

# Goreto

*a tireless journey of educational development*



## **Education Working Group**

**ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL NGOs in NEPAL**

**A NETWORK OF INGOs WORKING IN NEPAL**

**<http://www.ain.org.np>**

**2023**

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च.नं. :

नेपाल सरकार  
शिक्षा, विज्ञान तथा प्रविधि मन्त्रालय

## शिक्षा तथा मानव स्रोत विकास केन्द्र



सानोठिमी, भक्तपुर  
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### शुभकामना

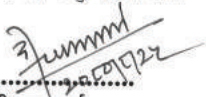
अन्तराष्ट्रिय गैरसरकारी संस्थाहरूले नेपालको शिक्षा क्षेत्रमा पुऱ्याएको योगदान र यसबाट आएका प्रतिफल, सिकाई तथा असल अभ्यासलाई लिपिवद्ध गरी गोरेटोमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको पाउँदा मलाई खुशी लागेको छ ।

नेपालको शिक्षामा सुधारको लागि लामो समयदेखि अन्तराष्ट्रिय गैरसरकारी संस्थाहरूको महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहँदै आएको छ । खासगरी नेपालको संविधानले प्रत्याभूत गरेका शिक्षा सम्बन्धि संवैधानिक अधिकारहरू, नेपालले राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तराष्ट्रिय स्तरमा गरेका प्रतिबद्धता र दिगो विकास लक्ष्य पूरा गर्न, विशेषतः शिक्षा, विज्ञान तथा प्रविधि मन्त्रालयले कार्यान्वयनमा ल्याएको विद्यालय शिक्षा क्षेत्र योजनालाई सार्थक बनाउन महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको छ ।

अन्तराष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थाहरूले आर्थिक सामाजिक र अन्य कारणले जोखिममा भएका महिला, बालबालिका, सामाजिक रूपमा पछाडी परेका र शिक्षाको पहुँचमा पुग्न नसकेका तथा सहज पहुँच नभएका समुदायका बालबालिकालाई शिक्षामा पहुँच बढाउन तथा गुणस्तरमा वृद्धि गर्न योगदान पुऱ्याएको छ । यी प्रयास, सलगतता र साम्केदारीको निम्ति अन्तराष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्था एवम् संयोजक एआइएनलाई धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु ।

नेपालमा विद्यालय शिक्षा क्षेत्रको विकासमा नेपाल सरकारले दीर्घकालीन लक्ष्य अनुरुपको रणनीति र कार्यक्रहरू लागु गरी शिक्षाको विकासमा लागिरहेको र दिगो विकास लक्ष्य हासिल गर्ने छोटो समय बाँकि रहेको सन्दर्भमा हाम्रा शिक्षाका निर्धारित लक्ष्यहरू हासिल गर्न अन्तराष्ट्रिय गैरसरकारी संस्थाहरूको प्रतिबद्धता, लगानी, र योगदान निरन्तर रहने छ भन्ने आशा लिएको छु ।

अन्तमा अशोसिएसन अफ इण्टरनेसनल अर्गनाइजेसन्स इन नेपाल (एआइएन) एजुकेशन वर्किङ ग्रुपलाई बधाई ज्ञापन गर्दछु । यसले सिकाईलाई निरन्तरता तथा असल अभ्यासलाई अन्य विद्यालयमा पनि विस्तार गर्न सहयोग गर्नेछ र विद्यालय शिक्षा क्षेत्र कार्ययोजनाले लिएका उद्देश्य तथा लक्ष्यलाई थप योगदान पुऱ्याउन सक्ने अपेक्षाका साथ हार्दिक शुभकामना व्यक्त गर्दछु ।

  
दीपक शर्मा  
महानिर्देशक



## FOREWORD

On behalf of AIN, the Association of International Non-Government Organization (INGOs) in Nepal, we are thrilled to present this documentation showcasing our commendable practices and impactful contribution to public education in Nepal. These efforts align with our commitment to the long-term strategic plan, achieving milestones towards Nepal's ambitious goals of ensuring inclusive access to quality education for every child. And fulfilling constitutional provision and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

It is an honor and privilege to pen this foreword to complement the School Education Sector Plan (SESP) of Nepal representing the collective commitment of the INGO sector who is also a part of Local Education Development Partner Group (LEDPG). Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Government of Nepal extends its heartfelt appreciation to the International Non-government Organization for our exceptional dedication and transformative efforts in the realm of public education. The collaboration initiatives and tireless commitment of INGOs have played an instrumental role in reshaping the landscape of education in our Nation.

The documentation **"Goreto – A Tireless Journey of Educational Development"** serves as compelling evidence showcasing the impactful contribution and active engagement of the AIN Education Working Group (EWG) within the education sector. It encapsulates our commitment, achievement and collaborative endeavors offering a comprehensive overview of our role in advancing education initiatives. These innovations can be replicated for the benefits of all which also helps in disseminating the best evidence and learning in a wider community at all levels of government, development partners, education stakeholders and different associations. This will further extend AIN member organization's visibility and will create an environment to collaborate with each other for continuity of education and learnings.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all AIN EWG members who have supported in designing and sharing their learning, contribution, best practices and impactful stories. Your valuable support, contribution and commitment in promoting access, quality and efficiency of the public education system through implementation of SESP. We also would like to take the opportunity to extend gratitude to MoEST, Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) and all three tiers of government who have supported and contributed by providing enable environment to work. We are equally grateful to all the Development Partners for their continuous supports by providing grants and required support to AIN member organizations.

We extend our sincere and profound appreciation to the AIN EWG under the leadership of Ms Renu Shrestha AIN EWG Coordinator (ActionAid International Nepal), Mr Kedar Tamang (German Nepalese Help Association), Mr Uddhab Bhattarai (World Vision International Nepal) and Ms Reshma Shrestha Program Coordinator at AIN. Their unwavering commitment and collaborative effort have made this document fruitful, enriched with insights and perspectives of our collective dedication to advancing public education. Last but not the least, we extend our sincere appreciation to Mr SP Kalaunee member of Steering Committee for his valuable support in enhancing the strategic direction and overall development of the working group and VSO Nepal for providing support for proofread of the stories.



Bhagwan Shrestha

AIN Chairperson



Heather Campbell

AIN Vice Chair/Steering Committee Lead-EWG

## A Challenging Yet Opportune Time

Over the last few decades, Nepal's school education sector has faced many challenges. Socio-political and economic challenges coupled with natural calamities have adversely affected the already under-resourced education sector.

A series of incidents affected educational advancement in the first quarter of this century. Education was severely affected by over a decade-long conflict in the country. The country was slowly coming out and gradually recovering from the loss when it got hit by a devastating earthquake in its mid-hills. While the earthquake did not hit the whole country, the impact was that the government had to focus its attention and allocate the resources to earthquake response, resulting in a lack of focus on other sectors, including education. Before completing the rebuilding work, the global pandemic started, which halted the progress in the educational sector across the globe. Post-COVID, Nepal continues to face small and large disasters. Bajhang and Jajarkot earthquakes are recent examples that resulted in deaths and caused students to be out of school for a long time. The calamities, coupled with socioeconomic disparities, such as the ones based on gender, caste, region, religion, and class, have retarded the pace of educational development.

Amidst all these challenges, with long-term system thinking and immediate support, there are significant opportunities for the school education sector to leap in Nepal.

*Decentralization:* The restructuring of the nation has brought the school governance in closer geographic proximity in the form of a municipal government. In the new structure, the responsibility of secondary education falls under the purview of the local government. Since the former structure of the District Education Office does not exist in the prior form, the municipal education office should fill the gap created by that immediately. Strengthening the municipal education office can strengthen the monitoring, supervision, and support mechanisms for the schools.

*Education Bill:* The Education Bill tabled in the parliament presents another opportunity to strengthen school education in Nepal. This opportunity has come after a long time, as the new Education Act will replace the old one after five decades. This is when the parliament, the government, and other stakeholders can focus on finding ways to solve immediate challenges and pave the path for decades to come. The bill should address how the country can fill the existing gaps, focus on - (a) the learning outcomes of the students, (b) adaptation to the changing times, (c) building a performance-based system of management, and aim to produce a competent human resource fit for this century.

*Technological Advancement:* We have witnessed technological advancement at an unimaginable pace. Nepal should take advantage of utilizing technology for learning improvement and innovation. Building a data system using the technology can tie the investment with the outcome and proactively support the marginalized.

*Partnerships:* With a clear vision, strategy, and implementation commitments and results, Nepal has the potential to attract a significant investment. Donors and the international community seem favorable about continuing to support Nepal. With the planned graduation from the least developed country (LDC) approaching soon, this is the best time and opportunity for the government to tap into international resources. At this point, Nepal must take advantage of all opportunities available.

The country nestled in the heart of the Himalayas with diverse cultures, stunning landscapes, and a rich history has the potential to speed up progress in education. It can take a long-term approach to become an educational hub for the world. AIN is there to work hand-in-hand with the government of Nepal to help realize its set goals. The *Goreto: A Tireless Journey of Educational Development* presents a snapshot of stories of how we are collaborating to deliver impact in education.

We look forward to a continued and impactful journey!



Dr. SP Kalaunee  
AIN Steering Committee Member, Education Lead

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# Transforming the Community Through Education and Youth Mobilization

In the heart of Nepal, where education once hung in the balance, a story of resilience, innovation, and community spirit unfolded. ActionAid International Nepal (AAIN), guided by its commitment to youth empowerment and educational excellence, embarked on a journey that would forever change the lives of children and communities.

## Part 1: Youth-Led Remedial Classes

Remedial learning, a source of optimism for children facing learning challenges, has experienced a revitalization through the efforts of committed young volunteers. These enthusiastic mentors, possessing a strong commitment to education and a profound sense of mission, made the decision to address the void created by the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the scenic village of Bagnaskali, situated in the Palpa district, a group of young volunteers shouldered responsibility for conducting remedial classes targeting students from grades 5 to 8.



The efficacy of remedial classes stems from their comprehensive approach. Instead of relying on memorization, students were encouraged to develop a deep understanding of concepts by engaging in practical examples and hands-on learning experiences. Pooja, an

### Remedial Class Kept Students Engaged in Study

Remedial class has engaged the children in their study at home and decreased the chances of visiting the colleagues and spending their study time in playing or doing some risky activities like swimming in the nearby rivers, climbing trees. Bhawana, a student in the fifth grade, stated that these sessions have comprehensively addressed his knowledge deficiencies. Thanks to the assistance provided by these young mentors, students such as Bhawana have discovered their ability to express themselves, actively participating in classroom discussions with confidence.

eighth-grade student hailing from the remote village of Siraha, provided testimony regarding the notable transformation. Not only did her self-esteem experience a significant boost, but she also discovered herself engaging in conversations in English—a skill she had never envisioned attaining.

The impact extended beyond the realm of academia. The young volunteers also experienced personal and professional growth. They developed and refined their teaching abilities, acquired valuable knowledge about the dynamics within the classroom, and successfully established meaningful relationships with both students and parents. The program focused on both fostering young leaders and enhancing their intellectual development.

*The emergence of the youth-led remedial class program stands as a source of hope, drawing encouragement from ActionAid International Nepal and its partner organizations. The objective is to provide a cost-effective and highly efficient alternative that aims to mitigate the learning deficiencies resulting from the COVID-19 epidemic. Significantly, the primary objective of this initiative is to address the educational disparities in English and mathematics by targeting a minimum of 7500 students in the period following the pandemic. In addition, this initiative provides essential capacity-building experiences to 315 young volunteers and promotes school volunteering by facilitating the sharing of their inspiring stories, which in turn contributes to shaping future policy engagement. Through the assistance of their siblings, an additional 8699 children have effectively had their educational deficiencies addressed.*

## Part 2: A New Beginning for Janata Primary School

The Janata Primary School in Bagnashkali, Palpa was on the verge of closure in year end of 2022, situated in secluded areas with minimal activity. The institution, which was previously characterized by its vibrancy, has experienced a substantial drop in enrollment, currently consisting of only 16 students. The decrease can be attributed to various factors, including worries regarding the quality of education provided, parental inclination towards private schools, and insufficient levels of teacher involvement. There existed a noticeable dichotomy, wherein certain individuals possessed the means to access private school, while others found solace within the public education system.

In light of challenging circumstances, the community demonstrated a collective sense of cohesion and solidarity. The emergence of **Nigrani Samuha** (Education Watch Group consisting of parents) a diligent watchdog organization, attributed to its commitment to overseeing and advocating for the provision of high-quality education. The school's future was uncertain as a result of budget reductions implemented by Bagnashkali Rural Municipality, which left only four teachers remaining.

The school's destiny saw a notable transformation as a result of collective endeavors. The Bagnashkali Rural Municipality (RM) has budgeted funding to hire an additional teacher and has implemented English medium instruction now. ActionAid International Nepal's partner Social Resource Development Centre Nepal (SRDCN), Palpa intervened by offering assistance in the form of infrastructure enhancements and safety precautions.

The Nigrani Samuha, SMC (School Management Committee), and PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) initiated a comprehensive outreach program, wherein they visited households in a door-to-door manner, with the objective of engaging parents and expressing their commitment to effecting positive changes inside the school. The restoration of trust in the school resulted in a significant increase in student enrollment.

Coming to 2023, Janata Primary School serves as a thriving center for education, accommodating a total of 59 children. It is anticipated that the school will witness further growth in the upcoming year, with goals to enroll 80 children by the year 2024. Parents who were previously discouraged by the state of the school now place their trust in committed educators for the betterment of their children's prospects. The aforementioned action serves as evidence of the potential accomplishments that may be attained by a society when it unites in pursuit of a shared objective, namely, providing high-quality education to every individual.

### Part 3: A Future Enriched

Both narratives, albeit separate, demonstrate the shared emphasis of ActionAid International Nepal on education and the mobilization of young individuals. By means of remedial classes led by young individuals, a substantial number of students were able to obtain not only educational assistance but also a revitalized sense of self-assurance and inquisitiveness. The young volunteers subsequently developed into dynamic leaders, equipped with valuable skills that would prove advantageous in their future endeavors.



The resurrection of Janata Primary School highlighted the influential role of community-driven development. Through the collaborative efforts of parents, teachers, and municipal authorities, a previously underperforming school underwent a remarkable transformation, emerging as a distinguished institution of academic achievement.

As ActionAid International Nepal persists in its pursuit, the reverberating consequences of these endeavors permeate vast distances. Beneath the quantitative data and statistical figures lay narratives of profound change, unwavering adaptability, and optimistic prospects. This statement serves as a poignant reminder that despite encountering challenging circumstances, education continues to serve as a guiding force, with young individuals assuming the crucial role of upholding its principles and values.

During the period of terrestrial implementation, ActionAid International Nepal has not only attained success but has also established a benchmark of exemplary methodologies in enhancing education and mobilizing the youth. This statement underscores the conviction that each child is entitled to access educational resources, develop their potential, and aspire to their aspirations. Moreover, it emphasizes the collective effort required to transform this belief into tangible outcomes.



