

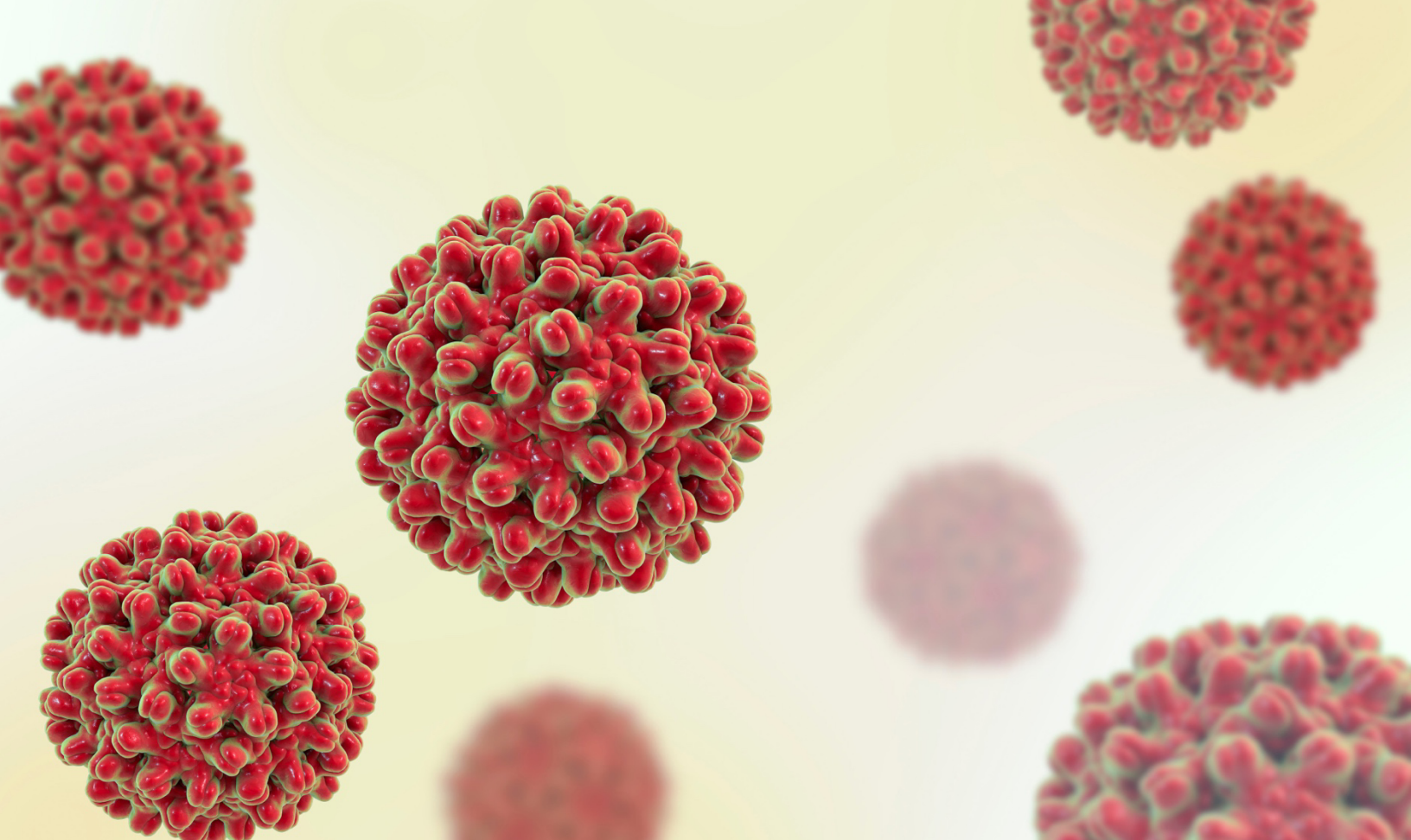
**REPORT**

# HEPATITIS B

**A 9-Day Awareness, Screening & Vaccination Program in Sirdibas,  
Tsum-Nubri Rural Municipality 3, Gorkha District, Gandaki Province.**

