

ABSTRACT TITLE:

**“ENFORCEMENT OF HARM REDUCTION:
PREVENTION, HEALTH CARE, AND TREATMENT
SERVICES FOR WOMEN WHO USE DRUGS IN NEPAL”**



**PRESENTED BY: POONAM DHAULAKOTI
DESIGNATION: PROGRAM OFFICER
ORGANIZATION: RECOVERING NEPAL
COUNTRY: NEPAL**



**POSITIVE
ACTION**



Enforcement of Harm Reduction: Prevention, Health care, and Treatment services for women who use drugs in Nepal.



Background:

Nepal is a strongly male-dominated country and has a limited harm reduction (HR) services program for Women who use Drugs (WWUD). In this context, Nepal successfully got the harm reduction (HR) project funded by *ViiV Healthcare* UK-based pharmaceutical company. Recovering Nepal (RN) started the HR services in four districts of Nepal including (Chitwan, Hetauda, Rupandehi, and Banke) for WWUDs.



PHC Check Up

RN implemented gender-specific HR services; Needle Syringe Exchange Program customized for WWUD. In coordination with the government, NCASC (National Center for AIDS & STDs Control) is responsible for HR commodities. We have successfully identified women who use drugs (WWUDs) in four districts of Nepal, providing services to 850 WWUDs as of August 2024. The project incorporates several key components, including sexual and reproductive health and rights education, an HIV/AIDS awareness program, and outreach programs in schools and colleges focusing on HIV and drug education. Additionally, we have implemented a community-based harm reduction initiative, focus group discussions, referral services, supported drug treatment, and emergency funds.



SRH Orientation

Beyond harm reduction services, we conducted surveys among our clients, which revealed that more WWUDs, as well as other vulnerable and marginalized communities, remain neglected, even within national HIV/AIDS programs. This underscores the urgent need for behavior change communication (BCC), information, education, and communication (IEC) on HIV, and geographic expansion of existing harm reduction services. A survey in 2024 August with 850 WWUDs across four districts showed that 90% advocated for the continuation of current harm reduction services, while 10% requested additional gender-sensitive services, including legal support for violence, child custody, and citizenship issues. Furthermore, 85% reported facing significant challenges: 25% experienced police harassment, 25% faced stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings, and 35% called for more women-friendly and free rehabilitation services.



Conclusions/Next steps:

The project survey outcomes demonstrate an urgent need to scale up gender-sensitive harm reduction services, given its focus on women.



HIV and HCV Testing



Partnership and Collaborative Approach of ViiV healthcare Program in Nepal

MoHP, NCASC, SWC

- *Commodities Supply, M&E*

Grant Supporting

- *ViiV Healthcare*

Program Management

- *Recovering Nepal*



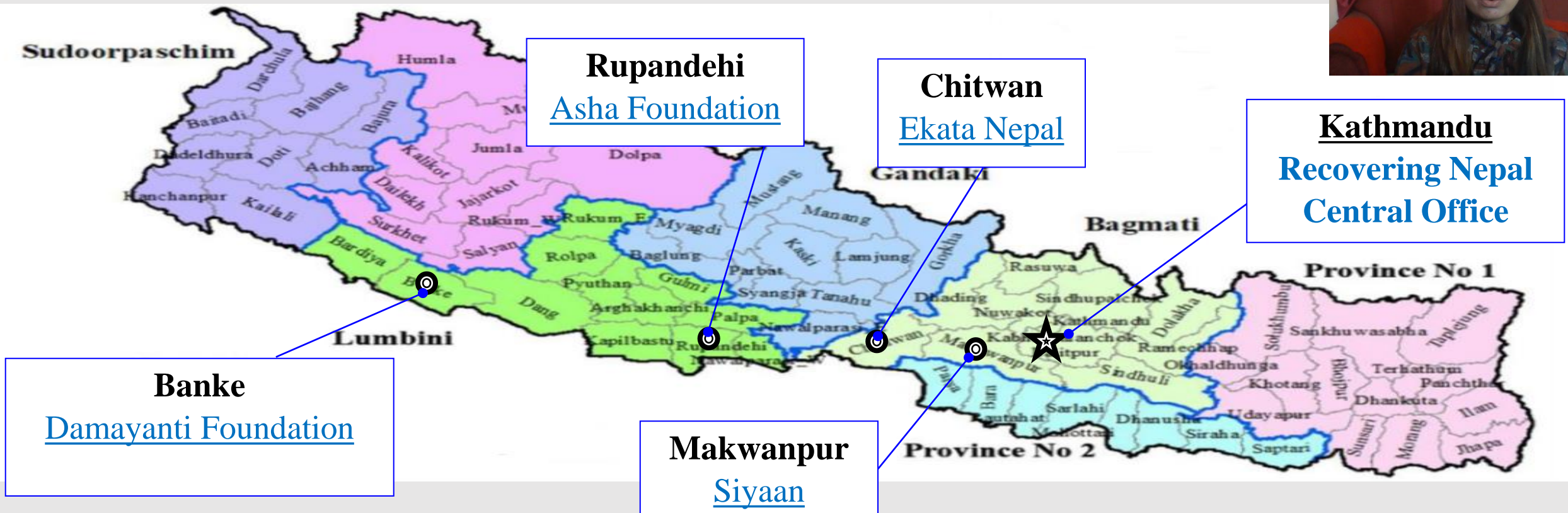
Four District Implementing Partners:

