

Annual Progress Report - 2020



Punarbal Plus

Sitapaila, Ramkot , Kathmandu.

E-mail: info@punarbalplus.org; Website: www.punarbalplus.org

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of project activities for Punarbal Home for the period of January 01 to December 31, 2020. It demonstrates the activities that have undertaken to support the children residing at Punarbal Home, but also elucidates Punarbal Plus's effort to address the prevailing stigma and discrimination that HIV infected orphans are facing in Nepal. At present, 32 children residing at the Punarbal Home all of whom are the orphans. Out of 32 children, 28 are HIV infected and 4 are affected, the siblings of the infected ones. All 28 infected children are undergoing anti-retroviral treatment. 21 children are attending Public School and 11 youth are attending High School (11 & 12 grade) and technical courses. 2 new children and one sick child will be admitted in March 2021 from the new session.

Punarbal Plus is ever grateful to its donors and well-wishers without whose support Punarbal would not have been able to provide continued service to the children. Punarbal Plus also would like to appreciate its staff whose dedication and commitment have improved the lives of the children suffering from HIV.

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1. General Information

Project Title	Punarbhal Home
Project Location(s)	Ramkot, Sitapaila, Kathmandu
Dates of Reporting Period	January 01 to December 31, 2020
Organization's Name	Punarbhal Plus
Postal Address	Post Box No: 24891, Kathmandu
Project Contact Person	Ms. Sunila Baniya, Advisor Mr. Mahesh Shrestha, Director
Telephone Number	977-9851049902 (Sunila)
Email Address	info@punarbhalplus.org
Website	www.punarbhalplus.org

2. Background

HIV infected people in Nepal still face discrimination every day due to stigmatization. Children are expelled from schools and are not given opportunities for education. They often come from poor families; having lost one or both parents they don't have access to healthy food, medicine or proper clothing. Sensing the urgency of the issues and the need to act quickly, in May 2007 Punarbal Plus established a school "Punarbal Shikashya Sadan" to provide educational and nutritional support for the orphaned and infected/affected children.

The school started with 31 HIV/AIDS infected students. However, soon after opening the school, Punarbal Plus realized the importance of integrating infected children, as people started to label Punarbal as the school for the infected children only. Therefore, in the following year, children from deprived families, orphans and conflict affected children were also admitted. This was the first step of the organization towards integration. The benefits of this process were abundant. The school started making its identity as a "normal" school again. Infected children who once lived in isolation now had the opportunity to play and interact with other children. This had a positive impact on their behavior. It provided opportunities to children who were disadvantaged and had not been able to attend school previously. At that stage, the school only supported children within the Kathmandu Valley.

The demand for admission for HIV affected and infected children/orphans started pouring in from remote parts of Nepal. Admission for any of those children also meant the need for a place to live. Hence, in November 25, 2009, Punarbal Plus initiated "Punarbal Home", a care and support center for those children who had nowhere else to go due to prevailing discrimination.

With continuous lobbying for rights to education of the infected children with school authorities, government officials, doctors, like minded organizations, journalists, Punarbal succeeded to integrate its first batch of students in grade 5 in 2013 in a government school in Sitapaila. The school agreed to admit only bigger children initially as the school authorities were afraid that smaller children may fight with each other and get infected. But as time passed by the school agreed to integrate children from grade 2. At the same time due to lack of funding support Punarbal Plus had to close Punarbal Shikshya Sadan School. The non-infected children from the community were integrated in other schools with free of cost education. Whereas the smaller infected children were home taught by the hostel in charge of Punarbal Home with a vision to integrate them when they reach grade 2. This was an achievement for Punarbal as it had always dreamt of children to be integrated in public schools so that they are treated as other normal children and the children do not feel discriminated. This was in fact the accomplishment brought about by a range of interaction awareness programs.

3. Children at Punarbal Home

At present, 32 children residing at the Punarbal Home all of whom are the orphans. Out of 32 children, 28 are HIV infected and 4 are affected, the siblings of the infected ones. All 28 infected children are undergoing anti-retroviral treatment. 21 children are attending Public School (20 in Janauddar Secondary School and 1 in Sitapaila Secondary School) and 6 children (6 Punarbal Children and 1 staff (staff is not included in children data)) are attending High School (11 & 12 grade). 1 is attending Electrician course in Balaju School of Engineering and Technology (BSET) and 1 youth studying Health Assistant course is waiting for final examination. 2 new children and one sick youth will be admitted in March 2021 from the new session. 17 are girls and 15 are boys.