## United for Education

ADRA Nepal has carried out a child sponsorship programme, United for Education, since 1998. It was started by ADRA Nepal staff who personally sponsored local children and has grown with sponsors now from Australia, Korea, and Japan to have about 230 each year. The sponsorship helps children from underprivileged homes attend school. Our dedicated education officer works with 18 public schools through long-established relationships with headteachers and committees. They undertake a needs assessment to identify children who would benefit from the extra support. The criteria include the economically poorest, children who have lost one or both parents, children with disabilities, indigenous children



or those from ethnic minorities, or children affected by natural disasters. The sponsorship covers the costs that the family would have to meet to send their child to school, essentially the uniform and school supplies for a year. These costs can be prohibitive or challenging for parents on the lowest incomes. Sometimes, the motivation for children to attend school is very low, and children are at risk of dropping

out to work or getting married before finishing secondary schooling. Some children have to walk for 2–3 hours to get to school, which can be challenging. Our Education Project Officer works with the schools and the children to encourage them to continue their education and finish school. We have had many success stories from children who have completed secondary school and gone on to further study or work.

### Results:

- ◆ Many children at risk of dropping out continue their education up to the secondary school level.
- ◆ An increase in educational quality and attainment
- ◆ Parents empower their children and encourage them to study.
- ◆ The Equal inclusion of female students contributes to increasing the number of girls in

education.

- ◆ Livelihood improvement or maintenance for the parents of the children

As well as the sponsorship, additional funds from private donors have contributed to improving the public schools through construction work, libraries, internet provision, and drinking water systems. Some funds have also helped children's families reconstruct their homes following the earthquake and provide goats for their livelihoods. This project allows people overseas who are passionate about education to directly influence a child's future.

## Ashwin's Engineering Dream

Ashwin Kharel is the youngest son of four brothers and sisters; he is from an underprivileged family living in rural Kavre. He was a dedicated and hardworking student at Shree Prakash Secondary School and started receiving sponsorship from ADRA Nepal in the 8th grade. The sponsorship helped his family meet their basic needs for uniforms and school supplies. He continued to be a good student and surpassed 94 students in his school, scoring 76.25% marks in SLC of 2069. Ashwin wanted to be an



engineer and had to go to Kathmandu to enrol in Madan Ashrit Memorial Technical School. He continued to receive sponsorship during this time and additional support from the college for his good grades. Ashwin topped the class with a mark of 85% on his diploma in civil engineering. Due to financial challenges, Ashwin needed to work, and seeing his talent, an organization called Prerana gave him a job. After working as a sub-engineer with them for 11 months, Ashwin was able to take a loan and enrol at Khwopa College of Engineering, Bhaktapur. He has now completed the eighth and final semester of his bachelor's in civil engineering.

"Today, I have reached this level because of the support and assistance of ADRA Nepal and my sponsor, and I would like to thank ADRA Nepal for this support. It has been a significant milestone in my life. I will always be grateful." Ashwin.

## Brothers Fighting for a Brighter Future

"I am Suresh Gautam from a remote place called Roshipari, Kavre. My primary - level education started at Shree Panchakanya Primary School in this village. Since our parents did not receive a formal education, they always encouraged us to study. They thought that 'our sons and daughters cannot get a good education by staying in this village,' so we moved to Namobuddha Municipality in Dapcha. It was difficult for us to study because my family's financial situation was weak, and my parents were farmers. I walked about 1 hour and 15 minutes from home to school.

Due to my financial situation, I almost decided to drop out of school, but then a surprising thing happened. I received sponsorship from ADRA Nepal. They provided me with a uniform and the necessary educational materials to continue my education. ADRA Nepal provided me with continuous sponsorship from classes 7 to 12, encouraging me to continue studying. This sponsorship has had the most significant impact on my life so far. I was always first in my class because I was interested in my studies, and I got 82.25% marks in the SLC exam. After SLC, I had to stay in a rental house in Kathmandu, and I studied grades eleven and twelve at Everest Florida High School, Shantinagar, Kathmandu. I got more than 90% of my scholarship from college because of my good grades. Again, I almost had to drop out due to the burden of the remaining 10% fees. Even in this situation, ADRA helped me again. It was one of the happiest moments of my life because, in our society, there were expenses that a boy like me could never afford. I also completed my grade twelve exam with excellent marks. After passing grade twelve, I was confused about what to do, but college teachers advised me to study medicine and become a doctor.' After that, I dreamed of becoming a doctor, but I would have to pay many expenses.



I applied to study MBBS many times but could not afford the private schools. Finally, I completed the exam of the Medical Education Commission in the year 2078 and got a full scholarship. Now, I am studying my 3rd year of MBBS at the College of Medical Sciences, Bharatpur, Chitwan. I am getting sponsorship from the Nepal Youth Foundation in coordination with ADRA Nepal. I would like to thank ADRA Nepal and the Nepal Youth Foundation for their support. I want to become a great neurosurgeon to serve people and give full support to people like me who want to study but cannot.

While continuing my studies, my brother Shushil Gautam also managed to take the examination by the Medical Education Commission last year, and currently he is studying at Nepalgunj Medical College. He is in his first year. We are two brothers born into a poor family and have struggled and studied with financial problems, but we are building a bright future."

## Youth as Advocates for Health: ADRA Nepal's School Health Champions

As adolescents and young people traverse the path to adulthood, they often encounter conflicting and elusive information about sexual and reproductive health, subjects still often shrouded in taboo. This critical phase in life is marked by vulnerability and curiosity, underscoring the importance of equipping them with accurate knowledge and skills to navigate various challenges. Recognising this need, ADRA Nepal has taken a significant stride in fostering positive change through the development of school health champions.

In line with this commitment, a 2-day "Reproductive Health Workshop for School Champions" was organised in collaboration with Bagmati Welfare Society Nepal. The training witnessed the participation of 22 school students alongside five teachers from diverse communities in Madhesh province.

Participants engaged in a reflective exercise that not only outlined the training's content and methodologies but also established a foundation for discussing sexual and reproductive health. This session, employing the innovative approach of introducing one's friend, aimed to foster self-awareness and initiate candid conversations about human anatomy and sexuality. The training provided students with a fundamental orientation to sexual and reproductive health, spotlighting women's health issues such as pelvic organ prolapse (POP) and cervical cancer (CC). Equipping the students, or champions, with facilitation skills and tools to conduct orientation sessions in their respective schools and communities was also a key component. The training sought to dispel myths and misinformation associated with sexual and reproductive health, ultimately shaping the champions' values and attitudes positively.

ADRA Nepal's initiative to empower youth as school health champions underscores its commitment to creating informed advocates for reproductive health. By providing these young individuals with the knowledge and tools they need, ADRA Nepal is fostering a generation of informed leaders who can drive meaningful change within their communities.

## Empowering Communities: Local Advocates Drive Hygiene Transformation

ADRA's initiative took a community-centric approach by enlisting local advocates within Basbariya Rural Municipality, Harion Municipality, and Haripur Municipality. These community advocates, deeply rooted in their respective locales, were engaged to educate women and families. The programme centred on vital aspects of hygiene, covering topics such as toilet utilisation, hand hygiene, menstrual health, water purification, and overall hygiene awareness. A noteworthy achievement of this endeavour is that it successfully reached 1718 households, fostering awareness and catalysing robust community engagement.



The peer-based education model has embraced a community-led methodology. Local champions were selected from within these regions to disseminate essential knowledge, thereby fostering community-driven change. This approach, which thrives on local insights and connections, showcases ADRA Nepal's commitment to grassroots empowerment for sustainable progress.





## Farmers' Group Achieves Certification and Improves Local Food

The Sana Kishan PGS Management Group, founded in partnership with BlinkNow/Kopila Valley Sewa Samaj, has achieved certification as a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) group this year. This group began in January 2018, in collaboration with our Sustainability Program, to provide training, support, and accountability for local farmers pursuing organic practices. Twenty-two women farmers are members.

The PGS system of business is a means for farmers to work together for quality and organic practices and maintain a stable income. Supporters and partners include Kopila Valley Sewa Samaj, CEAPRED, and the Ministry of Land Management,



Agriculture and Cooperatives, Karnali Province.

Small farmers across the world face a number of challenges due to climate change and market access, so farming incomes are inconsistent. The PGS system provides a local network of support with other farmers, training in organic farming practices to reduce pesticides in the land





and in foods, and local buyers who commit to long-term purchasing relationships with the farmer group.

In contrast to a global third-party certification, which can be cost prohibitive for small farmers to enter, a PGS system builds on local relationships and accountability. The Sana Kishan/Kopila Valley farmers work together to create guidelines for growing food with organic practices, create sustainable income for their families, and improve access to healthy foods in the region.

Local customers, like the Kopila Valley School lunch program and the Kopila Valley Children's Home, commit to purchasing from these farmers as much as possible, and to finding additional market

outlets for the farmers.

The organic practices the PGS group is working with have proven to create impactful results in soil composition and health. On the Kopila Valley school farm, using natural and organic practices has resulted in farm land tests with significant improvement in the NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium) and organic matter content of the soil.

We are incredibly grateful for our Sustainability Program team, local partners, and these dedicated farmers who are increasing the availability of organic and local foods, nutrition in our community, and food security for all of us.



## BEENA: Dreaming Big, Living Bigger

As a child, I loved spending time with my father at our family rice mill. He explained each step of the intricate process, from the cleaning and husking to the polishing and sorting of the rice, and I was amazed. My father involved me in the work, allowing me to participate in small tasks. I would carefully weigh the rice and help bag it, my tiny hands working diligently. He would patiently guide me, teaching me the importance of precision and dedication.

I loved helping my father, but the time came where a little girl's help wasn't enough to keep the family afloat financially. I had no idea my family was struggling, but I started noticing fewer rice bags that we made, they reduced day by day, and the day came when there were no rice bags.

When my family was at the weakest point of their lives, one worry got lifted when I was admitted to Kopila Valley School. Here I was learning, growing, embracing, and spreading my wings into the universe. I grew up in a community where girls were assumed to be delicate and fragile. In Kopila Valley, I became wild, I became agile, I became a girl with endless dreams and passions. I joined a girls soccer team, and I played all the games from Kabaddi, badminton, table tennis, and volleyball, to running marathons. I even became a performer, delivering my opinions in speech competitions, dancing my heart out with joy on Talent Tuesday. In the pursuit of discovering myself, I uncovered a lesson: if you're willing to be a learner in life, the possibilities are endless.

After graduating +2 in 2018, I decided to pursue Hotel Management. I love cooking, I've always found solace from cooking,



and I get a feeling of liberation when I feed people. With a friend's advice, I went to Kathmandu and began a 6-month diploma course in Hotel Management, and then I was assigned an internship in China for a year. I knew that I wanted to visit new places, so I did not back down from this opportunity, knowing that it was the beginning of my journey into adulthood. In China, I learned so much about life. As part of my internship, I had the incredible opportunity to immerse myself in the vibrant culture and hospitality industry of this dynamic country.

Learning never stopped for me. When I came back from China, I immediately enrolled in a Hotel Management Program in Global College in Kathmandu. I am in my third year with many insights about life, which is why I'm so grateful to be right here, right now. I want to travel to other countries, learn, see, explore, and take away newness. And maybe one day, I might just open my own restaurant, a FIVE STAR restaurant. It's good to dream big, you know!

“No matter where you are or what you are doing, you're part of a much bigger story.” – My favorite advice.



## “Where there is will, there is way”

Roshni Khatun, 11, a resident of Bhagawanpur Rural Municipality 2 in Siraha district dreams of becoming a teacher in future. However, as the eldest child in her family of seven, she has to take care of her younger siblings while also shouldering other responsibilities of the household.

Roshni's mother had to undergo an operation during the delivery of her youngest sibling. There was nobody else to look after her mother at the time since her father was abroad for foreign employment. Roshni had no choice other than to shift to her maternal uncle's home in Bhagwanpur RM of Siraha in Madhesh province from her home in Koshi province three years earlier. Roshni was studying in grade 4 when she was in Biratnagar of Koshi province. After shifting to Bhagwanpur RM, she had to discontinue her schooling due to the multiple responsibilities on her shoulder. However, she never stopped looking for opportunities to continue

her education.

She kept on requesting her parents to continue her studies but she had to face obstructions also because of the cultural beliefs of her community that didn't allow girls to go outside of their community to study. The Muslim community, to which Roshni belonged to, had a tradition of sending the girls to local Madarasa for studies. Roshni also joined local Madarasa, which only had classes for up to to 3<sup>rd</sup> standard. She studied there for five months.



Roshni had no other option in her community for further studies as none of the girls from community were going to school outside of Madarasa. Although she wanted to study immensely, she was forced to discontinue her education because of social barriers and unavailability of higher education at her Madarasa.

In the meantime, teachers from CARE Nepal's UDAAN



learning center visited her home and convinced her parents to send Roshni to UDAAN learning center. The teacher also shared with the parents the non-formal and accelerated learning modality of the UDAAN program. Her parents were convinced and enrolled Roshni to the UDAAN learning center.

Roshni shares that joining UDAAN center has been a turning point in her life. "I learned literacy and numeracy skills, including life skills like leadership skills, decision making skills, personal hygiene and sanitation among other things at UDAAN classes", Roshni shares. In addition, she learnt about child marriage and its implications as well as gender-based violence issues at UDAAN classes.



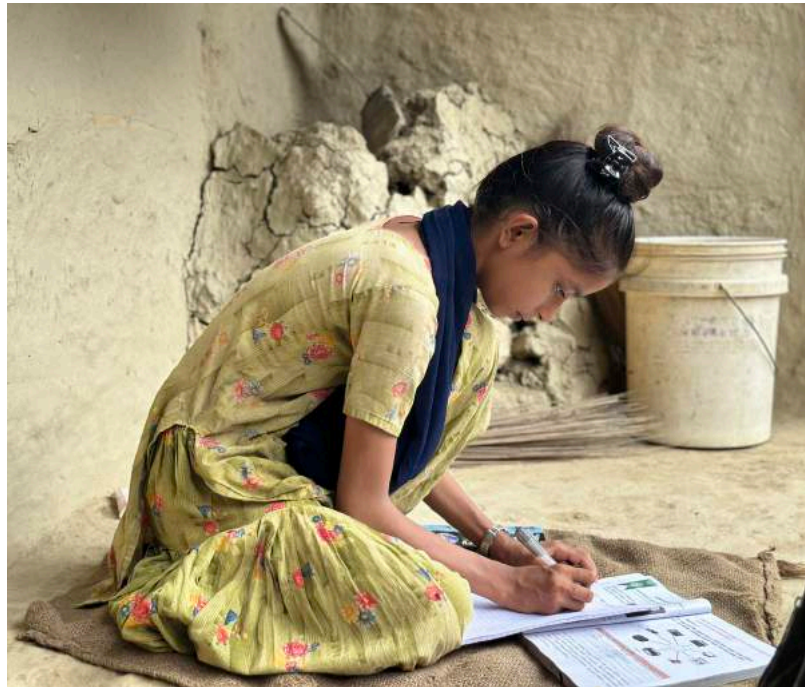
'The UDAAN classes have changed the perception of local community here and people are allowing their girls to go outside for education. This has made a huge impact in our Muslim community', Roshni's mother shares, adding 'I commit to support my daughter in her studies and will ensure that she gets to study as much as she desires.'



