

# EpiC Nepal Project

## Monthly Update: December 2023

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### Objectives:

**Objective 1 &2: Attain and maintain HIV epidemic control among at-risk adult men, women and PPs and KPs**

### Support group meeting:

#### Jhapa:

AMDA EpiC Nepal conducted support group meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 in Birtamode Field Office, Jhapa. A total of 11 PLHIV (8 male & 3 female) participated in the meeting. Meeting was facilitated by Case Manager, CBS & PN. Discussion was done about the ART Adherence, Importance of viral load and health insurance.

#### Sunsari

AMDA EpiC Nepal conducted support group meeting on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in Itahari Field Office, Sunsari A total of 13 PLHIV (3 Male and 10 Female) participated in the meeting. Meeting was facilitated by Case manager and PN. Discussion was done on Health Insurance, U=U, ART enrollment and re enrollment of all positive cases, importance of Index based partner testing and about viral load.

#### Morang

AMDA EpiC Nepal conducted support group meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Biratnagar Field Office, Morang a total of 12 PLHIV (9 Male and 3 Female) participated in the meeting, maintaining all the precautions including proper distancing and proper use of mask. Meeting was facilitated by Case Supervisor and PN. Discussion was done on viral load importance & benefits as well as merits of Health Insurance and ART

#### Ilam

The Support Group meeting of December was held on December 20, 2023, at Ilam ART center. There are a total of 21 personnel present during the support group meetings. 17 are PLHIV and others 4 are ART counselor, HA-ART, and 2 are P.N from AMDA Nepal. Education on HIV prevention, Viral load, U=U, adherence, the importance of adherence and index testing was given at the meeting.

### Monthly review meeting:

Monthly Review Meeting (MRM) was done on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at Itahari Field Office and Birtamod city clinic of Morang, Sunsari and Jhapa. Discussion was done on following topics

- Target vs achievement
- CBS/PN wise achievement
- Areas to be focused like Index Testing, Viral Load Testing, PrEP\_New, Merosathi booking and testing.
- Completion of all event with in 28<sup>th</sup> of Dec.2023 due to quarterly reporting.
- Benefits and allowances

# EpiC Nepal Project

## Monthly Update: December 2023

---

### Online Activities

Jhapa: In this reporting period, 7 phone call were made for ART Adherence, support group & viral load testing. Also, 2 high risk KP were communicated for HIV prevention, testing & PrEP services.

- Similarly, 1 client booked HIV testing services through Merosathi & 1 arrived in the clinic & took the services.

Sunsari: In this period, 15 phone call were made among them 7 took services. Similarly, 5 clients booked HIV testing services through MeroSathi & 5 arrived to clinic and took the services.

Morang: In this period 2 clients booked HIV testing services through MeroSathi & 2 arrives to clinic & took the services.

### Relief Packages

- Not done in this period.

### COVID-19 Isolation Kit:

- Not done in this period.

### Hygiene kit Distribution:

- Not done in this period.

### Creative events:

- **Sunsari**

Conducted creative event (PrEP focused) on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Itahari City clinic. A total of 11 participants were present of which 10 of them were FSWs and 1 other female. It was facilitated by DIC Operator and CBS. There was discussion on importance of PrEP and its continuation. In this event 1 other female started PrEP, PrEP restart was done by 3 FSWs and 5 KPs and 1 PP has done the HIV/STI screening.

- **Morang**

Conducted creative event on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Biratnagar Field Office. A total of 15 female participants participated in the event. It was facilitated CBS, PN and Field Supervisor. There was discussion on importance of PrEP and its continuation, HIV prevention & treatment. In this event 2 of the participants were screened for STI/HIV, 1 of the participants started PrEP and 1 of the participants re-started PrEP.

- **Jhapa**

## **EpiC Nepal Project**

### **Monthly Update: December 2023**

---

Conducted creative event on 13<sup>th</sup> December, in Birtamode City clinic. A total of 12 (FSWs) were participated in the event which was facilitated by HA, DIC, CBS & P.N. Discussion was done about the importance of PrEP its advantages, sexually transmitted Infections (STIs) and its effects. In this event, 8 Kp tested for HIV & STI, 5 KP started PrEP, 1 restarted. Also, 8 KPs were screened for STI, 3 were diagnosed and 1 were treated.

