

Adolescent girls' capabilities in Nepal

The state of the
evidence on programme
effectiveness

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Table of Contents

Acronyms.....	i
Executive Summary.....	ii
Report objectives.....	ii
Methodology.....	ii
State of the intervention evidence base on adolescent girls in Nepal.....	ii
Key findings.....	iii
Key evidence gaps.....	v
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Methodology and overview of the literature.....	1
1.2 Limitations.....	2
2. Voice and agency interventions.....	3
2.1 Overview of the evidence.....	3
2.2 Interventions improving girls' voice and leadership skills.....	3
2.3 Interventions targeting youth with peacebuilding objectives.....	7
2.4 Child and youth club interventions.....	9
2.5 Interventions addressing discriminatory norms and promoting gender equality.....	11
2.6 Communication interventions.....	12
2.7 Child-centred disaster risk reduction interventions.....	13
2.8 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps.....	13
3. Education and learning interventions.....	15
3.1 Overview of the evidence.....	15
3.2 Scholarships and financial incentive programmes.....	15
3.3 Clubs and life skills training.....	18
3.4 Interventions targeting out-of-school girls.....	21
3.5 Interventions targeting child labourers.....	22
3.6 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps.....	24
4. Economic empowerment interventions.....	26
4.1 Overview of the evidence.....	26
4.2 Vocational skills training and livelihood interventions targeting youth.....	26
4.3 Youth savings interventions.....	29
4.4 Public works interventions.....	29
4.5 Interventions with peacebuilding objectives.....	30
4.6 Women's economic empowerment interventions.....	32
4.7 Interventions tackling child labour.....	34
4.8 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps.....	35
5. Bodily autonomy, integrity and freedom from violence interventions.....	36
5.1 Overview of the evidence.....	36
5.2 Interventions tackling violence against girls.....	36
5.3 Communication interventions.....	40
5.4 Interventions tackling child marriage and other harmful traditional practices.....	41
5.5 Interventions tackling human trafficking.....	43

5.6 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps	43
6. Psychosocial wellbeing interventions.....	45
6.1 Overview of the evidence.....	45
6.2 Psychosocial support interventions targeting conflict-affected youth	45
6.3 Psychosocial support interventions for children and women.....	47
6.4 Interventions with psychosocial wellbeing outcomes.....	48
6.5 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps	48
7. Sexual and reproductive health, health and nutrition interventions	49
7.1 Overview of the evidence.....	49
7.2 Interventions targeting adolescent girls	49
7.3 Reproductive health interventions targeting youth	51
7.4 Interventions targeting women and girls.....	54
7.5 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps	55
8. Conclusions: key findings and gaps	56
References.....	59
Annex I: Nepal Interventions Table	64
Annex II: Methodology.....	138
Search grids for Google and Google Scholar	138

Tables

Table 1: Thematic foci of impact studies and evaluations.....	2
Table 2: Distribution of MSSM Scores	2
Annex Table 1: Gender and empowerment.....	138
Annex Table 2: Education and learning	139
Annex Table 3: Economic empowerment	140
Annex Table 4: Physical and psychosocial wellbeing	141
Annex Table 5: Academic databases searched and search strings used	142
Annex Table 6: Databases and websites searched.....	145

Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BLOP	Better Life Option Programme
CEDPA	Centre for Development and Population Activities
DACAW	Decentralised Action for Children and Women
DFID	Department for International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EIPG	Educational Incentive Programme for Girls
EPPI	Evidence for Policy and Practice Information
GAGE	Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KEP	Karnali Employment Programme
MSSM	Maryland Scale of Scientific Measurement
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
RH	Reproductive Health
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
TAP	Teens for AIDS Prevention
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WEP	Women's Empowerment Programme
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

Report objectives

This rapid country evidence mapping report brings together key evidence on the wellbeing of adolescent girls (aged 10-19) in Nepal, particularly on what is known about the effectiveness of interventions in the six Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) capability domains. It focuses on the availability of evidence and important gaps, and it is not intended as a comprehensive assessment of ‘what works’. Moreover, it specifically focuses on adolescent girls and does not attempt to synthesise the existing body of literature on gender and development interventions in the country, as the girl-focused literature itself draws upon wider gender and development analysis. This report has been produced to inform GAGE programming and to feed into the design of the longitudinal impact evaluation study. In addition, it aims to provide a resource for researchers, programme designers and policy makers to better understand what is known about interventions targeting adolescent girls in Nepal and what the key evidence gaps are so that GAGE and other research programmes can best contribute to a robust evidence base to support evidence-informed policy and programming.

Methodology

This report draws on the analysis of 56 impact studies and evaluations, obtained through a systematic search process conducted in eight academic databases with relevant thematic and geographical foci and complemented by Google Scholar and specific searches of key international development websites and databases. The vast majority (82%) of these impact studies and evaluations were grey literature, a large proportion of them produced by international agencies and non-governmental organisations to assess implemented programmes. Many of the reviewed programmes were multi-sectoral and multi-component interventions, so there is inevitably some cross-over between adolescent capability sections.

State of the intervention evidence base on adolescent girls in Nepal

We found 56 impact studies and evaluations, of which the majority combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Thus a total of 27 studies employed mixed methods, 15 used various qualitative techniques and the remaining 14 used purely quantitative methodology. Three interventions had a randomised design: a child labour and education project used a cluster randomised control trial (RCT) with two treatment arms (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014); a psychosocial support intervention targeting conflict-affected adolescents also used an RCT (Jordans et al., 2010); and an often-cited menstruation and education project also used a randomised design to measure impact (Oster and Thornton, 2011). Five other studies used a quasi-experimental design, yet none assessed the relative effectiveness of different intervention strategies. Use of the Maryland Scale of Scientific Measurement (MSSM) showed that the majority (40) of the studies had a research design of weak strength, and only 11 evaluations were considered rigorous (attaining a 4 or 5 score). In addition, we found a number of project documents and other reports providing information about completed or ongoing projects benefiting adolescent girls.

In terms of their geographical distribution, examined interventions were implemented in all five development regions, but more were found in the mid-western and the central development regions with evidence indicating that some areas have benefited more from a high concentration of NGOs and a wide range of development projects, while other more rural areas have remained largely overlooked due to scarce resources and challenging conditions.

Almost all of the accessed impact studies and evaluations were conducted relatively soon after the end of the project (within two years) or on projects that were still ongoing. In addition, although the intervention target spans the adolescent age group and sometimes also includes young women, evaluations rarely assess and

specify outcomes by narrower age groups. Identifying which intervention strategies have better effects on different adolescent age groups, understanding whether impacts prove transformative into adulthood, and determining the relative importance of different components in effecting change in girls' lives, are three key areas where GAGE would be well-placed to make valuable contributions.

Key findings

Voice and agency interventions

Overview of the evidence and key findings: Our search generated 14 impact studies and evaluations of interventions aiming to transform discriminatory social norms and to enhance adolescent girls' voice and agency. The most common approach used by international agencies and NGOs is the establishment of clubs providing girls with safe spaces, life skills training and peer support in order to build their knowledge and leadership skills. In general, child and youth clubs are a common intervention type in Nepal seeking to increase child and youth participation and enable girls and boys to improve their skills, advocate for their rights, and get involved in decision-making in local governance structures. There are also several initiatives targeting youth in conflict-affected areas and aiming to empower them and enable them to contribute to peacebuilding efforts and community welfare. Given the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, there is also an increasing number of child-centred disaster risk reduction projects that target adolescents to build their capacity to mitigate risks and become agents of change. We also found a few interventions seeking to transform social norms and promote more gender-equitable attitudes among adolescents and their parents along with two popular communication initiatives also aiming to change norms and improve adolescent knowledge and decision-making.

Evidence indicates that participation in clubs enables girls to develop their leadership and communication skills, increase their self-confidence, voice their concerns and engage in decision-making, thus becoming agents of positive change for their own lives and their communities. On the other hand, adolescents are not often considered to be full members of their communities and citizens with rights. Interventions targeting boys and parents and changing norms and attitudes appear to be effective in creating an enabling environment wherein girls' decision-making and action is accepted. Yet there is limited evidence on how to effectively reach out-of-school girls, girls most in need and married girls who, along with younger adolescents, remain largely invisible in the evidence base for this thematic area.

Education and learning interventions

Overview of the evidence and key findings: Our search generated 14 impact studies and evaluations of education-related interventions, suggesting that there is a considerable body of literature on this thematic area. The majority of these studies primarily assess the effects of interventions on improving girls' school enrolment and attendance and, to a lesser extent, their learning outcomes. In addition, a few impact studies focused on interventions aiming to assist out-of-school girls as well as child labourers to return or enrol to school. A rather common type of education interventions includes provision of financial or material assistance to girls or disadvantaged children, followed by establishment or strengthening of girls' school clubs, and improvements in the enabling environment through awareness-raising initiatives targeting parents and communities around the importance of girls' education. However, many studies acknowledged the difficulty in reaching those most in need. Most interventions targeted a wide age range from young to older adolescents without always considering their differential needs and priorities. Programmes targeting older adolescents (aged 15 years and over) who are out of school, tend to provide them with vocational skills training instead of helping them return to school. As a result, we know very little about how to support older girls to return to school, and what works for different age groups in general. Financial incentives may contribute to increase girls' access to education, yet studies expressed their concerns about their potential when they are not combined with other strategies such as raising awareness and addressing discriminatory norms and practices.

Economic empowerment interventions

Overview of the evidence and key findings: Our search generated 14 evaluations and impact studies of interventions promoting the economic empowerment of adolescent girls. The majority targeted disadvantaged youth and provided them with vocational skills training and support to find employment or enable them to get involved in income-generating activities. In addition, several studies focused on youth livelihood interventions which also had a peacebuilding objective and on multi-component programmes targeting women and seeking to empower them economically and socially. A few other studies assessed initiatives targeting child labourers, one study evaluated a public works programme and another one a large youth savings intervention. Given that most reviewed interventions targeted girls along with youth or women, it is challenging to identify age- and sex-disaggregated effects due to limited data. Evaluations actually indicate that girls are often those benefiting less from vocational training and livelihood programmes with a broader target group as inadequate attention is paid to their specific needs. Moreover, the youth schemes examined fail to address discriminatory norms which shape girls' labour market outcomes. Few studies used a robust methodology, so we still do not know what works best to promote the economic wellbeing of adolescent girls in different settings. Our knowledge is particularly limited when it comes to younger adolescent girls, as most interventions focused on older adolescents with the exception of a youth savings intervention that targeted adolescents aged 12-18.

Bodily autonomy, integrity and freedom from violence interventions

Overview of the evidence and key findings: Our search generated eight evaluations and impact studies of programmes aiming to improve the bodily integrity of adolescent girls in Nepal. The majority of interventions tend to address the main forms of gender-based violence in targeted communities: child marriage along with physical and sexual violence. Although child marriage rates continue to be high, the evidence base on interventions focusing on eliminating the practice appears to be rather weak. This finding is also confirmed by the available literature which has pointed out that there is a lack of targeted interventions and rigorous evaluation evidence on how to tackle child marriage as until recently it was generally assumed that the problem would largely be addressed if girls were provided with life skills training and education. Overall, the number of evaluations is growing, yet the evidence base is still weak and lacks robust evaluation findings. We therefore know very little about the best practices for tackling violence against girls, let alone about what works for particular age groups or categories of girls such as those in rural areas, married girls, girls with disabilities or those belonging to disadvantaged groups. Participation in clubs and provision of training appear to have potential, along with awareness-raising initiatives targeting boys, parents, religious leaders and communities. Some evidence indicates that child marriage initiatives need to consider and address the multiple underlying factors involved more explicitly.

Psychosocial wellbeing interventions

Overview of the evidence and key findings: Our search generated five impact studies and evaluations of interventions aiming to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of adolescent girls, directly or indirectly. The evidence base is thus very limited and focuses on vulnerable groups, such as conflict-affected girls or girl survivors of violence, human trafficking or the 2015 earthquake. The majority of the evaluated interventions targeted adolescents and women affected by the civil conflict and provided them with psychosocial counselling. Another impact study assessed a women's empowerment intervention which also included psychosocial support. Interestingly, a few studies of interventions with economic or social empowerment objectives identified positive effects on the emotional wellbeing of participating girls. In general, some evaluations assessed the mental health outcomes of participants as measured by international self-assessment tools, which have been validated in Nepal, while others focused on girls' social and emotional wellbeing measured by changes in their self-confidence and their relationships with significant others. However, even when positive impacts are reported, lack of a rigorous research design does not allow us to identify the most effective strategies. Most often the study compares self-reported outcomes to the baseline and presents findings without trying to explain them. Some evidence indicates the important role of family support,

friendship, and economic independence, yet far more research and robust evaluations are needed to confirm those findings and identify best practices for different groups of adolescent girls.

Sexual and reproductive health, health and nutrition interventions

Overview of the evidence and key findings: Our search generated 14 impact studies and evaluations that aimed to improve adolescent girls' physical wellbeing with a particular focus on their sexual and reproductive health. The majority of interventions had several components, with the most common being providing knowledge about adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Many interventions also included training to service providers for the delivery of youth-friendly services as well as community awareness-raising activities to improve understanding of the sexual and reproductive health rights and needs of adolescents and their access to services. While some interventions explicitly targeted adolescent girls, others focused on youth – married and unmarried – and a few others on women of reproductive age. While evaluations show that these interventions were often successful in changing knowledge and attitudes, they were less effective in changing behaviours and health practices. Longer-term effects are also unclear as most evaluations took place shortly after programme completion. In addition, there is very limited evidence on younger adolescent girls, who are often missed out by sexual and reproductive health interventions.

Key evidence gaps

This review uncovered a number of key evidence gaps. Thus GAGE research could usefully focus on the following gaps in order to contribute to a more robust and comprehensive evidence base on adolescent girls' capabilities and programmatic responses:

- Investigate the long-term impacts of programmes targeting adolescent girls, especially in the areas of social norm change and girls' empowerment
- Explore what works to protect groups of girls, in terms of different age, socioeconomic status, caste/ethnicity and marital status, from violence
- In particular, investigate how best to protect girls from child marriage and provide robust evidence
- Explore what works to improve girls' mental health and emotional wellbeing, including strengthening their resilience
- Explore the effects of economic empowerment interventions, those aimed at younger adolescents as well as those aimed at improving the employment and income-generating opportunities of older adolescents and young women
- Generate insights about how best to reach and benefit younger adolescent girls with information and services, especially those aged 10-12 who remain invisible in the evidence base.

1. Introduction

This Rapid Country Evidence Mapping report outlines the key evidence on interventions to boost adolescent¹ girls' capabilities in six key domains in Nepal. Together these domains encompass the areas to be explored in GAGE's longitudinal studies: voice and agency, education and learning, economic empowerment, bodily autonomy, integrity and freedom from violence, psychosocial wellbeing and sexual and reproductive health, health and nutrition. This report is intended to highlight areas where knowledge on adolescent girls' interventions is strongest and to identify key gaps in order to inform the design of GAGE's longitudinal studies. It is also intended as a living document to be updated over the course of GAGE.

1.1 Methodology and overview of the literature

This Rapid Country Evidence Mapping is based on a systematic search process. Eight academic databases² were used to identify relevant material. These databases were chosen due to their thematic and geographical foci which were relevant to the capabilities and life opportunities of adolescent girls in Nepal. After searching within the databases, the results were screened on title and abstract in EPPI Reviewer (a systematic review software), followed by full-text screening for final inclusion. This search methodology provided a rigorous and time efficient approach to the literature search. To supplement these academic database searches, further key word searches were completed on Google Scholar and on websites of international, regional and national development organisations known to be active in Nepal. Full details of search locations and terms are included in Annex 2. The literature was single-screened with a number of borderline pieces of literature double-screened. The EPPI Reviewer was used for coding which assisted the evidence mapping and production of this report.

It has to be noted that the search team applied strict inclusion criteria for this evidence mapping, only including literature that addressed adolescent girls' capability development and factors that influence them. Given that the available literature on gender and development in Nepal is substantial, a focus on adolescent girls' ensured that only relevant literature was included.

Initial academic database searches yielded 4,665 results with 2,859 duplicates removed. Then, 1,806 records were screened on title and abstract for inclusion, with 227 full-text screened. Additional searches took place on Google Scholar (the first 50 hits of each search on Google Scholar were screened), and on the websites of international organisations and agencies working in Nepal as well as of government ministries and regional and Nepali NGOs. All included texts were snowballed.

The overall search process returned 56 impact studies and evaluations. Table 1 below outlines the thematic distribution of impact studies and evaluations and shows that the largest number of evaluations focused on voice and agency, education and learning, economic empowerment and physical wellbeing. The smallest number assessed psychosocial wellbeing interventions, indicating that these issues have been little studied in relation to adolescent girls in Nepal. The vast majority – 46 studies – were grey literature and only 10 studies were academic papers. Our search also generated several project documents with information about completed or ongoing interventions targeting adolescent girls in Nepal. In terms of their geographical distribution, examined interventions were implemented in all five development regions, but more were found in the mid-western and the central development regions; in terms of districts, a comparatively larger number of projects were found in the Bardiya, Kailali, Mahottari, Saptari and Surkhet districts. A mapping of gender-based violence NGOs and relevant interventions in the country indicated that some areas benefit more from

¹ Adolescents are defined as age 10-19 inclusive.

² Global Health, SocIndex, EconLit, Web of Science, IBSS, ERIC, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, and Bibliography of Asian Studies.

a high concentration of NGOs and a wide range of development projects, while other more rural areas remain largely overlooked due to a scarcity of resources and insecure conditions (Asia Foundation, 2010).

Table 1: Thematic foci of impact studies and evaluations

Thematic distribution of impact studies and evaluations	Number of studies (n=56)
Voice and agency	14
Education and learning	14
Economic empowerment	14
Sexual and reproductive health, health and nutrition	14
Bodily autonomy, integrity and freedom from violence	8
Psychosocial wellbeing	5

Note: Many sources generated insights on multiple capabilities and hence numbers add up to more than 56.

The majority of these studies combined qualitative and quantitative methods. In particular, 27 studies used mixed methodology, 15 used qualitative techniques, and 14 used purely quantitative methodology. Five studies used a quasi-experimental design, yet only three used a randomised design (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014; Jordans et al., 2010; Oster and Thornton, 2011), one of which had two treatment arms (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014).

The design of the evaluation studies was classified according to the Maryland Scale of Scientific Measurement (MSSM), a scale which is used to identify studies with strong and weak research designs. Studies with scores of 4-5 were considered to have very strong research designs with treatment and control groups, those with 2-3 medium strength designs, and those with 1, very weak designs. As evident in Table 2, the majority of reviewed studies had a weak strength design.

Table 2: Distribution of MSSM Scores

MSSM Coding Score	Number of Studies (n=56)
MSSM Score 1	22
MSSM Score 2	18
MSSM Score 3	5
MSSM Score 4	5
MSSM Score 5	6

1.2 Limitations

While the search strategy employed a systematic approach, the rapid and desk-based nature of this study means that some key literature may have been missed. Some relevant evaluations and studies may have been discarded as the age group was not specified precisely enough to be sure that studies were relevant to adolescent girls. Two researchers conducted single screening in parallel and consulted only when inclusion or exclusion was unclear, thus some relevant studies may have also been discarded because inclusion and exclusion decisions were made by a single researcher.

2. Voice and agency interventions

While some traditional norms shaping adolescent girls' lives have started to change with, for instance, the age of marriage increasing and girls having aspirations for an independent life, many girls continue to be discriminated against and undervalued in their families and communities, are expected to be submissive and obedient, and have limited opportunities to voice their concerns and engage in decision-making about their own lives (Ghimire et al., 2013).

2.1 Overview of the evidence

Our search generated 14 impact studies and evaluations of interventions aiming to transform discriminatory social norms and to enhance adolescent girls' voice and agency. Twelve of those sources were grey literature and only two were academic papers. Several programmes have targeted disadvantaged girls and sought to raise their awareness about issues that affect their lives, to build their leadership and communication skills, and to empower them to claim their rights. A common intervention type to increase child and youth participation in the country includes the establishment of clubs providing safe spaces and training to girls and boys to build their skills, advocate for their rights, and get involved in decision-making and local governance structures. There are also several initiatives targeting youth in conflict-affected areas and aiming to empower and enable them to contribute to peacebuilding and community welfare. Given the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, there is also an increasing number of child-centred disaster risk reduction projects that target adolescents to build their capacity to mitigate risks and become agents of change. We also found a few interventions seeking to transform social norms and promote more gender-equitable attitudes among adolescents and their parents along with two popular communication initiatives also aiming to change norms and improve adolescent knowledge and decision-making.

Only one intervention aiming to promote gender-equitable norms among young adolescents had a quasi-experimental design (IRH, 2011; Lundgren et al., 2013), indicating the lack of a rigorous evidence base. The majority of studies used qualitative methods, five combined qualitative with quantitative techniques, and only two used purely quantitative techniques. Our search also generated several project documents and other sources with information about relevant projects that provide a broader picture of the interventions in this capability area. A more detailed overview of all examined studies can be found in Annex 1.

2.2 Interventions improving girls' voice and leadership skills

In recent years, many interventions have targeted adolescent girls and sought to raise their awareness about their rights, build their communication and leadership skills, and enable them to take action. **My Rights My Voice** (2012-2016) was a multi-country intervention implemented by Oxfam in eight countries, including Nepal. The project targeted marginalised children and youth, with a particular focus on girls and young women, and sought to increase their awareness of their health and education rights, and to empower them to claim those rights. Indeed, the evaluation noted that the project empowered children, youth and young mothers to claim their rights to information and services that met their needs. In the first three years, the project worked in three districts with local partners and the national Association of Youth Organizations Nepal to support young people to voice their needs and to increase the accountability of the health system. Child Health Committees and Community Health Committees – run by women – supported young people to increase their knowledge and to campaign on health rights. Women led door-to-door campaigns to spread awareness, particularly among women on sexual and reproductive health issues. Moreover, radio programmes and street theatre were used to raise awareness among targeted communities. The evaluation found that radio shows increased accountability and played a key role in linking communities with national-level duty-bearers. Young participants were also provided with capacity building activities and thus built their capacity to monitor health

and education activities at community and district levels along with identifying community needs in each area. The programme also created a leadership forum for girls and young women, bringing them together and supporting them to become leaders of civil society organisations. Many of the Community Health Committees became more institutionalised and empowered female participants got involved in addressing important social problems affecting their lives. Furthermore, over 1,600 young women from the Community Discussion Classes were elected in key positions in local decision-making bodies. In the fourth year, the programme focused on child marriage and worked in four districts to empower youth, raise awareness of the harmful practice and prevent it happening (Van Esbroeck et al., 2016).

Between 2004 and 2007, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) implemented a non-formal education project for adolescent girls in three districts³. The two-phase project trained girls as peer educators to increase youth and community awareness about the negative effects of caste-associated menstrual taboos and the vulnerability of girls and women to HIV infection. The project was built on the view that adolescent girls can be trained and supported to become effective agents of change. A key concept was the psychological notion of individual self-efficacy, which refers to the leadership skills that build girls' confidence in their own ability to take action and achieve their goals. Related to individual efficacy is collective efficacy, which refers to the belief shared by members of a group that they can effectively work together to accomplish a goal. Thus the project aimed to build and strengthen girls' leadership self-efficacy and collective efficacy, and through training and support enable them to challenge discriminatory norms and practices that threatened their wellbeing, and to bring about normative behavioural change (CEDPA, 2008; Posner et al., 2009).