4. Admission of New Children and Reintegration in the community

New Admission: This year, 3 new children were admitted out of them 2 were boys (Tapendra Babli, 14 years and Siddharth Kewat, 11 years) and 1 girl (Swostika Poudel, 17 years). All the children are infected with HIV and are taking ARV medication. The detail of the children is attached in the annex 1.

Reintegration: Santosh Dhanuk chose to leave Punarbal with his mother Parbati Dhanuk who worked as a caretaker in Punarbal. During the lockdown Santosh felt his time is wasted and wanted to go out of Punarbal to work. He preferred to work than study although Punarbal management and staff tried to convince him to study till grade 12. Santosh is now working as a cleaner in a company and earning NRs. 15,000 per month. His sister Sushila Dhanuk who is infected is still in Punarbal and is studying well. Sushila does not want to leave Punarbal as she is happy to be with her friends.



From left to right: Santosh & Parbati with Gita



Children happy to go to back to school

5. Educational Activities

Due to COVID-19 pandemic since March 20, 2020 the children could not go to school. Luckily children managed to complete their final exam and all the children passed. Online classes of the children from grade 2-9

started from September 28, 2020. Online classes for the smaller children was difficult. Thus, the senior girls and staff Anita BK helped the children of grade 2-5 in attending the online class. Even during the lockdown Anita managed to go to the school which is at the walking distance to collect the homework for the children and then submitted it regularly. From November 20, 2020 school resumed and children attended the school in alternate days.

Jeevan Dhakal, a student of grade 9 changed the school to Sitapaila Secondary School. This school recently introduced Electrical Sub-Overseer course in Grade 9. Jeevan showed interest to join. After he completes this course in Grade 10, he plans to join Diploma in Electrical in BSET. This will increase his future career prospect. However, the girls who are also studying in grade 9 did not dare to join this course and did not change the school.

Secondary Education Examination (SEE) was cancelled by the government due to pandemic. But the students were declared pass based on their past performance in school. Three Punarbal youth Karuna Raut, Rupesh Babli and Santosh Dhanuk passed SEE this year.

Rupesh chose to go to Balaju Technical School to study Electrician course of 18 months duration. He was inspired by Punarbal's graduate Binod Raule who is working in as an electrician in a Hydropower project and earning well.

Karuna and Swostika are now studying Humanities in Kamana International School in grade XI.

Sushmita Pokhrel, Anisha Ghimire and Durga Saud resumed their Law classes from December 24, 2020. All are now in Grade XII. **Sarawati** is waiting for grade XII examination.

Anita BK, an infected staff, showed interest in studying again. She is 22 years and is working in the capacity of home warden. Punarbal admitted her in Kamana International School in grade XI in Humanities.

Jeevan Saud, a student of Health Assistant course is preparing for the final examination which will be held in March 2021. His examination postponed by 6 months due to COVID-19.



Rupesh enrolled in BSET



From left to right: Swostika, Karuna & Anita

6. Medical Services

For medical services Punarbal is coordinating with Teku Hospital, TUTH and Bir Hospital. During the pandemic Punarbal faced difficult especially for medical tests and ARV medicine supply. Due to shortage of ARV medical supply in the hospitals, only two weeks medicine was provided at one time. Punarbal staff had to take risk going to hospital every two weeks for the medicine. Few children had to change the medicine due to short supply creating complications. At this time, National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Nepal (NAP+N) helped Punarbal with medical supply for three months. Since there was short supply of Viral Load Testing kit in the hospitals, testing was done only twice a week limiting four person a day. At this time Organisation SACKS Nepal helped in collecting blood sample for Viral Load and Liver Function Test. Luckily this year no children got seriously ill and did not required regular hospital visit.