#### **Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Training:**

- **Ilam**

S&D reduction Training was conducted on 12/29/2023 at the FPAN Ilam meeting hall from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the presence of Mr. Kamal Subedi (FPAN Ilam Section Officer). This training was given to Health workers working in FPAN, private polyclinics and private Labs. Training was facilitated by facilitated by ART Counselor Mr. Mahendra Rajbanshi, HA-ART along with Peer Navigator for experience sharing.

There are altogether 30 participants from different organizations of which 24 are female participants and 6 are male. Among them, 5 are from different polyclinics and labs.

This training was new for them and after the completion of training, participants were able to know briefly HIV/AIDS, its causes, mode of transmission, diagnoses, treatment and preventive measures along with Prep, PEP services. Also, there was discussion on the role of health workers to minimize stigma and discrimination at different level of service delivery sites.

- **Sunsari:**

S&D reduction Training was conducted on 12/31/2023 at the Youth Development Center Hall, Itahari meeting hall from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. In the training there were presence from committee members of Nagar Yuva Sanjal, Smart Chori Club members, Leo Club members and students of Namuna college Itahari. A total of 31 participates were present in the session among them 20 were female and 11 were male participants. Training was facilitated by PC, Sr. Lab Assistant and Peer Navigator. In the training participants were able to know briefly concept of HIV/AIDS, its causes, mode of transmission, diagnoses, treatment and preventive measures along with Prep, PEP services, National strategies of 21-26 and goal by 2023. Activities carried by government and private sector. Concept of stigma and discrimination, its effects, areas and causes of stigma and discrimination. Also, there was discussion on the role of civil society, health workers, students and other community leaders to minimize stigma and discrimination at different level of service delivery sites and community.

- **Morang**

S&D reduction Training was conducted on 12/25/2023 at the Biratnagar 18, Bhediyaari, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. In the training there were presence construction workers, drivers a total of 21 male participates. Training was facilitated by Field Supervisor and Scommunity Based Supporter. er Navigator. In the training participants were able to know briefly concept of HIV/AIDS, its causes, mode of transmission, diagnoses, treatment and preventive measures along with Prep, PEP services. Concept of stigma and discrimination, its effects, areas and causes of stigma and discrimination.

## **EpiC Nepal Project**

### **Monthly Update: December 2023**

---

- **Jhapa**

Stigma and Discrimination Reduction training was organized at 12/27/2023 at Jiban Kalyan Samaj, Mechinagar municipality in coordination with Luvkush Ashram Jhapa. There were altogether 23 male participants. The program was conducted in the presence of Case manager, CBS & PN and staffs from Lavakush Ashram. The participants were eager to the subject matter and learned more about HIV & AIDS. Good feedback was provided by them about the continuity of the program in coming days.

#### **Monthly joint inter-Network meeting:**

- In this period participated in the closing ceremony of 16 days campaign against Gender Violence organized by Itahari Sub Metropolitan City on 10<sup>th</sup> Dec.2023.
- In this period participated in the CLM program sharing meeting organized by Richmond Fellowship on 7<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2023 at Health Office Sunsari and there was sharing of activities carried by CLM project.
- In this period participated in the closing of 6-month skill development training and sewing machine handover program organized by Maiti Nepal at Tarahara on 29<sup>th</sup> Dec.2023.
- In this period participated in the blood donation program organized by Recovery Nepal Itahari at Itahari Metropolitan City on 30<sup>th</sup> Dec.2023.
- In this period participated in the PMTCT services recording and reporting orientation to private hospitals and clinics organized by Province Health Directorate on 8<sup>th</sup> Dec.2023
- In this participated in the meeting organized by Richmond fellowship at Health office Sunsari on 27<sup>th</sup> Dec.2023. In this meeting there was sharing of findings of survey done by CLM project on services delivery sites and clients satisfaction.