Roshni adds that UDAAN's approach of educating parents has changed the perspective towards girls' education in the community. UDAAN teachers invite parents to school as well to ensure their interaction with the students of formal school nearby, where UDAAN classes are run. The regular meeting and interaction with parents by UDAAN teacher have helped the parents realize the importance of education for their children.

After the completion of her UDAAN learning course, Roshni has been enrolled in grade 7 at the local Balasundari Secondary School. She cannot contain her excitement for being enrolled to formal schooling. “It takes me about 20 to 25 minutes to reach school and I go to the school on a bicycle with my friends. Teachers in school are very cooperative, they always motivate me to study well. If I find any difficulties at school, I can even drop down my grievances through a suggestion box,” she shares. She continues that she is very happy and satisfied with her studies and that she is grateful to CARE Nepal, UDAAN learning center and her teachers for motivating her to continue her education.

Roshni has also managed to inspire the enrollment of another adolescent out-of-school girl in her school. She urges other out-of-school girls to also continue



education through any means available.

Ram Bhagat Ram, a social teacher at her school shares that Roshni is improving in her studies and that she is more confident in expressing herself in school. Finally, Roshni hopes that her dream of becoming a teacher will come true someday if she can continue her education without any obstructions.



# Transforming Education at Shree Jangala Devi Basic School: A Tale of Enhancement and Growth

## Childaid Network supports quality education in Ramechhap and creates a best practice:

Nepal has made significant progress in improving access to early childhood education and development in recent years. However, there is a considerable disparity in terms of quality. Childaid Network is committed to improve the quality of education in public schools and has partnered with Seto Gurans National Child Development Services to carry out the project "Promoting



Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) and primary education to strengthen quality education in Gokulganga Rural Community, Ramechhap District, Nepal." The project started in 2021 and is supporting 38 schools with 2,530 ECD to grade three students in the rural community of Gokulganga. Through the active involvement of parents and local authorities, the project is placing a special focus on early childhood education in the region.



## The project adopted a comprehensive approach

All ECD to Grade 3 classrooms were equipped according to the minimum standards set by the Nepal government. This included providing P-foam and carpet, cushions,



child friendly tables and chairs as well as the corner library. Additionally, the playground of all 38 schools were equipped with play materials. The teachers received different training focused on Early Learning and Development and integrated curriculum.

They also were trained on parenting education and psycho-social support. Continuous technical support was provided to ensure a smooth and effective implementation of the project.

ECD classrooms received special focus and were provided different educational resources and age- appropriate books to stimulate the children's learning interests. Furthermore, an ecological framework was introduced within the ECD classroom. This framework aimed to incorporate diverse ecological concepts that encompass Nepal's Himalayan, Hilly, and Terai regions with the goal of providing the students with a holistic learning experience that incorporates various aspects of their environment and fosters a deeper understanding of ecological concepts.

The government is highly impressed by the project concept and is working closely with Seto Gurans to jointly improve the quality of education in the region.

Shree Jangala Devi Basic School presents an example for the success of the project : Commencing its journey in April 2007 (2064 B.S.), the school located in Kartike, Betali-4 of Gokulganga Rural Municipality in the Bagmati Province has been teaching to children from ECD to the fifth grade, employing five dedicated female teachers.

Like many other schools in the area, the classrooms in Shree Jangala Devi Basic





School lacked child friendly seating arrangements, the teachers applied old- fashioned teaching methods due to lack of knowledge and training and the cleanliness and hygiene of the children was less prioritized. Apart from this there was a lack of community and parental involvement in the planning and monitoring of the quality of education in the school.

Through the interventions implemented by the project, the school has transformed into a learning environment that is child-friendly, equipped with the necessary materials and equipment, and staffed by trained teachers who actively involve and engage parents in the educational process.

## Teachers are empowered and motivated

Ms. Devi Phuyal, ECD teacher of Jangala Devi Basic School has benefited from the interventions. Regular trainings and knowledge sharing have had a profound impact on her professional growth. She maintains now individual portfolios for each child to track their progress prioritizing

the socio-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development of the early childhood development (ECD) children.

She says that implementing the curriculum was initially challenging in the early stages of the class after receiving training, as parents often complained about the lack of home Assignments compared to previous classes. However, significant improvements are visible after parenting education sessions and since parents had the opportunity to observe the classroom setup and the new child-friendly teaching techniques.

## A whole school is mobilized

Ms. Devi Phuyal expresses her gratitude towards the School Management Committee and the Headteacher for their support. She acknowledges the active involvement of Grade 5 students in assisting her with the preparation of teaching materials who willingly help her by creating sketches and drawings that are needed for the classroom, even after school hours.

### Our guiding principles

	Cooperative and at eye level
	Focused
	Proven to be effective
	Professional
	Sustainable
	Transparent

## Childaid is committed to Nepal's children:

Our mission remains incomplete until every child in Nepal receives a solid foundation of quality education. At Childaid Network, we strive to empower children and youth, as well as all stakeholders, by promoting inclusive and equitable education that fosters lifelong learning opportunities for all. This commitment aligns with the principles outlined in Sustainable Development Goal No. 4

## A Network for Children

### In a nutshell – basic information on Childaid Network

Childaid Network is a medium-sized, independent, and unaffiliated children's aid organization from Germany. It provides needy children and youth with access to education, enables child rights, and offers vocational training and selected health services operating through a network of local partners in four countries in South Asia (Northeast India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar).

### How it all began

Childaid Network was founded in 2007 in Germany as a charitable foundation for children in need by the married couple Dr. Cladders and Dr. Kasper with their own capital. Childaid Network supports children and adolescents in South Asia regardless of gender, ethnic background, or religious beliefs to eliminate poverty and to create a perspective for them for a better future, focusing on education as a key to transformation.



## Bridging the Gap: Empowering Inclusive Education Through Assistive Technology

Belbari municipality of Morang district where the story of young Saloni unfolds—a story of succeed over adversity, made possible by the convergence of inclusive initiatives and innovative assistive technology.

Saloni, an eager eleven-year-old, thrived in her family of five. Her father toiled as a farmer, and her mother nurtured their household. Education and play were the cornerstones of her world. However, a subtle challenge began to cast a shadow on her path. Gradually, Saloni's ability



to see clearly declined, affecting her school performance and diminishing her enthusiasm for learning.

Saloni's life took a turn for the better when the Sundar Sansar program, led by Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh (NNJS)– Eastern Regional Eye Care program (EREC-P), collaborate with Dangihat Little Buddha School for an eye and ear screening camp. This collaboration, fueled by the spirit of inclusion, aimed to extend the benefits of education to all, regardless of challenges.

During the screening camp, Saloni underwent a comprehensive eye



examination. The results revealed a refractive error in both of her eyes. This simple yet crucial discovery marked a turning point in her academic journey. With the guidance of dedicated professionals like ophthalmic assistant Sonika Pandey, Saloni was prescribed spectacles tailored to her needs.

The process didn't end with the prescription. Here's where technology and compassion intersected to reshape Saloni's world. Within the confines of the vision van, equipped with modern technology and expertise, Saloni was presented with an array of spectacle frames to choose from. With precision, her measurements were taken, and the lenses were crafted to perfection.

Saloni's first moments with her new spectacles were nothing short of magical. The world around her transformed from a

blurry canvas to a vivid tapestry of details. She could now engage with her studies and surroundings with a newfound clarity that inspired hope for a brighter future.

Saloni's journey is more than an individual success; it's a testament to the power of assistive technology in education. The fusion of medical expertise, compassionate outreach, and state-of-the-art tools brought about a revolution in Saloni's

life. Her story echoes the larger narrative of inclusive education—a vision where no obstacle is insurmountable, and every child's potential is nurtured.

As Saloni embarks on her academic endeavors with renewed zeal, her story radiates optimism. It exemplifies the potential for change when organizations like NNJS EREC-P and CBM Global supported Sundar Sansar project collaborate to break down barriers and empower children with the tools they need to succeed. Saloni's clear vision now mirrors the clarity of purpose that these initiatives embody: to create a world where every child's potential can shine unhindered, where barriers are reduced with assistive technology becomes a fundamental of inclusivity.





## Transforming Education

### Tara Rai a dynamic leader in holistic child centric education

Tara Rai is an Early Childhood Development (ECD) teacher at Shree Surya Jyoti Basic School in Jyamire, Khotang. She has been teaching at the school since 2014. She practiced a traditional, old-school “parrot-feeding” learning method and threatened children with a stick to get them to do what she wanted.

In 2021, dZi Foundation provided ECD training to Tara and 39 other teachers in Aiselukharka and Kepilasgadi Rural Municipalities to equip them with the skills and knowledge to deliver holistic and child-centered instruction methods. The training contained sessions on lesson planning, small group facilitation, interactive communication, and improving teachers’ emotional intelligence. It also included subjects like language, arts, and math.

Through this training, Tara learned how to engage her students in their education by employing classroom décor, storytelling, interactive songs, physical education, and art (created with locally available materials). She discovered that integrating play as a teaching strategy can help children retain material more easily, connect with their intrinsic love of learning, and become less weary during the school day – resulting in a more joyful learning experience. It also helped to improve her emotional intelligence so she could support students struggling with education and develop positive responses to re-engage them through other activities.

According to Tara, this training was quite effective. She learned how to make effective lesson plans that engaged student’s interests. These days, she uses games, songs, and poetry to encourage her students to learn. Tara’s attitude and enthusiasm were commended by dZi at an event held in the presence of the Aiselukharka Rural Municipality Chairperson, and she was encouraged to continue contributing to positive change in education.





After the training, she has seen the impact on children. She has observed that students are more engaged in their education and are more creative when taught through songs and stories. There is more unity within the classroom, and students are happier. They arrive at the school before classes begin and wait for Tara to open the door. Furthermore, the children want to stay in her class after school, and she must ask them to go home and come the next morning.

One of Tara's students said, "Games are played every day. It is fun to sing and dance, and new stories are told. So, I love to come to school these days!"

Tara is a wonderful example of a dynamic educational leader. From relying on outdated teaching methods to adopting and benefitting from modern approaches, she strives to offer her students confidence by embracing their uniqueness and empowering them to learn at their own pace as dZi has envisioned.



## Parents Engagement: Leading to Community School's Development

"Parents never visit school!" This was a common saying among the teachers at community schools in our working areas. Even though the Government of Nepal, as per the Education Act 2028, changed public schools to community schools, community members did not demonstrate ownership and accountability at the school. Their involvement was seen as minimal.

To address this issue, dZi initiated the Parental Awareness Program. dZi collaborated with child clubs to plan and organize a drama to raise parental awareness of their roles and responsibilities in quality education. Teachers and ward representatives also supported this initiative. The drama script was written by the teachers, and it was performed by the students of the clubs. dZi provided technical support and assistance with resource management.

This event was conducted at Shree Simle Secondary School in Jaleswori, Khotang. The presence of the parents was huge in numbers. Before the drama, several entertaining activities such as a



sack race, and musical chairs were organized to make the event more engaging. The Principal of Shree Simle Secondary School said, “This is the first time this many parents have come to school. If only we can persuade parents to come to school, then they will feel responsible for taking ownership of the school and work together for its improvement.”

According to him, parents believed enrolling their children in a village community school would make no difference. Some parents sent their children to school only when there was no household work. One of the primary motives for sending their children to school was to send them abroad in the future. Many seminars, meetings, and discussions with the parents were held in the past, but they were all forgotten quickly.

However, after this event, parents have developed a feeling that children should be sent to school regularly. They are more interested in their child's education and want updates from the teacher, as opposed to the previous careless approach. They are energized after seeing their children's potential for conducting such brilliant events, making them feel more responsible for school and somewhat more involved than previously.

One of the parents who came as an audience to watch the drama shared that when she came to school, teachers always used to complain about her children. Hence, she avoided coming to school. But this kind of fun activity and drama in school is a very effective way of bringing us back. This demonstrates that parents were typically encouraged to get engaged in school activities in the future.

These days, parents are active in school. They attend parents' meetings, visit the school at the time of the results of their children, and do the task as prescribed by the school for its development. "We are grateful to dZi for organizing such an innovative idea to raise parental awareness and bring parents to the school. Such initiatives will be planned every year." says the principal.

Thus, parental awareness through drama has resulted in a significant shift in parents' attitudes regarding education, their children, and school.



## A Success Story of Overcoming Adversity and Achieving Education

In our society, there are many young girls whose dreams of education have been challenged by financial constraints and societal pressures, forcing them into early marriages and child labour. One such inspiring story is that of Manju Chaudhary, a 19-year-old residing in Gauriganga Municipality Ward No. 3, Jhil Juneli Mukta Kamaiya Basti. Manju comes from a family of four, including her father, brother, sister, and herself. Their only possession is a 5-katha piece of land provided by the Ailani government. Despite facing immense economic challenges, Manju is determined to pursue her education. Currently in the 12<sup>th</sup> standard, she hails from a family with limited means and has encountered numerous obstacles due to their financial struggles. Living in the house of a landlord, she used to spend her entire day working to earn enough to satisfy her hunger. Her grandmother, with tears in her eyes, recalls those difficult times.

Manju's parents taught her up to grade 7, but her education faced disruptions

when her mother left the family. With her mother's departure, Manju took on the responsibility of caring for her siblings. Her father's meager earnings were barely enough to cover household expenses and his alcohol consumption. Fortunately, Manju's life took a turn for the better when she received a scholarship from the Freed



Kamaya Women's Development Forum (FKWDF). This support enabled her to continue her education. She expressed her commitment to study diligently after receiving assistance.

The social mobiliser of FKWDF, Sharda Choudhary, took charge and arranged



for Manju's education at Malika High School. The project covered her tuition fee of Rs. 15,000. With renewed hope, Manju resumed her studies, and today, she is appearing for her class 12 exams. Reflecting on her journey, Manju shared, "Lack of funds prevented me from paying school fees, buying books, and covering campus expenses on time. I used to fear my teachers' questions about overdue fees, so I often stayed away from school. This irregular attendance weakened my studies. Thanks to the project's support, I can now afford stationery and clothes for the entire year. I can also engage with my fellow students more comfortably."

In conclusion, Manju extends her heartfelt

gratitude to FKWDF and FCA for their unwavering support. Their assistance has not only enabled her to overcome financial obstacles but has also paved the way for her to pursue her dreams of education. Manju's story serves as a testament to the transformative power of education and community support in the face of adversity. Through the project titled "Economic and Social Empowerment of Ex bonded labours (Freed Haliya and Freed Kamaiya) and other marginalised groups" supported by FCA, the children from marginalised families received scholarship and education material as a support for had better access in education.



## Kathmandu Metropolitan City revived the program 'BaBa' in Schools

Air pollution is a growing concern in Nepal, exacerbated by the country's rapid industrialization and urbanization. The effects of this pollution extend beyond environmental degradation, impacting public health, especially among vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. With increased emissions from transportation, industry, and energy production, the air quality in Nepal, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley, has deteriorated significantly. Recognizing the need to address this critical issue, the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) took an important step back in the late 1990s by introducing the 'BaBa' program in schools. 'BaBa,' short for *'Balbalika ra Batawaran,'* was designed to instill environmentally friendly behaviors among schoolchildren. However, the program faced discontinuity over time due to various challenges, including political, social, financial, and a lack of prioritization.