7. Pandemic Days, Entertainments and Festivals

Initially it was quite difficult for the children to stay indoors as there was only a small playground. Punarbal bought badminton, chess, ludo, skipping rope etc to engage the children. Craft work, computer literacy, debate, dance & singing competition, and barbeque programs was organised to entertain the children. The children were very understanding and took the situation in a normal way. This made the management and staff life easier and everything went smoothly. Precaution was taken so that children are not infected due to their low immunity. The management supplied food, medicine and other requirements from outside the gate and went inside only when necessary with full PPE to protect the children from infection. Disinfectant spray was frequently sprayed. Awareness was raised among the children and staff to use mask and wash their hand regularly.



This year none of the children were sent home during the national festival Dashain & Tihar considering the possibility of COVID infection while travelling to their relatives' home.

But children were overjoyed when Punarbal celebrated festival at home. The board members put





tika on the children's forehead and gave blessings. Although new clothes could not be purchased during Dasain as most of the shops were still closed and people feared to go out. But children enjoyed good food and celebrated the festival.

Tihar was celebrated with fanfare. New clothes were bought and children enjoyed putting marigold flower in the windows and lighting the home. Bhaitika, where sisters worship brothers for their good health and long life, was celebrated. Fruits and sweets were offered to brothers. Boys were very happy to get the attention.

8. Counseling Sessions

Counseling session was provided frequently through online as physical presence of the counselor was minimized. This helped the children overcome the trauma of staying indoors for months. Counseling is one of the best methods to reduce or remove these scars which often cause the children to feel sad, isolated, maladjusted or mentally stressed.



9. Nutrition and Meals

Below is the regular weekly meal planner and nutrition intake.

Day	Breakfast (7:00am)	Lunch (9:30am)	Light snacks (1:00pm)	Snacks (4:00pm)	Dinner (7:30pm)
Sunday	Milk, roti & egg	Rice, meat, veg & salad	Biscuit, popcorn	Fruits, Bread & Buns	Rice, dal, green veg & salad
Monday	Milk, beaten rice & egg	Rice, dal, veg & salad	Biscuit, popcorn	Gram & beaten rice	Rice, dal, green veg & salad

Tuesday	Milk, biscuit & egg	Rice, beans, veg & salad	Biscuit, popcorn	Noodles	Rice, dal, green veg & salad
Wednesday	Milk, bread & egg	Rice, dal, veg & salad	Biscuit, popcorn	Chowmin	Rice, dal, meat & salad
Thursday	Milk, biscuit & egg	Rice, dal, veg & salad	Biscuit, popcorn	Pasta and Fruits	Rice, dal, green veg & salad
Friday	Milk, biscuit & egg	Rice, beans, veg & salad	Biscuit, popcorn	Paratha	Rice, dal, green veg & salad
Saturday	Milk, bread & egg	Rice, dal, veg, meat & salad	Biscuit, popcorn	Noodles	Rice, dal, veg & salad

10. Monitoring Visits

The government officials and the members of National Child Right Council (NCRC) visited Punarbal Home. Although the officials were satisfied to observe inside Punarbal Home and its documentation, they were not satisfied with Punarbal's current location. They suggested to shift the home to a new place as the current location is on high-way and it is not safe for the children. They also suggested to look for the house where there is plenty of space to play. Punarbal agreed to the suggestion and at the same time highlighted the difficulties in getting the rented place due to the infected status of the children. So, this year Punarbal could not get the best home award. However, the officials appreciated the work being done and were satisfied how healthy children looked.

11. Staff Update

Parbati Dhanuk (infected) who worked as a caretaker left Punarbal with his son Santosh Dhanuk as he started earning. Dhansara Majhi (infected), a Punarbal student who is 19 years and do not prefer to study is now recruited as a staff and takes care of the children.

Anita BK and Manju Panta Pandey are working in Punarbal as assistant officer and caretaker. Both are HIV infected. Dipika Gurung is working as a counselor and Roshani Adhikari as a part time nurse.

12. Key Challenge

Having a secured place to stay for a longer time has been always a challenge for Punarbal. Thus, Punarbal is seeking government support in securing land for constructing a building which can be leased for at least 25-30 years.

13. Conclusion

Punarbal Plus would like to thank all its donors who supported the cause – supporting children living with HIV & AIDS in education, nutrition, medication, livelihood and care. Punarbal is committed to serve the children in need with a hope to expand to meet the demand of the needy. This initiative will provide greater assistance to the children facing discrimination in Nepal.