#### **Viral Load campaign**

- In Sunsari district a total of 44 viral load sample was collected and 63 viral load report was received
- In Morang district total 17 viral load sample collection was done and 12 VL report was received in this period.
- In Illam, altogether 14 viral load sample was collected from Illam ART in coordination with AMDA Nepal Illam, CCC and was sent to Koshi hospital. Also 14 VL report received among them 1 was unsuppressed in this period.

#### **Festival campaign social media posts:**

In this period World AIDS Day 2023 was celebrated in Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari and Ilam district with coordination with Province Health Directorate, Health Office, Municipality and various organizations working in the field of HIV/AIDS and following activities were conducted in the district on 1<sup>st</sup> Dec.2023.

#### **Jhapa**

- Red ribbon distribution at Birtamod city clinic to all the participants and employee before the rally program got started.

## **EpiC Nepal Project**

### **Monthly Update: December 2023**

---

- Informative rally with display of messages, contents of HIV & AIDS as well as slogan of AIDS Day was circulated. The rally program started at AMDA Nepal Birtamod City Clinic to Birtamod Municipality.
- Discussion and Sharing program were conducted at Birtamode Municipality, where there was sharing of presentation about HIV/AIDS program of Nepal, facts, issues & challenges by Health Office Nepal. Also, sharing was done by health section of municipality. At last, some confusion by the students were also made cleared at the end of the program.
- Signature were taken from the program participants for their commitment in ending AIDS as part of signature campaign.
- Candle light ceremony at Mukti chowk, Birtamod chowk in the evening.

#### **Morang:**

- Interactive program on HIV/AIDS at Koshi Hospital with different stakeholders.
- Informative stall at Bus Park with condom distribution to prevent and treatment of HIV/AIDS.
- Informative rally from Devkota chowk to Buspark with message display for preventive measures of HIV/AIDS.
- Red ribbon distribution program to all participants and employees of office.
- And finally had candle light ceremony at Sansari Maisthan in the evening.

#### **Sunsari:**

- Red ribbon and T-Shirt distribution program to all participants (Itahari Sub Metropolitan city, Itahari Hospital, Ilaka Police Office, local media, Banglamukhi Multiple College students, staffs of CBOs, networks and development partners and had Itahari nagar parikrama rally with informative message of banners in the presence of Mayor, Sub Mayor, Chief of Social Development Division, Health coordinator and other representatives of Itahari Sub Metropolitan City.
- Had sharing on the current Scenario of HIV Program with Issues, challenges and actions taken by Nepal Government to meet 95-95-95 by 2026 and achieve SDG goal by 2030. Also distributed leaflet released by NCASC 2023 to the participants.
- Sharing of informative messages through local Media (Arena Television).
- Submitted a draft copy of HIV program of PHIV and ID Users to Mayor (Mr. Harka Rai Sampang) of Dharan Sub Metropolitan City.
- Distribution of nutrition package, Hygiene Kit 31 PLHIV family members of Sunsari district by the hand of Mayor (Mr. Hem Karna Poudel) and Deputy Mayor of Itahari Sub Metropolitan City.
- And finally had candle light ceremony at itahari chowk in the evening with closing remarks of the WAD 2023 program by Province HIV Focal Person Tara Devi Subedi.

#### **Ilam:**

- Red ribbon distribution program to all participants and employees of office.
- In Ilam orientation about HIV/AIDS and its transmission is given to transport workers and drivers in two different sessions. One session from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM and another from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM and all participants got HIV tested and got their results.

## **EpiC Nepal Project**

### **Monthly Update: December 2023**

---

- In Rong Rural Municipality, it is celebrated in two different phases one phase is Orientation on HIV/AIDS given to health workers and FCHV and there are 80 total participants and is facilitated by HA-ART Mr. Radhe Shyam Yadav from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM and in the second phase HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination Drama is conducted by theater from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM
- After that at 5:30 PM candle light program is inaugurated by Health Officer Mr. Aaditya Shakya.

**Objective 3: Improve program management including HIS and HRH and financial systems to ensure attainment and maintenance of epidemic control; and**

#### **Data Quality Assessment:**

- Not done in this period.