In recent years, there has been renewed commitment to tackle air pollution and its adverse effects. Through USAID Clean Air project, FHI 360 has been actively involved in supporting governments to implement the Kathmandu Valley Air

Quality Management Plan. FHI 360 has been working alongside schools and municipalities in the valley for the past two years. Through a series of policy discussions and capacity-building events involving education stakeholders in KMC, and Interactive Environment Education (IEE) workshops for public school children, significant strides have been made. These workshops offered hands-on experiences,



enabling children to comprehend various solutions to environmental pollution. Besides educating students about the harmful effects of pollution, these workshops motivated them to take proactive measures for environmental conservation.

In addition to these efforts, FHI 360 initiated the "Clean Air Through Art" campaign in collaboration with KMC. This initiative sought to raise awareness among schoolchildren about air pollution through art. Open-Air Art Competitions were organized on multiple occasions, with hundreds of students participating. The initiative encouraged young



participants to creatively explore the issue of air pollution and its impact on human health, fostering innovative solutions to environmental problems. Simultaneously, FHI 360 facilitated the formation of the Eco Focal Teachers Network in KMC. This network aims to promote Clean Air programs within schools by focusing on green school policies, interactive teaching methods, and co-curricular activities. The goal is to empower eco-clubs and nurture environmental consciousness among students.

These collective efforts were showcased during the Eco Mela event organized by KMC with technical support from FHI 360 on World Environment Day in 2023. The event drew the participation of over 500 students and teachers and featured exhibitions, art competitions, screenings, an eco-market, games, and student-created models. On this occasion, Deputy Mayor Ms. Sunita Dangol announced KMC's commitment to revive the '*Balbalika ra Batawaran*' (Children and Environment) program to promote sustainable practices and encourage environmentally friendly behavior. To further support these initiatives, FHI 360, in collaboration with KMC, has been actively establishing and strengthening Eco clubs in public schools throughout the city.

Additionally, KMC, with technical support from FHI 360, is conducting a comprehensive assessment of public schools. This assessment evaluates various aspects, including infrastructure, water supply, sanitation facilities, air quality, and the overall school environment, including green spaces and proximity to roads. Based on the assessment findings, KMC has pledged to invest in public schools to ensure that children have access to clean and green learning environments. This commitment reflects a broader effort to create a sustainable future for Nepal, one where both the environment and the health of its citizens are safeguarded.



## Air pollution related subject matter becomes part of government teachers' guides.

Air pollution is a global environmental issue that has far-reaching implications for public health and the environment. To combat this problem and pave the way for a sustainable future, it's crucial to educate the next generation about the causes, consequences, and solutions related to air pollution. This is where the concept of educating school children about air pollution becomes vital.

In Nepal, the education system primarily focuses on imparting knowledge about environmental issues but falls short in developing the skills, values, and perspectives needed to address these challenges effectively, including air pollution. An assessment by FHI 360/USAID Clean Air revealed significant gaps in the curriculum, particularly in terms of scientific content related to air quality maintenance. Furthermore, topics related to air pollution are inadequately covered in higher-grade levels, and the slow pace of curriculum updates posed challenges for intervention efforts. One prevailing challenge was the perception that air pollution is a highly technical issue, often overshadowed by broader environmental concerns. Overcoming this perception and highlighting the significance of air pollution

in education presented a substantial hurdle.

In response to these challenges, FHI 360 collaborated with the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) to bridge the gaps and integrate clean air programs into Teacher Guides—a critical educational



resource. This collaborative effort involved an in-depth study of school curricula to identify areas where air pollution topics could be integrated, along with alternative methods for creating effective learning tools. The CDC, with technical support from FHI 360, conducted roundtable discussions with education stakeholders to identify ways to address these gaps, with a focus on improving educational outcomes. This partnership resulted in a week-long co-design workshop aimed at enhancing



Teacher's Guides by incorporating practical, project-based activities aligned with the curriculum framework.

The outcome of this endeavor was the integration of clean air-related awareness and knowledge into Teacher's Guides for science subjects in Grades 4, 6, 7, and 9, as well as math subjects in Grades 4, 7,

and 9. This integration not only aligned the guides with the new curriculum but also elevated their importance as essential reference materials and learning tools for teachers. By infusing clean air awareness and knowledge into these critical learning resources, FHI 360 significantly contributes to the improvement of air quality through enhanced education. This integration ensures that clean air awareness and knowledge will permeate Nepal's education system, further advancing efforts to enhance air quality. The collaboration with the CDC underscores a shared commitment to enrich educational outcomes and promote sustainable practices for clean air, ultimately forging a path towards a cleaner and healthier environment.



## Best Practices in Community Schools

### From Seed to Plate

To sustain day meal program in the school, the school built a thriving school nutrition garden. A barren plot of land was turned into a flourishing school nutrition garden within the school premises. Students of all ages were involved in cultivation process and made their hands dirty. As the garden grew, it began to provide an abundance of organic vegetables. Students excitedly joined in the cultivation process while learning about organic agricultural practices and the advantages of growing one's own food. The vegetables were incorporated into the meals served at the school, enriching the diet of students with wholesome, fresh veggies.



*School name: Shree panchakanya primary school*

*Location: Melamchi, Sindhupalchowk*

## Nurturing Financial Responsibility

Most of the parents used to give money to their kids when they went to school, and this money was spent to buy unhealthy packaged food. To stop these activities, a different but interesting initiative was observed in the school. Students were taught the value of money by the teachers. After which, a friendly competition was seen among friends to save more money instead of wasting it on junk food, encouraging even the youngest members of the school to value savings. This strategy not only decreases junk food consumption in children but also sets a trend of saving money given to them by their parents or relatives. This savings will be given to them when they are going for higher education at another school, where it can help their parents with various needs such as school supplies and personal essentials. This mental shift demonstrated the potential of empowering students to make mindful choices that extended beyond nutritional preferences.

**School Name : Dhanakali primary school**

**Location: Dhulikhel, Kavre**

## The Power of Community Engagement

A mothers' group became the main driving force behind eradicating junk food from students' lives. The mothers' group advocated the implementation of "junk food avoidance" rules within the school grounds. This was really a best practice in community schools to stop packed food in schools because if school administration forcefully implements the junk food eradication policies, then there may be a clash of interests between mothers and school administration. This bottom-up approach not only reinforced healthy habits but also strengthened relationships within the community.

**-This best practice seen in most of the partner school**

## Teachers as Beacons of Wellness

As school-aged students usually learn from seniors, the teachers took on the responsibility of being role models for the students. They practiced healthy eating habits and even brought nutritious meals as tiffin. It had a significant impact when students observed their beloved teachers applying the principles they had been taught, such as avoiding packaged food and increasing healthy eating habits.

**School Name : Kalika Higher secondary school**

**Location: Dhulikhel, Kavre**

## Conclusion

The Health Education Program has been successfully implemented in community schools in Sindhupalchowk, Dhading, Dolakha, and Kavre districts in 2017. The program has effectively boosted awareness about health and nutrition through innovative methods such as integrating health education into medical services and introducing school gardening concept. German Nepalese Help Association has increased its impact by addressing the issue of junk food consumption in school children. This effort exemplifies the positive outcomes that may be achieved through well-designed health education interventions.

## Teacher's Learning Circle (TLC) As the Best Practice of WISE Project

### Concept

The Teacher's Learning Circle is a Teacher's Cluster Workshop of WISE Project schools for their professional growth. This enriching experience brings together teachers either within the same school or across a network of WISE schools in a particular region to provide a platform for teachers to foster a collaborative learning environment, where they can share best practices, develop new skills, and build a supportive network within their



professional community. For the purpose, teachers come together with problems and challenges and tackle common challenges, collaboratively crafts the practicable solutions. The teachers' learning circle conducts the workshop within the cluster area at least 4 times a year which is also guided by the structural diagram given in the next page. The circle used to call the workshop in every 2 to 3 months like the rhythmic cycle choosing the time of harmonic intervals. Thus, the Teacher's Learning Circle is assumed as a symphony of ideas, a convergence of expertise, and a platform where educational horizons expand through shared exploration.

### Process and Practice of the Workshop

- 1. Role of Head Teacher as Workshop Manager:** The Head Teacher of the host school takes charge of the workshop's overall management. This involves coordinating



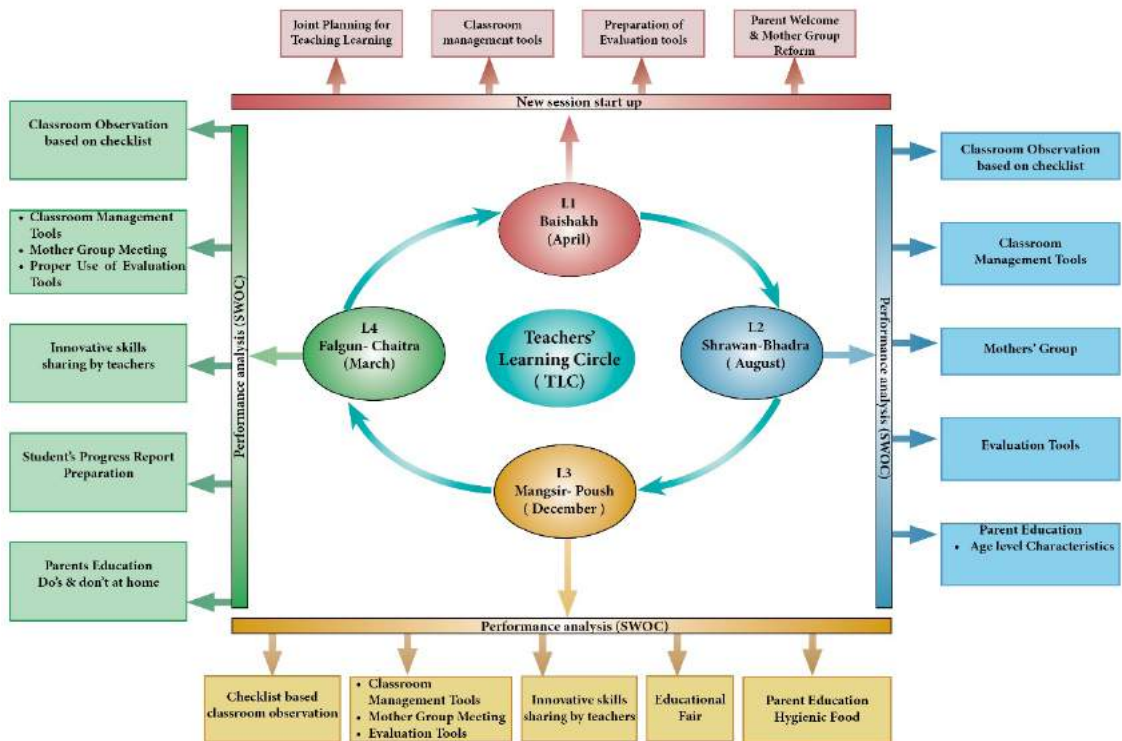
various aspects such as communication with fellow teachers, sending out invitations to participants, and ensuring that all required materials are available for the Learning Circles. Their role is pivotal in ensuring a smooth and organized workshop.

2. **Facilitator from Host School:** A Trained teacher from the host school assumes the role of the workshop's facilitator. This individual is responsible for implementing the workshop sessions as per the predetermined agenda and the schedule. His/her expertise and familiarity with the WISE program enables them to effectively guide participants through the various learning activities.
3. **Experienced Facilitator from Cluster Area:** Analyzing the collection of problems collected during the teaching learning, if the problem is beyond the expertise of the facilitator of the host school, an experienced facilitator is selected from WISE Roster Teachers within the cluster area. This facilitator plays a vital role in guiding participants through workshop activities, discussion and provide the solution for the particular agenda or challenge.
4. **Engagement of the Social Mobilizer:** The Social Mobilizer attends the workshop sessions as an observer. Their presence is crucial for maintaining consistency and providing follow-up support. Beyond observation, the Social Mobilizer actively engages with participants, offering positive feedback and addressing any learning challenges that may arise.
5. **Documentation and Communication:** The Head Teacher/ teacher of the host school diligently records meeting minutes, ensuring that the insights, discussions, and decisions are accurately documented. These minutes are then shared with relevant offices and within the learning circle, facilitating transparent communication and accountability. At the end of the workshop, the head teacher or the teacher hands over the minute book to the representative of the host school of the next workshop. The venue and the host school for the next workshop is determined within the workshop.
6. **Support from PNGOs and GNHA:** The Cluster Workshop's execution is overseen by PNGO, who play a central role in organizing and ensuring the workshop's success. Additionally, the education team at GNHA contributes expertise and updated educational information to the workshops, enhancing the content's relevance as per need.

By implementing this structured process and practice, the workshop ensures that each role is clearly defined, resources are effectively utilized, and participants benefit from a collaborative, supportive, and informative learning experience.

## The impact and the continuity of the teachers' Learning Circle (TLC)

The collaborative approach of the TLC significantly fosters a culture of continuous improvement and also enriches the learning landscape of the teachers. It cultivates a sense of unity among teachers within the same school or cluster. Through shared experiences, discussions, and collaborative activities, teachers establish stronger bonds, creating a vibrant professional community that thrives on collective growth. The impact of the Teacher's Learning Circle is a transformative journey. Teachers evolve as collaborative, skilled, and empowered professionals, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes and a nurturing, student-centered learning environment. This practice can be seen within the WISE Project schools of GNHA working districts. The cluster schools are guided by the following structural diagram for the continuity of the workshops and its contents.



### Structural Diagram of Teachers' Learning Circle



# Integrated Approach: A Necessity to Ensure Disabled Children's Access to Education

## Project Introduction

The Inclusive Education Project to enhance access to learning for Children with Disability (CwD) was implemented by Good Neighbors International (GNI) Nepal in Mithila Bihar Municipality and Mukhiyapatti Musaharmiya Rural Municipality of Dhanusa District and Bhangaha Municipality of Mohattari District from January 2022 to March 2023. The project's main objective was to support CwDs to have access to formal education by increasing their access to aids and creating disabled-friendly learning environments at schools by enhancing institutional and individual capacity.

"We shared the budget of NRs. 400,000 to manage assistive devices for CwDs. With the help of the GNI Nepal project, we have drafted a policy document to ensure the rights of People with Disabilities. The project has sensitized us about the need for CwDs. We will continue prioritizing them in our programs."

*– An elected member of Mithila Bihari Municipality shared.*

## The methodology/approach that helped the project to succeed

Sensing that providing only assistive devices to the CwDs is not sufficient to ensure their access to education, the project adopted an integrated approach. The project focuses on equipping the selected schools with the necessary infrastructure and skills, making parents and communities sensitive towards CwDs and sensitizing local governments to be responsible for ensuring CwDs' rights. For smooth implementation of the project, strong coordination and collaboration with schools, the local



*Assistive Devices Fitment Camp and Distribution Program*

community, the local governments, and National Disabled Fund (NDF) was done from the designing stage.

