

PRESS STATEMENT

Nepal's looming Covid crisis poses serious threat to children, warns Save the Children

KATHMANDU, 13 May 2021 - As Nepal's rapidly escalating Covid-19 emergency puts the country's hospitals under increasing strain, Save the Children warned today that there could be "catastrophic" consequences for children if the virus is not brought under control.

It warned that disruptions to essential health services and education, along with increasing rates of child poverty, will have a lasting and irreversible impact on children that will be felt for "many years to come."

Jennifer Syed, Country Director of Save the Children in Nepal, said:

"Record numbers of deaths are already being reported in Nepal, and things are going to get a lot worse over the coming weeks with oxygen supplies running out and the vaccine programme at a standstill. Our health system is already being overwhelmed by the number of critically ill patients. There are people queuing up outside emergency wards because there are no beds available for them.

"It's particularly alarming to see the number of cases rising in rural areas, where health services are woefully ill-equipped to handle this surge in critically ill patients. Someone from a rural part of the country might have to travel seven or eight hours to get to the nearest hospital -- many of which are understaffed and under resourced -- and with few ambulances available, life-saving treatment is out of reach for many.

"Because of Covid-19, other medical treatments have come to a halt, which is especially dangerous for young children and pregnant mothers who desperately need access to healthcare. The longer this crisis goes on, the greater the disruption to vital health services, putting even more children at risk of illness or even death. The nationwide lockdown, whilst essential to control the virus, threatens to push even more children into poverty as families lose their incomes. One thing is certain, children in Nepal will feel the effects of this crisis for many years to come.

"Nepal is in urgent need of oxygen, plain and simple. Without it, the situation will quickly spiral out of control and the consequences will be catastrophic. Save the Children is doing all it can to obtain vital supplies of oxygen and life-saving oxygen concentrators, as well as other life-saving equipment for hospitals and quarantine centres. We're also teaching children and their families how to protect themselves from Covid-19 through radio, social media, posters, and public loudspeakers."

Save the Children is providing vital equipment to health centres, including pulse oximeters, surgical masks, rapid antigen test kits, thermometers and PPE. We are also working with police on Nepal's border with India to provide vital information to migrant workers crossing over about how to protect themselves and their families at home from the virus.

Für Interviewanfragen steht Ihnen unsere Pressestelle zur Verfügung.

Kontakt:

Save the Children Deutschland e.V.
Pressestelle – Susanne Sawadogo

Tel.: +49 (30) 27 59 59 79 – 120

Mail: susanne.sawadogo@savethechildren.de

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Über Save the Children

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in 120 Ländern tätig. Save the Children setzt sich ein für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen. Für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet. Eine Welt, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben und frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen und lernen können – seit über 100 Jahren.