** Asmita KC, Barsha Gharti, Prakriti Koirala, Shibu Subedi, Sangita

Bashyal, Smriti Bastakoti, Susan KC, Ranjita Dhakal, Samrajya Subedi, Bikash Joshi, Sharad Tiwari, Akaanchhya Gurung, Sabina Bhandari, Ranjita Dhakal, Bijay Thapa, Krishna Aryal, Sabina KC, Pawan Tiwari, Alok Acharya, Sarmila Adhikari, Basanta Poudel, Chandani Tamrakar, Yadav Prasad Devkota, Rejina Shrestha, Bishwa Hari Nepal, Sristee Bhattarai, Aayushmi Bhaju

5. **Province 5:** Bindu Paudel, Yogendra Bikram Poudel, Shittal Aryal, Bibek Aryal, Binod Malla, Suruchi Bhattarai, Bishwabandhu Acharya, Resham GC, Pooja Pokharel, Dipak Khatri, Sushma Paudel, Prateema Neupane, Swikriti Sharma, Asmita Gyawali, Binod Malla, Bineeta Ghimire, Srijana Khanal, Dinesh Bhusal

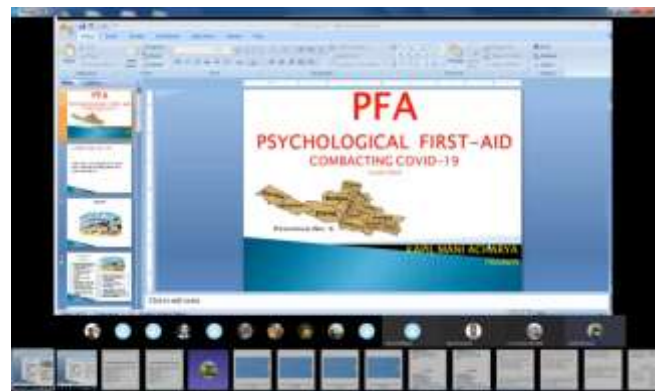


Figure 5 PFA training for Province 5

6. **Province 6 & 7:** Dhiraj Bhatta, Radha Joshi, Indu Joshi, Maya Swar, Hemant Singh Saud, Alina Shahi, Tanka Bhatta, Nisha Shrestha, Opendra Oli, Dhanu Bhandari, Namraj Dhami, Rojana Dhakal, Dhiren Bogati, Jenny Ojha, Ganesh Pandit, Rashmi Shahi, Choodamani Kalaunee, Gaura Shahi, Yogesh Joshi

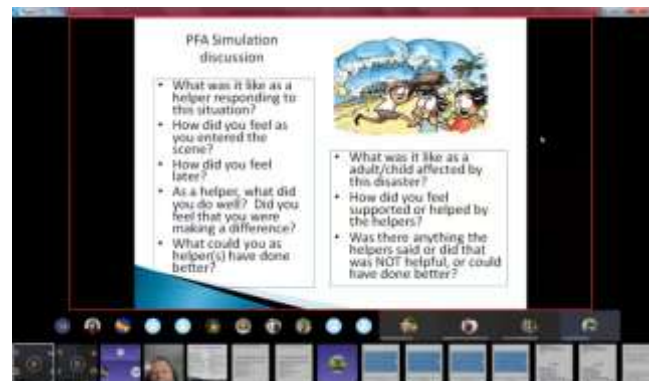


Figure 6 PFA training for Province 6 & 7