- With the help of NDF, a technical assessment was conducted, which identified 81 children with the need for assistive devices.
- To ensure the continuity of CwD-focused programs, a partnership with the local governments was made.



*Class teacher orienting students on proper behavior towards CwDs*

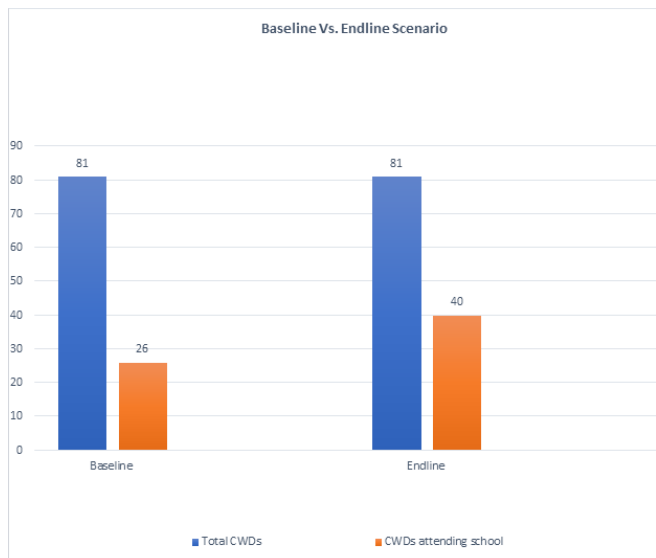
Along with support for disabled-friendly structures, 89 teachers of 45 schools also received conceptual clarity on inclusive education, pertinent policies, values, norms, and teaching learning practices. Radio jingles were aired continuously on the local FM radio to sensitize the community about the rights and needs of the CwDs.

- 59 parents of CwD were provided with psycho-social counseling on CwD needs related to security/protection, care and love, education, nutrition, assistive devices, and government provisions for CwDs. Meanwhile, 55 CwDs were also provided psycho-social counseling to boost their morale.
- In the participation of 2077 students of six schools, learning-sharing meetings were conducted to sensitize peers of CwDs about the needs of CwDs.

## Remarkable Success

- Out of six schools, one school has built a new disabled-friendly toilet, another school converted an existing toilet into a disabled-friendly, and four schools constructed disabled-friendly drinking water supplies and hand-washing stations. All six schools have ramps to classrooms and made playgrounds accessible to CwDs.

57 children with disabilities received assistive devices, and 121 received educational and learning materials. The baseline study conducted before the project implementation showed that only 32% of children





*A CwD playing with his friends with the support of his artificial leg.*



*A CwD writing with the support of his artificial hand.*

with disabilities attended school regularly. In contrast, the end-line study showed that 49% of CwDs attend school regularly.

- Three local governments, including Mithila Bihar Municipality, Mukhiyapatti Musaharniya Rural Municipality, and Bhangaha Municipality, drafted policies for people with disabilities.

Mohamad Ali Haider Khan, a CwD of Bhangaha Municipality, shares, “I used to feel lonely and discarded most of the time before having an assistive device (artificial leg). Now, I can play with my friends and go to the school with its support”.

## Conclusion

Involving exclusively with CwDs is not adequate, instead, it is equally important to involve all concerned actors to create a favorable environment for CwDs to flourish in all areas, including education.



## Good Practice: Mobilization of Itinerant Teachers

### Project Background

Handicap International is committed to addressing the challenges encountered by the most vulnerable children, particularly those with disabilities in Nepal through empowering target individuals including and their families, and OPDs through intensive capacity-building support and more targeted support, personalized support based on individual needs. This holistic initiative operates across schools, homes, and communities, extending its reach to strengthen municipal systems.

deeply



to provide essential technical support and guidance, benefiting children with disabilities, along with their teachers,

### Mobilization of Itinerant Teachers

Itinerant Teachers, a cornerstone of the successful community mobilization model within HI's inclusive education projects, play a pivotal role in fostering inclusive education. These educators are equipped with specialized training, enabling them to go across households, communities, and targeted schools. Their mission is

caregivers, and parents. By acting as a bridge between school and home, especially for children with disabilities, Itinerant Teachers fill critical gaps that arise due to the absence of resource classes and necessary provisions within the project's working municipality.

Their proactive involvement results in specialized assistance for children with additional needs or special education requirements. They collaboratively engage

with school personnel, administrators, parents, community members, and local government authorities to establish an inclusive learning environment. Beyond this, they ensure that children have access to vital materials, assistive devices, and supportive services tailored to their diverse needs. Itinerant Teachers also champion the rights and inclusion of children with disabilities within schools and liaise with local government services for social protection. Their collaborative efforts extend to professionals like doctors, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists, ensuring a holistic support system for children's comprehensive needs. Through home and school visits, data collection, assessments, and progress monitoring, these educators play a crucial role in shaping children's educational journey.

The mobilization of Itinerant Teachers within various inclusive education projects in HI serves a multi-faceted purpose, addressing the educational requirements of diverse learners. By ensuring inclusive education, these teachers provide equal access to quality learning for children with disabilities or special needs. Furthermore, they offer individualized support, developing tailored education plans and fostering students' overall development. Collaborating closely with school educators, they enhance capacity, promote inclusive practices, and cultivate collaborative partnerships. Beyond education, these teachers become advocates, eliminating barriers and stigma while empowering students, families, and communities. Their role extends to support in monitoring and evaluation, contributing

to the continuous improvement of educational approaches.

## Home-Based Education Support (HBES) by mobilizing Itinerant Teachers (IT)

Home-Based Education Support (HBES) is one of the key interventions of HI's IE projects. Children with functional



limitations and disabilities are supported by IT by providing HBES. HBES is focus on those children who never been to school or can't go to mainstream or special school or resource class due their disabilities. Based on Individualized Education Plan (IEP), HBES run by ITs which they prepared jointly with parents. IT are also supporting teachers of mainstream school or special schools to prepare IEP of the children with functional limitation. IT are applying Universal Design Learning's (UDL) principles in their facilitation. Based

on prepared IEP, IT focus on low-cost ICT tool as well as locally available Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) which they prepared with parents.

Itinerant Teachers creates learning environment to the children with



disabilities/ functional limitation at in school and out of school. HBES is addressing the rights of education of children with disabilities and playing a significant role in imparting education to children with disabilities or those who are unable to go to school and well as who are struggling to learn in school. The Itinerant Teachers are bridging between children, their parents/homes, and schools. In other words, Itinerant Teachers are purely technical person who visit school regularly and mentoring support to teacher for IEP preparation and apply UDL practices in the classroom and supporting parents at home.

## Impact

The mobilization of Itinerant Teachers has brought forth remarkable outcomes

across various aspects of children's lives. These outcomes highlight the positive impact of Itinerant Teachers on several fronts. Firstly, their intervention has resulted in substantial progress in learning achievements among children, as evidenced by tangible improvements. Stories showcasing enhanced mobility and increased independence highlight the significant role played by Itinerant Teachers in improving the overall quality of life for these children. Moreover, the efforts of Itinerant Teachers have prompted a profound shift in parental attitudes and behaviors through sensitization initiatives.

This transformation has led to greater understanding and proactive support for children with disabilities, fostering a nurturing environment conducive to both learning and personal growth.

Furthermore, HBES is creating a learning environment at home and in school by mobilizing IT. IT are using UDL principles to learn the child who have learning difficulties. They also play a vital role in connecting the parents with different services that provided by the government and other institutions. Parents are very happy with the support of IT as they are directly working with parents and teachers by preparing an Individual Education Plan (IEP).





# A case Study of Nalgad Municipality, Jajarkot HGSF Programme

## BACKGROUND

Home Grown School Feeding Approach has been effectively running at Nalgad Municipality of Jajarkot district to support local governments and schools in making the most effective use of funding from the government's cash-based school meals program to provide nutritious meals that are locally produced. Since the last 10 months of the approach began at the municipality, it initially appeared difficult to run the approach; however, as locally available crops gradually began to make their way into the schools' kitchens; cooperatives, the local government, parents, and children have all expressed satisfaction with the approach.

## POSITIVE STEPS

Monthly linkage and coordination meetings were held to resolve concerns and difficulties that arose during the implementation of the HGSF program in the municipality of Nalgad. On May 4, 2023, local government representatives, the administrative head, the education section department head, the agriculture section department head, school representatives from 52 schools, and cooperative representatives attended a linkage meeting in the hall of Nalgad municipality. The linkage meeting discussion agenda was how to improve the day-meal system at schools at all levels. A school should have its own building and infrastructure;

## WORDS FROM THE LG LEVEL

Man Bahadur Giri, the Head of the Administration Unit, Nalgad Municipality, Jajarkot shared the municipality's new mandate on selecting the top 'model schools' among the 68 schools beginning from the upcoming academic year. He shared that the LG has introduced this step to encourage quality education in the Nalgad area. Furthermore, he stated that the top school will be chosen based on one of the indicators of the school's Home-Grown School Feeding Approach. Mr. Giri is optimistic that this step will further encourage the schools to embody the HGSF modality in future as well.





there should be a child-friendly environment; the school should have a computer lab and library; and so on to meet the criteria of being a complete school. Along with this indicator, the home-grown school feeding approach will be set as an indicator for the upcoming educational year 2080–81 to provide effective school day meals, prepared from locally available food crops by local farmers, for school evaluation. From now on, when evaluating schools in Nalgad municipality, the education department will give top priority to those schools in terms of providing school development grants and other funds to schools that provide daily meals prepared from locally available food, as well as taking strict action against schools not using locally available crops in a mid-day meal



## Dreams Fulfilled: Rita and Radha's Inspiring Path to Success Through Education and Empowerment

### Against All Odds: Radha Ram's Journey to Education and Empowerment

**“I had dreams of becoming a teacher and marrying an educated person, but my parents wanted me to get married before they passed away.”**

Radha Ram, a 23-year-old woman living in Devtal Rural Municipality in Bara, originally from the marginalized Dalit community in the Terai region of Nepal, got married at the tender age of 13 and now has four children ranging in age from 2.5 to 8 years. She was in grade 5 when she was forced into marriage against her will. After her marriage, she lived with her parents for two years and managed to complete grade 7. Those two years were like a lifeline of education for her, a brief respite from the responsibilities of married life at very young age. Despite being a mother of four young children, Radha had always harbored an unwavering desire to pursue her education and attend school.

When Radha heard about the Community Learning Center (CLC) for drop-out girls, her decision to enroll was a turning point in her life. In 2019, Radha joined a Community Learning Center (CLC) run by Aarambha project and supported by UKaid's Girls Education Challenge program. The Aarambha project is led by People in Need in partnership with Aasaman Nepal and SODCC. This was a turning point



for her, as she was able to continue her passion for reading and learning. Her husband initially opposed her decision to join the CLC as their economic status was poor and he thought that she could better support the family by staying at home. However, despite the initial opposition, Radha persisted and continued to attend the CLC, where she learned about social issues, literacy, and numeracy. She also managed to convince her husband and her in-laws to support her to continue her formal education at a regular school.

Radha's journey was punctuated with sacrifices and hurdles. As a young mother, she would attend classes with her children in tow, sometimes juggling a baby while taking notes. But her determination never wavered. She believed that education was her ticket to independence and a brighter future for her children. But, the CLC became Radha's sanctuary, a place where she could pursue her education while also building a network of like-minded women who had faced similar challenges. She described how the teachers at the center were not just educators but mentors and guides who motivated her to persevere.



**Radha shared,** *"After completing the CLC program, all the other married girls went for vocational training, but my only objective was to continue my formal education, which I had left behind four years ago. So, despite being a daughter-in-law, I was the only one who enrolled in a formal school. I joined grade 9 and continued my studies. I had my youngest son, so I couldn't attend regular daytime school, but I received home tuition supported by the project, which provided a tutor for my studies. During my preparation for the Secondary Education Examination (SEE), the project again coordinated with the school and arranged free coaching classes for me, along with necessary study materials and reference books."*

With hard work and determination, Radha successfully passed the SEE in 2022. However, her journey has not been without challenges. Managing household chores and taking care of four young children while studying has been extremely difficult. She studies at night after completing all her chores and putting her children to sleep, and during the day, she studies for two to three hours while her children are at school.

"When asked if she plans to have more children, **Radha smiled and says,** *"No, not any more. My eyes are open now, and if I had known and realized the consequences of early marriage before, I would have definitely limited my children to two. Influenced by friends and neighbors, I gave birth to four children without much thought. Even after joining the CLC, I became pregnant with my fourth child, and it took me time to understand and realize all the consequences. Due to*

*my early marriage and having four children before the age of 23, my health has been affected. I am physically weak, lean, and thin, and my children's growth has been slow too. But now I am aware, so I try my best to provide a nurturing family environment for my children to pursue a good education and live a better life."*

Radha's determination and hard work has not gone unnoticed by her family and the community. She has been able to register her children's birth certificates and her own citizenship, despite initial resistance from her family due to fear of property division. To her surprise, her mother-in-law was proud of her achievements and expressed her gratitude, **stating**, *"There is no other daughters-in-law in our community who goes to school. I am proud that my daughter-in-law is studying. She helps our neighbors with important documents and even assists her husband with mobile phones and other tasks he doesn't understand."*

Over time, Radha's health has improved, and her children have really started thriving in the nurturing family environment that she provides. Her husband, who initially had doubts about her education and documents registration efforts, soon began to see the positive impact that her choices were having on their lives. He now supports Radha wholeheartedly.

Today, Radha continues to study diligently and aims to become a Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) in her own village after she completes Grade 12. She has been keeping herself updated about vacancies in the local government (palika) and the work that an FCHV does. She is grateful to the Aarambha Project for the support she has received including study materials, follow-up visits, and mentoring, even after she completed the CLC program. The support has fueled her motivation and helped her pursue her passion. She is determined to continue her education, become an FCHV, and make a meaningful contribution to her community. With the support of her family, she is confident that she can create a better future for herself and for her children.

Radha's story continues to be spread throughout the village, and she has become a role model for other young women who face similar challenges. She has been approached by several girls who have sought her guidance on things like education, marriage, and citizenship registration. Radha is more than happy to share her knowledge and experience and has become a mentor for these girls, encouraging them to pursue their dreams and break free from social norms.

Radha's story is a testament to her resilience, determination, and courage in the face of societal norms and challenges. Her voice shines through as she continues to pursue her dreams, overcome obstacles, and create a brighter future for herself and for her family. Her story also highlights the importance of education, empowerment, and how awareness can bring positive changes both to individuals and to entire communities.

**Author: Bindu Gurung, MEAL Coordinator, Aasaman Nepal**

Link to the photos: <https://peopleinneed.canto.global/b/RIEKI>



## Rita's Entrepreneurial Journey: Turning Dreams into Reality

On a busy street in Rautahat, Nepal, there is a cosmetics shop owned by 22-year-old young woman named Rita Mandal. Rita is busy dealing with her customers; with one hand, she is taking out packages, and with the other, she demonstrates the products. Rita sells beauty products, cosmetics, and provides beauty salon services in her shop. Rita has run this business for six months now. Every day she leaves her home with her husband to open the shop at 9 am. It takes around 10 minutes by bike to reach the shop, where they part as he continues to his furniture store.