1. *Ekata Nepal – Chitwan*
2. *Aasha Foundation, Rupandehi*
3. *Siyaan Drop in Centre, Makwanpur*
4. *Damayanti Foundation Nepal, Banke*



Background

- **Nepal's Context:** Male-dominated society, limited HR services for (Women's Who Use Drugs) WWUDs.
- **Project Focus Areas:** Four districts—Chitwan, Makwanpur, Rupandehi, and Banke.
- **Target Population:** Women Who Use Drugs (WWUDs).



Intervention Target set by (95%) SDG 95 95 95 of reached WWUDs till August 2024

Districts	National Size Estimation (By government of Nepal)	Target (95%) UNAIDs 95 95 95	Reached
Chitwan	269-308	274	316
Rupandehi	342-440	371	157
Makwanpur	104-139	115	71
Banke	432-516	450	306
Total		1210	850



Source: “Mapping and Size Estimation of Key populations in Nepal, NCASC, 2024”

Project Designed

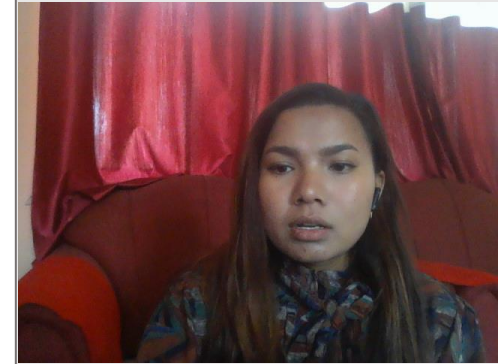
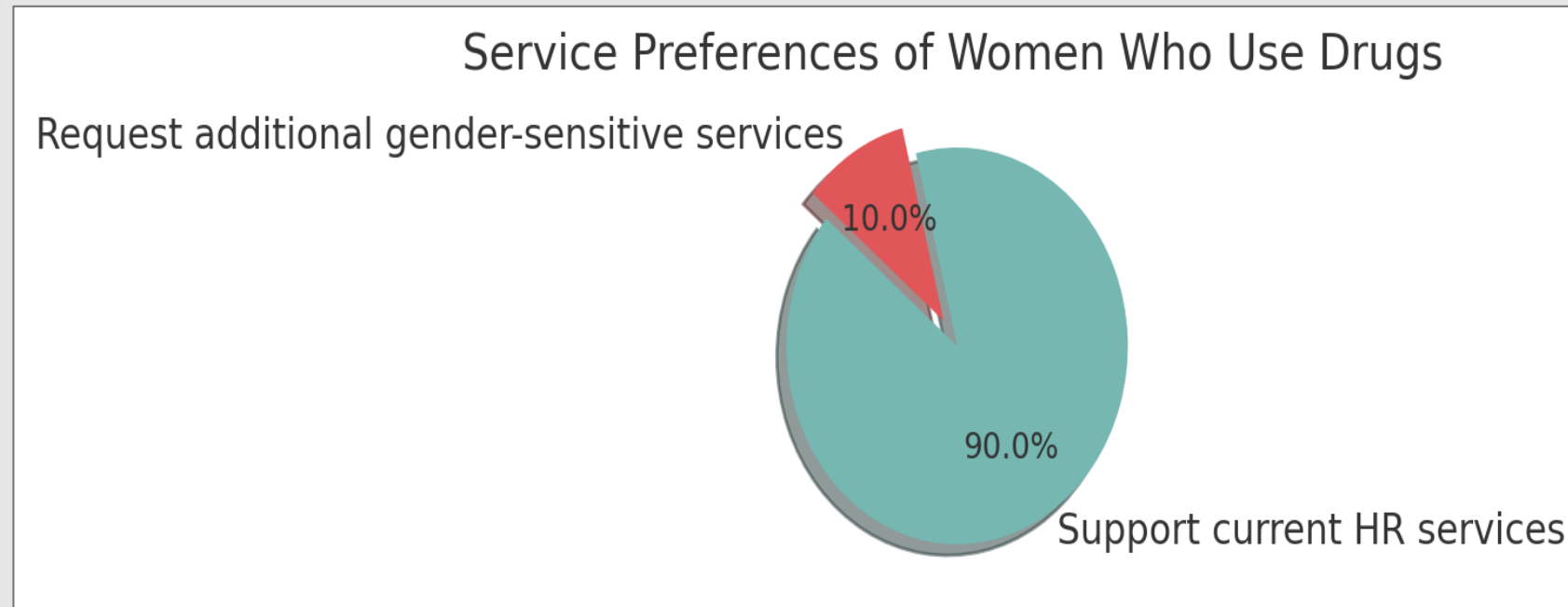
Key Services:

- Needle Syringe Exchange Program for WWUDs through outreach service.
- HIV and HCV testing
- Sexual & Reproductive Health Education.
- HIV/AIDS awareness programs.
- Community-based harm reduction initiatives.
- Referral services, drug treatment, emergency funds.
- Primary Health Check-up.



