***Field and Interview Note***

Fieldworker/Interviewer: OC

Interviewee: JRS

Note Taker: OC

Note Checked and Edited by: JS

Language of the Interview: Nepali/English

Note Transcribed by: OC

Place: 3rd floor, meeting hall, Thapathali, Kathmandu.

Date: 26th June 2014

Time: 12:30-1:30 Pm

**Major Highlights:**

* MIRA’s overall activities are categorized into three categories i.e. research, training and advocacy on maternal and neo-natal.
* MIRA has been working with UCL for research on maternal and neo-natal health from 20 years now.
* Sustainability of the projects on maternal and neo-natal health at community level is the biggest challenge among others.

OC left the office around 12: 00 in the noon for Mother and Infant Research Activities (MIRA) and reached to office of MIRA at Thapathali near Nepal Rastra Bank. As OC reached to office, he asked one staff, can OC meet the JRS? She replied, he is at the third floor, you could meet him there, and then OC left with thanking her for information. OC reached to third floor, from outside of the main door, OC saw two elderly people talking in the room with having tea. OC then asked them, OC is there to meet JRS, one of them replied, JRS will be there soon with laughing, please be sited there referring to safa in the room, next to JRS’s office room. OC entered into the room and sat at sofa. In a while, JRS came with leaf-let of Essential Newborn Care Equipment along with some other publications in his hand and sat next to OC. Then, briefly explained about each publication, once JRS done with it, OC gave him one page introduction and shortly mentioned about the purpose of visit and informed him about Nepal Inception Workshop which is going to be held on 28th and 29th of July. After listening to OC, JRS began to describe about the working sector and sub sectors of MIRA briefly.

JRS explained that overall activities of MIRA could be broadly categorized into Research, Training and Advocacy on maternal and child health sector. MIRA has been conducting research entirely focused on mother and neo-natal. Additionally MIRA provides training to upgrade skills and abilities of doctors, nurses and paramedical. Training for doctors is primarily concerned in providing essential new born care skills and practical knowledge to MBBS graduates and Gynecologists, such skills includes preparation for delivery; care during and after delivery or post natal care, importance of nutrition or balanced diet and so forth. Similarly, nurses are provided training on how to provide proper services to new born and mother. Particularly they are taught to maintain appropriate temperature for new born at the health facility, how to handle, in case new born does not cry at the time of birth? What are the danger signs for new born and mother? And, how to handle for Post-Partum Hemorrhage (PPH). In short, training for nurses is focused on developing their skills and abilities to require for peri-natal care. While talking about the trainers, they are MD doctors, child health specialists or public health specialists at the central and district level. Whereas, training for FCHVs at the community level is provided by either district health supervisors or by in charge of health facilities.

In terms of paramedical, MIRA provides training to FCHVs at the community level. It teaches on identifying danger signs of mother and new born. How to overcome, in case FCHVs identify danger signs on other or new born? Required skills are differs with each danger sign, which are taught to FCHVs during training, when and how to use bag and mask properly? How to keep clean nose, mouth and other parts of new born clean and tidy? are some of skills among others.

On top of research and training, MIRA advocates for promotion of mother neo-natal health. JRS remembered that when MIRA took initiated to work on mother and child health issues in Nepal, even Government of Nepal had not designed such programs. MIRA uses different means to advocate on mother and child health related issues such as it organizes meetings among different stakeholders including related persons from government, hosts seminars, produces articles, publishes booklets, leaf-lets, and research reports. JRS further told one can access many of our publications from the website link as http/www.mira.org.np

Coming back to earlier points of research and funding mechanism, JRS began to explain in a bit detail, he told that, for research activities, MIRA has been working with University College London (UCL) more than 20 years from now. In this process UCL does most of the fund generating activities individually although, it includes MIRA from the very beginning of the research project like, from the stage identifying of the problems, designing of the research. MIRA puts its ideas, understanding regarding mother and child health in general and specific problem(s) based in particular. UCL on the hand does writing research proposal, based on the problems of Nepal, particularly problems of mother and child health then apply for fund, when it wins the fund, and then UCL makes information public especially among young university graduates and then interested candidates will apply once they are selected for the project, UCL sends selected candidates to Nepal for Master and PhD research. MIRA as a sub-contractor of UCL research project(s) make it happen in Nepal. In this process, MIRA will need to get approval of the proposed research in Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC) and Social Welfare Council (SWC). When these organizations approve for the research project(s), then MIRA informs to UCL accordingly and then donor(s) will send fund to MIRA in its organizational account.