The cosmetics store is the first time Rita has run a business. As a child, Rita's family finances were never great, and the family lived on the daily wages earned by her father and brother. Rita dropped out of school because her parents couldn't support her further studies. Rita explains, *"My parents supported me until class six. Though I was very much interested in studying, they could not afford to continue my studies"*. After dropping out of school, she was married off at 12 years of age.

Rita says, *"I was young, and after marriage, I came to a family of 12. I didn't know many things, but the fear of my in-laws made*

*me learn everything quickly, though they never did or said anything to me. Then, slowly I started to forget whatever I learnt at school."* In southern Nepal, most girls are married as minors. As a result, they are never provided with opportunities and access to education, and they acquire



zero bargaining power in the household. Additionally, they often have little or no literacy and numeracy skills and lack information about their rights, equality, sexuality, contraception, and life skills.

People in Need initiated the five-year Project Aarambha - Leave No Girl Behind, to address these shortcomings. This project is supported by the UK Aid funded Girls' Education Challenge (GEC), with local partners Aasaman Nepal and Social Organization District Coordination Committee (SODCC). This project began

in 2018. It aims to improve the prospects of adolescent girls aged between 10-19 years who did not finish primary schooling. The project teaches literacy, numeracy and life skills, and community mobilization for social transformation in Bara and Rautahat districts.

## Interest to continue her education

When in 2019, Rita heard about the education program in her village, she showed interest to study with her husband and requested permission from her mother-in-law. Rita shares, *"I told my mother-in-law about the program and showed my interest in enrolling. At first, my mother-in-law was against the idea, but I managed to persuade her and I enrolled in the education program."*

Besides literacy and numeracy sessions, Rita learned about basic life skills, including child rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, personal safety, social skills, basic financial management & business planning and other available services in the community, especially during times of crisis like disasters or COVID-19 pandemic. *"When I spent nine months in the Community Learning Center (CLC), I realized that child/early marriage should not be done. If I had known it earlier, I would not have married. In the future, I will not let it happen to my children, and I won't allow others to do the same".*

Since its inception, the Aarambha project has supported 9497 adolescent girls, just like Rita, in Bara and Rautahat districts. Most of these girls are either married or at heightened risk of early marriage, with no

history of access to education.

## Rita's journey toward entrepreneurship

Because of Rita's age & family responsibilities, she was not keen to return to school. Therefore, after completing the informal education, she chose to receive a month-long beautician training course as part of the project's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program. Rita was taught how to do facials, manicures, pedicures, hair cutting, oil massages, henna painting/tattooing, and waxing. Rita received NPR 15,000/- from the project to support her start-up. In addition, her husband took some loans to support her business. *"By selling the products and providing beauty services, I earn NPR. 4000 to 5000 on a daily basis, and make a profit of NPR. 500 to 700 per day. During the Chhath festival this year, I made NPR 50,000/- in 9 days. The shops make a decent profit during festivals and weddings".*

Besides selling cosmetics and running the parlour alone, she also goes to India to buy supplies for her store. Rita keeps detailed accounts of her expenses and has already paid half of the loan taken to start the business. *"Thanks to the project, I learned about calculations and accounting. I can keep track of expenses as well as profits. With the profit, I have added more products to the store. I am proud to be an entrepreneur now."*

Usually, in Terai- the southern plains of Nepal, girls and young women are not allowed to go out of their house or markets and are bound to do household chores. Girls from an early age must take care of

their younger siblings, help their mothers in the kitchen, take cattle for grazing, and fetch water. Rita's achievement has made a positive statement in her community that girls provided with education and skill can be independent and successful. Rita's engagement in the Aarambha project not only provided her with basic education, practical skills, and livelihood support through micro-entrepreneurship opportunities. The project also opened doors to the future possibilities where Rita can independently run her own business and make her own life decisions. Besides beautician training, the girls we support are training in tailoring, hand embroidery, animal husbandry, bangle production, incense production, bead necklace making, soap/detergent powder production, and start and improve your business opportunity (SIYB). So far, **2402** girls have completed TVET training and started their own business.

The success of Rita and the other girls enrolled in Aarambha project has been made possible by the Girls' Education Challenge which is funded by UK Aid from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office. GEC is the world's



largest fund dedicated to girls' education. The fund supports over a million marginalized girls in the poorest countries, including girls with disabilities or who are at risk of being left behind through a lack of quality education and training.

Text: Dharmendra Chaurasiya, Aasaman Nepal and Sajana Shrestha, People in Need

Link to the photos: <https://peopleinneed.canto.global/b/JC8N4>





## Keeping Nepali children in school, away from child marriage

9-year-old Pratikshya recently completed the third grade at primary school, and proudly celebrated getting good marks. Having once struggled with her studies, Pratikshya has been able to catch up to her classmates after being enrolled in remedial classes supported by Plan International to keep young Nepali students – notably girls – from dropping out of school permanently and increasing their risk for child, early and forced marriage.

From Kalikot district in the western region of Nepal, Pratikshya's parents did not finish their schooling and got married when they were 16. "I wanted to continue my education, but in our community, you get married early to take responsibility for your family," explains Pratikshya's father Abil who works as a farmer.



"I decided to work hard for my children but my income is not enough to provide them with everything they need. My eldest son and daughters could not continue their education, and dropped out of school early. My eldest son is now working in India as a labourer and my older daughters help their mother with the farming and household chores."

Pratikshya's mother, Chana explains that there is a lot to do on their farm. The family grow seasonal crops and sell them at the local market. "We only have a small piece of land and we are unable to grow much due to the changing weather. Every year, we spend more on seeds and fertiliser but are producing fewer crops. Because of this, I have started to work as a maid for other families."

As the youngest child in the family, Pratikshya is much loved and is a playful and headstrong

girl. Her mother Chana admits that she is unable to pay much attention to her schooling. “She does not like to do her homework. She loves to play with her friends, make noise, ask for things, and annoy her sisters.”

Pratikshya’s teacher noticed that she was falling behind in class. “She was a slow learner, weak in reading and writing and with a poor attention span. It was getting difficult for her to keep up with her friends. Her parents rarely came to the school to speak with the teachers about her progress.”

Due to her low performance at school, Pratikshya’s teacher suggested that she start attending remedial lessons. The classes, run with the support of Plan International in partnership with KIRDARC Nepal, are for students who are struggling with their studies.

The remedial classes are offered to children after school for two hours each day. The lessons focus on subjects such as Nepali, English, Math, and Science and are led by teachers who have received on-site coaching and mentoring which is key to the programme’s success. “The remedial classes are very helpful. It was difficult for me to read and write before. Now,



I can easily read my textbook without any support. Now I am not scared of my teachers and I can speak confidently in front of my class too,” says Pratikshya.

Anil and Chana were also invited to take part in parenting sessions which highlight the essential role that parents play in supporting their children’s education. “In the beginning, it was awkward as I was not sure whether I should be sharing Pratikshya’s grades. Then I realised it was more about my learning and how I can support her to change her behaviour,” explains Chana.

Both Anil and Chana learnt tips on how to motivate Pratikshya to concentrate on her studies. “This was a good opportunity for us both to learn more about our daughter. We now have regular discussions with her about her studies, stay with her while she does her homework and read stories together,” shares Anil.

Chana also accompanies Pratikshya to her remedial classes, something that project coordinator Diksha says helps create a conducive, safe learning environment. “As a result, we see the child’s increased interest, motivation and self-confidence in school. They start to place more importance on education, and their attitude improves.”

The parenting sessions are an effective way to teach care givers about the importance and value of education and encourages them to send their sons and daughters to school regularly, and give their children more time to focus on their studies rather than overloading them with household chores. Parents are also asked to set up reading corners in their homes so that their children can continue their learning at home and have a safe place to do their homework. Chana and Anil prepared a reading corner for Pratikshya, made using locally available resources.

“The reading corner is a designated area in the home where children can study, practice reading, and parents can spend time with them and encourage their learning. It provides a safe space where they can hang the resources they receive and projects they make at the remedial classes to create a study space,” explains Diksha.

Pratikshya loves her new reading area and both she and her sisters now use it to read and write, and make colourful learning materials for the corner. “It has been very beneficial as my daughter loves to study surrounded by interesting reading materials that she can point to and read. I also spend time with her and her sisters every morning when they are studying in the reading corner.”

Looking forward to starting grade four soon, Pratikshya has a newfound love of learning. “I used to be very lazy. Now I wake up at 6am and go to the reading corner and memorise my multiplication tables posted on the wall. Now, I can repeat the tables up to five. This makes me happy and my teachers appreciate my efforts.”

### **About the project:**

To boost literacy and increase reading rates among the children, Plan International implemented the “Improving Reading and Writing Skills of Children in Kalikot” project in partnership with Naraharinath Rural Municipality and our partner organisation KIRDARC Nepal.

The project is being implemented in 12 community schools, with a focus on marginalised families, including our sponsorship children and children with disabilities. The project aims to improve the learning status of children in grades 1-3 to prevent them from dropping out of school. 36 learning centres have been established which are providing catch up classes to more than 1,200 children.

The project also provides educational materials for children studying at the learning centres, trains teachers and parents to create locally available educational materials, conducts literacy fairs in schools, helps parents create reading corners in their homes, runs parent education programmes for school management, and lobbies for educational policies and programmes at the municipal level.



## पढ्ने बानी लागेकी लीना

तपाईं हामी एक वर्षमा कति नयाँ पुस्तक पढ्छौं होला ? पाँच, दश वा धेरैमा चालिस वा पचास वटा सम्म । सुन्दा तपाईंलाई पत्यार नलाग्नु सक्छ तर कक्षा दुईकी एक छात्राले १ वर्षमा ८०२ भन्दा बढी पुस्तक घरमा लगेर पढेकी छिन् ।

उनी हुन् लीना पाण्डेय । भर्खर ८ वर्ष टेकेकी लीना श्री सत्यदेवी माध्यमिक विद्यालय, कालीगण्डकी गाउँपालिका वडा नं. ५, बेल्टारीमा पढ्छिन् । उनी कक्षा दुईकी छात्रा हुन् । शैक्षिक सत्र २०७९ मा कक्षा एकमा भर्ना भएका पाँच जना विद्यार्थी मध्ये उनी पनि एक हुन् । अरू विद्यार्थी जस्तै उनलाई नेपाली पढ्न र लेख्न गाह्रो थियो । तर, जब विद्यालयमा पठन सिप विकास कार्यक्रम लागू



आमासित पुस्तक पढ्दै, लीना ।

फोटो: पशुपति पाण्डे, प्रअ



पुस्तकालयमा पुस्तक पढ्दै लीना पाण्डे, फोटो: टेक ढेगा

भयो, तब विद्यार्थीहरूको सिकाइमा परिवर्तन देखिन थाल्यो ।

कक्षा एककी नेपाली भाषा शिक्षक मञ्जु पाण्डे शैक्षिक सत्रको सुरुवातका दिन सम्झिदै भन्नुहुन्छ, "पढाइ सिप विकासको तालिम त लिइयो, साना नानीबाबुहरू छन् । सोचे जस्तो सिकाउन सक्छु कि सविदन भन्ने चिन्ता लागिरहन्थ्यो । तर तालिममा सिकेजस्तै गरी शैक्षिक सामग्रीको प्रयोग गरी नयाँ विधिबाट सिकाउँदा त विद्यार्थीले थाहै नपाइ पो सिके । कक्षा १ मा नै लीनाले पढ्न सिकेकी भएर पुस्तकालयका पुस्तकहरू पढ्न उनलाई केही गाह्रो भएन ।"

लीना कक्षा एकको पढाइ सकेर अहिले कक्षा दुईमा आएकी छिन् । उनी अहिले सरसर्ती पढ्न सकिन्छन् । कक्षाका अरू साथीलाई पनि पढ्न

सघाउँछिन् । उनको पठन सिप त राम्रो छँदै छ, पुस्तकालयबाट किताबहरू पनि उत्तिकै पढ्न मन पराउँछिन् । उनले १ वर्षमा ८६७ पुस्तक घरमा लगेर पढिसकेकी छिन् ।

विद्यालय खुलेको बखत मात्रै होइन, लामो समयसम्म बिदा हुँदा पनि उनले पुस्तकालय खोल्न लगाई किताबहरू घरमा लगेर पढ्ने गरेकी छिन् । घरमा लगेका पुस्तकहरू फिर्ता गर्ने क्रममा किताब भित्रका कुराहरू सोध्दा समेत बताउने गरेको कुरा पुस्तकालय शिक्षक रूपा न्यौपाने भन्नुहुन्छ ।

छोरीको पढ्ने सिप र बानीमा आएको परिवर्तन देखेर बुबा पशुपति पाण्डेय खुसी व्यक्त गर्नुहुन्छ । उहाँ भन्नुहुन्छ, “घरमा हरेक दिन किताब पढेर

सुनाउने गर्छिन् । उनी जति पुस्तक पढ्दै गयो उति पढाइप्रति उत्सुक भएकी छिन् । अहिले उनी फरक तरिकाले प्रश्न सोध्ने, विचार गरेर बोल्ने, एकाग्र भएर पढ्ने स्वभावकी भएकी छिन् ।”

पालिकाका सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूमा बालमैत्री पुस्तकालय स्थापना र प्रभावकारी व्यवस्थापन भएपछि विद्यार्थीहरूमा पढ्ने बानी बढेको कुरा गाउँपालिकाका शिक्षा शाखा प्रमुख भीमप्रसाद श्रेष्ठ बताउनुहुन्छ । हाल कालीगण्डकी गाउँपालिका र रूम टु रिडले सहकार्य गरी गाउँपालिकाका सबै विद्यालयमा बालबालिकाको पढाइ सिप र पढ्ने बानी विकास गर्न साक्षरता कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन भएको छ ।

## Breaking Barriers, Inspiring Change: Meet Dhiksha

***“You don’t want to be fair; I want to be fearless.”***

In a village where Diksha's skin tone stood out, she carried a radiant beauty within. Yet, the taunting and discrimination from peers and even her own family tested her resilience. Witnessing this, Diksha's sister became her ally, determined to guide her towards self-love and appreciation for diversity.

Through Room to Read's Girls' Education Program, Diksha discovered her voice and the strength to confront injustice. Learning that her friend Sita was barred from school during her menstrual cycle, Diksha took a stand. With courage, she approached Sita's grandmother, advocating for her right to education and debunking the stigma surrounding menstruation.

Diksha's transformative journey from self-doubt to self-acceptance fuels her passion for equality. Her unwavering determination serves as a beacon, inspiring us all to stand against injustice and build a more inclusive, equitable society. With confidence as her ally, Diksha lights the path toward positive change, reminding us of the power within to uplift others and make a difference.