**JUNE 2023**





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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview and evaluation of the 9-day hepatitis B screening and vaccination program conducted (on June 12<sup>TH</sup> to 21<sup>ST</sup>) in various rural villages of Sirdibas ward in Tsum-Nubri Rural Municipality. The program aimed to raise awareness about hepatitis B, provide free screening services, and provide vaccinations to eligible individuals. The report outlines the program's objectives, implementation strategies, outcomes, and recommendations for future initiatives.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the hepatitis B screening and vaccination program were as follows:

- Identify individuals infected with hepatitis B.
- Educate the rural population about hepatitis B transmission, prevention, and treatment.
- Provide hepatitis B vaccinations to eligible individuals.
- Create awareness about the importance of regular screenings and vaccinations.

## 3. UNDERSTANDING HEPTITIS B IN THE CONTEXT OF NEPAL

Hepatitis B is a significant public health concern in Nepal, with a long-standing history of the disease impacting the population. Here is a brief overview of the history of Hepatitis B in Nepal:

### 3.1. Early Recognition:

Hepatitis B was first recognized in Nepal as a major health problem in the 1970s. The disease was found to be prevalent in various regions of the country, affecting both urban and rural populations.

### 3.2. Prevalence and Transmission:

Nepal has been classified as an intermediate to high endemic region for Hepatitis B. The prevalence of Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg), a marker of chronic infection, varies across different populations and geographical areas. High-risk groups, such as injecting drug users, healthcare workers, and those with multiple sexual partners, have shown elevated prevalence rates.

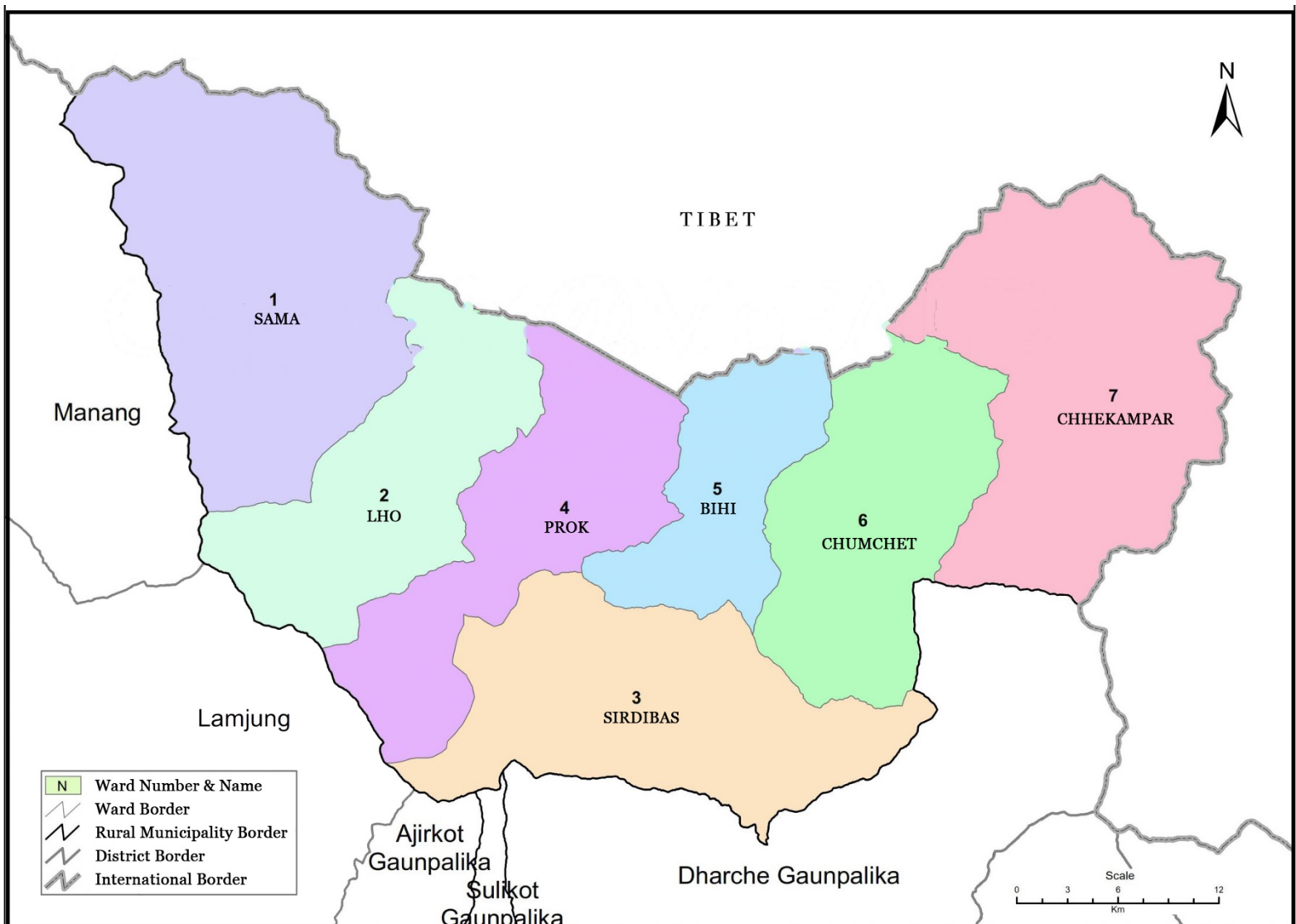
Hepatitis B is primarily transmitted through exposure to infected blood or other bodily fluids, such as during childbirth, unsafe medical procedures, unprotected sex, and sharing contaminated needles.