#### **Monitoring visits:**

- Monitoring visit was done from FHI360 with presence of Technical Specialist Dr Prasanna Khatiwada and Team leader Bhav Nath Jha at Mechi Hospital and Birtamod City clinic on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, in Itahari city clinic on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and on Biratnagar Field office on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023. They monitored achievement against target in major indicators, reasons for low coverage in Index testing, low viral load testing, Merosathi booking and testing, Store mgmt. also Dr. Prashana provided orientation on 180 days packages, IIT and missing cases.
- In this period monitoring visit was done by Sr. Lab Specialist of FHI360 Mr. Sanjit Pandit on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2023. He monitored the Lab room for waste mgmt., cold chain maintained, kit storage, CLT box of all filed staffs also provided orientation on use of capillary Tube to CBS,PN and Lab staffs.
- In this period monitoring visit was done Logistic officer Sushmita Ghimire and Seana Shrestha at Itahari City Clinic on 5<sup>th</sup> Dec.2023. They monitored Merosathi booking process, store room and mgmt., clinical services provided by Case manager, stock book, HMIS, STI register and Lab register.

#### **Monitoring visit by GoN**

#### **Provincial / Other GoN meeting:**

- In this period monitoring visit was done by NCASC Director Dr. Sanjay Kumar Thakur, PPHL Director Mr. Pranav Kumar Yadav, Province HIV Focal Person Tara Devi Subedi, Koshi Lab Technician Lalit Narayan Chaudhary and Binay Kumar Yadav, visited AMDA Nepal Itahari City Clinic at Itahari on 29<sup>th</sup> Dec.2023, welcome was done by PC and AMDA Nepal Team. They Monitored the process of service delivered from our city clinic. PC facilitated to monitor from registration room (process of registration) to Clinic room (services given from clinic pre/post counseling, STI syndromic diagnosis and treatment, mental health screening, counseling and referral, PrEP services) and Lab room (screening of HIV, STI, kit storage, cold chain maintained, waste mgmt.). Then after we all had a meeting in the meeting. A Presentation was done by PC. Briefly presented the Working areas in the Koshi Province by EpiC Project with Technical support of FHI360 coordination with AMDA Nepal and BDS Sub IPs.

## **EpiC Nepal Project**

### **Monthly Update: December 2023**

---

Introduction of AMDA Nepal working with FHI as IP in the district from 1999 to till date.

Describes the goals of the project and results areas, process of outreach session by our CBS/PN using IEC materials.

And presented the cascade for target Vs achievement of the district KP wise with Issues and challenges. After the presentation, discussion was done on issues and challenges faced in the fields during work:

- Limited supply of STI reagents causes halt in smooth diagnostic and treatment services. So, STI cases are diagnosed and treated syndromic only and treatment of syphilis was halted for 2,3 months due to incident occur in another district and need to get approval from concerned authority also need to emergency setup. In this period client was referred to nearest government hospital. Director suggested to get treatment of all syphilis cases not to refer to other sites (1/2 cases arises problem during treatment of thousands of cases but need to have emergency setup with Medical Officer).
- Frequent movement of FSWs and PrEP Clients to other districts and discontinue due to change in their name, contact number and address. They have more queries on PrEP services, how is PrEP effective and beneficial to clients, it only prevents from HIV not from STIs, also do not protect from unwanted pregnancy, so better option is promotion and use of condom, it has easy access, cost effective, dual protection and is successful intervention for HIV/STI prevention program. We shared we promote to use PrEP as well as condom, in case of condom tearing and PrEP will prevent also in case of HIV positive and negative couple who want to have baby PrEP will help to have safe baby. In this scenario team was convinced to use PrEP. Director also raised that incase of PrEP client if he had HIV after some years, he needs to take ARV and who will guarantee that client will not develop resistance against ARV because same composition of medicine is used PrEP and ARV. So, need to think more and have justifiable reasons in expanding PrEP service nationwide.
- Director also had queries on secondary distribution of HIV Self Kit, if the client has false negative result, then how can we track that positive cases also how to ensure that client will not transmit to other clients. So, need to think in secondary distribution. Also blood based CLT screening is successful intervention and self-testing kit is also in the phase of blood-based testing will be launched soon.
- In some districts STI cases are in increasing trend in MSM and TG community also in FSWs what are the reasons, we are working in HIV/STI prevention areas for decades of year and what is the situation in this Province need to have comparative study. So, focus on prevention of HIV/STI diseases by promotion and proper use of condom.
- Also discussed need of MMD dispensing from ART centers, he said we have circulated to provide MMD as per need of clients as per protocol.