## Equitable Education: Inclusive Initiatives and Remedial Programs for Enhancing Children's Learning

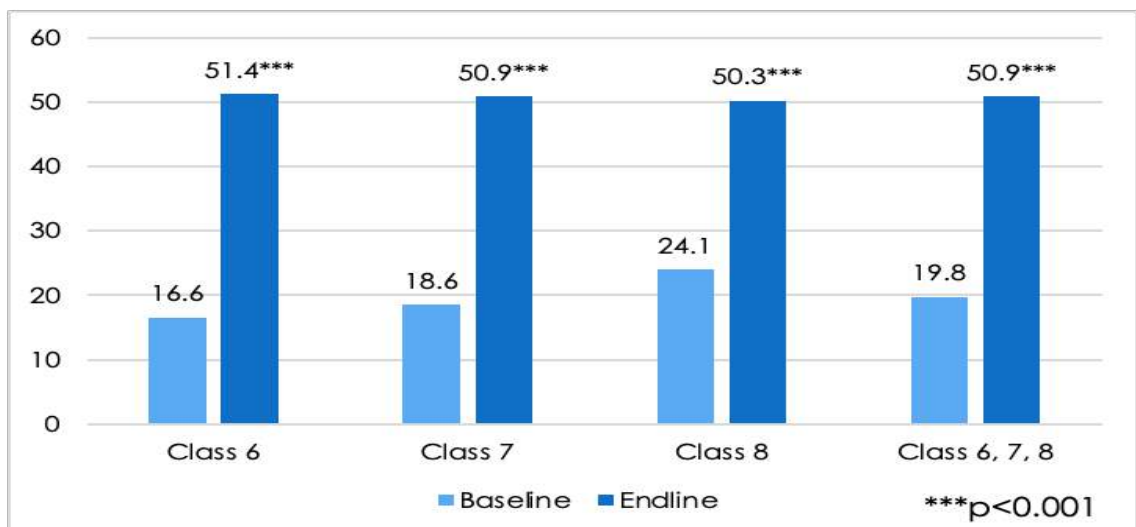
### Remedial Plus Program boosts children's learning outcomes

School closures in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal resulted in the loss of educational opportunities for adolescent girls and boys. Many adolescent girls, particularly from marginalized populations, were more likely to drop out of school permanently and be at an increased risk for child early and forced marriage (CEFM).

SaveSave the Children implemented Re-

medial Plus Program in nine local levels of Rautahat and Mahottari districts in 2021-2022, with the aim of improving learning performances of children from Grade 6 to 8 who were consistently falling behind, mainly in Nepali, Maths, Science and English subjects, through a series of interventions.

Reflecting on the effectiveness of the interventions, a teacher from Rautahat says, "The remedial classes were very effective in improving adolescent girls and boys' learning outcomes. We took classes on Mathematics, English, Nepali and Science,





which helped us complete the lessons that we had missed out during the school closures when COVID-19 cases were at their peak.” A total of 7,800 children benefitted from the four-month Remedial Plus Program with significant improvement in their learning performances achieved across all the four subjects.

Apart from the remedial classes, the program interventions also included educational and bursary support, life skills sessions, psychosocial counselling sessions and parenting education/home schooling

support.

Positive parenting sessions have significantly changed parents’ understanding of the significance of child education. “This program changed the parents’ perspectives on the importance of children going to school and the importance of education in the prevention of early marriage. Now, parents have started providing opportunities for their children to go to school and focus on their studies,” says a student from Rautahat.



## Children with disabilities benefitting from School at Home classes

Binit lost his ability to walk when he was only five. Now, his mother supports him to carry out his daily activities. He cannot move one hand. He cannot walk to school. He has been taking classes at his home under Save the Children's School at Home program since 2019.

School at Home is an initiative designed for children with disabilities who can't attend schools physically. The program is providing learning opportunities to many other children with disabilities, like Binit, in Dailekh, Kalikot and Jarjarkot districts. The aim of this intervention is to provide them with access to education in their homes through a trained facilitator who is further backed up by teachers from the

respective schools.

Each day the classes are run by using locally made teaching and learning materials for 4 hours at their convenient time. During the class, instructional methods are tailored in the most child-friendly and child-centered ways to meet the developmental and learning needs of individual children. Assessments tests are administered by schoolteachers of their respective catchment areas on a regular basis to diagnose the learning needs of children as well as track their progress and upgrade their grades.

The program has shown promising results. "When I first met Binit, he was afraid and would not communicate anything. Now,







with motivation and practice, he is excellent in communicating with new people. He can also read and write the names of his family members; he can sing the rhymes and knows the multiplication table till five,” says Binit’s teacher.

The program is being implemented in five local governments of Dailekh, Kalikot and Jajarkot districts, reaching 31 children with disabilities.

“This program is very helpful for children

with disabilities to secure their right to education. It is the responsibility of local government to provide education to the most deprived children but can’t always do so because of many challenges. But, recently from our general assembly we have decided to scale up this program to two new places of Kushe,” says Amar Bahadur Shahi, Ward chairperson.



## Unleashing Potential: The Innovative Approach to Learning

Manisha Jaiswal, a 11-year-old student at Bal Kalyan Basic School in Suddhodhan Rural Municipality, Lumbini Province, Nepal, has experienced a remarkable transformation in her education through the "Innovative Pedagogies to Support Foundational Learning" (IPSFL) project.

The IPSFL project is currently being implemented in Buddhahumi Municipality and Suddhodhan Rural Municipality, of Lumbini Province. This initiative, in collaboration with Aasaman Nepal, implements differentiated learning tools combining Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) interventions across 40 community schools aiming to enhance fundamental literacy and learning recovery. Manisha's story exemplifies the positive impact of these innovative teaching methods.

Manisha and her sister are both students at the same school, studying in Grades 5 and 4 respectively. Belonging to a family of ten, which includes six sisters and two brothers, Manisha's family faces significant financial challenges and strains making it hard for her to focus in school. The IPSFL project was implemented in her school with the aim of addressing learning challenges

and improving literacy skills for students with low learning outcomes. Both Manisha and her sister have experienced the new methods in learning. Before the IPSFL project, a baseline study revealed that many students, especially in grades 4 and 5, struggled to read at the grade 3 level or solve math problems. With the innovative methods in place, a significant improvement in learning levels was observed. Manisha's teacher highlighted how these



methods boosted students' confidence to actively participate and ensured that learners with lower proficiency were not left behind. Manisha's younger sister Jyoti says, "One of my favorite games involved

flipping cards to match letters and words.” The innovative teaching methods, includes engaging and interactive ways to learning, focusing on foundational literacy and numeracy, that includes subjects like Nepali, English and Math. This project provided training to 80 teachers from 40 specific community schools. The training focused on interactive and engaging methods to teach foundational literacy and numeracy skills. These methods encompass subjects like Nepali, English, and Math. Manisha and Jyoti found the learning environment transformed through games and interactive sessions.

Manisha's enthusiasm for school soared as innovative learning sessions continued. “Even after school, my friends and I play the games that we learn in school. I feel, I understand better with the new methods of learning,” says Manisha. The combined TaRL interventions, designed to enhance foundational literacy, noticeably elevated her reading and writing skills.

Punakala Khadka, who is the focal teacher

in Manisha’s school, shared her thoughts on the impact of these innovative teaching methods: “This approach has been pro-



foundly influential in our students’ lives. Previously, I was unaware of the various methods that could be used in teaching, but now I am equipped with the knowledge to differentiate children’s reading levels. This has allowed me to provide focused attention to students with lower reading abilities.”



## Collaborating to make schools in Chitwan more Environmentally-friendly



Street Child of Nepal, in collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Nepal, is working to support 50 schools across Ratnanagar Municipality in Chitwan to embrace green practices and become more environmentally friendly. With the global issue of climate change and environmental degradation becoming increasingly urgent, it is crucial to address these issues at the local level. By promoting sustainable practices in schools, such as reducing waste and using renewable energy sources, we can contribute to the fight against climate change and protect our planet for future generations.

After the introduction of the Green School

Project, Lyceum International Model School in Ratnanagar Municipality, Chitwan has taken up a new initiative to embrace environmentally friendly practices. Mr. Santosh Panta, the Managing Director of the school, believes that this initiative should have started years ago. "We have been advocating for this type of program for a long time, and finally, our school is adopting these environmental practices," says Santosh.

The project has six main components that focus on sustainability and green practices, which include waste management, water management, promotion of greenery,

energy usage, eco clubs for students, and innovation.

Furthermore, eco-friendly clubs are formed where students and teachers become members of the network and regularly participate in various environmental-related events. These eco-clubs organize events on occasions such as International Environment Day, among others, to promote awareness and action towards environmental issues.

*A recent project the grade 4 students were given was to each plant one sapling in their homes.*

When asked about what makes the school a Model Green School, Mr. Santosh explained, "There are many ways to make a school environmentally conscious, but one effective way is by planting trees in schools, homes, and public spaces." To set an example, a beautiful wall garden with various flowers has been set up in the school. Additionally, the school committee has planned to establish a school garden where they will grow fruits and vegetables and add a compost pit. The school garden will be a productive place to teach students about gardening and growing their own vegetables.



However, the school faces some challenges in becoming more environmentally friendly and adopting the practices they would like. Mr. Santosh puts it this way, "Many private schools operate on a tight budget, making major changes like adding sustainable architectural infrastructure very expensive. In addition to that, the lack of support from the local government is another major challenge in accomplishing our plans." Although there are funds available for green initiatives, they are often inadequate or mostly targeted at public schools.



## Three Bright Leaders of Future: Pratima, Kanhaiya and Manisha

Bhuneshwor Saha and Deepmala Devi of Jagarnathpur Rural Municipality, Parsa live with eight children: six daughters and two sons. Three of them, Pratima (15), Kanhaiya (13) and Manisha (10) were born with visual impairment. They took their children to different hospitals but in vain. Doctors said that their children's nerves are completely damaged and there is no way to fix them. Both the parents were shocked, and heartbroken to learn that their children can never see again. A traditional healer had also duped NPR 20 thousand from the parents with false hopes and medication.

The children had to face multiple discrimination. They were even told that they are paying for their sins from their past lives. These comments used to hurt their sentiments and make them feel unworthy. Despite the circumstances, the children had deep interest to study and move forward with their lives. They used to attend classes in local schools but faced numerous difficulties due to unavailability of audio recordings and braille books.

A Braille trainer, National Volunteer of New Generation of Adolescent Girls with Education (ENGAGE) project funded by FCDO under Girls Education Challenge fund; mentored and supported the children



for one year. He gave mobility training and oriented them on using white cane, talking calculator, mobile phones, computer, and speech synthesiser, reading, and writing in braille and other basic life skills. The project also supported learning materials helpful for the visually impaired children and enrolled them in resource classes.

Kanhaiya is a very bright student at school. He comes first in class in every exam and is exceptionally good at extracurricular

activities like debate, cricket, poems recitation and so on. His teachers are incredibly happy to see his progress in studies. He aims to complete his degree in Law and become a Judge. Pratima and Manisha share their joy of getting an opportunity to go to school, learn, talk and play with friends. They want to complete higher studies and Manisha has already set her aim to become a teacher. The children said, “They do not want to be dependent on anyone, instead they want to help other people to make their lives better”.

Their parents are now proud seeing their children’s success. Their father says, “I feel lucky to be their father. They can now fluently read and write. All three of them are great in speaking and debating both in English and Nepali, and I feel that they will achieve great heights in future.



*Kanhaiya studying his textbook in braille.*

I am forever thankful to FCDO, VSO and ENGAGE project for changing the lives of my children.”



# Bhumika's Contribution to Social Transformation

SIKAI Project is an inclusive education project in Baglung implemented in two municipalities i.e. Jaimini Municipality and Kanthekhola Rural Municipality supported by HEMPEL Foundation. SIKAI Project is a 4-years project mainly focused on 60 schools targeted to reach directly on 7200 students of Grade 1 – 5 along with their parents, headteachers, schoolteachers, SMC/PTA members through utilizing 660 members of community volunteer's network. This project aims to collaborate with local governments in providing access to quality education across Baglung district and increase in the children's enrollment at schools, learning achievement of children, retention, attainment, and transition to the higher grades

In 2021, Bhumika crossed path with Mamata Thapa Magar, a mentor involved in SIKAI project. Mamata was working as a Big Sister at Narayani Secondary School and under her leadership a network of 10 volunteers for community-level social mobilization was established. Bhumika's son also attended the same school, and Mamata encouraged her to join the network. Although Bhumika did not have regular employment at the time, her deep desire to serve society led her to agree to become a volunteer. She assumed an active role as the coordinator for the 10



volunteer members within the network. Mamata provided coaching to Bhumika regarding her responsibilities in team mobilization and social mobilization. Bhumika enthusiastically shared, "I gained valuable skills from the mentor, especially in community mobilization, engaging with parents, and providing counseling. I also participated in an orientation session on community mobilization and capacity development, which further enhanced my leadership abilities. The visibility materials provided, such as a cap and bag, helped me introduce myself as a volunteer."

Bhumika built strong networks and connections in her village and surrounding communities. Alongside her team members, she conducted visits to community, provide counseling on the importance of



education and addressing harmful social practices like discouraging child marriage, gender-based discrimination, and caste-based discrimination. Working closely with the mentor, the youth volunteer networks organized awareness programs through door-to-door visits, social gatherings, and street dramas to educate local residents and stakeholders about the significance of education and the need to eradicate harmful social norms and practices. Bhumika noted that the positive impact of these campaigns led to many parents regularly sending their children to school. Her efforts acquired widespread recognition, motivating her to continue her volunteer work.

Through her volunteer activities, Bhumika gained popularity within her community. In 2021, she was elected as a member of Ward 4 of Kathekhola Rural Municipality with a significant majority of votes. Bhumika highlighted, "As a volunteer, I earned the trust of many people, and they elected me with a substantial majority in the local election." She has now integrated her volunteer work into the local political agenda, working in coordination with the

local government. She explained, "We have organized various programs, including rallies, street dramas, and discussions, in collaboration with the local government. We have also educated parents on the importance of regular school attendance." The positive impact was evident at the community level, with parents frequently visiting schools to stay updated on their children's education.

Scholarships and educational support were provided to students, and in her role as a people's representative, Bhumika took the initiative to offer scholarships, school uniforms, and essential stationery to underprivileged and economically disadvantaged children. She added, "During my time as a volunteer, scholarships for underprivileged and Dalit children were reinstated, and there was regular supply of midday meals to students." Bhumika's relentless efforts have brought about these changes both at the school and community levels. She is also planning to incorporate the project's lessons and best practices into the local government's annual program for sustainability.



## ABOUT VSO

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) is one of the longest serving INGOs in Nepal. It is working in Nepal since 1964. With the belief that people are the best agents of sustainable change, works through its Volunteering for Development Approach with volunteers (Local, National and International) as central actors in its three priority areas of programming: 1. Resilient Livelihoods 2. Inclusive Education and 3. Global Health. Gender and Social inclusion, Social Accountability and Resilience are its cross-cutting priorities.

So far, VSO has reached 72 out of 77 districts of Nepal. Currently, it is working in 20 districts and has its presence in all 7 provinces.