Annex 1: Case Study of Three New Children

1. Siddharth Kewat

Child's Name	Siddarth Kewat
Date of birth	November 25, 2009
Age	11yrs
Sex	Male
Address	Niglihawa - 5, Kapilbastu
Date of Admission at Punarbal	December 12, 2020
Infection Status	Infected and taking ART



Family Detail

S.N	Name	Sex	Age (In 2020)	Relation	Remarks
1.	Tulsiram Kewat	M		Father	Deceased
2.	Gyanmati Kewat	F		Mother	Deceased
3	Kausila Kewat	F	14	Sister	Affected
4	Shiva Kumar Kewat	M	13	Brother	Affected
5	Siddharth Kewat	M	11		Infected

Case History

Siddharth Kewat was born in 2009 in Kapilbastu District and is from Madhesi community. He lost his father in March, 2011 and mother in September, 2020 due to HIV. His father transferred the disease to his mother which in turn infected Siddharth when he was born. His two elder siblings were saved from the disease.

Siddharth's father committed suicide after came to know about his infection status. He was disillusioned that he got everyone infected at his home. After his father's death, Siddharth's mother struggled for nine years to bring up her children. Besides HIV, she suffered from cancer and passed away. Siddhartha and his siblings lived with his uncle who himself is very poor. Since his uncle could not afford his education and medical bills, they were looking for the support.

Kapilvastu Municipality office contact Punarbal Plus for admission. When Siddharth arrived Punarbal his health was deteriorating condition. Punarbal immediately admitted to TUTH (Teaching Hospital) in Kathmandu for further treatment. He started ARV drugs Abacavir Sulfate, Lamivudine and Dolutegravir. Punarbal wishes him a quick recovery.

Siddharth is very happy to be at Punarbal Home. He said when at his uncle's place he was discriminated by the family and society. He said he often wondered why he is always sick but later came to know that he is sick with HIV infection. He was then sent to his aunt who was very poor and could not provide enough nourishment he needed. After meeting the children and staff at Punarbal, he felt much better. He said he does not want to return home ever. A positive change can be seen in his behaviour. Siddharth said he felt better than his uncle's and aunt's home where there was no basic amenities in the village.

Siddharth is very kind and helpful. His favorite subjects are Nepali and Social Studies. His favorite sport is badminton and loves drawing.

2. Tapendra Babli

Child's Name	Tapendra Babli
Date of birth	August 20, 2006
Age	14yrs
Sex	Male
Address	Babla- 8, Achham
Date of Admission at Punarbal	December 30, 2020
Infection Status	Infected and taking ART



Family Detail

S.N	Name	Sex	Age	Relation	Remarks
1.	Kale Lohar Babli	M		Father	Deceased
2.	Jhirkuli Babli	F		Mother	Infected – in serious condition
3	Tapendra Babli	M	14		Infected
7	Durga Babli Tamrakar	F	20	Sister	Affected
8	Dinesh Babli	M	18	Brother	Affected

Case History

Tapendra was born in 2006 in Aachham in a poor dalit community. He lost his father when he was only 19 months in March 2008 due to HIV. Tapendra was told by his brothers and sisters that his father had to take lots of medicine for HIV. He then stopped the medicine for sometime and suddenly he passed away. His mother too now in a serious condition. Tapendra's brother works hard as a labour to earn enough to feed the family and medication for his mother. Seeing the condition, the Local Authority in Accham recommended him to Punarbal so that he gets enough care considering his infection status, availability of medicine in Accham and his health condition. He has been taking ARV medicine since past seven years whenever the medicine is available in his remote village. Therefore, his health condition worsened. Tapendra is now in a regular follow-up at Teaching hospital in Kathmandu. His medicine is changed and is now taking Dolutegravir Lamivudine and Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate Tablets.

Tapendra is glad to be at Punarbal Home. He is slowly adapting to the new environment but misses his mother. Tapendra's mother is relieved that he is in safe hands. Tapendra is also happy that he is treated as a normal child at Punarbal. He is active and helpful. His favorite subjects are Nepali and Math and wants to study further. He loves playing volleyball but afraid that he will get hurt.