### 3.3. Initiatives:

The government of Nepal has recognized the importance of addressing Hepatitis B as a public health issue. Efforts have been made to include Hepatitis B vaccination as part of the national immunization program.

In 2003, Nepal introduced the Hepatitis B birth dose vaccination, which involves providing & administering the first dose of the vaccine to newborns within 24 hours of birth. This initiative aimed to prevent mother-to-child transmission and reduce the burden of chronic Hepatitis B infection.

## 4. PROGRAM LOCATION



Tsum-Nubri Rural Municipality, which is located in upper Gorkha District, was our program target location. The municipality comprises of seven wards, four in Nubri valley, two in Tsum valley, and the remaining being Sirdibas. Our original plan was to organize the program and cover the whole rural municipality. However, because of the harvest season of Himalayan caterpillar fungus (*Cordyceps Sinensis* or Yartsagumba), the only sources of financial income for the communities of upper Tsum & Nubri, we organized only in the Sirdibas region. The screening and vaccination program for the remaining wards will be organized in October and November 2023.

Sirdibas, the third ward of the rural municipality (highlighted orange in map), is located at an altitude between 1,500m and 2,000m in the lower part of the rural municipality. The region is ethnically a Gurung community with agriculture and cattle rearing as the main means of subsistence. Jagat, Pati, Sano-Philim, Pangshing, Seyrsong, and Nyak are some of the villages in Sirdibas region.

Generally, people living in the mountains of Nepal face numerous challenges due to the region's rugged terrain, remoteness, and difficult living conditions. The scenario is worst in Tsum- Nubri Rural Municipality because it is one of the least accessed & developed regions within Nepal. Some of the major challenges they encounter include:

- **Inaccessibility:** The mountainous terrain often makes transportation and communication difficult. Many villages are located in remote areas, far from main roads and urban centers, resulting in limited access to basic services and facilities.
- **Limited Infrastructure:** Infrastructure development, such as roads, electricity, and healthcare facilities, is often inadequate or non-existent in mountain regions, hindering economic growth and social progress.
- **Harsh Climate:** The mountainous areas experience extreme weather conditions, including heavy snowfall during winters and landslides during monsoons. This poses a significant risk to life and property and makes agricultural activities challenging.
- **Limited Livelihood Opportunities:** The mountain communities heavily rely on agriculture and animal husbandry, which are susceptible to the effects of climate change and land degradation. Limited access to markets and modern farming practices further constrain income-generating opportunities.
- **Education and Healthcare:** Access to quality education and healthcare is often limited in mountainous regions. The distance to schools and health centers, coupled with difficult transportation, hinders children's education and healthcare services for the population.