The first phase of the project, known as **Building Demand for Reproductive Health Awareness**, targeted 3,000 in- and out-of-school girls aged 10-19. Selected girls participated in weekly discussion groups led by trained facilitators with sessions on career and educational goals, self-awareness, marriage and parenthood, gender relations, women's rights, HIV and AIDS and reproductive health. Apart from participating in those groups, out-of-school girls also attended intensive literacy classes for five days a week during the school year. Almost 45% of those girls who completed the literacy training, enrolled in primary school after the first phase of the programme ended. During the second phase, known as the **Putting Learning into Action** project, both in- and out-of-school girls identified as key advocacy issues menstrual prohibitions and HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention respectively. The project thus selected and trained for ten months nearly 500 girls as peer educators on menstruation, social taboos, HIV prevention, discussion facilitation, social mobilisation and advocacy skills. The aim was to help them develop effective leadership skills and facilitate discussions to raise community awareness of these issues. Selected girls received information and training in public speaking skills and strategies, and were supported to select their own advocacy goals and identify the best ways to meet them. Teachers, health volunteers and village coordinating committees helped girls in their activities. Indeed, trained girls led weekly sessions for girls and young women as well as community activities, including making home visits, holding group talks and organising public events, to raise awareness among more than 1,500 other girls and 20,000 community members in nine months (CEDPA, 2008).

The quantitative evaluation examined project impact on participating girls, comparing baseline with end-line data, and concluded that it enabled them to develop their leadership skills and become agents of social change. Project participation significantly increased girls' individual self-efficacy; in particular, girls from high caste Mahottari and Udayapur districts and with completed primary education showed higher gains. In the case of collective efficacy, project participation also improved such perceptions, especially among high caste girls, girls from Udayapur, and those with had completed secondary education or higher. The project also increased girls' HIV knowledge and reduced the average number of menstrual taboos. Once again, high caste girls who also reported adherence to the greatest number of restrictions at the beginning of the project showed the greatest decline in such taboos by the end of the project. Their participation in groups enabled them to support each

3 Baglung, Mahottari and Udayapur.

other and build the skills to debate and lead, thus increasing their confidence and ability to abandon some restrictions. Their confidence also increased as they participated more in events and discussions. The evaluation also noted that the project increased community awareness of risky HIV-related behaviours and reduced harmful menstrual taboos (CEDPA, 2008; Posner et al., 2009).

The **Her Turn** project targets rural adolescent girls and their communities in two districts⁴ and provides education and empowerment workshops to improve girls' awareness of their rights and knowledge of reproductive health issues and violence. The project lasts four weeks and is delivered to groups of 20 girls in schools, although out-of-school girls are also invited to participate. Trained young women from the same community, the majority of whom are from low caste or marginalised ethnic groups, facilitate the workshops where girls improve their knowledge of issues that affect their lives. During the first week, girls learn about health, nutrition, hygiene and menstruation. Then they learn about and discuss issues of violence and safety such as child marriage, trafficking and domestic violence and sexual abuse, become aware of existing laws, and elect a group to form a Girl Support Committee; each committee works to resolve issues that hinder girls' wellbeing at school and community level. On the third week, girls work with trainers to develop their confidence and leadership skills, while on the fourth week girls design and implement a community project. The project also includes a mentorship scheme aiming to provide long-term guidance and support to girls on a monthly basis. Mentors work closely with the Girl Support Committees to solve problems and help girls at risk (Her Turn, 2015).

The mixed methods evaluation in 2014 with participating girls, trainers, teachers and parents found that the project reached more than 1,000 girls with average attendance exceeding 97%. While the project had initially targeted young adolescent girls aged 10-14, many trainers reported that girls aged 10-11 were too young to fully participate in the workshops, and thus the project age range was changed to target girls aged 12-16. The report noted that girls' average age was 13 years, and that older girls showed a higher level of understanding of the issues discussed. Between baseline and end-line, girls improved their knowledge about health and menstruation with 33% more girls knowing about puberty and menstrual hygiene. Girls also improved their knowledge of laws and response mechanisms to violence, with 64% more girls becoming aware of domestic violence laws, 44% more knowing how to respond to such violence and 34% more learning the legal age of marriage. Moreover, girls reported disseminating their knowledge to their family members and friends. Most girls also reported increased confidence and ability to speak in public. In particular, 28% more girls reported feeling powerful and 22% more girls feeling strong to deal with issues that affected their lives thanks to the training they attended. Many teachers also confirmed that participants improved their confidence levels and participated more in school activities. Community members, including leaders, also reported noticing positive changes in girls' behaviour after project completion. The Committees and mentors encouraged girls who had dropped out to return to school and improved school safety. The evaluation also notes that the project aims to involve boys and young men more actively, based on the idea that that they play a critical role in the process of girls' empowerment and that their support is crucial (Her Turn, 2015).

The DFID-funded 'Transforming the lives of adolescent girls and young women' research project included a qualitative assessment of two interventions in the Kailali district. The World Vision **Adolescent Reproductive Health** programme aimed to sensitise adolescent girls on sexual and reproductive health issues and to enable them to communicate such information to their peers and the community. The project included formation of girls' clubs providing safe spaces for girls from poor families to come together and raise their awareness about issues affecting their lives. In addition, the Department of Women's Development implemented the **Choose Your Future** project which targeted out-of-school adolescents with life skills and livelihood training along with provision of seed money. Its objective was to increase adolescent awareness and self-confidence, with a particular focus on adolescent girls. The study found that both projects improved knowledge and understanding among adolescent girls about issues such as gender-based violence, discrimination, child

4 Gorkha and Sindhupalchok.

marriage, trafficking and dropping out of school. Moreover, girls disseminated their knowledge to their peers through dialogue and to the wider community through street dramas. Both projects also enabled girls to overcome their shyness and become able to talk in public, to express their feelings in front of other people without being afraid of being ridiculed, and to increase their confidence to fight harmful practices such as child marriage and help girls return to school. Moreover, they enhanced girls' ability to solve problems in their daily lives, and increased their social capital and their sense of wellbeing as they acquired many new friends with whom they shared their problems and anxieties (Ghimire et al., 2015).

Raising Her Voice is an Oxfam women's empowerment intervention implemented in three rural districts⁵ characterised by high levels of women's marginalisation. It seeks to empower women of all ages by improving awareness of their rights with a particular focus on participating in decision-making structures, building their personal capacity and confidence, increasing their social capital through groups, association and alliances, motivating and enhancing their political participation, as well as improving public awareness and support for participation of poor and marginalised women in decision-making structures and thus contributing to norm change. To this end, the project set up Community Discussion Classes where women would come together for up to two hours daily to share their experiences, enhance their literacy and their knowledge of rights, and build their communication, advocacy and leadership skills under the guidance of local facilitators. Women were also encouraged to formulate action plans to tackle shared problems and to join local management committees dealing with education, health, sanitation or natural resources issues. They were also able to start savings and credit schemes. A national women's assembly and lobby meetings in the capital were organised to bring participants together to demand the implementation of existing policies such as quotas for women's political representation (which had not been met) and local governance improvement. While age-disaggregated data is not available, many adolescent girls in secondary school and young women started attending those classes in recent years (Green, 2015).

The evaluation noted that nearly 2,000 women attended the discussion classes and became agents of positive change in their communities, addressing discriminatory norms and practices, tackling violence against girls and women, improving their political representation and ensuring that their voices were heard. Women also learnt to read and write, making them able to deal confidently with transactions. Participants also reported fewer mobility constraints. They also stressed that they became more confident to speak up in public, organise meetings and strategise. They thus got involved in mediating community level conflicts, improving local infrastructure, protecting natural resources and improving sanitation facilities and hygiene education. Women's participation led to a prioritisation of public policies that focused on the poor, marginalised and excluded, including women's issues. For instance, public money was used to provide free services for pregnant women, mobile clinics and sanitation infrastructure. Women even traced and returned misused funds, brought cases of gender-based violence to justice, mediated disputes and tackled discriminatory practices. Thus, 87% of respondents in project villages reported changes in the attitudes and practices of local service providers compared to 3% in non-project villages. Female participation in community organisations and committees also increased, especially in committees with quotas. Nearly 75% of participants in the classes took up local leadership roles. The evaluation noted that those women who attended more training, were involved in more than one committees and were fully supported by their family, were more influential and powerful. Women were thus no longer considered to be a liability but rather an asset, and women leaders became role models for girls and women in their communities. After some male resistance at household level, women's contribution to local governance was valued and supported; 91% of respondents reported increased family and community support to women's representation in project villages compared to just 15% in non-project villages (Green, 2015).

5 Bardiya, Dailekh and Surkhet.

Women Empowerment for Transformation in the Churia area (SAKCHAM II, 2010-2012) was a women's empowerment project targeting 19,000 poor and marginalised women of all ages in three districts⁶ and aiming to increase their self-esteem and enable them to make decisions affecting their lives and to participate in local and national peace processes. The qualitative evaluation found that the project was effective as women participants became more aware of their civic and community rights, increased their confidence and ability to speak out in the household and in public places about issues that concerned them, and started requesting better services and participating in local peace committees. The project also targeted 4,000 men, provided training around gender roles and masculinities, and mobilised them as campaigners and advocates for gender mainstreaming; men started assisting women in their traditional domestic tasks such as caring for the children and helping with household chores when their wives attended project meetings. Thus men played a key role in supporting the process of women's empowerment. The project also provided training, awareness and advocacy campaigns to stakeholders at community, district and national levels to promote the two UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 for the rights of conflict-affected women and girls, and tried to incorporate women's issues into the new Constitution (Khanal et al., 2012).

2.3 Interventions targeting youth with peacebuilding objectives

Young people were at the core of the long civil conflict (1996-2006): many joined the armed parties and fought, prompted by unemployment, insecurity and lack of voice, while most were affected in some way (Sharma, 2008). In the post-conflict period, thousands of children and youth actively engaged in peacebuilding and violence prevention initiatives through clubs and networks and other child and youth peacebuilding activities that sought to increase awareness of their rights, build their leadership skills and involve them more in decision-making structures (Bista and O'Kane, 2015).

The **Youth Initiatives for Peace and Reconciliation**, a project implemented by Mercy Corps in five conflict-affected districts⁷ in the mid and far western Nepal, targeted 15,000 youth aged 16-30 and aimed to promote their active engagement in community reconciliation and decision-making processes. Participants were supported to form youth committees and to attend training and capacity-building activities. They participated in camps, sports competitions and cultural programmes, got involved in community projects and decision-making meetings, and participated in the development of radio programmes, street dramas and competitions promoting peace. Meeting and interacting with youth from other castes and communities enabled them to establish relationships and promote reconciliation in their daily lives (Sharma, 2008).

The qualitative evaluation estimated that the project reached more than 32,600 young people, created more than 840 youth clubs and committees, provided leadership and peacebuilding training to more than 4,700 youth, involved more than 2,000 in decision-making bodies, enabled youth to get involved in community infrastructure projects, organised mass meetings and events with thousands of young participants, and enabled them to get involved in publishing newsletters, producing radio programmes, and performing street dramas. Both boys and girls were equally involved in youth clubs and all project activities. Participants reported that the project improved their leadership skills, increased their involvement in community issues, reduced caste and ethnic barriers and promoted youth collaboration, and enabled them to develop dispute resolution skills. Participants also said that the project helped them improve their self-confidence and social interactions as they overcame their shyness and poor communication skills. They regularly held meetings to address pressing social issues in which all club members expressed their views, met with community leaders to discuss issues, and no longer felt intimidated by urban people or civil servants. Youth who did not participate in the project did not show such skills. The project also boosted participants' morale and increased their chances of finding employment. It also narrowed gaps between youth and adults at community level with village elders expressing their admiration for what those youth achieved, while they also became role models for younger

⁶ Chitwan, Kapilvastu and Makwanpur.

⁷ Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Kailali and Kanchanpur.

children who were attracted to youth clubs. Before the project started, adults felt that youth were lacking skills and experience, and were vulnerable to crime, while youth saw adults as people sticking to tradition and resisting change. Thanks to the project, many adults thought that youth clubs transformed the local communities, and youth realised that they could work with older people to improve their lives (Sharma, 2008).

Launched by the Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding⁸ in 2014, the **Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding** project was a multi-country project in four conflict-affected countries, including Nepal. The project targeted children and youth aged 10-29 in four districts⁹ and sought to increase their knowledge of child and human rights, support them to become active citizens for peace and facilitate their participation in local governance structures. A key component of the project was use of child and youth clubs, which provided participants with the spaces and opportunities to gain knowledge and skills, and to build their confidence to assert their rights and start participating in decision-making that affected their lives. The project also invested in the creative use of sports, theatre and other cultural activities to help youth expression and community awareness (Bista and O’Kane, 2015).

The qualitative evaluation found that the project increased adolescent and youth knowledge of rights, improved adolescent self-confidence and communication skills with peers and adults, promoted peaceful collaboration and reduced several types of discrimination, including age, caste and gender discrimination. Parents and elders started listening to child and youth suggestions more than previously. Ethnic and caste discrimination also declined due to increased understanding and continuous collaboration; for instance, youth-led initiatives and adult support led to a declaration of an untouchability-free Village Development Committee (VDC) in one district. Moreover, girls reported that while their participation was initially less acceptable, the project started changing that and girls increasingly expressed their views and took action to reduce injustice. They thus contributed to the reduction of various forms of violence in their communities. Participants reported reduced rates of child marriage, domestic violence and scolding of children, while two youth initiatives supported alcohol-free VDCs to reduce domestic and community violence. Changes in chhaupadi¹⁰ practices were also reported as a result of awareness initiatives run by child clubs with one VDC declared chhaupadi-free, thus enabling girls and women to sleep in their home during menstruation with the number of girls and women bitten by snakes or attacked by wild animals declining. In addition, Schools as Zones of Peace campaigns, advocating for children to have uninterrupted access to education and health care and not be used by warring parties, and codes of conducts developed by children, teachers and parents contributed to a reduction in corporal punishment, bullying and misuse of school children by political parties. In one district, youth also organised a peace festival to encourage peaceful opportunities to resolve conflict and promote social harmony. The evaluation also noted increased support to groups of vulnerable children and youth, including reintegration support for those affected by the armed conflict, increased enrolment of girls and boys in schools, and increased support to children and to families with a member living with a disability (Bista and O’Kane, 2015).

Despite adolescent and youth active involvement in their communities, the evaluation identified a lack of provision for child and youth representation in Local Peace Committees at all levels. Moreover, participants in all districts stressed that traditional beliefs and practices hindered adolescent and youth participation in peacebuilding, particularly for girls, thus requiring a more gender-sensitive approach. Parental support was also deemed important for children and female youth who faced mobility restrictions. Efforts to reach and involve out-of-school children and marginalised youth were more successful when skills training and income-generation activities for youth or family members were incorporated. Additional efforts were also required to assess and address protection and security risks faced by children and youth involved in peacebuilding

8 The Partnership is a community of practice that brings together INGOs, national and international child- and youth-focused organisations, scholars and advocates, and promotes the key role that young people can play in the peacebuilding processes around the world (Bista and O’Kane, 2015).

9 Doti, Mahottari, Nawalparasi and Rolpa.

10 Menstrual prohibitions. See Section 5.

activities, again particularly by girls and young women. The evaluation also pointed out that child peacebuilding initiatives received insufficient material and financial support (Bista and O’Kane, 2015).

Similarly, the **Enhancing Youth Participation in Decision Making in Nepal** project aimed to build the leadership capacities of young people to analyse and address the root causes of conflict and to foster democratisation at community level. Embracing the view that young people are agents of positive social change, the project targeted youth in four districts of eastern Terai¹¹ for a year and provided training, district youth leadership development workshops, and community peacebuilding projects implemented by youth clubs (Dhungana, 2009).

The qualitative evaluation found that the project provided young participants with knowledge and leadership skills in relation to community development, conflict mediation, transformation and peacebuilding. In particular, more than 460 youth in conflict-affected areas were made aware of conflict analysis and transformation, and acquired leadership skills. Respondents reported applying those skills to their daily lives and activities, including convincing youth in armed groups to return to their communities. Moreover, youth clubs started building linkages and creating district networks. Youth clubs were also provided with seed grants used for community welfare, and organised peace rallies, sports, dramas and debates to generate awareness about reconciliation, coexistence and community harmony. Positive youth mobilisation led to community recognition of youth potential and power with older community members and leaders starting regularly inviting those youth to meetings and public gatherings. Girls participated along with boys and some respondents noted that while girls had not been allowed to attend community gatherings in the past, their project participation made them not only attending but actively participating, being listened and appreciated for their suggestions. While efforts were made so that equal numbers of boys and girls were offered training, data showed a higher participation of boys in district leadership development training workshops. However, participating girls felt being empowered thanks to the training they received and stressed that while before they had been reluctant to speak in front of elders and never attended meetings, training helped them express their opinion confidently and clearly (Dhungana, 2009).

2.4 Child and youth club interventions

Child clubs became an important new kind of institution in Nepal over the 1990s and appeared to be both an expression and a promise of democracy and children’s rights (Rajbhandary et al., 2001). They began in 1991 in response to the call of the Convention on the Rights of the Child for children’s own perspectives to be given consideration. Many international NGOs with child-to-child training programmes began to convert them into child clubs, and a few years later local NGOs also began supporting child clubs’ development. A growing number of clubs have sought recognition with the Village Development Committees in order to establish a formal voice for children in local decision-making structures. In 2001, the Supreme Court made a ground-breaking decision to grant child clubs the right to register their organisation on the basis of Article 15 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the right to freedom of association. Children and youth, thus, successfully negotiated formal recognition and started to participate in decision-making, affecting the local community (UNICEF, 2004). Over the past decade, child clubs for girls and boys under 18 years have proliferated: while in 2005 there were nearly 3,000 child clubs, in 2014 more than 19,400 child clubs were registered or in contact with the District Child Welfare Board. Many of these clubs were established with the support of national or international NGOs and others by children themselves without external support (Bista and O’Kane, 2015).

The Nepali government recognises that child and youth clubs promote girls’ participation in social, economic and political life, with girls comprising 47% of members of school- and community-based child clubs (GoN, 2015). School-based child clubs target children aged between 9 and 16 years, while community-based child clubs involve children and adolescents aged between 8 and 18 years; out-of-school classes also include child

11 Dhanusha, Mahottari, Siraha and Saptari.

clubs with children aged between 10 and 14 years. Adolescents can also participate in youth clubs. Clubs provide spaces for children and youth to come together, engage in sports and recreational activities, receive skills training and attend awareness-raising sessions about their rights to enable them to challenge discriminatory norms and practices. They may thus attend leadership and communication skills training and awareness sessions on puberty and reproductive health, gender-based violence, sanitation and hygiene, education as well as peacebuilding or the environment. Club members also get involved in campaigning and advocating at community, district and national levels on policy issues that matter such as education, child labour and trafficking, health and sanitation and even increased public expenditure on children, using street drama, sports and cultural events to raise public awareness and motivate behavioural change. Moreover, as children and youth come and work together irrespective of their gender, caste or ethnicity, they also promote attitudes more sensitive to these identities (Adhikary et al., 2009; GoN and UNICEF, n.d.).

Built around a human rights approach, the UNICEF-led **Decentralised Action for Children and Women (DACAW)** programme was a community development intervention aiming to improve the lives of children and women in disadvantaged communities. A key programme component was child participation and mobilisation, primarily through child clubs. The qualitative evaluation noted that the programme established and strengthened child clubs in targeted areas with, for instance, the number of child clubs in the 15 original districts increasing from 4,000 to 5,000 within just one year. Clubs enabled children to get involved in decision-making that affected their lives and in community advocacy and policy influencing efforts. Child clubs at district and municipal levels became proactive advocates of the right to quality education and the need to make school environments child-friendly, and campaigned for improving health, hygiene and sanitation and tackling violence against children. In one instance, working children's clubs were established and their network collaborated with the municipal government to increase budget allocations on children, with the Biratnagar municipality becoming the only one in the country with the target to become child-friendly by 2015. In another instance, child clubs from six districts in the central region prepared a convention which was submitted to the Prime Minister for the provision of free and compulsory education to all children up to secondary level, and the prevention of child labour, child trafficking and sale of children. However, the evaluation also pointed out that child clubs were not fully integrated in the communities but worked in isolation. In many cases, children were not perceived and respected as positive change agents and citizens with rights. Thus the evaluation recommends that child clubs should be linked more closely to other community groups and organisations such as the paralegal committees and the Village Development Committees. Their management should also be strengthened and more ways to enhance child and youth participation than just through the club model should be explored (Adhikary et al., 2009).

Plan Nepal implements the **Better Life Option Programme (BLOP)**, which provides life skills training for adolescent girls and boys who join the nearly 600 BLOP centres. Training covers family life and reproductive health education and services; non-formal education; vocational skills training; and discussion of gender and rights issues including child marriage and trafficking. Findings indicate that children who participated in the centres and child clubs' activities had many positive experiences and emphasised that they helped them, particularly adolescent girls, to better express themselves and boosted their self-confidence (Plan International Nepal, 2014).

In collaboration with the Nepali government, UN agencies and NGOs, UNICEF recently launched the **Adolescent Development and Participation** programme. The programme seeks to ensure adolescent participation for adolescent-sensitive national plans and policies as well as to empower adolescents to initiate activities and interventions that would transform their communities. The programme is implemented in six UNICEF-priority districts¹² and in other districts with groups of at risk and vulnerable adolescents.

12 Mugu, Achham, Humla, Bajura, Saptari and Dhanusha.

2.5 Interventions addressing discriminatory norms and promoting gender equality

Aiming to promote gender-equitable norms among young adolescents, Save the Children developed the **Choices** curriculum linked to eight participatory activities. The curriculum and the accompanying activities were piloted in the Siraha district in the Terai region, characterised by high rates of child marriage, early motherhood and dowry. For three months in 2010, the intervention targeted young adolescents aged 10-14 in 12 existing child clubs with two-hour sessions weekly on gender issues, followed by discussion facilitated by child club graduates, one male and one female per club. Overall, 309 children participated with 48% of them being girls. In addition, 12 other child clubs without the intervention were selected to be the control group. Both the intervention and the control group included Dalit adolescents as well as adolescents from other disadvantaged castes (IRH, 2011; Lundgren et al., 2013).

The evaluation used a quasi-experimental design to assess the effectiveness of Choices in shifting gender attitudes, behaviours and practices of participating boys and girls. Qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews with participants and focus group discussions with parents were also used at end-line. The study found that the intervention contributed to more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours among both participating boys and girls. Quantitative data showed improvements in indicators measuring gender discrimination, social image, control and dominance, violence and girls' education, gender roles and acceptance of traditional norms, after participation in the project. Qualitative data also reinforced those findings as most adolescents recognised gender inequality and felt that it was unfair and had to change (IRH, 2011).

More boys in the intervention group than in the control group were able to recognise gender inequality and pointed out that they started making small behavioural changes by helping their mothers and sisters with household chores more frequently than before the project started. Indeed, there was a slight reduction in the number of sisters performing household chores in the intervention group as more brothers helped them. Brothers also helped their sisters with school work, advocated for their sisters' education and against child marriage, and expressed and showed their affection to them more frequently. They also admitted discussing those issues with family members, friends and neighbours and advising them to act in a similar way. On the other hand, more girls in the intervention area confirmed that their brothers and other boys in the community did make small changes in their attitudes and behaviours. Girls in the intervention area were also more comfortable expressing their opinion compared to girls in the control group, and overall felt empowered to talk to their parents about their future, and ask to continue their education and delay their marriage. Finally, parents in the intervention area also reported that their sons were helping their sisters with chores and school work, and that their households were enjoying more harmony and peace (IRH, 2011).

A notable difference between the intervention and the control group was also that most participants in Choices stated that girls in their community were unhappy and would be happier if they had more opportunities and freedom like their brothers. Both boys and girls participants felt that there should be no discrimination between sons and daughters and that parents should provide both of them with equal opportunities. Girls in the intervention group said that women are capable of doing everything from earning money to working in the field and cutting wood. Yet in the control group most boys felt that girls should be prepared and encouraged to become good housewives and only a handful stated that girls may be unhappy with their lives. Girls in the control group acknowledged gender discrimination in the division of labour, yet the majority accepted the situation (Lundgren et al., 2013).