## Makar's Academics Improved through Tole Shikshya

Jawa basic school established in 2063 B.S is one of the average running government school of Kedarseun Rural Municipality of Bajhang district. The school has a total of 105 students from grade 1-5 with majority of the students being from Dalit community. The school was established with a major motive of educating and empowering the children of the dalit communities. Similar, to the trend of the area, the father figure of the community mostly works in India, while the female mother also goes to India for seasonal jobs in the farms. Poverty hinders the children education in this community. Some families even tend to take their children as well to India for the work and earning little more than usual.

Makar Parki, is the youngest son of Jogi parki and Hiukala parki studying in class three of Jawa Basic School. Makar Parki is not beyond from this problem and his entire family went to India and Makar left the school for few months in 2078 Bs when he passed class one. He came back to school at end of the academic session 2079 Bs and tried to join class 3, but due to the long gap he was not able to pass the test taken by the school for admission. As an only way out from the



*Individual support by RM in Tole Shiksha*

problem the school administration and his parents admitted makar to class 2 to start his academic career from the start again. But being 9 years old, with his friends completing class 3 and getting promoted to class 4, Makar had to start his journey from class 2 again. The teachers and parents were worried about his academic development.

In this period, the Early Grade Reading program, had started to shift its focus to phase II schools as well. With the focus on remedial support through the tole shikshya interventions. Being a dalit majority school with poor results, Jawa was a top priority for the EGR program. The Head teacher of the school Mrs.

Asha Shingh personally shared this problem to the reading motivator Mr. and the EGR team as well. Identifying the issue, the EGR team initiated the tole shikshya intervention including the low performances students of Jawa Basic school at the end of 2079 academic session after final examinations.



*Individual support by class teacher in school*

Makar along with other 24 weak students of dalit community started attending the tole shikshya. Among them Makar was one of the weakest students. In the CAS assessment carried out in the class his reading level was 1 and khutkila (sub-level) was 10 which means recognized just single letters which was extremely poor for class 2 standards.

To tackle the scenario, EGR program with support from the school teacher started providing individual support and

administration to promote him to Grade 3 with the reading motivator personally taking the task to make sure he passes his terminal examination. As a result the Head teacher and school administration decided to promote him to class 3 with specific assurance from the reading motivators and commitment from his parents that his school will continue and they will provide regular support to him.



*HT Mrs. Asha Shingh motivating Makar in class by wearing crown*

regular tole shikshya classes to these students with makar being provided extra support. Within a month of regular supporting he started recognizing letters with Matra and half letters as well. Looking at his progress, the reading motivators and the parents requested the school

The reading motivators also carried out regular home visit in Makar's place. If he remained absent in the school or tole shikshya sessions for more than a day, the reading motivator would immediately visit home and identify the reasons.

Currently, Makar is attending the school and tole shikshya classes regularly. His reading skills and habits have also changed drastically. The support of the teachers has also accelerated his learning. In the recent baseline of tole shikshya as well his reading level has increased. He is in a proficient level of CWPM and comprehension (CWPM 35 to 45 words and comprehensions around 60 percent). While he has also passed



*Group support in class by teacher*

recently completed terminal exam with flying colours as well.

Mrs. Asha Shingh, Head teacher of the school have acknowledged the support of tole shikshya classes which has changed his academic career. In few months period he was able to be promoted to class 3 and even pass the terminal examinations as well. This is all because of the support of tole shikshya and the reading motivator.

Hiukala Parki mother of makar also delightedly shared “After returning from

India my son was not able to even attend class 2 properly. In a mere six month period the EGR has not only made him able to read & write but also promoted him to grade 3. The support of teachers and EGR is the only reason of this development in my child.” Apart from Makar all the other 24 dalit students of the tole shikshya have also passed the terminal examination of the school scoring good marks in all the subjects, highlighting the impact of tole shikshya in remedial support.



# Surma Bhawani: An Exemplary School of EGR Pedagogy

Surma Bhawani Basic School is situated in Api Himal 3 Thumti. The school is named after the famous goddess of Api Himal surma bhawani. This school was established in 2040 B.S. and runs from Grade 105. The school has 6 teachers from ECD to 5 and 64 students in total. Among them 2 of the teachers have been trained under the EGR pedagogy. The school also have specific facilities from separate washrooms, to kitchens and drinking water facilities.

However, the situation was poor prior to the EGR intervention 3 years back. Class



*Class room before EGR intervention*

rooms were very old and students used to sit on benches in a traditional way. Traditional stereotype teaching learning was in practice during those days. There was not a culture of using instructional materials in learning activities. The purpose of teaching was to finish lesson and complete course. Teachers did not care about students' level and conduct



*Surma Bhawani Basic School*

level wise activities. Extra-curricular activities were rarely conducted and parent's involvement was also very low. Students' enrollment was very low and many students of surrounding areas went to other schools.

After the constant intervention of EGRP through awareness activities, coordination meetings, orientation and training, technical support and monitoring, school has improved in many aspects. Daman singh Bohara appointed as a head teacher some two years ago who is also an EGR trained teacher, he started improvement in every aspect of school. After discussion



*Discussion with parents during class room parents interaction*



*Students are conducting learning activities after sitting arrangement*

with school authorities and local level and in class room parents meeting, class room sitting arrangement is made child-friendly. Now class rooms are equipped with carpet and round tables. Former students of this school and local level have provided materials for sitting arrangement worth 5 lacks. Book corners are established in every class room and EGR and other instructional materials are managed in the class room and learning activities are conducted according to students level.



*Interact with parents on child progress*

Due to constant intervention from EGRP, parents involvement has increased and students enrollment has also increased. EGRP has practiced to develop local instructional materials in class room parents interaction and due to the practice now the school has developed sufficient local materials and former student union

of this school also assisted in this task.

Now, the level identification grid chart is updated of every student and learning activities are conducted according to students' learning level. Now, students learning activities are conducted not only depending on text books but local materials are also used in learning activities and use of ICT is also applied in learning activities. Smart boards are established



*Teachers are developing local materials*

in every class room and extra learning materials are provided using ICT.

Now, the school's learning environment has completely changed and therefore the children who have gone other schools are also returning back to this school again. The students enrollment has increased now. Head teacher Daman Singh Bohara expresses his view in this way, "We were teaching in a traditional way before EGR training but when we get EGR training, our views on teaching learning has been completely changed. We realized when we conduct learning activities according to children's need, only then a child can learn. To create learning environment in the school, child-friendly class room was necessary. When I appointed as a head teacher, I focused on this issue and I got support from all sides especially from parents. This all credit goes to EGRP."



## Interactive Voice Response for Improved Learning

World Vision is a child-focused relief, development, and advocacy organization that has contributed to the transformation in the lives of millions of children around the world in vulnerable situations. WVI aspires to achieve this through a partnership with local communities, civil societies, government, and private sectors where we believe in mutual participation and trust, shared vision and goal, accountability, and responsibility. We are child-focused organization driven by Christian values to serve children and families regardless of their religion, age, gender, ethnicity, class, and caste.

World Vision International Nepal is a part of the World Vision International global partnership operating in more than 100 countries. WVI started its long-term development programme in Nepal since 2001 to contribute for the well-being of children. At present, WVI Nepal has long-term development programmes in Udayapur, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Rautahat, Sindhuli, Kathmandu, Lamjung, Lalitpur, Jumla, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Achham, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Doti and Bajhang across six provinces of Nepal.

Using Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

to improve the learning performances of children is one of the proven models of WVI Nepal piloted during the COVID pandemic. It has proven effective in increasing parental engagement in their children's overall learning. This model was implemented in Krishnapur Municipality



of Kanchanpur district reaching 240 parents/caregivers aiming to build evidence on strengthening caregiver and community behaviors to support and sustain reading practices in early grades.

The audio messages were developed, pre-recorded and sent in the form of bulk messages. The format of messaging in the audio format was selected as per the findings of the pretesting which recommended on the basis of literate as well as technology friendly population who can read the messages. The model utilized Interactive Voice Response messaging to disseminate information to the caregivers for supporting their children's reading practices at home and in the community.

To make caregivers aware on the importance of the home environment and their role in improving children's reading skills, recorded messages have been pushed to the mobile phones of caregivers. The audio messages were developed considering the community environment and caregivers/parents' profession. Separate messages for male and female caregivers have been created as they have different responsibilities in daily household work. In total 68 messages were broadcasted to 240 individual parents or caregivers among which 54 messages were distinct and the remaining were repeated. The PSAs were well-received, with approximately 62% of the targeted population reached on average. It has been found that the people mostly listened to the PSAs in the morning and evening. The messages were effective even when repeated to the same caregiver list, with caregivers still tuning in to listen.

In addition, it was observed that the most listened-to hours were between 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. and 9 a.m. in the morning, as well as between 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the evening. These findings suggest that caregivers were more likely to listen to the messages during their morning and evening routines, likely before or after work or other daily responsibilities.

The IVR messages have been very effective in reminding the caregivers about allocating time for their children. Before the IVR intervention, caregivers used to be busy in their daily household chores and didn't have time for looking after their children. As per one of the caregivers, Junu, *"Even though I'm busy most of the time in household activities, with IVR received as a notification to check on your children's hygiene, school bags, homework before they go to school and help them with their homework, tell them stories before sleep after they come back home from school has really been helpful for me to allocate time for my son. This has developed a sense of good parenting in me as well as supported my son in his academics as well."*

As per the End-line Evaluation, among 139 respondents from high doze, slightly more than half of the respondents (55%) reported on receiving system supported telephone (IVR). Out of 76 respondents who received IVR about 87% (66) reported as they listened to the whole message of the call. Further, among the respondents who listened to the call, about 86 % (65) cited as they understood the message. It shows the effectiveness of the IVR system itself where nearly half of the respondents did not receive IVR. So, there is a need



to carry out a short assessment on the relevancy of such intervention.

### **A Case**

Aasha was working in her kitchen garden, suddenly she received a SMS in her phone where it was said to allocate time for her children and to help them in reading. At first, she thought that how can illiterate parent and labor support in children's education? She used to think that teaching and learning is the only job of teacher in school. But this type of IVR message started receiving frequently, and gradually she started to change her thought and providing time to her children.

After receiving frequent mobile messages, awareness activity on the role and responsibility of good parenting, she has started to provide time to her children helping them in learning activities. *“Before this, I only used to ask my children whether they have done their homework. But now even if I am not literate, I can support them in doing their homework and learning activities by sitting with them together are discussion on the topic they read”*. These days, no matter how busy she gets, she usually spares little



time for her children and help them out in learning activities at home. She spends quality time with her children while children doing homework. She encourages her children in study. She makes are children read stories of their book and she herself listen to them.

She tells the stories to her children that she knows. Not only this, she tells the name of different grains and vegetables and explains about their source during meal time at kitchen. Her effort towards her children has changed in the learning attitude of her children as well as also improved learning outcome at school.



## A labor worker turned into an Emerging Entrepreneur

Deviram Sunar, a resident of Barahatal Rural Municipality, has emerged as one of the region's top five successful Goat entrepreneurs, but his journey to success was far from easy. He had to demonstrate unwavering dedication, hard work, and a keen understanding of market demands. He was born in Ward No. 8 of Barahatal Rural Municipality in the year 1993. Belonging to disadvantaged community with a family of 15 members and all relying mostly on daily wage labor to make their livelihoods, he faced numerous challenges. Additionally, the absence of nearby schools limited his education to fifth grade.

At the age of 15, Deviram got married and, like his relatives and neighbors, migrated to Kala Pahad, India, where he found work in road construction as a manual laborer. His visits back home were infrequent, happening only once or twice a year. However, during one of his workdays on the construction site, an encounter with a goatherder changed the course of his life. The goatherder wondered why people in Nepal didn't engage in commercial goat raising. Drawing from his experiences of traveling across Nepal, the goatherder shared his insights on the potential of goat

rearing in Nepal, highlighting the favorable weather conditions and the abundance of fodder and forage. This conversation left a lasting impression on Deviram, prompting him to seriously consider the idea.

Within two months of the above interaction, Deviram decided to return home in 2019 with the intention of starting a goat-rearing business. While many villagers sought employment in Kala Pahad and Gulf countries, he chose to permanently focus on goat raising. With a modest beginning, he started his venture with just three goats. However, in absence of enough technical knowledge and skill on goat raising, he faced lot of problems related to diseases, parasites and feed management to make the business profitable.

In 2020, Deviram got information about a 65-days goat-raising training program being conducted by Janjyoti Secondary School Surkhet in collaboration with CTEVT and the Skill Up! Project. Intrigued by the potential benefits, he decided to participate in the training. Recognizing the value of acquiring technical knowledge and enhancing his skills, he eagerly joined the training program. During the training, he gained valuable insights into various



*Figure: Deviram working at his goat farm, Chanabari, Barahatal, Surkhet.*

aspects of goat raising. He learned about improved goat shed, managing the health of goats, managing effective feeding techniques, understanding insurance options, avoiding inbreeding, castration, administering basic treatment, and developing business plans. The training provided him valuable knowledge and techniques to further improve his goat-raising business

Inspired by the training, Deviram's enthusiasm soared, and he made decided to expand his goat-rearing venture to a scale of 200 goats. His ultimate goal was to establish the Model Goat Farm as a well-structured and thriving enterprise.

Through an interface meeting facilitated by the Skill Up! Project, Deviram had the opportunity to present his comprehensive business plan to the bank representatives. Impressed by his vision and determination, Nabil Bank (a commercial national bank) granted him a loan of NPR 1 Mil (Euro 8,000) to upscale his goat business.

With this financial support, he was able to construct a well-organized goat shed, equipped with the necessary amenities to provide the best care for his goats and rear more than 160 goats.

The positive changes and improvements in his operations paid off. Deviram's annual earnings soared to 10 lakhs annually, demonstrating the success of his expanded goat-rearing venture. His hard work, dedication, and strategic planning turned his aspirations into a reality of establishing the Chanabari Model Goat Farm.

In June 2023, he sold 50 improved goats to a development organization based in Achham for distribution among their project beneficiaries. This transaction further increased his reputation as a trusted goat supplier in the community. His achievements in the field of goat farming have become the talk of the village. In fact, he is now widely recognized as "Bakhra Firm wala" (meaning "Goat Farm Owner"),

a title that has become synonymous with his name within the local community.

Deviram proudly says, “With the earning from my goat business, now I can support my two children with a good education and equipping them with the skills to become self-reliant individuals. I thank Skill Up! project and Janjyoti High School for providing me such great opportunity through training”.

Deviram's achievements have served as a powerful source of inspiration for others in the community, motivating them to embark on their own goat-raising

endeavors. Recognizing his expertise and success, fellow community members frequently seek out him for guidance and advice on various aspects of goat rearing. He willingly shares his knowledge and experience, providing valuable insights on goat health, culling practices, and other essential care requirements. His guidance has become invaluable to those who are new to the business or seeking to improve their existing practices. His willingness to help others demonstrates his commitment to the community and his desire to see others succeed in their own goat-rearing ventures.





State's Pays For Education

State's Health and Empowerment Agency for Health VSPs  
Reproductive Health System for School Campuses  
From 2011-12 to 2014-15  
Total Budget Allocation: Rs. 100.00 Crores



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