- **Lack of Clean Water and Sanitation:** Many mountain communities face difficulties accessing clean drinking water and proper sanitation facilities, leading to health issues and the risk of waterborne diseases.
- **Vulnerability to Natural Disasters:** The mountainous areas are prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides. The rugged terrain complicates disaster response and recovery efforts, leaving communities vulnerable to sudden calamities.
- **Limited Government Services:** Due to the remoteness and inaccessibility, government services and interventions may not reach these areas effectively, resulting in a lack of support and resources for the communities.
- **Socio-cultural Isolation:** The geographical isolation of mountain communities may lead to socio-cultural detachment from the rest of the country, preserving unique traditions but also making them susceptible to exclusion and lack of representation in national policies.
- **Outmigration:** Economic hardships and limited opportunities in the mountains often lead to significant outmigration, particularly of the younger population, resulting in labor shortages and demographic imbalances in the region.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1. Preparatory Phase:

We took the following steps to prepare for the program:

- Approached and collaborated with 'Humanitarian Efforts Reaching Out' (HERO) and 'Elevate Nepal' as a funding partner.
- Collaborated with local rural municipality's health department, local healthcare authorities, and community leaders to gain support and ensure smooth implementation.
- Conducted a comprehensive training program for locally posted healthcare professionals on Hepatitis B screening and vaccination protocols.
- Used all the connections and available resources like social sites to advertise and inform about the program and its schedule.
- Procured necessary medical supplies, testing kits, vaccines, and educational/ awareness materials.



हेपटाइटिस बी परीक्षण कार्यक्रम

## HEPATITIS B SCREENING PROGRAM

तपाईंलाई हेपटाइटिस बी भएको थाहा पाउने एकमात्र उपाय भनेको परीक्षण हो  
Testing is the only way to know if you have Hepatitis B.

12<sup>TH</sup> - 21<sup>ST</sup> June 2023 . Sirdibas, Tsum-Nubri RM-3

## DON'T WAIT. VACCINATE!

खोपले तपाईंलाई सुरक्षित राख्छ, त्यसैले समयमै खोप लगाउनु ।

Hepatitis B is a very contagious liver infection.  
हेपटाइटिस बीले अत्यन्तै छिटो कलेजोमा संक्रमण हुन्छ ।

**लक्षणहरू**  
What are the symptoms of Hep B?

Fever  
ज्वर लाग्छ

Dark pee, pale poop, diarrhea  
थुला रंगको मल, पेशाब, र पेशाब

Belly ache  
पेट दुखा

Yellow skin  
खैरो त्वचा

Yellow eyes  
खैरो आँखा

**रोग सर्ने तरिका**  
How would I get Hep B?

Using drugs  
दुग्धपदार्थको प्रयोग

Having sex  
सम्बन्ध

Getting tattoos or body piercings  
दुग्ध र अन्य चीजहरू खोपार्ने

Sharing things like razors or toothbrushes  
दुग्ध र अन्य चीजहरू प्रयोग गर्नुभन्दा अगाडि रगत प्रवाह गर्नु

**जोखिम न्यूनीकरण गर्ने उपायहरू**  
How can I prevent Hep B?

Get a Hep B vaccine  
हेपटाइटिस बी विरुद्ध खोप लगाउनु

Use condoms  
सम्बन्धको प्रयोग गर्नु

Use your own razors, toothbrushes  
दुग्ध र अन्य चीजहरू प्रयोग गर्नु अगाडि राम्रो प्रयोग गर्नु