The study thus concluded that the intervention was indeed effective in shifting gender norms in terms of education opportunities and household gender roles and responsibilities; yet it also suggested that sustainable change requires engaging also with parents and the community to create the necessary supportive environment for gender-equitable norms. It also pointed out that the evaluation was conducted one month

after the intervention ended, meaning there might not have been sufficient time for behavioural change to be observable or that any observed changes might not be sustained (IRH, 2011).

In 2011, Save the Children developed a second behavioural change intervention called **Promises**, which targeted the community where Choices had been implemented with the objective to change gender-related normative values around child marriage, girls' education and domestic violence. These behaviours were specifically chosen as those with the greatest impact on the lives of young adolescents. A process evaluation of Promises noted that the intervention led to behavioural changes with the key reason for the reported changes being 'advice from people they liked'. A second factor leading to change was the fear of scarcity or realisation of what would be lost; that is to say, girls being unable to feel confident, learn skills, create friendships, and become economically independent. Once again, findings suggested that the short timeframe of two months was effective. The positive impact of Choices and Promises led to the development of **Voices**, an approach that uses the voices of mothers and fathers through testimonials to influence norm change among other parents in the community so that they become more supportive of the changes young adolescents make as result of their participation in Choices (Save the Children, 2014).

2.6 Communication interventions

Communication initiatives to disseminate information, raise awareness about various issues and change attitudes are widely used in Nepal. The UNICEF-led **Meena Communication Initiative** has been a large multi-media intervention in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal) that uses entertaining stories to improve the awareness, knowledge, attitudes and practices of the audience in relation to the status, rights and treatment of girls. The intervention is built around the stories of a nine-year-old South Asian girl named Meena, her family and community. Intervention materials are developed in collaboration with country offices and are linked to education, health and social development programmes undertaken by UNICEF. In Nepal, the initiative included posters, stickers, radio broadcasts, a television series (the Meena Cartoon), and the appointment of Meena as a goodwill ambassador and spokesperson for girls. The initiative also reached villages in the mountainous areas with village screenings of Meena followed by group discussions, essay competitions, debates and street drama. Meena booklets were also included in UNICEF out-of-school programmes, providing information and promoting discussions around girls' rights. Using mixed methods, a multi-country evaluation of the initiative found that Nepali girls compared themselves to Meena and aspired to do what she does, while mothers said that Meena convinced them that girls should also be educated and that both girls and boys should be given equal treatment. Indeed, over 94% of the children exposed to Meena messages, reported being treated equally in their family irrespective of their gender compared to 84% of children not exposed to the intervention. In discussions, children also indicated that they preferred Meena to other programmes as it was both educational and entertaining (Chesterton, 2004). Many child clubs have also used the Meena materials to promote gender equality (UNICEF, 2004).

Saathi Sanga Manka Kura¹³ (SSMK – 'Chatting with my best friend') is a radio programme which is designed and developed by young people and targets youth in Nepal. Launched in 2001 by UNICEF Nepal, it is now an established communication intervention with a weekly episode of 45 minutes on issues of puberty, sexual and reproductive health, peer pressure and resistance, drug abuse and HIV and AIDS, education and work opportunities. Its aim is to provide adolescents and young people with the life skills that will enable them to make informed decisions about issues that matter in their daily lives and to empower them to solve daily problems and tackle peer pressure. The programme is very popular with over 8 million regular listeners across the country (Ghimire et al., 2015). In collaboration with local organisations and village development committees, listeners have created their own clubs and organise activities such as training programmes and awareness campaigns on gender, caste discrimination or menstrual hygiene issues. Club members also engage

13 <http://ssmk.org/saathi-sanga-manka-kura-chatting-my-best-friend>

with their communities to influence decision-making related to youth issues and help friends and family members to seek appropriate services. Those listeners' clubs also work in coordination with the 'SSMK youth hubs' which are located in the five development regions of the country. Since 2007, the programme website also disseminates news and encourages listeners to share their views and contact the programme in case they have a particular problem or concern; the production team replies providing life skills information suited to the needs of each individual that contacts the programme. A recent survey found that 91% of Nepali youth have listened to the programme and pointed out that it is the most popular programme among youth listeners, with three-quarters of adolescent boys and over two-thirds of adolescent girls aged 15-19 listening to it.

2.7 Child-centred disaster risk reduction interventions

Given the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, the government also supports mainstreaming gender and empowering women and girls to adapt to climate change. The National Climate Change Support Programme targeted 550,000 women and girls and aimed to reduce their vulnerability through local adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities (GoN, 2015). Moreover, NGOs increasingly implement child-centred DRR projects in areas with high vulnerability and exposure to disasters in order to build child and community capacity to better respond, prevent and mitigate their impacts. Such projects are built around the fact that children are often the most vulnerable, yet they can play a crucial role in changing community attitudes and practices (Plan International Nepal, 2012).

For instance, in 2010, Plan piloted an 11-month **Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction** intervention in Sunsari district in eastern Nepal with the objective of building the capacity of both government bodies and communities, including children, and of strengthening their resilience. The qualitative evaluation found that the project benefited more than 30,800 people and made children and communities more aware about DRR through behavioural change communication materials, radio broadcasts, street drama and training sessions about what they need to do to reduce risk. Hundreds of children and youth attended child-centred DRR training, and around 120 of them (one-third girls) participated in first aid and search and rescue training sessions; they also received a first aid kit and search-and-rescue material to use. The training had a positive impact as trainees started to advocate for constructing more and safer toilets and drinking water facilities in their schools and for making these facilities more child-friendly. They also felt that they knew what to do in response to a disaster and identified areas of risk. Parents and teachers also became more aware of the risks that disasters expose their children to, including sexual abuse and trafficking. The project also created a number of participatory and inclusive DRR institutions to serve as child-centred DRR, fostering resilience with the participation of girls and young women, and members of Dalits, indigenous ethnic groups, and people with disabilities. Children and adults also attended leadership and skills training to enable them to voice their concerns and advocate for change. More than 1,300 children and youth participated in 12 DRR-related activities that increased their understanding of disasters and mobilised them to share their knowledge with peers, families and communities, convincing school management committees of the role children can play in DRR. Overall, the project enabled children to realise that they have the capacity to respond to disaster and play a key role in that response; both children and adults became confident about their own ability to respond to disaster instead of feeling like helpless victims at the mercy of God. The project also built their capacity to do so, with communities preparing development plans which included child-centred provisions for responding to disasters (Plan International Nepal, 2012).

2.8 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps

There is a considerable and growing body of literature on interventions seeking to transform discriminatory social norms, increase adolescent girls' voice and promote their agency. Moreover, these interventions combine various objectives from empowering girls and women to improve their lives to increasing child participation in local governance, enabling youth involvement in peacebuilding or strengthening adolescent resilience to disasters. Evidence indicates that participation with other girls or boys in clubs which provide safe

spaces, awareness-raising activities, skills training and peer support, enables girls to develop their leadership and communication skills, increase their self-confidence, voice their concerns and engage in decision-making, thus becoming agents of positive change for their own lives and their communities. On the other hand, the potential of those clubs should not be overstated and more research is needed to investigate the interaction of boys and girls because, although both participate in activities, in some cases boys still dominate decision-making. Moreover, as the UNICEF evaluation noted (Adhikary et al., 2009), child clubs may facilitate adolescent involvement in local governance structures in Nepal, yet they are often not fully integrated in communities and their members are not always perceived and respected as citizens with rights. Interventions targeting boys and parents to change norms and attitudes and create an enabling environment also appear to be important in terms of these groups accepting the right of girls to make decisions and act for themselves. Yet there is still limited evidence on how to reach out-of-school girls, girls from disadvantaged groups and married girls who have so far remained invisible in the evidence base. We also know little about what works for younger adolescents, especially those aged 10-12, who need age-appropriate strategies to benefit from such interventions. Although the successful norm change Choices pilot succeeded in changing attitudes and behaviours within just three months (IRH, 2011), further research is also needed to confirm the sustainability of this change. Overall, we are in need of more and better evaluations to test innovative approaches and identify best practices to enhance the voice and agency of adolescent girls.

3. Education and learning interventions

Over the last decades, Nepal has made significant progress in promoting girls' education and gender parity at all levels, with girls' enrolment now higher than boys at primary and secondary education, thanks to a combination of scholarships, improved learning environments, increased parental awareness and community mobilisation (GoN, 2015; World Bank, 2015). Yet education quality is low and girls from marginalised groups, including girls with disabilities, continue to face discrimination (DPMG, 2015; World Bank, 2016). Huge challenges thus remain in achieving gender equality in education: the value of girls' scholarships needs to increase to better reflect the actual direct cost of sending a girl to school; more effective policies against gender-based violence in schools need to be developed and implemented; women's participation in the education sector as teachers and administrators should increase; sectoral data collection and management systems should improve; accountability needs to be strengthened; and gender mainstreaming has to be implemented at all stages of the education planning and implementation (Terry and Thapa, 2012). Discriminatory norms and practices that continue to hinder the access and attendance of poor, Dalit and marginalised girls (GoN, 2015) should also be addressed.

3.1 Overview of the evidence

Our search generated 14 impact studies and evaluations of education-related interventions, with 12 being grey literature and the remaining two academic papers. The majority of these studies assess the effects of interventions targeting girls and aiming to improve their school enrolment and attendance. In addition, a few impact studies focused on interventions aiming to assist out-of-school girls as well as child labourers to return or enrol to school. A common type of education interventions is financial assistance to girls or disadvantaged children, followed by establishment or strengthening of girls' school clubs which provide girls with safe spaces and life skills training, and improvements in the enabling environment through awareness-raising initiatives targeting parents and communities around the importance of girls' education. Five studies combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies, six others used only qualitative techniques, and only three used purely quantitative methodology. In particular, one used a randomised control trial (RCT) to evaluate a child labour and schooling intervention (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014). We also found several sources with information about ongoing education interventions targeting adolescent girls as well as reports investigating the results of education sectoral policies and donors' related programmes. A more detailed overview of all examined studies is provided in Annex 1.

3.2 Scholarships and financial incentive programmes

Since the 1970s, the government, UN agencies, the donor community, and local and international NGOs have implemented several scholarship and incentive programmes in Nepal as a key strategy to promote the education of girls and children of disadvantaged communities and to improve their enrolment, attendance and learning outcomes (Acharya and Luitel, 2006). The first girls' scholarship programme was introduced in 1971 and since then has evolved. Education initiatives such as the Education for All National Plan of Action and the Secondary Education Support Programme prioritised a more inclusive education system and provided scholarships and hostel facilities for marginalised and excluded children, with the aim to reduce gender inequality and discrimination (ERDCN, 2011). More recently, the School Sector Reform Programme succeeded in promoting gender equality and particularly in achieving gender parity at primary and secondary level. Measures taken included providing scholarships to girls, hiring more female teachers, providing separate toilets for girls and boys, and making schools safer environments where sexual harassment and abuse are no longer tolerated (DPMG, 2015); in addition, textbooks free from gender bias and without gender stereotypes were introduced (Terry and Thapa, 2012). Many donor agencies are currently interested in adolescent girls and

girls' education and are pushing this agenda forward along with UN agencies and the government (DPMG, 2015).

Indeed, the Nepali government in collaboration with UN agencies, such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA, have implemented a number of schemes to support girls and disadvantaged children to access basic education. These programmes include the **50% Girls Scholarship Programme** providing scholarships to half of the girls enrolled at primary school in the country, the **Dalit Scholarship** for all Dalit students in grades 1-8 with at least 80% attendance, the **Girls scholarship in Karnali zone** for girls in grade 6-10 as well as scholarships and hostel accommodation for secondary education students (ERDCN, 2011).

Since the 1990s, several studies assessed the effectiveness and management of these schemes with a number of studies by the Research Centre for Education Innovation and Development (CERID) finding mostly positive effects in increasing girls' enrolment. Overall, impact studies showed mixed results in terms of effectiveness, management and impact of the scholarship programmes aimed at girl students. They identified problems with reaching disadvantaged ethnic groups, variations in the timing of the incentive distribution and its amount, limited coordination, poor management, lack of clear guidelines and problems with recipient selection criteria, and weak monitoring and follow-up (ERDCN, 2011; World Bank, 2015). However, so far there is no longitudinal study which is required to assess their impact on both the recipients and the Nepali education system (Acharya and Luitel, 2006), while a few studies note that there is little evidence that schools improved educational outcomes, especially for disadvantaged and marginalised children (Acharya and Luitel, 2006; DPMG, 2015).

A mixed methods study in five districts¹⁴ assessed the impact of three government incentive programmes: the **Educational Incentive Programme for Girls** (EIPG) implemented as a pilot in 17 districts and targeting disadvantaged girls, the **Primary School Scholarship for All Girls** implemented in 40 districts, and the Dalit Scholarship implemented in all districts. The study reported an increase in the enrolment of girls after the introduction of the EIPG programme in the sample districts over a period of three years, with the highest average increase recorded annually being 26%¹⁵. However, the study also noted that in the district with the highest increase, some parents enrolled their daughters just for the incentive and then sent their children to private schools. On the other hand, girls in another district were enrolled but did not attend school regularly. Retention rates also increased, yet more among younger recipient girls aged 6-10 than among older girls aged 11-15 in the surveyed districts (ranging from 73% in Khotang to 11% in Parsa). The number of Dalit students also increased (in Nawalparasi, the number of Dalit girls actually increased only since the introduction of the EIPG), while in the case of the third programme no significant increase was identified – just a 6% increase in girls' enrolment (Phuyal et al., 2003).

The study also found that participation of girls and children from disadvantaged caste or ethnic groups in the programmes was low due to a number of reasons such as girls' names missing from the programme list along with names of out-of-school girls, parents aiming to marry off their daughters early instead of sending them to school, the Muslim community preferring madrasas as knowledge of the Quran was essential for girls' marriage, and many schools suffering from inadequate infrastructure and teacher supply. The modality used for selecting recipients along with the amount provided often varied among districts. Moreover, scholarship quotas were often inadequate to meet the needs of all eligible students. An additional problem identified was lack of programme monitoring and follow-up. Finally, there were limited community initiatives to increase parental awareness of the scholarship programmes or children's right to education, and to mobilise communities for girls' education which could help programme implementation and uptake (Phuyal et al., 2003).

¹⁴ Darchula, Kapilvastu, Khotang, Nawalparasi and Parsa.

¹⁵ In Nawalparasi, the average annual increase in girls' enrolment was 26% compared with 22% in Parsa and just 10% in Khotang (Phuyal et al., 2003).

Using qualitative methodology, a study in three districts¹⁶ also investigated the effectiveness of the scholarship and incentive programmes running there, including the 50% Girls Scholarship, the Dalit Scholarship, the World Food Programme (WFP) **Food-for-Education programme** (providing a midday meal for students in public primary and lower secondary schools and two litres of vegetable oil monthly for girls with 80% attendance), UNFPA and UNICEF financial assistance, and various NGO and donor schemes for disadvantaged children. Most respondents agreed that these schemes reached the target population, yet they complained that they did not reach all the children who were in need. Teachers reported that since the introduction of the scholarships, girls' school enrolment and attendance increased in selected schools; incentives in the form of food and oil were noted as the most effective means to increase girls' enrolment and attendance (Acharya and Luitel, 2006).

Recipients were regarded highly by their families and reported that they were respected and their ideas were valued. In some cases, girls who brought the scholarship money home were valued more than boys in family decision-making. However, there were cases of girls sent to schools in order for the family to access the cash assistance. In the case of the Dalit scholarship, Dalits claimed the scholarship as their right, yet some recipients did not want to be labelled as Dalits and wanted the scholarship to be named differently. Apart from providing financial or material assistance, these schemes did not explicitly try to address discriminatory social norms, which often remained unchanged and hindered programme effectiveness. For instance, no girl in one programme district benefited from the hostel scholarship for higher education as parents continued to allow their boys to go but kept their girls at home on grounds that they were vulnerable and required protection (Acharya and Luitel, 2006).

A more recent impact study focused on the 50% Girls' Scholarship Programme and its successor, **the 100% Girls' Scholarship Programme**, which in 2011 started expanding the government policy to help all disadvantaged and marginalised girls access education. Combining a survey with qualitative techniques in seven districts¹⁷, the study found that the 50% Scholarship contributed to increased girls' enrolment; parents also reported that the programme increased girls' enrolment. Moreover, data from 12 out of the 14 surveyed schools over the past three years showed that girls who benefited from the 50% programme also increased their school attendance over time compared to non-recipients whose increase was less than that of the scholarship recipients. The dropout rates of girls recipients were also lower than the overall student dropout rate – on average around 3%. Although the majority of parents thought that the amount provided was inadequate, 85% said that it helped their children to study. In particular, they thought that it enabled their daughters to continue studying, increased their motivation to learn, supported their regular school attendance and better exam results, and also enhanced their dignity and self-respect. The vast majority of girls also thought that the scheme helped their studies (ERDCN, 2011). The study notes that according to a previous assessment the 50% programme was more effective at secondary level than in primary and lower secondary school levels, without giving any further explanation (DOE/CENSORD 2010 cited in ERDCN, 2011).

Parents also reported that for the past three years the proportion of girl recipients increased from 28% to 62%. In many schools, the entire scholarship amount was distributed equally to all students and thus girls were provided with a smaller amount than the one allocated to each individual by the ministry. The amount of money received by the recipients ranged between 50 and 500 rupees (US\$0.50-US\$4.50), with the majority of both parents and girls feeling that the provided amount was insufficient and the majority asking for at least 800-1,000 rupees annually. Although the vast majority (92%) received cash, the majority of girls (61%) would prefer stationery and school uniforms. Respondents also thought that girls from poor households should be supported more and that those households should also be offered additional support. Respondents also noted that low-income parents had their children in public schools, although they would have preferred them attending private schools where the quality of education is considered to be better (ERDCN, 2011).

16 Rasuwa, Saptari and Surkhet.

17 Badiya, Dailekh, Jhapa, Rasuwa, Lalitpur, Gorkha and Jumla.

The information provided about the programme was often inadequate with 40% of parents and 36% of girl students unaware of the name of the scholarship received – especially those from the Terai and mid-western region. The main source of information were teachers and head teachers. The study concluded that the programme contributed to raising girls' enrolment and supported their regular attendance, yet it also cautiously noted that a single factor like the provision of the scholarship could not be given credit for all positive changes and the increase in the numbers of girl students (ERDCN, 2011).

Poverty alleviation programmes can also address households' financial constraints and indirectly increase girls' school enrolment. The **Nepal Poverty Alleviation Fund** was a World Bank community-driven development programme aiming to improve rural welfare in the 40 poorest districts of Nepal. Since its launch in 2004, the programme indeed benefited over 2.5 million people, almost 10% of the population. Using two rounds of survey data and a difference-in-difference combined with instrumental variable estimation method, a World Bank study estimated that the programme also led to a 14 percentage point increase in school enrolment for all children and adolescents aged 6 to 15 years; in particular, girls benefited more, with a 21 percentage point net increase. The study thus concludes that as the household income increased, parents were able to send their daughters to school, while community mobilisation as part of the community organisations established by the programme may have convinced and motivated parents about the importance of schooling (Parajuli et al., 2012).

3.3 Clubs and life skills training

Many education-related interventions included creation or strengthening of girls' clubs and life skills training. The **After-School Programme for girls** was launched in 2012 as part of the UNICEF-funded Let Us Learn programme in Nepal. It was implemented in the Parsa and Saptari districts in response to high dropout rates of adolescent girls from disadvantaged communities with large Dalit and Muslim populations. The project identified that lack of friends, play and social capital, difficulty doing or completing homework, and problems linked to menstruation were responsible for girls' poor attendance. Girls themselves identified household chores as a major problem not allowing them enough time to complete their homework, and thus leading to irregular school attendance. They also noted menstruation as another key problem leading to irregular attendance and dropping out. The project thus targeted at-risk girls enrolled in grades 6 to 8 and aimed to improve their regular attendance and attitude towards schooling through the provision of school-based sports clubs, homework clubs and menstrual hygiene instruction provided by trained female teachers (Gaible, 2015).

The qualitative evaluation found that the project was effective in terms of increasing girls' attendance. Interviewed girls and head teachers reported that project participants attended school more regularly. Girls attributed this to the menstruation hygiene instruction they received and to their participation in the homework groups. They also said that their physical and emotional wellbeing improved and linked it to their participation in sports activities. Girls also strengthened friendships, increased their self-confidence, felt equal to boys, and improved their relationships with their parents and teachers. The programme also trained 346 Young Champions – 117 of them female. However, the evaluation pointed out that the project had limited impact on learning outcomes, as girls did not find that the homework groups improved their school performance. Another problem was the limited involvement of girls from disadvantaged groups due to a combination of factors, including the low enrolment of Dalit girls in schools, limited participation of low-performing girls, and the parental approval required to allow girls to participate in sports clubs and homework groups (Gaible, 2015).

The **Girls' Education Programme** (GEP) was an NGO-led girls' empowerment intervention in four districts¹⁸ aiming to motivate adolescent girls to stay in school and to inspire parents to keep their daughters in school in communities with high dropout rates. It thus had three main components: engaging girls regularly in school activities, including child clubs, to increase their interest in attending school and to empower them; providing

18 Achlam, Bajura, Kalikot and Mugu.

them with life skills and livelihood information in peer-led sessions to make education more relevant to girls and highlight its practical benefits; and raising parental awareness of the importance of girls' education through four radio programmes, meetings, community events and training sessions. Overall, GEP targeted nearly 11,250 adolescent girls and boys at grades 5 to 9; created 84 child clubs; provided more than 5,700 girls with peer-support homework groups, sports activities and cultural activities; and provided nearly 2,360 parents – both fathers and mothers with a daughter or a daughter-in-law aged 10-19 – with training sessions (Alejos, 2015).

The mixed methods evaluation concluded that the programme was effective: girls' participation in school activities – mostly child clubs – increased from 11% at baseline to 31% at end-line with a statistically significant difference. Data also shows that in the surveyed schools, girls' dropout rates declined by 28% and their attendance increased from 15-16 to 21 days monthly. Girls also reported feeling empowered with increased self-confidence and ability to speak out in public compared with their previous shyness. The programme also increased the number of students with a good level of knowledge on livelihood options and life skills, especially students in grades 5 to 8 with the difference being statistically significant. This increase was more significant among girls than boys, particularly for life skills. Finally, the programme changed parental attitudes towards girls' education: trained parents increased their positive attitudes towards girls' education by nearly 28 percentage points, and stated that they were willing to promote girls' education in their community. In addition, they reported increased awareness about the harmful practice of dowry and early pregnancy. However, some girls felt that the programme should have focused more on parents as they are the key decision makers for girls' education, while they also indicated that it should have also addressed the role of poverty (Alejos, 2015).

The NGO Room to Read has implemented another programme with the same title and similar objectives. Since 2001, the **Girls' Education Programme (GEP)** has targeted adolescent girls from economically disadvantaged areas and helps them complete secondary school, acquire the life skills they need and make informed decisions about their lives, improving their self-awareness, self-efficacy and social awareness. Girls attend life skill sessions provided by social mobilisers, local women who mentor girls, work closely with them and their families to ensure that girls stay in school, and advocate in the community on girls' education (Cadena et al., 2015). Since its launch, the programme has benefited more than 4,800 girls¹⁹.

The mixed methods evaluation in Bardiya district found that the programme had a positive impact on the lives of participating girls. Girls' enrolment and retention rates improved. Girls were also able to improve their overall performance and complete their secondary education. Moreover, their parents and communities understood the importance of girls' education, while girls themselves felt empowered to talk to their parents, siblings and communities about their education and how it can contribute to national development. Girls also reported enjoying the life skills sessions and gaining valuable knowledge which they could apply in their daily lives, such as problem-solving skills, saving habits, time management ability and public speaking. On their part, social mobilisers also noted that girls overcame their shyness and were able to express themselves in public along with improving their communication skills and their ability to interact effectively. Parents also reported that their daughters increased their self-confidence and self-awareness, especially in relation to how their body functions and were thus less anxious during menstruation. They also mentioned that their daughters developed leadership skills and were more confident speaking in public. In addition, some girls used their acquired skills and supported by social mobilisers were able to prevent or at least prolong an early marriage. However, the evaluation also pointed out that support was only provided to schools for four years and then stopped, while continuous support to girls and partnerships with existing programmes would maximise programme impact. Lack of continuous support could also force girls to adopt the same behavioural patterns they used to before participating in the programme. In addition, girls were not provided with opportunities to

19 <https://www.roomtoread.org/impact-reach/>

put into practice the skills they had gained. Finally, the exclusion of boys limited programme impact as adolescent boys can also become agents of change and help empower girls (Cadena et al., 2015).