After discussion he suggested to the team that need to focus on national goal Zero new infection, Zero Death and Zero discrimination by 20230, to achieve this goal need to promote and proper use of condom, create awareness' in community, key populations and stakeholders also increase coordination and collaboration with local government for engagement and budget allocation in HIV program which will be helpful for sustainability of HIV program.

# EpiC Nepal Project

## Monthly Update: December 2023

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### Trainings and Orientations:

- Training on Routine Data Management was conducted Kathmandu Nepal by FHI360 from 4<sup>th</sup> December- 7<sup>th</sup> December. The participants of the program were M & E officer, Field Officer and M & E Associate from the AMDA Nepal.
- In this period, HIV & AIDS related Logistic Management Training was conducted from 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> December at Hotel Ramada Encore Kathmandu Nepal by FHI360. The participants of the program were M & E officer from AMDA Nepal.
- Training on HIV testing and counselling for Case managers was organized by FHI360 Nepal from 18<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> December at Dhokaime Café, Lalitpur.
- Participated in Service Delivery Standard workshop organized by FHI360 from Dec. 18-20, 2023 at Naxal, Kathmandu. In the workshop there was presence of Executive Director, Program Manager, PC, Finance Officer from AMDA Nepal, NNSWA, NAMUNA, BDS, NAP+N, SPARSHA Nepal.
- In this period orientation was provided by CLM project officer Swikriti Khadka on Dec.22, 2024 at Itahari City Clinic to EpiC Staffs AMDA Nepal and Human Welfare Society (PC, M&E, Lab, CBS, PN) on Right to Health.

### Monthly ART center Meetings

- **Mechi ART Center**

Quarterly ART center meeting was conducted at Mechi ART center of Mechi hospital on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2023. In the meeting, there was presence of Medical Superintendent, ART Doctor, Hospital Administrator, ART counselor, Lab Incharge, Staff from Health Insurance M & E officer, HA-ART from AMDA Nepal. In the meeting, discussion was done about performing GeneXpert test to the clients from ART for tuberculosis test. Also, discussion was done about doing CD4 tests, provision for bed for HIV patients in the hospital. Besides that, quarterly data about achievements of the ART center was also presented in the meeting.

- **BPKIHS ART Center**

In this period monthly ART meeting was conducted at BPKIHS ART Center on 14<sup>th</sup> Dece. 2023. In the meeting there were presence of Tropical ward Incharge, ART counselor, HA\_ART, AMDA Nepal, HWS, DPG and NAP+N. In the meeting there was discussion on timing of viral load testing and result received, tracking and follow up of unsuppressed clients during community care also need of screening of mental health services for all clients and provide appropriate counseling and referral as per need.

- **Ilam ART Center**

ART monthly meeting of Ilam ART center was held on December 25, 2023 in the presence of ART counselor Mr. Mahendra Rajbanshi. There are a total of 14 personnel present during the



## EpiC Nepal Project Monthly Update: December 2023

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meeting and they are from Ilam Hospital, AMDA Nepal, Lava Kush Ashram (CCC), Bagmati Welfare Society Ilam, and others.

There are the following agenda discussed in the Meeting.

1. The ART counselor should request for CD4 counting machine at Ilam Hospital from NCASC or another donor agency
2. Recording and reporting should be on timely by ART counselor
3. Coordination with other organizations for effective implementation of HIV program should be done by ART counselor.