Use your own needles, straws, pipes, etc.  
दुग्ध र अन्य चीजहरू प्रयोग गर्नु अगाडि राम्रो प्रयोग गर्नु

The Hepatitis B vaccine is a safe & effective way of protecting people who have never had Hepatitis B from getting it.  
हेपटाइटिस बी को खोप सुरक्षित र प्रभावकारी छ । यदि तपाईंले खोप लगाउनुअघिको रोग नभएको खोप लगाउनुभन्दा अगाडि राम्रो प्रयोग गर्नु ।



हेपटाइटिस बी विरुद्धको  
खोप कार्यक्रम

## HEPATITIS B VACCINATION PROGRAM

Your best shot to protect yourself and others against Hepatitis.

12<sup>TH</sup> 21<sup>ST</sup> June 2023 | Sirdibas, Tsum-Nubri RM-3

### 5.2. Program Execution:

We conducted the following activities as part of the program:

- Established temporary screening and vaccination centers in each rural village, ensuring accessibility and convenience for the local population.
- Conducted community outreach programs, leveraging local networks, and social & online media to create awareness about the program.
- Provided free hepatitis B screening tests to all individuals, followed by counseling sessions to those who tested positive.
- Provided Hepatitis B vaccinations to eligible individuals above 19 years of age, including those who tested negative and those who were not previously vaccinated.
- Distributed educational materials and conducted interactive sessions to promote understanding of Hepatitis B and its prevention.



## 6. OUTCOMES

### 6.1. Screening:

S.N	Vaccination Center	Date	Target Population	Screening		Positive Cases		
				F	M	F	M	Total
1.	Jagat	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	160	87	73	3	3	6
2.	Nyak	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	81	55	26	0	2	2
3.	Syersong	17 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	101	69	32	3	2	5
4.	Pangshing	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	115	82	33	0	0	0
5.	Sano Phillim	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	83	50	33	6	4	10
6.	Pati	20 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	181	103	78	8	3	11
7.	Sirdibas HP	21 <sup>st</sup> June 2023	237	137	100	4	6	10
8.	Sirdibas HP	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2023	246	125	121	5	3	8
9.	Bouddha Sec. School	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2023	243	138	105	6	5	11
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1447</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>63</b>

S. N	According to Age	Number of Population
1.	0 to 15 years	315
2.	16 to 59 years	965
3.	60 years & above	167
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1447</b>

### 6.2. Vaccination:

S.N	Vaccination Center	Date	Target Population	Vaccinated			Remark
				F	M	Total	
1.	Jagat	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	115	69	45	114	12
2.	Nyak	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	66	46	19	65	Pregnancy
3.	Syersong	17 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	95	63	32	95	
4.	Pangshing	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	74	50	19	69	
5.	Sano-Philim	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	58	35	22	57	
6.	Pati	20 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	137	72	61	133	
7.	Sirdibas HP	21 <sup>st</sup> June 2023	199	125	74	199	
8.	Sirdibas HP	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2023	199	99	100	199	
9.	Buddha Sec. School	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2023	109	59	50	109	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1052</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>1040</b>	<b>12</b>

S. N	According to Age	Number of Population
1.	16 to 59 years	881
2.	60 years & above	160
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1041</b>



### **6.3. Awareness and Education:**

There have been numerous awareness and education campaigns in Nepal to increase public knowledge about hepatitis B transmission, prevention, and treatment. These campaigns have targeted various populations, including schools, communities, healthcare professionals, and high-risk groups. However, given the remoteness, difficult land topography, and isolation of these villages in Tsum-Nubri Rural Municipality, the initiatives from the government have failed to reach these communities.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like ours and international agencies like HERO & Elevate Nepal have played a crucial role in raising awareness, providing education, and organizing screening and vaccination programs in both urban and rural areas.