Room to Read also implemented the **Literacy Programme**, a comprehensive programme supporting children to become independent readers and improve their learning outcomes through publishing children's books in local languages, building new classrooms and libraries, providing instruction to teachers to deliver high quality literacy education, and establishing school libraries and reading activities. In Nepal, the programme has run in more than 3,750 schools²⁰. Using mixed methods, the evaluation assessed programme impact on children's reading habits in the Nawalparasi district. It found that the Literacy Programme influenced and encouraged children's reading habits, especially those in grade 4, with 70% of them reading five or more books a month. Interestingly, both boys and girls read about the same number of books in a month and the majority used a school library to find books and choose the ones they would like to read. However, girls spent more time reading than boys. Students reported enjoying reading on their free time and believed that it is an easy and enjoyable activity which would improve their education and provide them with better opportunities in the future. Those who participated in the reading and writing instruction programme had better reading abilities and habits. However, the evaluation also notes that the programme suffered from lack of stakeholder involvement, short project time and sustainability. Parental involvement in reading activities, and provision of additional training to teachers, librarians and school staff could maximise programme impact. Monitoring and follow-up also had to improve and include indicators to track the reading habits of boys and girls (Cadena et al., 2015).

Established in collaboration with the Nepali government in 23 districts, the UNICEF **Decentralised Action for Children and Women** (DACA) was a multi-sectoral community development programme that also aimed to increase access to quality basic education for girls and children from disadvantaged groups, and to provide learning opportunities for at-risk children and adolescents and for those out of school in both urban and rural areas. Both boys and girls were encouraged to participate in child and youth clubs and advocate for their right to education and a child-friendly school environment. The qualitative evaluation pointed out that the programme increased school enrolment and literacy rates and contributed to community awareness of children's right to education (Adhikary et al., 2009).

Parents learnt to appreciate the importance of giving their children quality education and this led to increased demand for better educational services, with the majority of communities asking the district education office to allocate more resources to local schools. As a result, school infrastructure improved along with teachers' skills and school governance, creating a more child-friendly environment with increased transparency and accountability. School enrolment and retention rates also improved. Moreover, communities requested the provision of alternative education opportunities for out-of-school working children and children from most disadvantaged households. Child and youth clubs also engaged in rights advocacy, while in some areas teachers became more aware and sensitive to the learning needs of their students. Moreover, the programme linked education to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) initiatives to address girls' disadvantage and improve their school attendance through the provision of separate toilet facilities. In particular, girls' enrolment increased from 87% to 89% between 2007 and 2008 in the DACA districts, an increase above the national average. Dalit enrolment also increased with the increase again being proportionally greater in DACA districts compared to non-DACA districts. Moreover, the programme helped both rural and urban out-of-school adolescents aged 10-19 to improve their basic literacy, numeracy and life skills, with more than 60% of them girls (Adhikary et al., 2009).

The **Young Champions for Education** programme was a United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) South Asia intervention model to mobilise young people to address multiple issues related to girls' education and gender equality and to help school management create a girl-friendly environment. The programme included training of youth trainers, preparing an action plan and implementing this plan. In Nepal, Youth

20 <https://www.roomtoread.org/impact-reach/>

Champions formed school groups and youth clubs, disseminated information, education and communication materials, mobilised the media, monitored students' attendance, networked with other community-based organisations and child clubs, followed up on girls' education activities with district partners, and engaged in UNICEF campaigns to enrol out-of-school children (UNGEI, 2012).

3.4 Interventions targeting out-of-school girls

Several interventions explicitly targeted out-of-school adolescent girls. The **Girls Access to Education (GATE)** project was launched in the Saptari district in 2011 as part of the UNICEF-funded Let Us Learn programme in Nepal. It targeted girls aged 10-18 who had never enrolled in school and those who had dropped out, and sought to help them participate in community-based, non-formal education in order to build their literacy, numeracy and life skills, increase their knowledge of social and health issues, mainstream those girls into public schools, and improve their overall wellbeing. Apart from providing flexible two-hour class sessions, six days a week using child-friendly pedagogies, the project also included community advocacy (Gaible, 2015).

The qualitative evaluation found that GATE was effective in providing literacy, numeracy and life skills to targeted out-of-school girls; in addition, 47% of girls were finally mainstreamed into government primary schools. Participants also reported improved hygiene and menstruation practices. However, older girls aged 15-18 (about 42% of participants) were unable to continue to formal education as they did not attain the skills enabling them to be mainstreamed into age-appropriate (lower-secondary or secondary) classes. Thus participants and other stakeholders consistently requested additional instruction, particularly provision of technical and vocational education and training, to enable those girls to find employment. Girls also noted that the life skills content of the GATE curriculum was only partially relevant to their lives and thus had to change. Participants also identified two major obstacles to their school attendance: household chores and the labour they had to perform as they were hired out to other adults to work on their fields during the paddy planting and harvesting periods (Gaible, 2015).

Between 2004 and 2005, UNESCO undertook an action research project to improve the access and retention of out-of-school Dalit girls aged 4 to 22. Its key component was community mobilisation to address discriminatory social norms and gain people's will on girls' education; thus the project was named **Winning People's Will** initiative and targeted girls in two impoverished communities with very low enrolment rates in the Kathmandu Valley. Aiming at convincing parents and communities of the importance of girls' education, the project initiated home visits, formal meetings and intensive discussions to first identify the main barriers to the education of Dalit girls and then make community members – leaders, elders, parents and the girls – aware of the need for girls' education. The major barriers were parental illiteracy, little awareness of the importance of education, poverty, girls' domestic responsibilities along with their need to contribute to household income, peer pressure, and lack of aspirations. The qualitative evaluation found that project activities changed the perceptions of parents who started supporting their out-of-school children, including girls, to return to school. Local education committees assisted with the enrolment process and offered support to girls who returned to school. Moreover, as targeted communities faced several social and economic problems, ultimately affecting girls' education, the project also provided income-generating and health education activities in the one community along with the establishment of a women's literacy programme in the second community. However, the follow-up four months later found that some girls had dropped out of school as they lacked uniforms, felt ashamed being in a class where they were too old for their grade, or faced other self-esteem problems (UNESCO, 2005).

The **Stromme Foundation Project** (2011-2015) was implemented in four districts²¹ and targeted 8,400 families, 5,450 adolescent girls and 3,650 children facing poverty and social exclusion. The project used a holistic and integrated approach to improve their status, including support for quality basic education, particularly for girls and children who were out of school. Its mid-term qualitative assessment found that the project assisted

21 Makawanpur, Rautahat, Rupandehi and Surkhet.

children and adolescent girls who had dropped out of school to attend the 181 non-formal learning centres and provided 550 children with material support to re-enrol to school and 150 children from marginalised families with scholarships, while teachers received training to deliver quality education and schools received infrastructure, repair and maintenance support. Comparison of baseline and follow-up data showed that enrolment of children from marginalised families increased by 76% (Rijal et al., 2013).

Launched in 2004, the UNICEF-led **Welcome to School** campaign was implemented in 11 districts and mainstreamed as a government strategy in 2005 to meet the Education For All (EFA) goals and related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The initiative targeted out-of-school children with a focus on girls and vulnerable children, and aimed to increase their school enrolment and retention. To this end, it combined multiple strategies, including strong advocacy, civil society monitoring, partnership facilitation, community mapping and the establishment of child clubs to identify out-of-school children. In particular, a month-long campaign sought to identify and motivate households with out-of-school children to enrol them. Schools then sent invitation cards to the children along with a notebook and pencil as an incentive. Data shows that the campaign was effective as the number of out-of-school children decreased from 590,000 to 160,000 between 2004 and 2010 (UNGEI, 2012).

The ongoing **Sisters for Sisters' Education** in Nepal is a project of the DFID-funded Girls' Education Challenge (GEC). The project is implemented in four districts²² and provides nine months of preparatory classes and school enrolment support to girls who have never been to school or who dropped out in grades 1 to 3 along with support classes to low performing girls to help them stay in school, and promotion of gender-friendly school environments. An innovative approach used involves marginalised girls who are provided with training and become the 'Big Sisters'; these 'Big Sisters' then mentor and provide academic and emotional support to other marginalised girls, their 'Little Sisters', while also acting as positive role models (DFID, 2015).

Another ongoing project, part of the Girls' Education Challenge is the **Supporting the Education of Marginalised Girls** in Kailali district (STEM) project aiming to improve the education outcomes of 5,400 girls in secondary schools. A central project component is creation of girls' clubs to enhance girls' learning, help out-of-school girls and those who dropped out in the past four years to return to formal education, and encourage girls already in school to remain and complete their education. These out-of-school and after-school girls' clubs provide reproductive health education and life skills training to participants and operate as safe spaces for peer support and social networking. Girls who completed their formal education or are unlikely to return to school are also provided with financial literacy and business skills. The project also includes two large-scale education campaigns using mass media and rallies to raise awareness about the importance and the impact of educating girls. In order to create a supportive environment for girls' education, the project also works with parents and teachers as well as with communities and even includes infrastructure improvements and provision of solar lights to increase girls' study time. Finally, STEM set up the Kailali Girls Transition Fund, a large revolving fund, through Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies, to provide post-education support as girls transition into adulthood (DFID, 2015; Mercy Corps, 2014).

3.5 Interventions targeting child labourers

Interventions have also targeted child labourers and aimed to improve their access to education. The **Schooling Incentives Project Evaluation** study aimed to assess the impact of a scholarship and stipend intervention promoting the schooling of children engaged in child labour in the carpet factories in the Kathmandu Valley. The intervention was implemented by a local NGO, the Nepal Good Weave Foundation, which supports child weavers. Carpet weaving is prohibited for children aged under 16 and it is considered a hazardous form of child labour, linked to human trafficking and bonded labour, incompatible with schooling and resulting in serious health problems. Conducted 16 months after the intervention ended, the study used an RCT with 660 children aged 10-16 at high risk of engaging in child labour in the carpet factories. A lottery allocated those children in

22 Dhading, Parsa, Lamjung and Surkhet.

three groups: the first group received a scholarship to cover school expenses, the second the scholarship along with a stipend of food rations conditional on regular school attendance for one year, and the third served as the control group (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014).

The study found that participants in the first group received the scholarship at the start of the school year and its effects faded after just two months, with children in this group showing a similar attendance rate to that of the control group. Children in the second group benefited more as the funds from the stipend lasted throughout the school year with participants attending 11% more days, being 10% more likely to have sat the end-of-year exams, 46% less likely to have failed their grade, and 48% less likely to have worked as carpet weavers. The study notes that the intervention had larger effects on girls' attendance, yet those effects were not statistically significant. However, girls who received the stipend were 64% less likely to weave, and 66% less likely to fail their grade. The study also found that those effects on schooling and child labour of participants were not sustainable after the intervention and the support ended (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014).

Likewise, the **Brighter Futures Programme Phase II** (2005-2009) aimed to get children out of exploitative child labour or prevent them from entering it by expanding their access to and improving the quality of basic education. The programme was implemented in 28 districts in Nepal and provided children engaged in 10 different child labour sectors²³ with non-formal education, formal education and vocational skills training. The non-formal education component included non-formal education classes, learning centres and the Girls' Access to Education (GATE) scheme, providing girls with bridging classes to enable them to continue to mainstream schools; the formal education component included scholarships for children, parental mobilisation, including the development of Parent-Teacher Associations, and policy level work with the government and UNICEF to improve the quality of formal education through the development of teacher training materials, school enrolment campaigns, and education planning and monitoring; and the vocational education component targeted older participants aged 14-17 and included vocational training, apprenticeships, self-employment and parental support through microfinance (ICF Macro, 2009).

The qualitative evaluation found that the programme withdrew nearly 19,600 children from the worst forms of child labour, prevented more than 14,500 children at risk from entering into such labour and provided services to more than 72,200 beneficiaries – exceeding its original target by four thousand. The non-formal education scheme with its flexible sessions was particularly effective in engaging out-of-school or difficult-to-reach children. Those who received a scholarship noted its importance in helping them continue and focus on their schooling. Parents also appreciated the scholarships. All boys and girls who participated in the programme agreed that it significantly improved their lives as they were able to go to school, learn about their rights and become more confident to speak out. However, the evaluation also notes that the programme was unable to provide follow-up, had to limit the duration and access to learning centres and schools, and social mobilisation activities were limited. Programme components were also sometimes carried out in fragmented ways in different locations. While parents appreciated the project, they did not always understand their personal responsibility in keeping their children out of the worst forms of child labour (ICF Macro, 2009).

Implemented in 10 districts, the **Nepal Education Project** (2010-2015) also aimed to end the exploitation of children of former and current Kamaiya and Haliya bonded labourers and facilitate their access to education and skills training. The Kamaiya are landless agricultural labourers who have fallen into debt to their landlords and their debt is passed on from generations forcing them to work to repay their debt. The Haliya are Dalit agricultural labourers who have become trapped in debt and caste obligations to higher caste landlords. Although both categories benefited from freedom movements and government proclamations abolishing the practices during the past twenty years, many are still not free. The children of Kamaiya and Haliya labourers continue to have difficulty to access education. Many have never enrolled in mainstream schools or have dropped out as they need to work to help their families or as their impoverished family cannot afford school

23 These sectors included carpet factories, transportation, domestic service, brick factories, entertainment, recycling, portering, mining as well as children associated with armed forces and armed groups, and children at risk (ICF Macro, 2009).

supplies and uniforms. These children also face caste discrimination while girls face additional gender discrimination. The project provided preparatory bridging classes to help Kamaiya and Haliya children – both boys and girls aged 8-15 – to return to mainstream school and attend regular classes along with child clubs and advocacy activities, including the use of media to improve duty bearers’ responsiveness to the rights and needs of those children and adolescents. Older adolescents aged 16-18 were provided with vocational skills training (Adhikari and Robertson, 2015).

Using mixed methods, the evaluation found that many children were able to access and continue their education, although several others were not finally reached. Interviews with students, teachers and district officials indicated that the preparatory bridging classes were successful and helped both Kamaiya and Haliya participants to return to school. Once in school, those students attended regularly and had a high pass rate. However, monitoring of their school progress was often low and inconsistent. The project also improved child and parental knowledge and understanding that all children have the right to go to school. Interviews with students suggested that nearly all participants acquired a basic understanding of their right to education and some even voiced their concerns. Older students who received training through the Child’s Rights and Awareness Groups were able to articulate their rights better. These school-based groups aimed to empower student participants and enable them to make decisions about policies and activities that affected their classmates (e.g. caste discrimination) as well as out-of-school children who needed support to return to school. Data shows that 455 boys and 445 girls were directly involved in these groups with 38% of them being Kamaiya children and 30% Haliya. Largely through these groups, the project improved student participation and decision-making; yet the Kamaiya and Haliya children were generally less vocal and less assertive than other children in those groups, despite notable improvements (Adhikari and Robertson, 2015).

Using child time-use data from the 2010 Nepal Living Standards Survey III (NLSS3) and coarsened exact matching, a **quantitative study** investigated whether scholarships promoting schooling tend to reduce the incidence and intensity of child labour in Nepal. The study focused on higher value scholarships, those valued at 5% of the poverty line (ranging from 800 rupees or US\$7 in rural Terai to 2,047 rupees or US\$19 in urban Kathmandu) or higher. The analysis showed that higher value scholarships decrease the work of girls aged 8-16 by 7.5 hours weekly compared to an average of nearly 23 hours for the control group, and this is a statistically significant effect. These hours are mostly spent on economic and extended economic activities, such as fetching water, collecting firewood, taking care of animals and weaving; on the other hand, scholarships had little impact on hours spent on household chores and care responsibilities. The study also estimated that the effect of scholarships on work hours for girls is statistically significant and becomes positive at the threshold of 2% of the poverty line. Interestingly, scholarships of similar value were not found to have any effect on the work hours of boys (Datt and Uhe, 2014).

3.6 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps

The interventions presented in this section indicate that there is a considerable body of literature on programmes primarily aiming to increase adolescent girls’ school access and attendance, and to a lesser extent their learning outcomes. While interventions initially focused on the provision of cash or in-kind support, the majority of interventions increasingly use several strategies, including the establishment of girls’ clubs, training by mentors on life skills and reproductive health (including menstruation), awareness-raising activities targeting parents about the importance of girls’ education, and social mobilisation. Some innovative measures are also currently being implemented such as solar lamps to extend the time girls have available to study, and instruction and guidance provided by older girls with similar marginalised background to young girls on a sisterly basis. There are also several interventions targeting out-of-school girls, marginalised girls and girls involved in child labour and providing them with flexible bridging classes or financial assistance. However, many studies acknowledged the difficulty in reaching those most in need. Only one intervention mentioned including married girls (without providing any further details), despite the fact that the country has high rates of child marriage, which is one of the factors identified as leading to school dropout. Moreover, interventions

targeting both boys and girls, as is often the case with those aiming to assist child labourers, often do not disaggregate outcomes by gender and age.

Most interventions target a wide age range from young to older adolescents without always considering their differential needs and priorities. Only programmes targeting older adolescents (aged 15 years and over), who are out of school, tend to provide them with vocational skills training instead of helping them return to school. As a result, we know very little about how to support older girls return to school and what works for different age groups in general. Financial incentives may contribute to increase girls' access to education, yet studies expressed their concerns about their full potential when they are not combined with other strategies such as raising awareness and addressing discriminatory norms and practices.

Reviewed evaluations had very little information about programme length or optimal duration, let alone about programme legacy. Most evaluations took place within the first two years after the intervention ended and in most cases, those interventions were of small or medium scale. A couple of studies identified short project duration as a problem and pointed out that any observed changes in girls' attitudes and behaviours may become unsustainable, while longer project support could ensure more permanent effects. Overall, the evidence base seems to be limited and fragmented, not providing enough useful insights to inform future programme design. To an extent, the limited information available is linked to the quality of the evaluations, which is generally low. Only one evaluation of a child labour and education intervention used an RCT design to assess the effectiveness of two different strategies and found that combined cash and in-kind assistance provided the strongest incentive to leave the carpet industry and enrol in school full time. There is obviously a need for more rigorous evaluations and better programme monitoring systems; thus GAGE is well placed to contribute to this area.

4. Economic empowerment interventions

The Nepali government and its development partners actively support women's economic empowerment; however, women continue to make up 75% of the unpaid labour force, have limited access to financial services, and face difficulty engaging in income-generating activities due to their heavy household and care responsibilities (GoN, 2015). Likewise, adolescent girls are more likely to be involved in unpaid labour, including child labour, tend to carry out undervalued and poorly paid jobs, and are less able than boys to access economic opportunities (Ghimire et al., 2013).

4.1 Overview of the evidence

Our search generated 14 evaluations and impact studies of interventions promoting the economic empowerment of adolescent girls. All of these studies were grey literature. The majority assessed programmes targeting disadvantaged youth and providing them with vocational skills training and support to find employment or enable them to get involved in income-generating activities. In addition, several studies focused on youth livelihood interventions which also had a peacebuilding objective, and on multi-component programmes targeting women and seeking to empower them economically and socially. A few other studies assessed initiatives targeting child labourers, one study evaluated a public works programme and another one a large youth savings intervention. In terms of the methodology used, eight evaluations combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies, three used only qualitative techniques, and three others a purely quantitative methodology; only one used a quasi-experimental design. We also found project reports providing information about past and ongoing projects aiming to increase girls' economic participation. A more detailed overview of all examined studies in this section can be found in Annex 1.

4.2 Vocational skills training and livelihood interventions targeting youth

In Nepal, there is a wide variety of technical and vocational training schemes for youth that aim to tackle unemployment. Concerns about the disadvantage and social exclusion of women, ethnic minorities and indigenous groups have also prompted investment in training opportunities for them. Despite increased donor investment and programme proliferation, the sector remains fragmented (Chakravarty et al., 2015).

Founded in 2008 as a partnership between a Swiss NGO (Helvetas) and the Nepali government, the **Employment Fund** is one of the largest youth training programmes in the country, targeting youth aged 16-35 with skills training and employment placement services. Eligible participants should have less than ten years of formal education and be of low economic status. The Fund annually sponsors about 600 training courses which last from a few weeks to three months. In 2011, the programme also introduced 40-hour life skills training for women in all its training courses. A subset of trainees also received a short course in basic business skills. Overall, the Fund benefited more than 40,000 boys and girls over a period of three years. In 2010, the programme expanded to include an additional 4,410 girls and young women aged 16-24 who participated in the **Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative** (AGEI), launched by the World Bank as part of its Adolescent Girls Initiative aiming to facilitate transition to productive employment and to empower young women in developing countries affected by conflict (Chakravarty et al., 2015).

Focusing on the 2010-2012 cohorts, the evaluation used a quasi-experimental design with a treatment group and a control group consisting of youth who applied but were not finally selected. The study reported positive findings as participation in the programme increased non-farm employment by 15 and 16 percentage points, thus increasing non-farm employment overall between 50% and 54%. Participants also had an average monthly earnings' gain of about 72%. Although no explanation is provided, impacts were larger for women

compared to men, and younger AGEI participants (16-24 years) experienced the same improvements as older women (24-35). The evaluation also investigated which trades had better employment and earnings impacts, and found that beautician training showed large impacts along with electronics and tailoring, although again no explanation is provided. Moreover, while female participation in non-traditional female trades was encouraged, most training courses were gender-segregated. Overall, female trainees reported having more money of their own, more control over household spending, and more access to mentors who could advise them on work-related issues. They also reported significant increases in self-confidence both in life and with regard to entrepreneurial activities. Trainees identified the life skills training as one of their favourite parts of the course, with the evaluation indicating that the life skills along with the technical skills learnt may have contributed to the increased employment impact found particularly for women. No impacts were detected on desired fertility, HIV knowledge, household food security or protein consumption (Chakravarty et al., 2015).

The **Improving the Lives of Marginalized Youth and Families (ILOM)** was a NGO-led vocational training and livelihood project (2010-2011) in the Banke and Bardiya districts in the mid-western region of Nepal. It targeted poor and socially disadvantaged youth aged 16-24 and their families and provided skills training, micro-enterprise development and the mobilisation of a revolving fund through local cooperatives to help trainees start their business. Skills training included business planning, product marketing, financial management and account keeping. Its mixed methods evaluation pointed out that the project created employment opportunities for marginalised youth, the majority of whom were unemployed before the project; around 265 youth were engaged in on-farm commercial enterprises as well as off-farm jobs with nearly half of them belonging to landless Dalit and Badi households. The majority (56%) of participants were girls. Participants were also able to increase their household income by 58% and thus contributed to improved food security, with 67% having sufficient food for almost one year compared to just 8% before the intervention. The vast majority also reported improved health and reduction in sickness incidence. Possession of assets such as water pumps, bicycles, mobile phones, televisions, radios and computers also increased. Participants also got involved in various community groups such as Village Development Committees, cooperatives and community committees enabling them to access resources such as credit and seeds. The majority reported that their overall living conditions considerably improved and as a result 55% of beneficiaries said that their sense of dignity increased. However, the evaluation stressed that many participants were rather young and thus often unable to start a successful business. Moreover, the project was rather short and thus graduates required additional knowledge, resources and capacity building (Adhikari, 2012).