### Photos



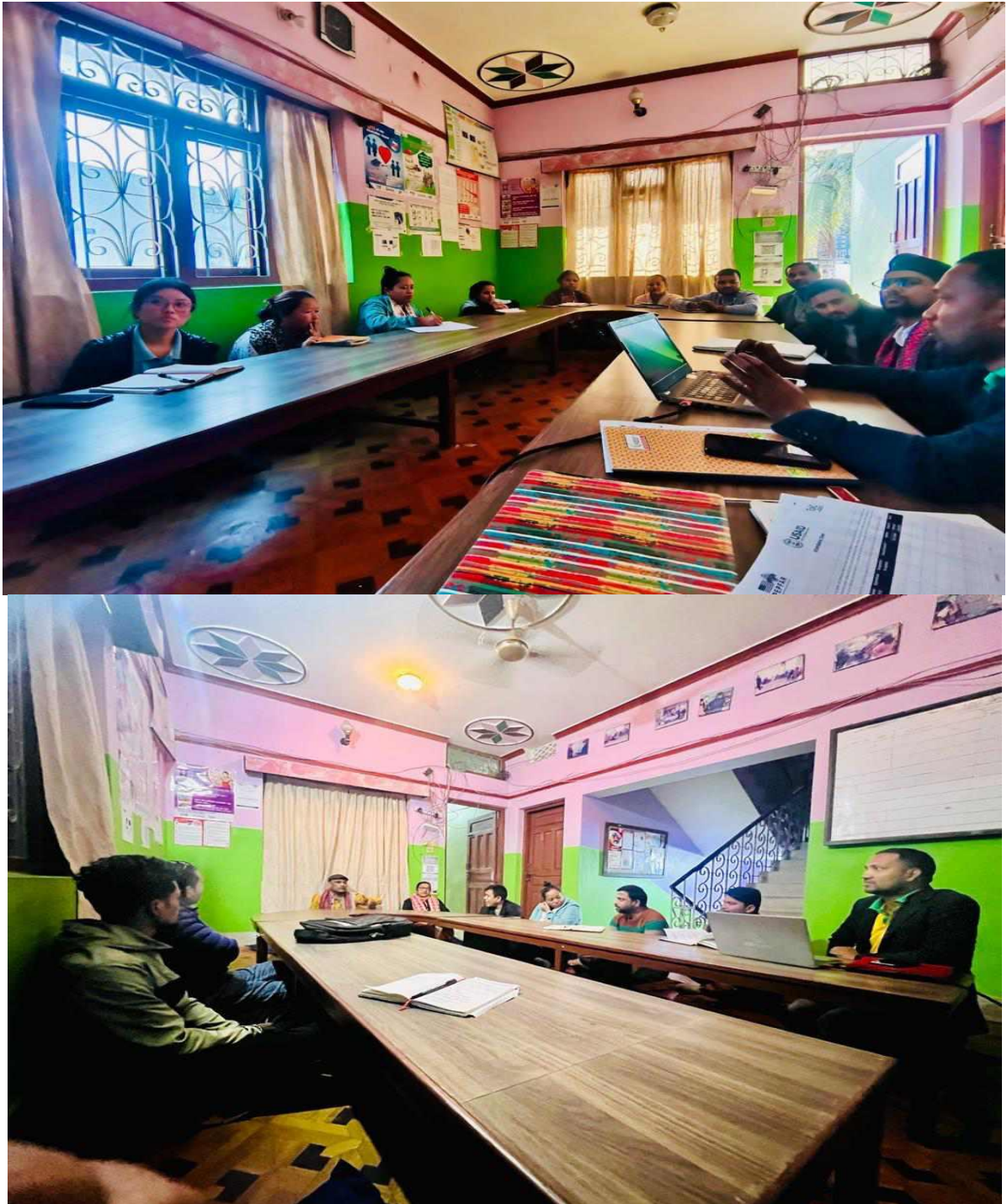
Fig. Monitoring visit from FHI360 at Itahari city clinic

# EpiC Nepal Project Monthly Update: December 2023



**EpiC Nepal Project  
Monthly Update: December 2023**

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Pics. Monitoring visit by NCASC & Koshi PPHL Director at Itahari city clinic

# EpiC Nepal Project Monthly Update: December 2023



Pics: Monthly creative event and support Group Meeting



**EpiC Nepal Project  
Monthly Update: December 2023**

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## EpiC Nepal Project Monthly Update: December 2023

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Pics: S&D reduction training conducting to Health workers and different Club members.

**Thank You**