- Feedback surveys indicated improved knowledge and awareness about hepatitis B transmission, prevention, and treatment among the rural population.
- We noted an increased willingness among participants to undergo regular screenings and encourage others to do the same.
- We witnessed a positive response from community & religious leaders, who pledged continued support for similar initiatives.

## **7. CHALLENGES**

Despite these efforts, several challenges persist in the fight against hepatitis B in Nepal. These challenges include limited healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural areas, lack of awareness among the general population, inadequate screening facilities, and accessibility issues.

The public is generally unaware that hepatitis B infection can be prevented with vaccinations and that early diagnosis of a hepatitis B infection can lead to timely initiation of effective treatments. Accessibility and affordability are major barriers, especially for screening, as many people do not have a primary care provider or lack insurance. Stigma and discrimination persist, particularly in several at-risk communities. Social determinants of health, such as lack of access to medical care and psychosocial factors, as well as language, cultural, transportation, and economic challenges represent additional barriers to accessing care.

We faced unprecedented obstacles in reaching remote and isolated

communities with our recent program, including challenges in delivering these life-saving vaccines because of the difficult land topography, rugged terrain, and frequent landslides caused by the heavy monsoon. Apart from the above-mentioned challenges, our team had to race against time in reaching the vaccines to a particular location because of the availability of only one cooler to store & safeguard the vaccines.

## 8. **FUTURE OUTLOOK & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Nepal continues to prioritize the prevention and control of hepatitis B through various strategies, including expansion of the vaccination program, strengthening healthcare infrastructure, and enhancing public awareness campaigns. Collaboration between the government, NGOs, healthcare providers, and communities is crucial for achieving sustained progress in combating hepatitis B.

While the burden of hepatitis B remains a challenge in Nepal, concerted efforts are being made to reduce transmission, increase vaccination coverage, and improve the management and treatment of individuals infected with the virus.

Next steps for our program include:

- a. Strengthening collaboration with local healthcare authorities and NGOs for improved planning and coordination.
- b. Conducting pre-program community engagement activities to address vaccine hesitancy and misconceptions.
- c. Enhancing outreach efforts through mobile healthcare units or satellite clinics to reach remote villages.
- d. Training local community healthcare workers to conduct follow-up vaccinations and screenings, ensuring sustainability.
- e. Developing sustainable partnerships with local communities, organizations, and government agencies for long-term impact.

## 9. **CONCLUSION:**

The 9-day hepatitis B awareness, screening and vaccination program in Sirdibas successfully raised awareness, identified infected individuals, and provided vaccinations to eligible participants. Despite challenges, the program achieved positive outcomes and laid the foundation for future initiatives. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, future programs can further enhance their impact and contribute to the prevention and control of hepatitis B in rural communities.

We appreciate Humanitarian Efforts Reaching Out (HERO) and Elevate Nepal for their continued support with the funding and partnering with us on this much needed program. We would also like to acknowledge the health department of the local rural municipality for their support with the coordination and networks.



The dedicated Team in the field.



Ven. Wangchuk Raptan Lama; founder & president of Kyimolung Foundation Nepal with the locals from Nyak village.



**KYIMOLUNG FOUNDATION NEPAL**

Organizer & Local NGO

[www.kyimolungfoundation.org](http://www.kyimolungfoundation.org)

|

Mob. (+977) 9861 873 888

|

[info@kyimolungfoundation.org](mailto:info@kyimolungfoundation.org)

In Photo; THE VILLAGE OF NYAK, 2000m

## ORGANIZING & FUNDING PARTNERS



205 Saddle Rock Circle, Sedona, AZ 86336  
United States of America



[www.heroefforts.org](http://www.heroefforts.org)



PO Box 391, Flagstaff, AZ 86002  
United States of America



[www.elevatenepal.org](http://www.elevatenepal.org)

## SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION



Sirdibas, Tsum-Nubri Rural Municipality's Head Office,  
Gorkha District, Gandaki Province,  
Nepal.



[www.chumanuwrimun.gov.np](http://www.chumanuwrimun.gov.np)