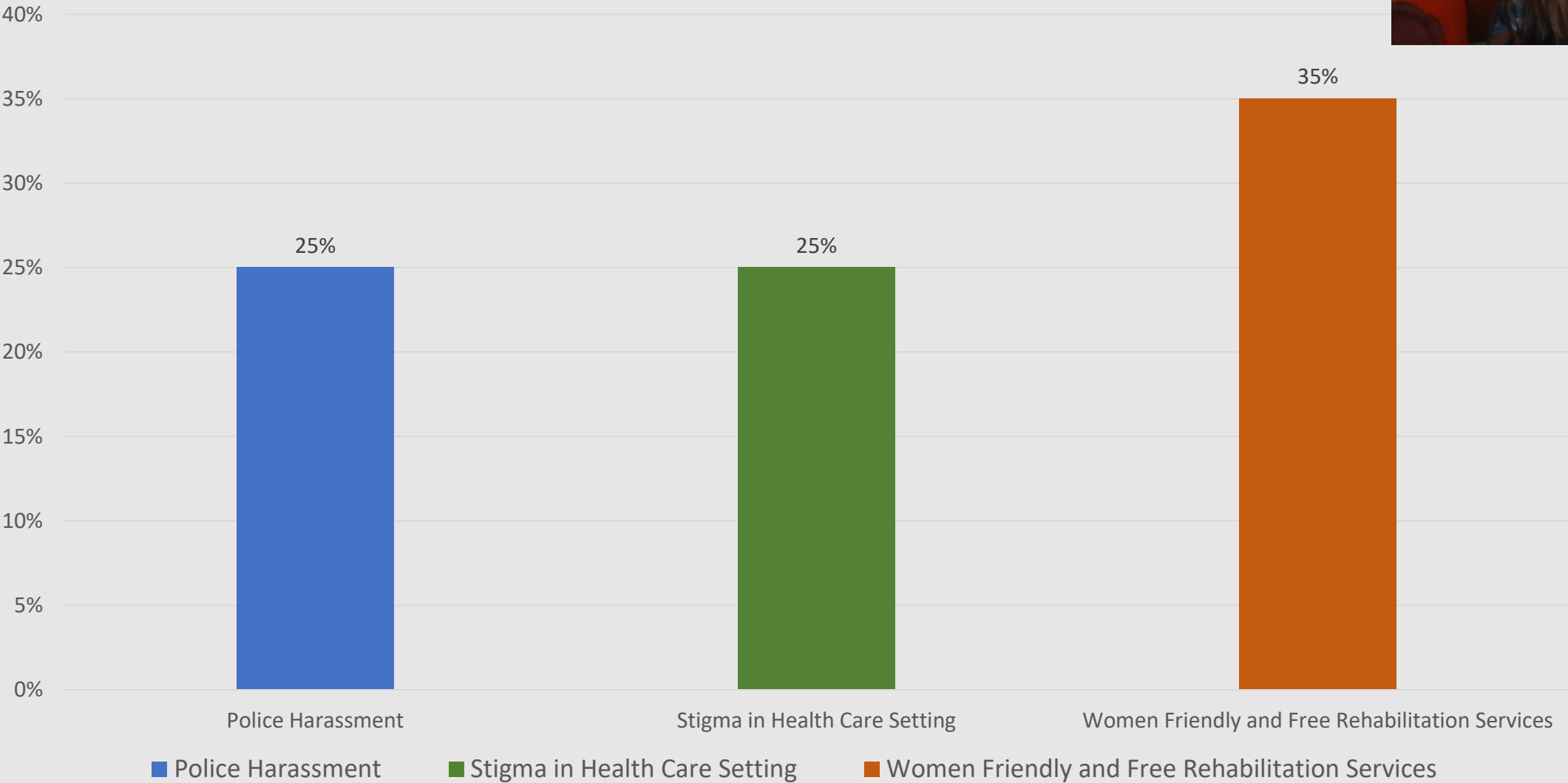
Key Findings

In survey among 850 Women Who Use Drugs (WWUDs) across four districts.



Note: Gender-sensitive services include legal support, child custody help, nutrition support and citizenship support.

Key Findings



Recommendations

- **Strengthen Behavior Change Communication (BCC):**

There is a critical need to enhance BCC strategies to promote safer practices, reduce stigma, and encourage service uptake among Women Who Use Drugs (WWUDs).

- **Enhance Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) on HIV:**

Tailored IEC efforts are essential to increase awareness and understanding of HIV prevention, testing, and treatment, especially within key vulnerable female populations.

- **Expand Harm Reduction Services Geographically:**

To ensure equitable access, existing harm reduction programs must be scaled up and extended to underserved and remote areas where services are currently limited or absent.

(Note: We have successfully organized the BCC session, and IEC materials related to HIV from our “Harm Reduction Momentum Grant” by ViiV healthcare project (Aug 2024-July 2027) within our implementing partners).





Thank You

For any quires:

Email: poonam.dhaulakoti@recoveringnepal.org.np

Contact no: +9779810187460