The **Stromme Foundation Project** (2011-2015) used a holistic and integrated approach to improve the economic and social status of poor and marginalised families and girls through empowering them and increasing their capacity to organise and work collectively. The project was implemented in four districts²⁴ and targeted 8,400 families and 5,450 girls with a package of interventions, including facilitating and strengthening self-help groups (SHGs) and providing participants with skills training and financial and other services to create assets and improve their livelihoods. The qualitative mid-term assessment noted that the project enabled 3,570 poor households to engage in SHGs, and more than 4,700 to get involved in savings and credit activities. More than 3,000 households involved in SHGs increased their group savings by 25%. Moreover, more than 3,100 individual participants, including adolescents, improved their knowledge and skills on on-farm and off-farm trades. Participants also received input support in the form of seed, fertiliser, goats or machinery and most started income-generating activities. More than 400 households reported being able to increase their annual income by 60% and with project assistance they opened bank accounts in local commercial banks. However, adolescents had limited income sources and opportunities and thus their income did not increase significantly although they reported that the project helped them develop saving habits (Rijal et al., 2013).

Funded by DFID, the Restless Development **Youth Livelihoods Project** has aimed to help youth take up productive livelihoods and employment opportunities in order to contribute to household and community

24 Makawanpur, Rautahat, Rupandehi and Surkhet.

economic development. The project works with youth in schools and young clubs in Dolakha district and tries to build key life skills which are necessary for successful engagement in livelihood opportunities. A quick quantitative assessment with nearly 250 boys and girls from grade 7 to 9 in three out of the eight project schools along with boys and girls from youth clubs in the same area, found that out-of-school adolescents improved their indicators compared to the baseline more than the in-school adolescents. Those out of school demonstrated better critical thinking and decision-making skills, interpersonal communication skills, self-management, financial literacy skills and knowledge, and livelihood options knowledge compared to those in school. They also increased by 400% their engagement in money-making activities compared to the baseline. However, in-school adolescents had access to much better or more information on job opportunities and were more involved in decision-making on their livelihood options compared to out-of-school boys and girls. A high percentage in both groups reported that the project supported them to set their livelihood goals (Restless Development, 2015).

Other NGOs have also implemented several other training and livelihood interventions. The Save the Children **Adolescent Livelihood Programme** targeted out-of-school adolescents and provided them with skills training and capital to enable them to become economically independent and contribute to family income. Participants reported that their self-confidence increased as they were able to earn a living and felt less pressure to migrate to urban centres in search of work. In particular, girls reported being able to earn their own income and thus become more self-confident and experience less pressure from their families to marry early (Save the Children USA, 2006).

The World Bank-led **Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT)** started in 2011 with the aim of expanding the supply of skilled and employable labour in Nepal by increasing access to quality training and strengthening the technical and vocational education and training system. A recent World Bank project document reported that the project made satisfactory progress in all key performance indicators: 72% of graduates have found employment for at least six months after completion of training; over 70% of youth have passed the national skills test and received their certification; and the combined share of girls, Dalits and disadvantaged Janajatis enrolled in supported institutions has already reached 55%, surpassing the initial 50% target (World Bank, 2016).

The **Skills for Employment Programme** is a DFID-funded ongoing programme (2015-2019) which aims to provide Nepali youth with the opportunities to improve their employability, productivity, income and decision-making. It continues and expands DFID's work on skills training in Nepal by providing skills training to at least 100,000 poor and disadvantaged youth with a particular focus on those from marginalised groups and young women – a minimum of 50% of participants in skills training should be women. In response to the 2015 earthquake, one programme component will provide skills in earthquake-resistant housing construction to help with the enormous reconstruction needs in the earthquake-affected districts (DFID, 2016a).

The Ministry of Youth and Sports set up **Youth Information Centres (YICs)** in all districts of Nepal with the aim of providing information on youth-related issues/areas of interest, particularly in the fields of livelihoods and life skills training. An assessment report pointed out that the capacities of those centres need to be strengthened. Youth who most frequently visited them were more likely to be male, from urban areas, between 15 and 30 years old, unemployed or college students; adolescent girls and young women were less likely to use them as those centres were often located in the building of the district sports committee where most of the staff were men. Moreover, most employees at the centres were male too and thus parents might think that their daughter was not safe there. Traditionally, girls face mobility constraints and have fewer opportunities to move freely and thus to visit the centres. Youth from rural areas were also unaware of the centres or had transportation problems. Finally, the assessment found that younger adolescents, both boys and girls, were less likely to visit them (Restless Development, 2013).

4.3 Youth savings interventions

International NGOs increasingly implement youth savings initiatives which aim to increase access to appropriate financial services for disadvantaged youth, build their financial knowledge, promote savings habits and help them build sustainable livelihoods. Created in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation, **YouthSave** is a youth savings initiative which targets low-income adolescents aged 12 to 18 years in four developing countries (Colombia, Ghana, Kenya and Nepal) and aims to promote youth financial inclusion and economic empowerment. Taking into account particular country characteristics, government policies and regulations, the programme provided financial products and services adapted to each context. In Nepal, the Bank of Kathmandu offered the youth savings account and along with its NGO and community partners also organised financial education workshops and outreach through visits to schools and youth clubs in all five regions of the country (Johnson et al., 2015).

The quantitative evaluation found that within the first two years (2012-2014) the Bank reached 70% of its goal, opening more than 6,100 youth accounts, of whom 5,800 account holders agreed to participate in the study. The majority did not have any previous bank experience, lived in poverty, and were between 16 and 18 years. Those aged 10-12 accounted for 24% of account holders, and those 13-15 for 23%. The average account holder age was 16. Over an average 13-month period, those adolescents deposited more than US\$4,590,000 with a total net savings of US\$665,000 and the average balance per account being US\$114. The Bank provided small cash incentives to account holders for seven months with nearly 25% of all Nepali youth account holders taking advantage of the offer to open their accounts. Evaluation data showed that youth who received the incentive had statistically significantly higher average monthly savings than those who did not receive it, suggesting that such incentives have a positive effect on account uptake and youth savings. Younger account holders saved more than older youth, with such savings coming from parents or gifts. Those who said that they learnt about the account through family, friends or mass media saved more than those who learnt through the bank campaign, the school or a relevant workshop. The number and amount of deposits and withdrawals made by the account holders using electronic transactions were also significantly higher than those made in the traditional way, thus indicating that electronic banking could help increase savings amounts while also reducing bank outreach costs (Johnson et al., 2015).

The programme did not have specific gender targets, and initially more boys signed up for an account than girls. After this data became known, partners attempted to reduce the difference by targeting girls' schools and clubs. Indeed, girls increased their participation from 35% at the beginning of the rollout in 2012 to 44% of account holders in May 2014. Girls also saved more than boys, and this difference was statistically significant. The programme faced particular difficulty to attract out-of-school youth (less than 6% of all participants) either because the outreach strategy focused on schools or because the provided products and services might not have been tailored to the needs of that group. Out-of-school girls comprised only 33% of out-of-school participants, indicating their greater difficulty in accessing formal financial services (Johnson et al., 2015).

4.4 Public works interventions

Employment generation through the expansion of inclusive and targeted programmes has been acknowledged as essential for poverty reduction in the government's development plans. The **Karnali Employment Programme (KEP)** is a public-works social protection scheme which was established by the government in 2006 in the five districts of the Karnali Zone, one of the poorest areas of Nepal, in the mid-western region. The scheme targets very poor households without any employment opportunity or source of income and provides one member per unemployed household with 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in unskilled manual work in a given fiscal year. Indicative of the situation is that out of the 63,000 households in the Karnali Zone, just over 95% were identified as unemployed and thus eligible to participate in the project. A mixed methods

evaluation in three districts²⁵ estimated that the average number of days worked per person was 15 and the average daily wage was 200 rupees (US\$1.80). Most participants used their earned income to purchase food for their household. The study found payment delays and differences between the amount paid and the amount mentioned in the original agreement. However, the vast majority of participants stated that they would participate again in the following year, while there was no evidence of discrimination against Dalits or ethnic minorities.

The study noted that women's participation in the scheme was low, about 23% on average, with some variations between districts – ranging from 14% in Kalikot to 20% in Humla and 37% in Jumla. Women in the focus group discussions raised concerns about their inability to benefit from the programme and gain some financial independence if a man from the household participated. The evaluation pointed out that due to programme requirement for only one participant per household, women's low participation may reflect household choices and priorities; it asked, however, for more research to identify the factors responsible for the low participation and to propose measures to improve it. Youth participation was also low, although youth unemployment and underemployment is a major problem in the country. Survey data showed that 17% of surveyed KEP participants were aged 15-19, 32% aged 20-30 and 22% aged 31-40. Qualitative evidence confirmed that this type of employment was not particularly attractive for youth due to its short duration, with young people preferring to look for other employment opportunities or migrate. Yet an alternative reason could again be the one person per household restriction, making older men in the household joining the programme and thus blocking youth participation (Vaidya et al., 2010).

4.5 Interventions with peacebuilding objectives

Youth unemployment was frequently cited as a driver of the civil conflict, prompting donors and development agencies to invest heavily in skills training and youth livelihood initiatives with peacebuilding objectives. Sources stress that peacebuilding efforts should focus on youth employment and enable young men and women to engage in leadership roles in the reconstruction of their communities; such efforts should attract enough funding to last for a considerable period of time to ensure sustainability of their results (Kumar-Range and Acharya, 2011).

Launched two years after the civil conflict came to an end, the **Education for Income Generation Project** was a five-year intervention (2008-2012) aiming to enable disadvantaged, conflict-affected youth aged 16-35 access education, training and employment opportunities in order to lead productive lives and mitigate the impact of the conflict. Particular attention was paid to out-of-school youth, illiterate young women and those displaced by the conflict in the 15 districts of the mid-western region, which has a history of conflict and inter-ethnic tensions. The project thus provided literacy, numeracy and life skills training; technical and vocational skills training linked to employment; training to increase agricultural productivity, product marketing and raise rural incomes; and targeted scholarships to Dalit youth to increase their access to higher education. In addition, all participants were provided with peace and reconciliation education to help them develop their knowledge, attitudes and skills for conflict resolution, peacebuilding and human rights promotion (USAID, 2013).

The mixed methods evaluation reported that the project provided training to more than 74,000 youth, exceeding its target by several thousand. In particular, more than 8,500 youth (95% of them adolescents and young women) graduated from the literacy and life skills course. More than 11,000 youth – half of whom were women – completed technical skills training, and more than 80% of the trainees were able to find employment assisted by the training providers or to start their business and generate an adequate monthly income. More than 25,000 youth also received agricultural training and were able to more than double their average income, while more than 54,000 youth (81% of whom were young women) were trained in agricultural production and linked to private sector agriculture input and output markets, also doubling their income and improving their

25 Humla, Jumla and Kalikot.

food security. More than 400 Dalit youth (46% of them women) received scholarships and were mostly involved in teaching (USAID, 2013).

The evaluation noted positive project effects in adolescent girls' and young women's lives, yet it does not provide age-disaggregated data and does not systematically identify differential outcomes among younger and older women participants. Overall, 85% of male and 74% of female participants were employed. However, employment was higher for men who benefited from the vocational training, agricultural productivity and scholarship schemes, and for women who completed the literacy and life skills programme. A positive contribution of the project was that it trained women in non-traditional trades such as masonry, carpentry and electrical wiring. Overall, women participants reported becoming financially independent, understanding the importance of saving up, acquiring new skills and using them in the daily lives, and increasing their self-confidence. In particular, they stressed that they were no longer afraid of speaking out and that their community interactions increased, including their participation in local community groups wherein most decision-making positions (chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer) were now held by women. Their employment also enabled them to improve their nutrition, hygiene and sanitation. They also learnt about their rights and understood that they did not need to stay out of home during menstruation. However, the evaluation found that women's employment was greatly influenced by marriage and their child responsibilities, with younger women participants who got married finding it difficult to access full-time employment as they had to focus on their household and care responsibilities. Moreover, as some literacy classes took place in the evening, some young women could not attend them, while some husbands opposed to their wives going there (USAID, 2013).

Established as part of the United Nations Peace Fund for Nepal, the International Labour Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization joint **Jobs for Peace Programme: 12,500 Youth Employed and Empowered through an Integrated Approach** project (2009-2011) sought to support the peace process by targeting youth in conflict-affected and vulnerable areas with skills training and employment opportunities. In particular, the project aimed to promote the social inclusion of women and other marginalised groups, generate productive and decent employment and contribute to national peacebuilding and poverty reduction. It thus targeted young men and women aged 15-29 in the Terai region and supported them to engage in self-employment or start a business in on-farm, off-farm or non-farm activities through an integrated approach combining wage employment in community infrastructure development, enterprise development, cooperatives strengthening, access to financial services, skills training, youth empowerment, and a trust fund for youth employment (Kumar-Range and Acharya, 2011).

The mixed methods evaluation reported that the project exceeded its targets as it provided employment to more than 34,000 youth and access to finance to more than 1,200 youth, and established 36 youth-led initiatives. Adolescent girls and young women comprised 58% of participants, and youth from marginalised groups (Janajatis, Dalits and Muslims) 38%. While more men benefited from skills training and entrepreneurship development, women accounted for the vast majority of those provided with access to finance, cooperative development and the trust fund for youth employment. Quality of provided training was good and over 95% of participants in the off-farm skills training passed the tests by the National Skills Testing Board. Participants admitted being satisfied with their achievements and reported increased economic independence and improved psychosocial wellbeing, 'peace of mind', and 'less anger and tensions in the family' (Kumar-Range and Acharya, 2011).

Qualitative research also indicated that the project contributed to the peacebuilding process. Those who were involved in community infrastructure activities worked together for a common cause despite their ethnic group, socioeconomic status or political differences. Both youth and community members reported that 'a new and positive self-image for youth was created, transforming them from idle vagrants into contributing community members' with enhanced capabilities to contribute to community development and welfare instead of getting involved in gangs or spending their time in socially disruptive activities. In addition, as an effect of their involvement in empowering activities, youth started voicing their concerns in village assembly

meetings and their opinions were being accepted and shaping public decisions about community needs (Kumar-Range and Acharya, 2011).

Similarly, the **Education for Youth and Youth for Peace and Development (EYYPD)** project was a skills and livelihood development project (2007-2011) that targeted adolescents aged 13-19 affected by conflict, internal displacement and marginalisation in 20 districts in the mid- and far-western regions of Nepal. The project provided technical and vocational training in ten different trades which lasted from three to six months followed by two or four weeks of on-the-job-training along with additional life skills training, psychosocial counselling and post-training support (material support, stipend or placement follow-up) to help adolescents build their livelihoods (NEAT, 2012).

The mixed methods evaluation found that the project benefited girls and marginalised youth as 38% of the nearly 400 trainees were girls, 30% Janajatis (indigenous people) and 27% Dalits. In terms of age, 2% of trainees were between 13 and 15 years, 30% between 16 and 19 years and the majority were young adults. The proportion of trainees finding employment after the training was very high: around 70% were employed and the majority were satisfied with their job. In addition, the average salary of those employed was around 5,000 rupees (US\$46) monthly, while nearly 33% earned between 11,000 and 15,000 rupees (US\$101-137) monthly. Both trainees and their employers said that the quality of training was good. Trainees also reported that the project helped them build their financial planning and management skills and increased their self-confidence (NEAT, 2012).

However, the evaluation notes that the number of youth trained was small compared to the number of youth who needed training. As local partners were responsible for selecting participants, selection criteria were not objectively verifiable and comparable with each other, thus the project may have missed the opportunity to reach the most deserving. Moreover, the trades in which training was provided (such as offset press, automobile, plumbing, electrical and mechanic) were not that relevant to the particular local context and actually required trainees to migrate to urban areas for employment. While the quality of training was good, the duration of the on-job training was too short and post-training follow-up and support were inadequate (NEAT, 2012).

Although attention was paid to include girls in the training, the project was not gender-sensitive. The training provided was largely male-centred and the rate of employment after training was higher for boys than for girls – 76% of male trainees were employed compared to 61% of female trainees. Once again, marriage was identified as a key factor not allowing girls to take up full-time employment. More than 70% of surveyed female trainees were trained in either offset press or screen print, while boys were attracted to automobile and general mechanics – only five girls chose to be trained as automobile mechanics and five others as electricians. The evaluation also found that female trainees had lower starting incomes than male trainees (NEAT, 2012).

4.6 Women's economic empowerment interventions

Over the past two decades, various interventions have sought to empower women of all ages, including older adolescent girls, and to enable them to join savings and credit groups, start small businesses or get involved in income-generating activities and improve their living conditions and community development. In most cases, interventions encouraged women to join groups where they could attend skills training, access credit, become aware of their rights and work collectively to change their lives.

Initially known as the **Women's Empowerment Programme (WEP)**, the programme was created in 1998 with a USAID grant to empower rural women in the Terai region, mostly through microfinance provision; women came together in groups of 25 and contributed weekly to a village bank so that they could borrow and invest in their own business or other income-generating activity. In 1999, the programme was renamed **WORTH** and targeted women with a combination of literacy training, savings-led microfinance and business training to enable them to become entrepreneurs, social activists and leaders bringing about change in their communities. Data shows that WORTH worked with 240 local NGOs and established 6,500 savings and credit groups with

130,000 rural women. Nearly 1,500 of those groups were also provided with business and financial training as they became informal Village Banks. Women were also provided with literacy classes and encouraged to get involved in collective community action and become leaders for rural development (Valley Research Group and Mayoux, 2008).

A mixed methods evaluation reported that the programme was successful. In just two years, women had accumulated over US\$500,000 annually and had a total of US\$1.9 million if group savings prior to joining WEP are considered. Only 4% of groups had ever made a loan on which a woman defaulted. Moreover, women members of these groups were earning up to 24% annual returns on their savings and thus were able to improve their economic wellbeing. The majority (71%) also got involved in income-generating activities, whereas two years before, only 14% of those women did so. Nearly 64,000 women learnt to read with a curriculum that focused on basic business literacy to help them improve the success of their enterprises. And an average of 89,000 women reported increased decision-making authority in the areas of family planning, child marriage and girls' schooling. Respondents frequently stressed that the programme changed their lives, improved their self-confidence and increased their sphere of influence in the household (Ashe and Parrott, 2001).

After 2001, due to the civil conflict, women's groups continued on their own. Five years later, a mixed methods study was commissioned to investigate what happened to those groups in seven of the 21 districts where WORTH had been implemented. The study found that Village Banks continued to exist and held more than three times more assets than in 2001, with every woman member of WORTH having an average holding of US\$116. Two-thirds of the original banks were still active more than eight years after the programme had started with nearly 25,000 members, maintained networks and provided informal technical assistance to each other. New groups were also created without external assistance, involving 11,000 women. Literacy sessions continued as 97% of respondents felt that being literate was very important to their lives, and 83% reported that because of WORTH they were able to send more children to school. Two-thirds of women's groups reported that members asked for advice and help with personal and domestic problems, including domestic violence, caste discrimination and trafficking. The vast majority indeed reported helping their members deal with those issues. Thus 43% of women stated that their membership in a WORTH group changed their degree of freedom from violence and one in 10 reported that the group actually helped change their life as they no longer faced violence. Half of the groups also reported efforts to reduce gender discrimination in the community. Moreover, the majority of respondents reported that the programme increased their access to health services, enabled them to engage in community action and even to help others in the community as the Village Banks helped build and repair village infrastructure and financially assisted vulnerable individuals and families. Women also felt that the programme increased their self-confidence and enabled them to become leaders in their families and communities, also helping them cope with the conflict and the lack of services (Valley Research Group and Mayoux, 2008).

Survey data showed that 5% of WORTH women were younger than 20 years old, meaning adolescent girls could participate while also benefitting from the programme indirectly; many women reported that as they started attending WORTH group sessions and became aware of their legal rights, they realised how harmful practices such as child marriage were and started advocating and interfering with parental decisions stressing that both boys and girls should be given equal opportunities in life and that girls should not be seen as financial burdens to be released at a young age through marriage. Their efforts contributed to raising the age of marriage for girls in their communities. The study also noted the case of a small group of girls aged 9 to 14 years who inspired by their mothers' involvement in WORTH savings groups created their own savings group with a set of rules and a register and saved money they received from family and community members during holidays. Their saving rate was 10 rupees (US\$0.09) monthly and their total savings 3,600 rupees (US\$33) which they lent to their parents with a 1.25% monthly interest rate (Valley Research Group and Mayoux, 2008).

Women Empowerment for Transformation in the Churia area (SAKCHAM II) was a multi-component project aiming to empower women affected by the conflict and enable them to exercise their rights and improve their

lives. Over a period of three years (2010-2012), it targeted 19,000 poor, vulnerable and socially excluded women and 4,000 men in three districts²⁶ and among other activities, it also provided women with business and cooperative training and also supported loans from a revolving fund. The qualitative evaluation found that women participants increased their involvement in savings groups and income-generating activities including sewing and candle-making along with starting small businesses such as grocery shops. Women also reported positive changes in their access to and control over private property in terms of sharing earnings and making joint decisions with their husbands. They also increased their access to and control over public property as, for instance, they obtained Village Development Committee land to construct offices (Khanal et al., 2012).

There are other NGO-led projects as well as various microfinance development banks, rural development banks and community-based cooperatives that provide microcredit to women and the poor in Nepal. For instance, in 2014 Plan Nepal targeted over 76,000 women, mostly young, and helped them organise into Self-Reliant Groups in order to access microcredit and skills for income-generating activities (Plan International Nepal, 2014).

4.7 Interventions tackling child labour

Child labour remains a persistent problem in the country and according to the 2010 Nepal Child Labour Report, 1.6 million children aged 5-17 years are still in child labour with 621,000 in hazardous work, 60% of whom are girls (ILO, n.d.). A number of projects have particularly sought to withdraw child labourers and prevent children at risk from entering child labour.

The **Brighter Futures Programme Phase II** (2005-2009) was implemented in 28 districts and aimed to withdraw and prevent children from exploitative child labour and to help them access quality education. The programme had three main components: non-formal education and formal education for younger participants and vocational skills training for older participants aged 14-17, including a self-employment economic education scheme, specific vocational skills training, apprenticeships and parental support through microfinance. The qualitative evaluation found that older adolescents particularly benefited from the vocational training combined with self-employment opportunities, whereas conventional vocational skills training is not linked to income-generating opportunities. Adolescents reported that the project helped them become more self-reliant, learn about business, develop a savings habit, be practical and solve household problems. Their parents also expressed their appreciation of the income-generating opportunities provided (ICF Macro, 2009).

Towards Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour as Priority (ACHIEVE) is an ongoing project (2013-2016) targeting children involved in the worst forms of child labour, those at risk and their families. In collaboration with the government, the ILO, trade unions and NGOs, the project aims to provide area-based models for child labour-free zones/communities which could be scaled up, to contribute to a more conducive policy environment and to build stronger institutional capacity for preventing and eliminating child labour (ILO, n.d.).

The Kamlari system is a traditional system of bonded child domestic labour in which indigenous destitute families from the western plains sell their daughters into servitude to landlords and wealthy families for a small amount of money or as repayment of a debt, believing that girls could have a better life. Plan International estimates that there are between 10,000 and 12,000 girls working as domestic servants under the Kamlari system; these girls have a very difficult life away from their homes and subject to abuse and exploitation. The government and NGOs work to support those girls. Bonded labour is prohibited in the country, and the system was officially abolished in 2013. The government provides scholarships and shelter to freed Kamlaris, while several NGO schemes seek to rescue and empower Kamlari girls (Pereira, 2014). Plan has implemented the **Kamlari Abolition Project** rescuing girls, providing them with life skills and technical training, and supporting them along with their families to get involved in income-generating activities and become economically

26 Chitwan, Kapilvastu and Makwanpur.

independent. By 2014, the NGO rescued 3,640 Kamlari girls. Many of these girls who were supported to start a new life, reported becoming aware of their rights and gaining confidence to join the campaign against the harmful practice (Plan International Nepal, 2014).