In the past, like 5 years ago approval process for research was a bit different. Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), NHRC and SWC were involved in approving the research projects. At that time research projects had to tie-up with MoHP. MoHP has to sign the MOU of the research project and then it goes to NHRC and SWC for further process of approval. Even before this period, National Planning Commission (NPC) and Ministry of Finance (MoF) used to involve in approving process.

While getting fund from USAID, it does not provide fund directly. USAID gives fund to Path Finder, a contractor for USAID. MIRA apply to Path Finder, if MIRA meets the given requirement then MIRA gets fund from Path Finder as a Sub-contractor. Again, in this process, MIRA apply for the approval of proposed research to NHRC and SWC. In case, research requires to be conducted in any health facilities, hospitals further approval needs to get from MoHP even these days as well. When MoHP approves the research it then sends a letter requesting related health facilities or hospitals to provide necessary help to accomplish research from their organizations. After, all these processes are completed, MIRA gets fund from contractor in its organizational account.

Likewise, in case of World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF public advertisement and MIRA will apply for fund in the given format of respective organizations when MIRA is selected for the projects. MIRA has to follow and complete all the official processes as has been mentioned earlier. Regarding to District Development Committee (DDC), Village Development, Municipality, Committee (VDC), MIRA informs to all the stakeholders and put efforts for their participation in the project from the beginning phase of project so as to make it sustainable. To inform about status of mother and child health MIRA organizes meeting at district level annually. Similarly, MIRA not only informs at VDC level but also ask for different potential supports including certain amount of budget from VDC’s fund for MNCH program.

In terms of DFID’s style of funding JRS told that DFID funds for the programs mainly in two ways. (1) It gives fund directly to the country through the MoF, and fund comes in the Red Book. (2) It requests for International Tender for projects on different countries in the world such as Nepal, Malawi. Then, interested organizations like UCL will apply for the fund when organizations are selected for the projects, then projects go to different countries in collaboration with different organizations like MIRA by fulfilling various requirements.

In addition to funding mechanism, JRS also mentioned some of the challenges in the field of mother and child health. As he told, sustainability of the projects at the community level is one of the biggest challenges among others, although MIRA always explains the sustainability of the projects among rest of the stakeholders including Health Facility Management Committee. MIRA further talks on the duties and responsibilities of the stakeholders at the community level after projects being handover to the community people. For instance, MIRA collaborates with Health Posts, Sub-Health Post, Outreach Clinic, Family Planning Unit, MCHW, and mother groups so that these stakeholders could continue the programs even after phase of particular projects.

MIRA conducted pilot project with Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHVs) and mother groups with hypothesis that if FCHVs and mother groups are aware regarding mother and child health issues, that will reduce neo-natal mortality at the community. The project was completed after being conducted 13 cycles of activities among FCHVs and mothers groups. The major aim of the projects was to raise group awareness on maternal and child health in the community in cycles of activities. The focused of the program was primarily on providing care to pregnant women and neo-natal which includes proper management of pregnancy and delivery, required services for mother and child during pregnancy and delivery, potential dangers for both mother and child, importance of institutional delivery among others.

JRS further told that, evaluation the project shows that, in initial days, pregnant women were hesitant to come forward for sharing their issues, some of them were complaining on issues like shortage of required medicine at the health facility but gradually project was able to prove the hypothesis.

After success of project in Makwanpur, it was replicated in Dhanusha immediately within the country and in Malawi, Bangladesh, slum area of Mumbai; India beyond the country. Among others countries project in Mumbai did not work well. JRS added in this regard, social and cultural situation of Mumbai is differs than of Nepal, JRS concluded the conversation. OC thanked him a lot for everything and left the office by reminding him about the date of Nepal Inception Workshop also told JRS, OC will give him call, if further clarification is needed in any of the points we discussed.

Note: *JRS is put in contact with OC by Prof. Manandhar as OC spoke with him on phone when he first made call to MIRA, receptionist, transferred his call to Prof. Manandhar for further talk on what OC asked to receptionist. OC then, briefly mentioned about the outline of the research project, Prof. Manandhar, refer to talk with JRS for detail information in this regard. He also told that he will talk with OC shortly at the time when OC visits to MIRA for meeting with JRS, but at time OC was at MIRA to attend meeting with JRS, by that time Prof. already left office, although OC made confirm with JRS on phone that Prof. was at the office before OC leave for MIRA.*