3. Swostika Poudel

Child's Name	Swostika Poudel
Date of birth	November 01, 2002
Age	17 yrs
Sex	Female
Address	Punarvas Municipality 6, Kanchanpur
Date of Admission at Punarbal	December 25, 2020
Infection Status	Infected and taking ART



Family Detail

S.N	Name	Sex	Age	Relation	Remarks
1.	Narayan Prasad Poudel	M		Father	Missing
2.	Saraswoti Poudel	F		Mother	Deceased

Case History

Swostika Poudel was born to a brahmin family in Kanchanpur, the far western district in Nepal. Swostika's father went to India for seasonal work where he got infected. After he came to know that he infected his family, he went missing. It's been 17 years now and no one knows where her father is. Swostika's mother too passed away in 2004 when she was just 2 years. She was brought up by her paternal grandfather alone. Now that he is getting old, he went to Punarvas Municipality to seek some support for her higher education after she passed grade 10. The Municipality office referred her to Punarbal as they had referred other children to Punarbal before. The Municipality was confident that Punarbal would provide safe and secured environment for Swostika. She has now joined in grade XI (Humanity Faculty) in Kamana International College. She is happy that she was able to study further. Swostika is also taking ART and is visiting Teaching Hospital for medication. Punarbal is glad to support Swostika who wants to look after her grandfather when she completes her education and starts earning.

Swostika, Tapendra and Siddharth with their relatives



Annex 2: Name list of children

S.No.	Name	Grade	M/F	Age*	Infected status (Y/N)	ARV (Y/N)	Remarks
1.	Aayush Pant	2	M	8	Y	Y	
2.	Jeevan Sunar	2	M	7	Y	Y	
3.	Gopal Mridul	7	M	14	Y	Y	
4.	Basanta Tamata (Jeevan)	5	M	14	Y	Y	Very weak student
5.	Rupesh Babli	Electrical	M	18	Y	Y	Passed SEE
6.	Jeevan Dhakal	9	M	16	Y	Y	Took Electrical course in school
7.	Sonam Sunar	6	M	14	Y	Y	
8.	Pranil Ghale	4	M	15	Y	Y	Very weak student
9.	Deepak Ghale	3	M	12	Y	Y	Very weak student
10.	Nikhil Thapa	3	M	9	Y	Y	
11.	Keshu Dharni	9	M	15	Y	Y	
12.	Sushila Dhanuk	6	F	12	Y	Y	

13.	Saraswoti Chaudhary	12 / Sociology	F	19	Y	Y	Preparing for exam
14.	Karuna Raut	11/Humanities	F	17	Y	Y	Passed SEE
15.	Pratikshya Sapkota	4	F	12	Y	Y	
16.	Shristi Pariyar	6	F	13	Y	Y	
17.	Devi Pariyar	2	F	10	Y	Y	
18.	Sita Dhungana	9	F	18	Y	Y	
19.	Malati Bista	9	F	17	Y	Y	
20.	Sushmita Pokhrel	12/Law	F	19	Y	Y	
21.	Durga Saud	12/Law	F	17	Y	Y	
22.	Anisha Ghimire	12/Law	F	19	Y	Y	
23.	Bimala BK	Will join school this year in 9 grade	F	17	Y	Y	Her health is improved a lot.
24.	Anu Baraily	7	F	15	Y	Y	
25.	Sheela Budha	8	F	17	Y	Y	
26.	Jhooma Sunar	6	F	14	N		Sister of Jeevan Sunar

27.	Laxmi Tamata	5	F	14	N		Sister of Jeevan Tamata
28.	Santosh Dhanuk	10	M	18	N		Brother of Sushila Dhanuk; Left school in December, 2020
29.	Jeevan Saud	HA final examination waiting	M	22	N		Brother of Durga Saud. Jeevan plans to leave Punarbal next year once his sister finishes her education as they do not have anyone living. He wants to take care of his sister once he starts earning.
30.	Swostika Poudel	11/Humanities	F	17	Y		New student
31	Tapendra Babli	Will be admitted in 7 in March 2021	M	14	Y		New student
32	Siddharth Kewat	Will be admitted in 3 in March 2021	M	11	Y		New student

**The age mention above is provided by the local authority due lack of evidence of their birth date. Some children's age is lesser than the mentioned.*