Implemented in ten districts, the **Nepal Education Project** (2010-2015) aimed to end the exploitation and poverty of children of former and current Kamaiya and Haliya bonded labourers and to help them access education and skills training. Many of those children had never enrolled in schools or dropped out in order to work and help their families. While younger boys and girls aged 8-15 were provided with bridging classes to return to school, older out-of-school adolescents aged 16-18 received vocational skills training by two local NGOs. The mixed methods evaluation noted that the first NGO trained 253 girls and 108 boys, including 180 Haliya girls and 120 boys. After completing their training, most trainees reported being employed or having work and some reported earning double the income that they would earn as daily wage labourers. Data shows that 61% of trainees were involved in their own enterprises – 82% in the case of girl trainees. In addition, 294 youth (166 girls and 128 boys) were trained by the second NGO and 79% were employed – with 91% of girl trainees finding employment. Employed adolescents reported supporting themselves and their families. However, the evaluation noted that the duration of the provided training was short – just three months – and that the curriculum lacked key components such as business skills required by youth with small businesses. In addition, most of the girls attended traditional vocational subjects – sewing/cutting and knitting training – and only a few participated in mobile phone repair training (Adhikari and Robertson, 2015).

4.8 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps

There is a considerable body of literature on interventions targeting adolescent girls and aiming to improve their economic wellbeing by building their skills, increasing their employability, supporting their access to credit and helping them start a business. However, the majority target girls along with youth and sometimes women without providing the necessary data to identify gender, age and caste/ethnicity differential effects. Interventions targeting child labourers are also characterised by a lack of a gender lens.

Several of the reviewed evaluations explicitly noted that youth training projects were not gender-sensitive and did not pay attention to the particular challenges and needs of girls and young women, let alone the discriminatory social norms that limit their economic participation. Yet two evaluations noted that girls had difficulty finding full-time employment after completing the training, getting married and having household and child care responsibilities. Most of those projects also focused on older adolescents and, with the exception of a youth savings intervention that targeted adolescents aged 12-18, younger adolescents remained invisible in this section. Therefore, there is very little evidence on how to promote their economic capabilities.

Evidence emerging from these evaluations indicates that vocational training schemes appear to be successful when they provide training relevant to the particular local context, include adequate on-the-job training and are linked to employment opportunities for trainees. Such schemes should also promote girls' training in non-traditional trades, yet it is unclear how best to do that in order to avoid gender-segregation. On the other hand, traditional women's professions such as being a beautician may enable female graduates to find better and more profitable employment. There is also very limited evidence on how best to reach and support the economic capabilities of out-of-school girls, including their access to financial services.

Once again, the limited available evidence is to an extent the result of poor programme monitoring and low quality evaluations which often lack a robust methodology and focus on providing participation data without analysis. Only one evaluation had a quasi-experimental design, whereas none attempted to disentangle the separate elements of multi-component programmes and assess their relative effectiveness.

5. Bodily autonomy, integrity and freedom from violence interventions

Although government laws and policies aim to protect Nepali women and tackle gender-based violence, adolescent girls continue to be vulnerable to several forms of violence. Domestic violence is a persistent problem along with sexual violence and abuse, child marriage and other harmful traditional practices such as Chhaupadi²⁷ and trafficking of girls (Asia Foundation, 2010).

5.1 Overview of the evidence

Our search generated eight impact studies and evaluations of programmes aiming to improve the bodily integrity of adolescent girls in Nepal, all of them being grey literature. The majority of interventions tend to address the main forms of gender-based violence in targeted communities: child marriage along with physical and sexual violence. Although child marriage rates continue to be among the highest in the world, the evidence base on interventions focusing on eliminating the practice appears to be rather weak, a finding also confirmed by the available literature (ICRW, 2014). There is also an increasing number of projects seeking to tackle human trafficking and protect the rights of Nepali girls and women who migrate for work. Overall, evaluations are limited in number and lacking in rigour. In terms of the methodology used, five used only qualitative methodology and the remaining three combined qualitative and quantitative techniques. We also found several project documents and reports with information about interventions in this capability area. A more detailed overview of all examined studies can be found in Annex 1.

5.2 Interventions tackling violence against girls

Several interventions sought to address gender-based violence against girls. The **Safer Environment for Girls Programme** aimed to establish and strengthen child groups and their networks as well as child protection committees, and to empower children and especially girls to protect themselves against child marriage, sexual violence and abuse; support infrastructure maintenance, such as drinking water and toilet facilities, and provide educational materials; and promote coordination between related stakeholders, including child protection committees, paralegal committees, village protection committees and district child protection committees. Led by Save the Children, the programme targeted children in 47 schools in two districts²⁸ along with their parents, teachers and various child protection structures (Gautam, 2012).

The qualitative evaluation noted that the programme established child groups where 30-35 boys and girls, mostly students at grade 6 to 9, used to meet every month to raise awareness of and discuss the problem of violence. Participants reported that the life skills training helped them solve their problems through sharing and discussing with their peers, and increased their confidence and ability to express themselves in public. With support from the child clubs, girls started sharing their experiences and reporting cases of violence and abuse. Boys participated actively and recognised their role in fighting violence and supporting girls. However, the evaluation noticed that despite the equal participation of girls and boys in clubs' activities, boys were less expressive than girls. Child clubs and their networks at village and district levels, also enabled children to get involved in the formulation of child-related plans and policies, while children also participated in the district child welfare board and the district child protection committee and in VDC meetings (Gautam, 2012).

The evaluation also reported a considerable increase in reporting and responding to cases of child rights violations. Numerous rallies and campaigns were organised and children participated in events and

²⁷ Menstrual prohibitions and segregation during menstruation.

²⁸ Kaski and Tanahun.

competitions around the prevention of violence. Parents and women's groups also became alert to child marriage and informed the local NGO about such cases. Teacher training led to a reported improvement in teacher behaviour. Training was also provided to key stakeholders, police, district structures and parents, while street drama was used to sensitise the community. Child clubs engaged in community awareness-raising activities around violence and child marriage and were even able to stop a few cases of child marriage. The project was thus effective in breaking the silence surrounding violence. The Women and Children Services Centres of the District Police Office became operational and improved the protection of children in school settings, while also working to raise awareness and enable children to protect themselves from violence, abuse and exploitation. Teachers reported that parents started sending their daughters to school regularly, even when menstruating, as the programme introduced sanitary pads for girls in school, established complaint box mechanisms and implemented codes of conduct in schools. Survivors of violence attended school regularly, although in some cases they faced social stigma and discrimination in the community. Overall, all project objectives were achieved, except that of child marriage where progress was moderate, partly due to the project's inability to address the socio-economic factors underlying the practice (Gautam, 2012).

Similarly, UNICEF's **Decentralised Action for Children and Women (DACA)**, a multi-sectoral community development programme implemented in 23 districts (1998-2010) with the objective of promoting the rights of children and women, also aimed to protect children against violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful traditional practices. To this end, women-led paralegal committees (PLCs) were established to serve as community pressure groups challenging those harmful practices, raising community awareness, seeking to prevent violence, and addressing problems of child protection. The qualitative evaluation noted that the programme established a total of 482 such committees which consisted of Women's Federation members, Community Mobilisers, Village Facilitators and Village Coordination Committee members. In addition, child and youth clubs addressed child protection issues and engaged in rights advocacy challenging various forms of violence against children, including child marriage, child labour and child trafficking (Adhikary et al., 2009).

The evaluation found that paralegal committees played an important role and that 80% of child protection cases were resolved by the members of those committees, in particular cases of domestic and community violence against children (Adhikary et al., 2009). Paralegal committees typically consist of 13-15 volunteer women – either self-selected or elected. Committees use legal arguments to address protection abuses. In each district they are supported by the district resource group which consists of lawyers and social activists who train committee members and provide consultations. An evaluation carried out by the Royal Norwegian Embassy noted that paralegal committees enhance community welfare as they deal with cases not openly discussed within the community or brought to the formal justice system, such as cases of domestic violence and abuse, rape, harassment, child marriage and property inheritance; only complicated cases are referred to the formal justice systems (GoN and UNICEF, n.d.).

Implemented in Nepal and nine other countries, the **Girl Power Programme: Promoting Equal Rights and Opportunities for Girls and Young Women (2011-2015)** aimed to build the capacity of the local civil society for gender equality and to support the empowerment of girls and young women aged 10-24 and their protection against violence. Its mixed methods mid-term evaluation²⁹ noted that the programme significantly increased girls' ability to say no to sexual activity between baseline and midline. Girls also changed their attitudes towards violence and accepted less violent behaviours. For instance, girls of all age groups disagreed with the statement that child beating by adults is acceptable with 85% of adolescent girls aged 14-17 disagreeing in midline, whereas more than 60% agreed at baseline. However, in the case of community members and their attitude towards beating children, the majority of young and older men as well as older women agreed that children may be beaten by their parents and teachers. In addition, more women than men over 24 years old believed that their peers would agree that a man is allowed to beat his wife/girlfriend, indicating that this is a culturally accepted behaviour. When asked whether they knew how to act when in

29 The final evaluation was scheduled for 2015.

need of protection against violence, only 35% of girls aged 10-13 said they knew. This age group also had the least knowledge of protection services. The majority of girls and young women – with a significant increase compared with the baseline – also reported that it was possible to join groups and discuss freely in places where girls and young women meet; the highest percentage was reported by young women, followed by adolescent girls aged 14-17. This finding indicates that girls' and young women's participation in groups increased since the beginning of the programme. The report notes that participation in groups also enabled girls and young women to increase their influence within the community with positive effects on the number of child marriage cases in the intervention areas; yet no further information is provided (Transition International, 2014).

The evaluation contends that gender-based violence decreased because of women's economic empowerment in intervention areas: many women engage in savings and credit groups, manage household expenditures, and are more confident and involved in community issues. There is also some indication that rates of child marriage are declining in those areas. Overall, although the programme appears to be effective in raising awareness and changing attitudes, the study notes that the awareness-raising activities of the programme were very much in line with other initiatives, including government programmes, so it would be difficult to attribute change clearly to the programme. Moreover, the study warns that the programme is too focused on girls' empowerment and thus neglects boys who are lagging behind in the same communities, with potential negative side effects (Transition International, 2014).

One of the programme partners, Child Helpline International, worked with a local partner, the Child Workers in Nepal Concerted Centre, between 2012 and 2014, to provide a **child helpline**. Data shows that more boys than girls called in 2013 and 2014. Overall, data indicates that the helpline was used heavily each year by both boys and girls, and by those aged 13 to 15, followed by young adolescents aged 10-12. Most frequent calls aimed to seek information with callers being mostly boys. Adolescents also called to talk about commercial exploitation, with most callers in 2012 being boys, while in 2013 they were girls. Another key reason for calling was homelessness. Girls accounted for almost all cases of children calling about sexual abuse in 2013 and 2014, while almost equal numbers of boys and girls reported physical abuse. The local partner in Nepal also provided adolescent girls with life skills workshops and awareness-raising activities about their rights and the services available. The organisation also undertook a massive outreach campaign to increase awareness on child protection issues, child labour and child marriage. In addition, as a member of the Men Engage Network, it participated in the Men Engage Symposium which provided training and discussion on how to engage men and boys in girl- and women-focused interventions (Cusack, 2015).

The Save the Children **Allies for Change: Creating Safer Environment for Girls, Women and Boys** project in Surkhet aimed to mobilise boys and young men and support them to work with girls in child clubs in order to tackle violence. It included a behavioural change approach, addressing gender-based violence and promoting more gender-equitable norms to challenge traditional notions of aggressive masculinity. The project encouraged boys to reflect and challenge stereotypes and harmful notions of masculinity and, along with girls, to develop strategies preventing violence in the community. Awareness-raising activities and advocacy campaigns were also carried out at community and district levels. The project involved nearly 200 boys and 140 girls as peer educators, who then reached 44,500 children and youth, and led to the increased support of the district administration office and the community police in punishing perpetrators and controlling the prevalence of violence in intervention areas (Save the Children Sweden, n.d.).

Using a holistic and integrated approach, the **Stromme Foundation Project** (2011-2015) aimed to improve the social and economic status of poor and marginalised women and girls in four districts³⁰ and to empower them to work collectively against social exclusion, violence and limited education and economic opportunities. Its qualitative midterm evaluation noted that more than 2,900 families benefited from a community-based participatory education programme, which provided a base for the discussion and analysis of the situation of

30 Makawanpur, Rautahat, Rupandehi and Surkhet.

adolescent girls. The project helped adolescent girls become aware of problems that affected their lives such as child marriage, trafficking and domestic violence, and provided them with the skills to solve those problems themselves. Thus 5,230 adolescent girls and their parents became aware of trafficking and other forms of violence, 4,100 girls and their parents actively engaged as watchdogs against trafficking, 45 trafficking and domestic violence cases were registered in the local government authority, 181 interest groups were involved in anti-trafficking efforts and 28 cases related to anti-trafficking and social issues were successfully solved by interest groups. Adolescent girls also improved their awareness about health, hygiene and sanitation and social issues such as caste-based discrimination. Many girls also increased their confidence and overcame their shyness in speaking in public about issues that threatened their wellbeing, while they also started trying to solve their problems themselves (Rijal et al., 2013).

The **Women Empowerment for Transformation in the Churia area** (SAKCHAM II) was a women's empowerment project (2010-2012) which targeted poor and social excluded women and girls in three districts³¹ with several activities, including creating women's groups and raising awareness to tackle gender-based violence. The qualitative evaluation noted that the project created 200 community-based women's groups in which more than 4,400 women were involved; groups met once a week to learn about existing laws, discuss gender-based violence cases reported in the community, and find a collective solution. A 28-minute radio programme was also aired to sensitise women against violence in project areas. These community-level groups also networked from the village to the national level and thus the project effectively created support networks for women's rights. Other group activities included capacity building, community mobilisation, policy advocacy and psychosocial support. The evaluation found that 50% of women reported that violence against women at the household and community level was reduced – although in one district it increased and in another district decreased; in addition, 37% of survivors of gender-based violence used the available services (Khanal et al., 2012).

Between 2010 and 2012, UNFPA and UNICEF implemented a joint two-year project funded by the United Nations Peace Fund for Nepal which aimed to support sustainable peace by improving access to transitional justice and other peacebuilding activities for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in the most conflict-affected districts. The **Ensuring recognition of sexual violence as a tool of conflict in the Nepal peace building process through documentation and provision of comprehensive services to women and girl survivors** project aimed to ensure recognition of sexual violence as a tool of conflict, document conflict-related sexual violence, and provide services to girls and women survivors. Until that point, such incidents were not officially recognised by the government, and survivors remained silent, often facing stigma. The project provided mobile reproductive health camps as an entry point to document cases of survivors, as those camps provided a safe environment wherein survivors could access help in a confidential manner including medical, psychosocial and legal services. Each camp lasted for ten days and girls and women who participated were referred to the services they needed, provided with psychosocial and legal support, shelter, rehabilitation and even reproductive health surgeries. The project also included policy and media advocacy, using radio dramas and television serials to raise awareness on the issue of violence against girls and women in the country (PHD Group, 2012).

The mixed methods evaluation paid attention to the age differentials of participants and thus research activities were conducted separately with adolescent girls younger than 17 years and with those 18 years and over (about one in eight women were under 18). The study noted that given the strong culture of silence around sexual violence, there were concerns over how best to assess project effectiveness and impact as people did not openly talk about violence. Indeed, some survivors did not want to make a formal complaint although they received legal counselling as they were afraid of re-victimisation, family discord and poverty. The project provided reproductive health services to more than 36,400 girls and women, psychosocial counselling to 3,500, and legal assistance to 1,000 (most cases were of domestic violence, followed by torture

31 Chitwan, Kapilvastu and Makwanpur.

during the conflict). In addition, it documented more than 800 cases of sexual and gender-based violence during and after the conflict and identified 70 cases as potentially eligible for consideration in the transitional justice process in 14 of the most conflict-affected districts of the country³². The project thus exceeded its original targets. The vast majority of beneficiaries (83%) found that the camp services were good or very good as services and medicine were free and readily available, counselling was good, there was no waiting time to access services and women service providers behaved in a respectful manner. The project also reached women and girls from disadvantaged groups, with 66% of beneficiaries being Dalits and Janajatis. Participants in the group discussions and in-depth interviews reported that their reproductive health improved after the project. The impact of the media campaign was also considerable as Katha Mitho Sarangiko (meaning ‘Sweet Tales of the Sarangi’) radio series was very popular and raised public awareness on gender and violence issues (PHD Group, 2012).

In 2011, the government established the **One-Stop Crisis Management Centres**, a hospital-based initiative to address gender-based violence. These centres provide 24-hour medical treatment, psychosocial counselling, legal advice, a safe home and rehabilitation services to girls and women survivors. By 2013, 16 such centres were created, each one headed by a district coordination committee. Some of these centres appear to be working well and the basic medical treatment and psychosocial counselling are considered to be important services. Yet there are still significant challenges including weak information dissemination with many potential users still being unaware of available services and procedures; poor coordination among stakeholders; uncertain quality of services and weak follow-up; and limited treatment of severe cases (Solotaroff and Pande, 2014).

Many NGOs also work in different parts of the country to tackle gender-based violence. In 2009, NGOs working on the issue (and especially on domestic violence) created the National Network Against Domestic Violence, which played a crucial role to pressure the government to pass the Domestic Violence Act. In general, NGOs run advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, implement prevention programmes such as the formation of paralegal communities and community watch groups and the provision of non-formal education and skills training, and offer support services to survivors, including free medical services, shelters, income-generating training, drop-in centres, free legal services, psychosocial counselling, reintegration initiatives and non-formal education. In 2010, the Asia Foundation conducted a mapping of those NGOs and their interventions in the country. The mapping identified 36 NGOs based in Kathmandu who work on such issues in different parts of Nepal. Yet it also revealed that while some areas benefited from a high concentration of NGOs and a wide range of development projects, other more rural areas remained largely overlooked. Many NGOs that tried to reach more rural areas stressed their difficulty to operate there due to a scarcity of resources and programmes and insecure conditions (Asia Foundation, 2010).

5.3 Communication interventions

Radio programmes are popular in Nepal and are used to raise awareness and change attitudes and behaviours around violence. **Samajhdari** (meaning ‘Mutual Understanding’) was a weekly radio programme which sought to change attitudes and behaviours around violence against women and around HIV and AIDS through the provision of information to help people find solutions. The programme was broadcast weekly for thirty minutes between 2008 and 2010 and reached more than three million regular listeners. Each episode opened with an ordinary listener talking about a dilemma followed by a discussion, which brought calls, letters and emails from listeners, expert opinion and guest participants, informing and inspiring the audience to deal effectively with similar problems in their lives. Listeners groups were also set up in 60 rural communities bringing women together weekly to discuss and take action on the issues raised in the radio programme. Findings from an impact study in 2010 showed that between one-fifth and a quarter of female respondents were adolescents aged between 15 and 19. As a result of listening to the programme, women’s willingness to speak out and

32 Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusa, Mahottari, Bardiya, Dang, Kalikot, Rolpa, Rukum, Surkhet, Achham, Bajura, Kanchanpur and Kapilvastu.

report violence increased along with the proportion of respondents who would seek legal action. Both men and women listeners became more willing to intervene in cases of violence, with an increase of 66 percentage points among men and 63 percentage points among women. Yet there was no significant change in men's views on whether women should tolerate violence in order to keep the family together. Regular listeners also felt empowered to speak openly among family members about their rights and choices and the low status of girls in Nepal. Respondents in focus group discussions indicated that increased knowledge and the broader messaging of the programme contributed to changing attitudes (Marcus and Page, 2014).

Saathi Sanga Manka Kura³³ (SSMK – meaning 'Chatting with my best friend') is another radio programme which is designed and developed by young people and targets youth in Nepal. This radio show is broadcast weekly for 45 minutes with over 8 million regular listeners and aims to provide them with information about puberty, sexual and reproductive health, peer pressure, HIV and AIDS, education and work opportunities, and to enable adolescents and young people to make informed decisions about issues that matter in their daily lives. Between 2014 and 2015, the issues discussed focused on adolescent participation, menstrual hygiene management, love and relationships in adolescence, physical and mental health, financial literacy and livelihoods, and child protection. A study on the importance of communication initiatives for adolescent girls in Nepal noted that since its start, the programme received more than 40,000 responses where people talked about changes in their lives and communities after the SSMK experience. These were usually about stopping dowry, child marriages or sexual abuse by guardians (Ghimire et al., 2015).

5.4 Interventions tackling child marriage and other harmful traditional practices

Given the high rates of child marriage in the country, we would expect many interventions explicitly seeking to eliminate it. However, as a recent report on harmful practices in the country noted, although there are many child protection and life skills interventions for girls and boys in Nepal, 'very few programmes explicitly address prevention of child marriage and elimination of harmful practices as measurable outcomes' (ICRW, 2014: 6). The report actually suggests that the majority of these programmes assume that child marriage will be addressed if girls are provided with life skills and education. Yet lack of a targeted strategy and absence of rigorous evaluation evidence does not support claims that interventions addressing violence against girls and women, improving their life skills or promoting girls' education will reduce child marriage. Although the government of Nepal has a national policy for child marriage, there also seems to be a weak implementation and poor awareness and enforcement. Thus apart from stronger law enforcement and targeted programmes, systematic and rigorous evaluations of child protection and child marriage interventions, strengthening ongoing work with religious leaders and actively involving adolescent boys, girls' parents and communities are all necessary to eradicate child marriage (ICRW, 2014).

One of the few examples of interventions with a direct focus on child marriage, was a project aiming to address child marriage and gender-based violence, implemented by CARE in three districts³⁴ between 2008 and 2011. **Chunauti** (meaning 'Challenge') had three specific objectives: to transform social norms underpinning the harmful practice through peer educators, leaders, schools, community-based organisations and a widespread behavioural change communication campaign; to scale-up promising practices; and to advocate laws and policies addressing child marriage and other forms of gender-based violence. To this end, the project used three strategies, behavioural change communication, social mobilisation and private sector engagement. Thus 70 school-based anti-gender-based-violence forums and 210 young girls' clubs with more than 1,000 members were formed and provided with training on gender-based violence, while they collaborated actively with child marriage eradication committees to raise awareness about the harmful effects of child marriage and violence.

³³ For more information on this programme, see also Section 2.

³⁴ Dhanusha, Mahottari and Rupandehi.

The project also used mass media, local and national celebrities, and peer educators who reached nearly 30 households every month, promoting messages against gender-based violence, raising awareness and advocating for law enforcement. Volunteers also worked with religious leaders and match-makers to speak publicly against child marriage. The private sector engagement consisted of working with private providers of wedding services to boycott child weddings, showcase their commitment to preventing the practice and introduce codes of conduct (CARE, 2015).

The mixed methods evaluation noted that the project created an enabling environment that rewarded families who delayed their daughter's marriage, contributed to the development of young female leaders in the community, and increased awareness among men and women in the targeted communities. Between baseline and end-line, knowledge about the legal age of marriage increased among parents from 21% to 84%, and among adolescent girls from 21% to 88%. More than 97% of adolescent and parent respondents also reported disagreeing with the practice. And by the end of the project, 66% of adolescents reported discussing the effects of child marriage with family and neighbours, up from 32% at the beginning of the project. Key stakeholders at district and national levels also spoke publicly against it, and law enforcement mechanisms were activated (CARE, 2015).

Another ongoing CARE intervention is **Tipping Point** (2014-2017) in the Terai region which seeks to identify and address the root causes of child marriage through innovative strategies. In particular, the project seeks to identify the tipping points for shifting social norms that restrict the lives and roles of girls and boys and uphold the practice of child marriage and dowry. The project aims to create spaces for dialogue between adolescents, parents and community members to promote communication and support for gender equality; provide them with awareness of gender equality and rights; promote gender equitable norms and celebrate such behaviours; and encourage networks, groups and organisations to collaborate, shift discourse and act to support gender equitable opportunities for boys and girls (Karim et al., 2016).

Apart from NGO-led interventions, community-based structures, such as the **Paralegal Committees**, play an important role in preventing child marriage. Along with vigilance committees at ward level, they support girls at risk of child marriage, resolve issues at community level or refer them to district level enforcement authorities (GoN, 2015). Significant too is the role of the **Village Child Protection Committees** which consist of local community members, and are implemented at local level through the Child Welfare Boards and Child Rights and Child Welfare Officers. It is estimated that there are at least 1,000 such committees working to protect girls and prevent child marriage. UNICEF has also supported their capacity building in child rights and protection and case management (UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016).

Another harmful traditional practice is Chhaupadi in the far western region, according to which girls and women are not allowed to enter the house and touch water and milk while they are menstruating. They are also prohibited from touching plants, objects with religious importance, men and anything else considered to be pure. During these days, they have to live and sleep in a small hut made of mud, straw and wood outside the village, known as the Chhaupadi house. The practice violates adolescent girls' rights to be in a safe environment and has negative impact on their health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and education as girls cannot attend school. The government declared Chhaupadi as 'the worst form of social practice' and in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and Save the Children implemented the **Chhaupadi Elimination Project** in Achham, one of the districts where the practice was still prevalent in 2008. The project aimed to increase by 50% the percentage of girls staying at home during menstruation, and to ensure that all girls went to school during menstruation. It involved mothers as role models and gatekeepers of traditional values and practices, targeted local committees and child clubs with awareness-raising activities, used mass media such as local radios and newspapers providing information about the practice, established and mobilised watch groups including youth and local leaders, provided training to police personnel on the rights of children and women, established health camps and a reproductive health fund for treatment of cases, provided instructions for the preparation of homemade sanitary pads and their hygienic disposal, constructed girls' toilets and water tanks at schools, and built capacity (Uprety and Bhandari, 2010).

The qualitative evaluation found that the project raised awareness on harmful traditional practices and improved local capacity. Particular activities appeared to have a positive impact, including involvement of men, use of mass media to raise awareness and collaboration with religious leaders who spoke against the practice and in some cases kept their own daughters and wives at home, thus making other community members follow their example. Community members also realised that the practice is a form of violence against women and girls that threatens their wellbeing. Parents and teachers understood that every girl has the right to go to school and should not stay at the Chhaupadi house, thus most girls started going to school during menstruation and learnt how to manage it effectively. Through training, girls and women also became confident about discussing health and menstruation without hesitation. Out of the 19 VDCs where the project was implemented, between 24% and 58% of adolescent girls and women started staying at home during menstruation. Results were positive and three wards in one VDC were even declared Chhaupadi-free. However, the evaluation recognised that it would take some time to eliminate the practice and noted that the project in some of the wards did not reach Dalit communities (Uprety and Bhandari, 2010).

5.5 Interventions tackling human trafficking

Trafficking continues to be a serious threat to the wellbeing of adolescent girls and young women in Nepal. Girls are trafficked to India and the Gulf countries for domestic work and commercial sex work. International and local NGOs with donors' support run various initiatives to raise awareness against trafficking and provide support to survivors in terms of repatriation, shelter and rehabilitation. Key local NGOs include Maiti Nepal, the Women Rehabilitation Centre and Shakti Samuha. These organisations provide shelter, medical support, psychosocial and legal counselling, skills training and livelihood support. They also focus on the reintegration of girls in their communities and emphasise the need to promote and restore their human rights (Asia Foundation, 2010).

The ongoing **Work in Freedom** project (2013-2018) seeks to reduce trafficking of girls and women from India, Nepal and Bangladesh into the domestic and garment sectors and to support their economic, social and legal empowerment by helping them to migrate safely and access decent jobs. A DFID-ILO collaborative project, it targets 40,000 girls and women in Nepal in five districts³⁵ and aims to improve the awareness, information and skills of girl and women migrant workers, ensure that recruitment agencies adopt ethical recruitment criteria which are monitored and enforced, enable migrant workers in domestic work and in the garment sector to enjoy better collective representation and support services, and ensure the implementation of laws and policies that protect women migrants' rights (ILO, n.d.). The project is actually DFID's main intervention to tackle human trafficking and modern slavery. So far, targets have been surpassed and first results are encouraging: over 210,000 girls and women in all three countries have benefited from outreach activities on how to make informed migration decisions; more than 170,000 received pre-decision orientation to help them make informed decisions about migration and reduce their risk of being trafficked; over 200 recruitment beneficiaries have been trained on fair recruitment; and over 29,000 women workers have been organised in migrants' destination areas to help them better access services, provide peer support and lobby for improved working conditions. Yet a number of challenges remain, including devising strategies to deal with informal recruiters in order to reduce girls' and women's vulnerability to exploitation (DFID, 2016b).

5.6 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps

There is a relatively small but growing body of literature on interventions aiming to protect adolescent girls from child marriage and other harmful traditional practices as well as physical and sexual violence and human trafficking. Yet the evidence base is still rather weak as not only are there a few evaluations available but also they lack rigour. Therefore, we know very little about the best practices to tackle violence against girls, let alone about what works for particular age groups or categories of girls such as those in rural areas, married

35 Chitwan, Dolakha, Ilam, Morang and Rupendehi.

girls, girls with disabilities or those belonging to disadvantaged groups such as Dalits or Janajatis. The limited evidence does, however, indicate that young adolescents are vulnerable to violence, yet they remain unaware of how to protect themselves and access services. Participation in clubs and provision of training appear to have a promising potential along with awareness-raising initiatives targeting parents, leaders and communities. The involvement of boys is also considered essential, not only because they are part of the solution, but also because programmes focusing exclusively on girls and neglecting boys may create negative side effects. In the case of harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage and Chhaupadi, the evaluations examined note that it would probably take some time to eliminate them, thus there is need for well-designed and longer-term initiatives, which in the case of child marriage need to consider and address the multiple underlying factors involved.

6. Psychosocial wellbeing interventions

Available evidence on the psychosocial wellbeing of adolescent girls in Nepal is rather limited. In the Nepal Adolescent and Youth Survey, 12% of girls aged 10-24 reported feeling sad and depressed, and 49% reported feeling that they could not cope with their existing situation (MoHP, 2012). Data also shows that 21% of suicides in the country are committed by girls aged 18 and under (Asian Development Bank, 2012). However, there is little understanding of the contributory factors, which are likely to include the pressures adolescent girls face to conform to social norms and expectations as well as traumatic experiences of violence, child marriage and conflict.

6.1 Overview of the evidence

Our search generated five impact studies and evaluations of interventions aiming to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of adolescent girls, directly or indirectly. Three of these studies were grey literature, while the remaining two were papers published in academic journals. Three studies evaluated interventions that targeted adolescents and women affected by the civil conflict and provided them with psychosocial counselling. Another impact study assessed a women's empowerment intervention which also included psychosocial support, and the fifth study evaluated a youth employment programme, including its potential psychosocial outcomes. In order to assess intervention impacts on psychosocial wellbeing, some evaluations focused on mental health and used international self-assessment instruments, such as the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist and the Child Psychosocial Distress Screener, which have been validated in Nepal, while others focused on social and emotional wellbeing and assessed changes in girls' self-confidence and control over life. In terms of the methodology used, one study combined qualitative and quantitative methods, another one used purely qualitative methodology, and three studies used quantitative methodology; one evaluation of an economic empowerment intervention with psychosocial outcomes used a quasi-experimental design (Chakravarty et al., 2015), while the evaluation of a psychosocial support intervention targeting young adolescents affected by the conflict used a cluster randomised control trial (Jordans et al., 2010). We also found several sources with information about mental health and psychosocial support projects targeting girl survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking as well as children and youth affected by the 2015 earthquake. A more detailed overview of all examined studies is provided in Annex 1.

6.2 Psychosocial support interventions targeting conflict-affected youth

As armed conflict is acknowledged to be a major risk factor for the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of children and youth, several agencies and NGOs implemented psychosocial support programmes for Nepali children and adolescents affected by the conflict, including both child soldiers and civilian children. To improve the services provided, efforts included training of counsellors, the validation of child mental health instruments, and development of methods for the participation of children in psychosocial programming that largely aimed to reintegrate former child soldiers into their communities. For instance, the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) Nepal worked to validate child mental health instruments originally developed in high-income Western settings (Kohrt et al., 2011) as well as to develop a tool to involve Nepali children in designing and monitoring culturally relevant and child-friendly psychosocial support programmes (Karki et al., 2009). Overall, there are several studies discussing projects to reintegrate former child soldiers, and a few others on supporting conflict-affected youth and women.

In collaboration with UN agencies and NGOs, the government of Nepal provided a **rehabilitation package for child soldiers** involved in the civil conflict to support their transition to civilian life along with psychosocial support services provided by regional counsellors. A study which collected baseline and follow-up data from adolescents who participated in the rehabilitation programme investigated its impact. Psychosocial and mental

health problems were assessed using standardised structured questionnaires such as the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist, which have been validated in Nepal. In addition, a locally developed 11-item questionnaire was used to measure their socioeconomic reintegration. The majority of study participants were boys and young men, while girls and young women accounted for 36% of them; 19% of all participants were adolescents. The study found that the prevalence of anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the sample declined significantly between baseline and follow-up, nine months later (2011-2012), while depression symptoms did not change. Poor social support and inter-caste marriage which often led to social stigma, abuse from family and rejection from the community, were identified as the strongest risk factors for psychosocial wellbeing. Interestingly, there were different mental health outcomes depending on the region with respondents from eastern regions showing the lowest levels of psychosocial and mental problems, while those from the western regions the highest; the study suggests that this may be due to lower rates of participation in the rehabilitation packages, lack of employment opportunities and difficult living conditions in the western regions. Caste/ethnicity also appeared to be important as Janajatis showed the best outcomes, while Dalits reported the highest levels of anxiety and depression, a finding which may be linked to social hierarchy and cultural norms of different caste groups. Younger age also appeared to be a risk factor as the younger the participant, the higher the risk of persistent mental problems. On the other hand, education, economic status and gender had no significant impact on overall psychosocial wellbeing. However, boys showed greater depression and PTSD symptoms reduction than girls, who actually showed worsening of depression and PTSD symptoms over the nine months. Thus the study questioned the benefits of the rehabilitation intervention, but stressed the critical importance of family and community support for former child soldiers (Adhikari et al., 2014).

The **Classroom-Based Intervention** was a comprehensive psychosocial care project (2006-2007) which targeted school-going rural adolescents aged 11-14 exposed to violence and the ongoing conflict in four districts³⁶ in south-western Nepal. Trained counsellors provided students with 15 psychosocial care sessions of one hour over five weeks and aimed to reduce their psychosocial problems and promote their resilience through strengthening their coping, pro-social behaviour and hope. Each session was structured around a theme-centred activity, group play and a closing ritual. The evaluation used a cluster RCT design to assess changes on a range of indicators, including mental disorder symptoms (anxiety, depression, PTSD), psychological difficulties and resilience indicators. The intervention was implemented in two districts and in two schools per district; districts and schools were randomly allocated. Participants were also randomly selected from a list of all children of the targeted age in the chosen schools. The two other districts and two remaining schools in each district were randomly allocated to serve as the control group. The intervention thus was implemented in eight schools with 164 adolescents in four schools being the intervention group and 161 others in four other schools as the control group. Mean participant age was 12.7 years, while 91% were Hindus and 49% were girls. The study used the Child Psychosocial Distress Screener, a brief instrument that assesses non-specific child psychosocial distress through distress and resilience indicators; attention was paid to the fact that the instrument was validated for the Nepali context. The evaluation found that the intervention improved pro-social behaviour and reduced psychological difficulties and aggression, but did not result in any reduction in mental disorder symptoms. In particular, the intervention moderately reduced general psychological difficulties and aggression for boys, increased pro-social behaviour for girls, and increased hope for older adolescents (Jordans et al., 2010).

The **Ensuring recognition of sexual violence as a tool of conflict in the Nepal peace building process through documentation and provision of comprehensive services to women and girl survivors** project (2010-2012) was a joint UNFPA and UNICEF intervention aiming to support girls and women survivors of the conflict-related violence, document such violence and support sustainable peace by improving survivors' access to justice. The project provided mobile reproductive health camps as an entry point to document cases of violence, as these camps provided a safe environment wherein survivors could access help in a confidential manner. Each camp

36 Banke, Bardiya, Dang and Kailali.

lasted for 10 days and girls and women who participated were referred to the services they needed and provided with psychosocial and legal support, shelter, rehabilitation and even reproductive health surgeries. Data shows that nearly one in eight women were under the age of 18. The mixed methods evaluation found that 3,500 women and girls were provided with psychosocial counselling. Before coming to the camp, nearly half of respondents shared their psychosocial problems with friends and 24% with their husband, while one in five did not share them with anybody. After receiving counselling in the camp, they reported feeling differently, relieved and more hopeful. During the counselling they learnt that resting from time to time, talking to their husband or parents, living in harmony with family members, avoiding child marriage, engaging in income-generating activities, working for children's future, and not worrying about problems but keeping on working as usual, were important for their psychosocial wellbeing. Around 95% of respondents said that the counselling was good or very good and female service providers treated them kindly (PHD Group, 2012).

6.3 Psychosocial support interventions for children and women

Mental health care is scarce in Nepal and limited to urban centres and hospitals (Jordans et al., 2016). Since 2000, many organisations with rehabilitation programmes for vulnerable and trauma-exposed groups, such as trafficked girls and women or conflict-affected youth, have started paying attention to the importance of psychosocial counselling (Jordans et al., 2003). Moreover, there are a number of initiatives aiming to integrate mental health into primary healthcare, including the DFID-funded Programme for Improving Mental Health Care (PRIME) implemented by the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Nepal (Jordans et al., 2016).

Women Empowerment for Transformation in the Churia area (SAKCHAM II, 2010-2012) was a women's empowerment project which targeted 19,000 poor and marginalised women in three districts³⁷ to help them exercise their rights and improve their lives. A multi-component intervention, it also included provision of psychosocial support to women in order to increase their self-esteem and help them take control over their lives along with information about domestic violence against girls and women, and men's discriminative and harmful conduct. The project thus developed 42 Community Based Psychosocial Care Workers through a series of training packages and coordinated with 59 traditional healers who also received psychosocial and gender-based awareness sessions for referral cases to help women overcome such problems. The qualitative evaluation found that women participants reported increased self-confidence and ability to speak out in the household and in public about issues that concerned them (Khanal et al., 2012).

Psychosocial counselling is also offered to girl survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking (Asia Foundation, 2010). In addition, international and local NGOs with donors' support and in collaboration with central and district government agencies implemented several interventions providing psychosocial support and referral of mental disorder cases to specialist centres in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake; the traumatic experiences that many people had experienced led to psychological distress, anxiety, inability to concentrate or rest, and mental health problems. Children, women and older people were more affected and in a more vulnerable condition. Intervention activities included: working with teachers and parents in schools and providing them with psychosocial support training to help their children deal with their trauma and return to normal activities; providing individual counselling to students or implementing group and classroom-based interventions; and using communication initiatives such as radio programmes to promote self-care and resilience. In particular, Manko Sansar, a radio programme, was broadcast from local radio stations and its 12 episodes talked about psychological problems and coping mechanisms to normalise the situation (CMC Nepal, 2016).

37 Chitwan, Kapilvastu and Makwanpur.

6.4 Interventions with psychosocial wellbeing outcomes

Apart from interventions explicitly aiming to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of participants through counselling, a few interventions with economic, educational or empowering objectives also reported positive psychosocial wellbeing outcomes. The **Employment Fund** is one of the largest youth training programmes in Nepal targeting youth aged 16-35 with less than 10 years of formal education and of low economic status, and providing them with skills training and employment placement services; a 40-hour life skills training is also provided to female participants. The programme expanded in 2010 to additionally include 4,410 girls and young women aged 16-24 who participated in the Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative, a World Bank programme which aimed to facilitate transition to productive employment and to empower young women in developing countries affected by conflict. Its quasi-experimental evaluation focused on the 2010-2012 cohorts and found that two years into the programme, the Fund had positive impacts. Apart from increasing non-farm employment and earnings for trainees – for adolescent and young women more than for their male counterparts – the programme also had important non-employment impacts. Female trainees also reported significant increases in self-confidence both in life and with regard to entrepreneurial activities. The evaluation also used 10 psychological empowerment indicators which included self-ability to control impulses and establish control over life with positive impacts recorded on six indicators, which was interpreted as predicting future labour market success (Chakravarty et al., 2015).

Similar findings were reported by other training and livelihood interventions: the evaluation of the **Jobs for Peace Programme** which targeted youth aged 15-29 and provided them with skills training, employment support and access to credit, also noted that participants reported satisfaction with their achievements along with improved psychosocial wellbeing, ‘peace of mind’, and less family tension (Kumar-Range and Acharya, 2011). Likewise, several studies of interventions with educational or empowerment objectives noted that participating girls reported increasing their self-confidence, acquiring new friends or strengthening their friendships, improving their relationships with parents and teachers, and reducing their anxieties (e.g. Gaible, 2015; Ghimire et al., 2015).

6.5 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps

Evidence on interventions aiming to improve adolescent girls’ psychosocial wellbeing is very limited and focuses on adolescents affected by the conflict, either as child soldiers or civilians and their mental health problems. There are also several sources on provision of psychosocial support services to vulnerable groups such as girls’ survivors of violence and abuse or those who were traumatised by the 2015 earthquake – yet we were unable to find any evaluation of those interventions. Interestingly, a few studies of interventions with economic or social empowerment objectives have identified positive effects on the emotional wellbeing of participating girls. Overall, we know very little about what works to enhance the emotional and social wellbeing of adolescent girls in Nepal, let alone the particular strategies for different groups of girls. Some evidence indicates the important role of family support, friendship and economic independence, yet far more research and robust evaluations are needed to confirm those findings and identify best practices for different groups of adolescent girls, their optimal length and duration.

7. Sexual and reproductive health, health and nutrition interventions

Adolescent girls in Nepal face health risks resulting from harmful social norms around puberty, menstruation, child marriage, early sexual debut, pregnancy and child bearing; they are also more vulnerable than boys to sexually transmitted infections and HIV (Amin et al., 2014). These risks are often heightened in the poorer and less accessible areas of Nepal, or among traditionally disadvantaged sections of the population such as low castes and ethnic minorities. Adolescent girls also face difficulties in accessing health support and services such as contraception (CBS and UNICEF, 2015).

7.1 Overview of the evidence

Our search generated 14 impact studies and evaluations of interventions that aimed to improve adolescent girls' physical wellbeing. Ten of these studies were grey literature and the remaining four were academic papers. The majority of interventions had several components, with the most common being provision of knowledge about adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Many interventions also included training to service providers for the delivery of youth-friendly services as well as community awareness-raising activities to improve understanding of the sexual and reproductive health rights and needs of adolescents and their access to such services. While some interventions explicitly targeted adolescent girls, others focused on youth – married and unmarried – and a few others on women of reproductive age. In terms of the methodology used, seven studies combined quantitative and qualitative methods, six used only quantitative techniques, and only one purely qualitative methodology. Two studies used a robust quasi-experimental design (Malhotra et al., 2005; Mathur et al., 2005), while one was a randomised evaluation (Oster and Thornton, 2011). We also found several other documents with information about physical health projects aiming to improve adolescent reproductive health. A detailed overview of all examined studies can be found in Annex 1.

7.2 Interventions targeting adolescent girls

The use of participatory approaches, life skills sessions and group formation appear to be particularly common approaches to improve adolescent girls' health capabilities in Nepal. The **Putting Learning into Action** programme targeted girls aged 10-24 both in- and out-of-school, and aimed to address menstrual prohibitions and their HIV and AIDS vulnerability. During its first phase, the programme set up participatory discussion groups where girls discussed educational goals, self-awareness, parenthood, gender relations, peer pressure, puberty, HIV and AIDS and reproductive health. Phase two entailed 'putting learning into action' with girls trained as peer educators to lead community events and discussions addressing the issues that they had considered most important. Using panel longitudinal design to compare attitudes and behaviours of peer educators before and after their participation in the programme, but without the use of a control group, the evaluation focused on those peer educators. It found that between the baseline and end-line, HIV knowledge increased by 15% and the average number of menstrual prohibitions decreased, especially among high-caste girls. Participating girls also increased their leadership self-efficacy with the evaluation emphasising that leadership self-efficacy is a strong predictor of increased HIV knowledge and fewer menstrual restrictions (CEDPA, 2008; Posner et al., 2009).

A **GIFT for RH Project** (Adolescent Girls Initiate for their Reproductive Health), employed similar approaches in order to mobilise illiterate and out-of-school girls to make informed decisions about their reproductive health and to enhance communication with their parents and community about their health needs and rights. Implemented by the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) in partnership with Aama Milan Kendra, a national NGO working with mothers and adolescent girls, the programme (2000-2002) engaged nearly 900 girls aged 10-19 in a range of non-formal literacy classes which focused on reproductive

health material. A mixed methods evaluation found improved literacy, improved communication between girls and parents, and improved health knowledge, attitudes and practices. For instance, only 1% of girls were unaware of how pregnancy occurs at end-line compared to 77% of 10-14 year olds and 23% of 15-19 year olds at baseline. Knowledge about sexually transmitted infections also increased. In addition, 99% of girls who had experienced health problems reported sharing their problems with their parents. However, the lack of a control group makes it difficult to assess the specific impact of the programme. The study also found a slight increase in experiences of health problems, which the authors attributed to better awareness of health issues and higher reporting levels (CREHPA, 2002).

CEDPA's **BuD for RH** (Building Demand for Reproductive Health) project followed on from GIFT. The programme targeted illiterate, low-income adolescent girls aged 10-19 and created groups where girls could increase their literacy and improve their reproductive health knowledge. Their families and communities were also involved in order to support girls and create an enabling environment. The quantitative evaluation showed sharp increases in girls' awareness about the types of physical changes girls experience at puberty, and in knowledge regarding why menstruation occurs in girls. While mothers continued to be the main source of information regarding menstruation, the project also provided a lot of such information to girls and led to positive changes in girls' personal hygiene during menstruation, such as taking a bath daily, changing their sanitary cloth daily and drying undergarments in sunlight. Between baseline and follow-up, girls also significantly increased their knowledge about ways to get pregnant or to avoid getting pregnant. In addition, a steady increase in knowledge on harmful practices for pregnant women was observed among participating girls (CREHPA, 2005).

The **Menstruation and Education in Nepal Project** (2006-2008) was an experimental intervention which targeted nearly 200 girls at Grades 7 and 8 in four schools in Chitwan district as well as their mothers and aimed to measure the effect of menstruation on school attendance and the effect of sanitary products on school attendance. To this end, the study used a randomised design. During the first meeting, a survey was administered which served as the baseline. Girls were then given a booklet of time diaries for each month with a menstrual calendar on which girls had to note the start and end date of their period each month. At the end of the meeting, a public lottery took place and 25 girls in each school were assigned to the intervention group and were provided with a menstrual cap and instructions on how to use it. The intervention and the control group used the menstrual calendars and the data collected were combined with school attendance data from official school records. Girls were followed for nearly 15 months and then, after the follow-up survey was administered, girls in the control group were also given menstrual cups. The evaluation found that the impact of menstruation on school attendance was significant and negative, but extremely small. According to the official attendance data, girls were 2% less likely to attend school on days they had their period, and this amounted to 0.4 missed days in a 180-day school year. Moreover, the randomised design to estimate the impact on menstrual cups on school attendance found no such impact – when comparing attendance rates for girls in the treatment group to girls in the control group there was no statistically significant differences in attendance. Moreover, the menstrual cup had no effect on test scores as a proxy to measure educational attainment (Oster and Thornton, 2011).

Similar interventions have also been implemented as part of broader programmes. For instance, the UNICEF-funded **Girls' Access to Education** (GATE) programme targeted girls aged 10-18, who were out-of-school or did not attend school regularly. The programme provided non-formal education, including provision of life skills and sexual and reproductive health issues. Since girls from poor families are often unable to afford sanitary napkins – and use old pieces of torn cloth – the programme taught girls how to produce low-cost, reusable pads from locally sourced materials (Sommer et al., 2013). The qualitative evaluation focused on the education-related effects of the programme, and only mentioned that participants improved their knowledge and their hygiene and menstruation practices³⁸ (Gaible, 2015).

38 For more programme information, see also Section 3.

7.3 Reproductive health interventions targeting youth

Many interventions targeted adolescents and youth and sought to improve their sexual and reproductive health knowledge and access to such services. The **Nepal Adolescent Project (NAP)** was a community-based, participatory project which aimed to improve the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, aged 14-25, married and unmarried, in rural and urban Nepal. The intervention ran for 24 months between 2000 and 2003. Its evaluation used a quasi-experimental approach with two urban and two rural sites, randomly allocated to intervention and control sites. While control sites received a programme of adolescent-friendly services, peer education and teacher training, intervention sites received additional components designed to allow more participation by young people. They included adult peer education, youth clubs and street theatre, and overall were more comprehensive, inclusive and interactive with more attention paid to building community ownership and involvement (Malhotra et al., 2005).

The evaluation used mixed methods, including a difference-in-difference approach to look at how the intervention impacted key outcomes around knowledge of HIV and AIDS, prenatal care and institutional delivery. It found an improvement in all three measures across all four sites, but no statistically significant differences between intervention and control sites. In fact, the two maternal health outcomes – prenatal care and institutional delivery – improved more at control sites, though this reflects the small sample sizes. Where the participatory approach was, however, positive was in reducing differentials in youth reproductive health outcomes between different social groups. Relevant disadvantages (location, wealth, education and ethnicity) varied by outcome: access to prenatal care services was significantly associated with urban-rural residence and household wealth, institutional delivery for the first pregnancy with urban-rural residence, and knowledge about HIV transmission with gender and educational differences. Qualitative data indicated that the participatory approach in intervention sites was successful in increasing access or knowledge for disadvantaged youth compared to the standard approaches used in the control sites. This approach was effective as it facilitated co-production of services, empowered youth, increased accountability, and increased community demand for such information and services. The study thus concluded that participatory approaches may be good at reducing disparities in access to services or outcomes between different geographical, social or gender groups, but may have less effect on overall direct measures of reproductive health outcomes (Malhotra et al., 2005).

The participatory approach also contributed to changing key social norms and institutions that constrained youth reproductive health choices and outcomes, such as norms and restrictions around girls' mobility, access to information and resources, and reproductive health decision-making. The programme enabled rural female participants to improve their understanding and identify how norms influenced and constrained their sexual and reproductive health behaviour; women identified the negative impacts of seclusion during menstruation and after pregnancy, lack of mobility, child marriage and early childbearing, the constant threat of husbands taking on a second wife, and the housework burden. The community mobilisation approaches enabled participants – boys, girls and adults – to acquire a better understanding of the sexual and reproductive health needs of youth before and after marriage, and contributed to a broader shift in norms and attitudes along with increased access to services. For instance, married girls started using more maternal care services between baseline and end-line. Moreover, the intervention also enabled a shift in the attitudes of health care providers; prior to the intervention, they reported embarrassment discussing sexual health issues with youth and were often judgemental and less attentive to youth needs, but the programme enabled them to change their behaviour towards young service users, maintaining confidentiality and providing better quality services compared to the control sites, where services continued to be considered of low quality (Mathur et al., 2005).

Married adolescents also benefited from the NGO-led **Reproductive Health for Married Adolescent Couples Project**. The two-year pilot project aimed to improve health outcomes for married adolescents through establishing a peer education network to disseminate relevant information, supporting local health facilities for youth-friendly services, and fostering an enabling environment to increase adolescent access to and use of

services. Project components also encouraged spousal communication and joint decision-making along with greater participation of husbands in maternal health (ACQUIRE Project, 2008).

The mixed methods evaluation reported significant improvements in key reproductive health indicators over the two-year period. For instance, between baseline and end-line the percentage of married adolescents visiting public health services increased from 36% to 42%, and the percentage of adolescent girls who made four or more antenatal care visits during their last pregnancy increased from 29% to 50%. Positive changes were also found in spousal communication: while 37% of girls and 57% of boys at baseline thought that husband and wife together were responsible for family planning decisions, 65% of girls and 79% of boys did so at end-line. In addition, the proportion of married adolescents discussing with their spouse where to deliver increased from 24% to 40%. The project also increased contraception awareness, but its use before the first pregnancy remained low; discussions with mothers-in-law revealed the widespread belief that contraceptive use before the first pregnancy causes infertility and confirmed that early proof of a woman's fertility continued to be a powerful social norm. Married adolescents' knowledge of HIV and AIDS and its symptoms, transmission and preventive measures also increased significantly, yet levels of awareness remained lower among girls. Moreover, many peer educators became champions for youth behavioural change; in particular, female peer educators became powerful role models for adolescent girls and promoted their access to basic health services. At community level, the project raised awareness of the rights and needs of married adolescents and led to an attitudinal shift which facilitated adolescent access to reproductive health information and services. The project also encouraged debates on social norms affecting adolescent health, including child marriage; youth established child marriage eradication committees and even a district conference was organised advocating against the practice. Training on youth-friendly services for providers along with increasing the supply of medical equipment, increased demand and facilitated access by girls and disadvantaged groups (ACQUIRE Project, 2008).

Implemented by Save the Children as part of its multi-country Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Programme, the **Better Life for Youth** project also aimed to improve the sexual and reproductive health of in- and out-of-school youth aged 10-21, improve service accessibility and quality, and create a supportive social and policy environment. The intervention used a peer education approach which chose and trained adolescents to become peer educators, reaching more than 24,000 young people and creating a network of youth groups. These groups met on a regular basis and discussed youth reproductive and sexual health topics. The project also provided training to service providers in order to offer quality care to youth, including confidential and non-judgemental behaviour, and created a counselling service. Acknowledging that adolescents do not always access formal care, the project also established a telephone hotline counselling programme. In addition, the project worked with the Ministry of Education to review and revise the school course book and incorporate age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health material; and with parents, teachers and service providers, providing training and engaging in advocacy around delaying marriage and age of first birth (Save the Children, n.d.).

The mixed methods evaluation showed improved knowledge, attitudes and skills among adolescents in project schools compared to those in non-project schools. For instance, 45% in intervention schools had very good knowledge of changes in puberty compared to 24% in control schools; 28% had very good knowledge about menstruation and sperm development compared to just 9%; and 56% had a good knowledge about the adverse consequences of early childbearing compared to 34%. A larger proportion of students in intervention schools also felt very confident about successfully convincing a sexual partner to use a condom. However, behavioural changes were reported to be more limited. The project also successfully bridged the gaps between adolescents and service providers and raised awareness of adolescent reproductive health issues among government officials, school leaders and the public (Save the Children, n.d.).

The Ministry of Health and Population through its Nepal Health Sector Programme II (2010-2015) aimed to introduce 1,000 adolescent-friendly services in the country by 2015. To this end, the government designed and implemented the **National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme** in collaboration with its

development partners. The programme sought to increase the availability of and access to information about adolescent health and to provide opportunities to build the skills of adolescents, service providers and educators; increase the accessibility and utilisation of adolescent health and counselling services; and create a safe and supportive environment for adolescents in order to improve their legal, social and economic status. Using qualitative methodology, a midterm evaluation assessed programme effectiveness in selected health facilities in the Banke and Doti districts. While all health workers were aware of the programme and its components, and health facilities implemented community awareness activities which were deemed essential to facilitate youth access to services, few adolescents visited health facilities to access those services. In particular, adolescent girls reported visiting less than boys, although they had a better understanding of the particular services offered. Those girls who visited health facilities did so for menstrual problems, to access contraception, or had friends who went to the facility for an abortion. Married adolescents reported visiting for antenatal check-ups and vaccinations. Most adolescents who visited the facilities stated that they were happy with the health workers' behaviour and assistance, while those who had not used the services were concerned about issues of confidentiality in addition to feeling embarrassed to talk to older people, whom in some cases they already knew, about sexual and reproductive health issues. On the other hand, health workers also reported significant changes in their behaviour as a result of the programme, including increased awareness of the importance of maintaining privacy and ensuring confidentiality. The evaluation also found that only a few boys and girls had read the information materials available in the health facilities, although both adolescents and health workers admitted that they were very helpful. The evaluation emphasised the need for close collaboration with schools and youth clubs, more community awareness activities, an improved monitoring system, and refresher training for health workers to reinforce behavioural change (Baral et al., 2013).

Implemented by Restless Development, the **Dance4Life** programme (2010-2013) targeted youth aged 13-19 at 89 secondary schools in seven districts. The programme used music, song, dance and other interactive activities to engage and mobilise young people to become aware of and fight against HIV and AIDS. The programme was implemented in four phases. In the first phase (Inspire), students accessed basic HIV and AIDS knowledge through music and dance workshops. During the second phase (Educate), trained peer educators provided smaller groups of students with in-depth information about HIV and sexual and reproductive health. In the third phase (Activate), students supported awareness-raising activities among their peers; and in the last phase (Celebrate), students met other agents of change and celebrated their collective achievements. The evaluation noted that the programme reached 18,200 youth with positive effects (Restless Development, 2014). The interactive approach of the programme raised awareness of key health issues through dance and music with 88% of surveyed students giving the right answers to all HIV and AIDS related questions. In addition, 95% of students said that they would 'remain friends with someone who has HIV'. The evaluation pointed out that one of the areas where students learnt the most was on how to develop their confidence to openly discuss sexual reproductive health issues and protect themselves; 97% of students said that they would not take drugs even if their friends offered them and 89% that they would refuse to have sex even if their boyfriend/girlfriend made it a condition for continuing their relationship. However, the evaluation found that some programme components such as the skills4life and act4life were too short, preventing long-term changes occurring. Respondents also said that a supportive environment was missing, particularly because adults – parents and community members – were not involved in the programme (Savoie and Bhatta, 2014).

Using a modified format of the Teens for AIDS Prevention (TAP)³⁹, the **HIV/AIDS Peer Education Programme** aimed to increase adolescent HIV and AIDS knowledge and self-efficacy in one urban secondary school in Nepal. The intervention targeted students aged 13-16 (46% of whom were girls) at Grade 9 with a culturally appropriate format of the TAP programme in terms of content and instructional methods. The programme

39 The Teens for AIDS Prevention (TAP) programme is a HIV and sexually transmitted infections prevention education programme which trains adolescents to become peer educators to other adolescents in the community. It has been adapted and used in many settings with adolescent participants.

consisted of five 45-minute sessions promoting positive behavioural change to prevent HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases; sessions were delivered in health classes by volunteer Grade 10 students who were trained as peer educators. The quantitative study found that both HIV and AIDS knowledge and self-efficacy for reducing risky sexual behaviour improved between baseline and end-line with the difference being statistically significant. The highest increases were seen among those who initially had the lowest scores. Boys had slightly higher HIV knowledge mean scores than girls; yet there were no gender differences on overall self-efficacy mean scores. Only in two self-efficacy items, gender differentials were identified: boys scored significantly higher on self-efficacy to buy condoms in a drug store and significantly lower on self-efficacy to refuse sex with someone unknown than girls. More girls than boys reported that it was appropriate for girls to carry condoms; and although not significantly different, more girls worried about getting HIV infection than boys (Mahat et al., 2011).

In recent years, several other interventions have been implemented to improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Launched in 2014, the **Mobile Health for Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (mH4ASRH)**, is a joint initiative of the Nepali government, UNFPA, GIZ and USAID which targets at least 300,000 adolescents and aims to help them access information they are curious about but are often too shy to ask. In that way, every adolescent can access accurate information and take the appropriate measures to prevent HIV transmission and unwanted pregnancies (Uprety and Regmi, 2016).

7.4 Interventions targeting women and girls

Interventions targeting women of reproductive age can also benefit adolescent girls. The **Network for Addressing Women's Reproductive Rights in Nepal** sought to improve women's access to safe abortion and post-abortion care in 16 districts. The project mobilised private paramedics and chemists and linked them to safe abortion service centres managed by the government and NGOs; trained service providers and offered services; worked to effectively implement the abortion law and advocate legal reforms to make the law more gender-sensitive; and conducted grassroots advocacy and awareness-raising activities among community health providers, youth, married woman of reproductive age and other stakeholders about the abortion law and safe abortion services. The quantitative evaluation found that knowledge about the abortion law and legalisation of abortion increased significantly between baseline and end-line among married and unmarried women of reproductive age (15-45) and married and unmarried men (aged 15-59). The proportion of respondents who agreed that abortion is a woman's right as well as that unmarried women also have a right to abortion also increased. However, the majority of men disagreed that an unmarried woman has a right to abortion. The reported abortion rate also increased between baseline and end-line among married women from 4% to 10%, while none of the unmarried women at end-line reported ever having an abortion. Almost all respondents, including men, said that they liked the topics covered by the project and almost all felt that they benefited as they accessed useful information. The project also led to an increase in the knowledge about the abortion law – reaching 100% – among private paramedics and chemists (CREHPA, 2009).

A similar programme was carried out by Ipas Nepal in Kailali district (2012-2014). The **Enhancing Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Young Women project** targeted adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 and sought to help them prevent unwanted pregnancy and obtain safe abortion services as well as to improve the availability and quality of sexual and reproductive health services for young women. To this end, the project organised a series of educational events and workshops on youth-friendly services with key stakeholders, provided training to service providers, and established a network called Didi Dai (meaning 'Big Sister/Big Brother') that trained young men and women from 31 VDCs to serve as peer educators on safe abortion and other sexual and reproductive health and rights issues in their communities. These peer educators held sessions for thousands of in- and out-of-school adolescents, conducted door-to-door counselling visits and held more than 100 street drama performances. The project evaluation found that young women aged 15-24 were very satisfied with the services offered at the facilities, with 96% saying they were either satisfied or totally satisfied, and 100% saying they would recommend that family or friends visit the

facility for abortion services. Youth in project areas increased their knowledge about the legal status of abortion and about the facilities where safe abortion was available; 88% knew where a woman could obtain a safe abortion compared to 77% in control areas. At the end-line, young people were aware of the legality of abortion for married and unmarried women and also knew the gestational age limit for terminating a pregnancy. Interaction with peer educators proved to be effective as 88% of youth who did so knew that abortion was legal in Nepal compared to only 62% of youth with no such interaction. Peer educators also reported referring 163 women for comprehensive abortion care and 3,066 male and female community members for other reproductive health services. Health providers' knowledge on youth-friendly abortion care also improved along with their understanding of the barriers that girls and young women face in accessing such care and how to facilitate access instead of contributing to barriers (Ipas, 2015).

Aama Surakshya Karyakram (Aama meaning 'Mother') is a government programme providing free delivery care and financial incentives to pregnant women of all ages to access a variety of maternity services, including antenatal care, delivery in a health facility and postnatal care. Pregnant women receive 400 rupees (US\$3.70) for completion of four antenatal visits, free delivery care and a cash payment to cover their transportation costs to a health facility to give birth. Meanwhile, health staff receive an incentive for attending both health facility and home delivery, although the latter is being phased out so as not to promote home deliveries. In addition, larger payments are offered for complicated deliveries and for caesareans, as well as to women in mountainous and hill districts. The programme also collaborates with VDCs identifying expected deliveries with the help of mothers' groups. The government first introduced the Maternity Incentive Scheme in 2005, providing cash incentives to pregnant women delivering in public health facilities to cover their transportation costs. The scheme was succeeded by the Safe Delivery Incentive Programme (SDIP) which again did not meet the goal of raising the number of institutional deliveries as it did not address the most important barrier, the institutional cost. In 2009, the government removed user fees for delivery care and introduced the Aama programme. Both the SDIP and Aama have contributed to improved maternal and child health (MoHP et al., 2015). Pregnant women also benefit from the **Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plan**. Launched in 2011, this plan seeks to improve maternal and child nutrition and reduce chronic malnutrition, offering a package of interventions with priority strategic objectives by sector that should contribute to a reduction by one-third in the current prevalence rates of chronic malnutrition (MoHP et al., 2015). However, we were unable to access any evaluation of the plan assessing its impact on young mothers.

7.5 Assessment of the evidence and key gaps

Overall there is a considerable body of evidence on interventions aiming to improve the sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls in Nepal. The majority of these programmes provide training sessions on sexual and reproductive health, and support adolescents to form discussion groups or clubs. In particular, many of these programmes use a participatory or peer education approach. A handful of programmes are entirely school-based, providing sexual and reproductive health education in the classroom, while a number of programmes focus specifically on improving services to become more adolescent-friendly. Most of these interventions have operated on quite a large scale, and have had a reasonable amount of success. However, as existing evaluations do not assess which programme components are the most effective, and for which groups of participants, we do not know how to tailor future programmes. In addition, there is no evidence about the longer-term legacy effects of sexual and reproductive health programmes. Most of the available evidence is about changes in knowledge and attitudes rather than health behaviours or practices. In part this is probably because it is easier to record knowledge than it is to track behaviours, but more work is needed to see how behaviours change. More research is also required to highlight the relationship between changing sexual and reproductive health knowledge and the practices of adolescents. Finally, there is very little evidence about effective interventions to improve the nutritional status of adolescent girls in Nepal, including reducing anaemia prevalence or addressing tobacco and alcohol use among adolescents.

8. Conclusions: key findings and gaps

This Rapid Country Evidence Mapping report has provided an overview of 56 impact studies and evaluations which assessed the effects of various interventions on adolescent girls' voice and agency and discriminatory norm change, girls' access to education, the development of their economic capabilities, their protection from harmful traditional practices such as child marriage and violence, and their physical and psychosocial wellbeing. The capability areas on which there is most evaluation evidence include girls' education, voice and agency, economic and physical wellbeing. In particular, education-related interventions primarily sought to improve girls' school enrolment and attendance through the provision of financial and material support along with the establishment of girls' clubs and community awareness-raising activities about the importance of girls' education. Likewise, interventions aiming to empower adolescent girls to voice their concerns and become positive agents of change also set up clubs providing girls with safe spaces, life skills training and peer support in order to build their knowledge and leadership skills, increase their self-confidence and help them speak out. Economic empowerment interventions have most often provided girls with vocational skills training, access to credit and support to start an income-generating activity or find employment. These typically target older adolescent girls, many through youth- and women-focused interventions. In the case of physical health interventions, the vast majority sought to improve girls' access to sexual and reproductive health knowledge and use of relevant services. There is also a smaller but growing number of evaluations of programmes aiming to improve the bodily integrity of adolescent girls, including reducing and preventing child marriage. The smallest number of impact studies assessed psychosocial wellbeing interventions, indicating that this thematic area has been little studied in relation to adolescent girls in Nepal; the evidence base is still very limited and interventions mostly target vulnerable groups of girls with a mental health focus, although a few studies of interventions seeking to empower girls also reported positive effects on their emotional wellbeing.

Although many of the reviewed interventions were multi-component programmes, their evaluations focused on and highlighted the effectiveness of particular components, often the provision of safe spaces, life skills training and peer support which appear to have positive outcomes across a range of girls' capabilities. Evidence indeed indicates that participation in clubs can help girls develop their communication skills, increase their self-confidence, voice their concerns and engage in decision-making. Moreover, involvement of boys, parents and communities, and initiatives seeking to transform discriminatory norms, are also important in creating the enabling environment in which girls are allowed to become agents of change for their lives and their communities. Yet the potential of those clubs is often overstated and more research is necessary to identify how best such groups facilitate adolescent involvement in local governance structures.

Similarly, girls' clubs and community awareness-raising activities can improve girls' educational capabilities along with financial incentives or material support. However, evaluations noted the difficulty in reaching those most in need, including out-of-school girls and married girls. Moreover, studies expressed concerns about the potential of financial incentives when they are not combined with strategies addressing discriminatory norms and practices, such as girls' limited mobility and the heavy burden of household chores. Interestingly, a quantitative study estimated that the effect of scholarships on work hours for girls is statistically significant and becomes positive at the threshold of 2% of the poverty line, yet it does not include any change in their household and care responsibilities (Datt and Uhe, 2014).

Participation in clubs, life skills training provision and community mobilisation also appear to have a promising potential in terms of tackling gender-based violence. There are some promising experiences of clubs working with local government on issues such as child protection, and the potential for building on or scaling up these activities should be explored. Yet evidence is limited on how best to work with younger adolescent girls who remain unaware of how to protect themselves and access available services as well as married girls and girls from marginalised groups. In particular, lack of targeted interventions and the absence of rigorous evaluation evidence means that there are limited insights into what works to tackle child marriage, although it is

emphasised that such initiatives should consider and address the multiple underlying factors involved, including poverty and caste/ethnicity.

In the case of economic empowerment interventions, emerging evidence from the examined interventions indicates that vocational training schemes appear to be effective when they provide training relevant to the particular local context, include adequate on-the-job training and are linked to employment opportunities for trainees. On the other hand, such schemes often target youth and pay inadequate attention to girls' needs, let alone to gender norms that disadvantage them at the labour market.

Family support and friends appear to be important for the psychosocial wellbeing of adolescent girls, while discussion groups led by peers, training of service providers for more youth-friendly services and community activities to improve understanding of the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents have positive effects on relevant knowledge, attitudes and use of services. However, they appear to be less effective in changing behaviours, let alone in sustaining any self-reported change. Once again, younger adolescent girls are often left out of such programmes, or remain invisible and tend to lack relevant knowledge.

Many programmes explicitly aimed to work with either children or youth, yet they also included adolescents. Although the target of many evaluated interventions spans the whole adolescent age group, and may even include young women and men, few evaluations disaggregate among different age groups of targeted girls and thus it remains unclear whether certain approaches are more effective with younger or older girls. Most often, interventions do not use age-appropriate strategies for different age groups of girls, especially for those aged 10-12, and end up having discouraging results. One empowerment intervention which included workshops promoting awareness of rights, reproductive health issues and violence initially targeted girls aged 10-14; yet many trainers reported that girls aged 10-11 were too young to fully participate in the workshops, and thus the project focused on girls aged 12-16. Indeed the impact report noted that girls' average age was 13 years, and older girls showed a higher level of understanding of the issues discussed (Her Turn, 2015). However, young adolescents also need to be included; the Girl Power Programme found that 65% of girls aged 10-13 were unaware of how to act when in need of protection against violence (Transition International, 2014); and 77% of girls aged 10-14 in the baseline of the GIFT for RH Project were unaware of how pregnancy occurs (CREHPA, 2002). Similarly, young adolescent girls tend to be left out of economic empowerment programmes that focus on older adolescents, with the exception of a savings scheme (Johnson et al., 2015). Another exception was the child helpline aiming to support both boys and girls which was indeed heavily used by adolescents aged 10-12 (Cusack, 2015).

A few of the examined evaluations provide information about the length and exposure to each programme component, such as the overall hours of provided training or frequency of sessions, yet without comparing potential differential impacts by adolescent age group, socioeconomic status, location, caste/ethnicity or other variables. The Choices pilot, a norm change intervention, succeeded in changing gender attitudes and behaviours within just three months (IRH, 2011), yet there is no further information on the sustainability of the reported change. The evaluation of a psychosocial care intervention for former child soldiers noted differential outcomes between participants from eastern and western regions, attributed to different economic and living conditions, and between Janajatis and Dalits, potentially attributed to social hierarchy and cultural differences (Adhikari et al., 2014). Similarly, the evaluation of an empowerment intervention noted that girls from high caste, particular districts and with higher education levels, were able to increase their leadership skills more than other participants, but no further explanation was provided (CEDPA, 2008). Overall, while many interventions explicitly targeted girls from marginalised castes and ethnic groups, their results were mixed: some indeed enabled those girls to access education, skills training and other services and to improve their capabilities, while others had difficulty to reach and support them adequately.

To a large extent the significant evidence gaps are due to the lack of rigorous research designs that would allow us to identify the best strategies and pathways of change. The quality and rigour of examined evaluations varied considerably with only 11 having a strong research design. Nearly half used mixed qualitative and

quantitative methods, but only five used a robust quasi-experimental design and only three used a randomised methodology (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014; Jordans et al., 2010; Oster and Thornton, 2011). Only one study of a child labour and education project used two treatment arms to assess the relative effectiveness of two different intervention strategies (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014).

The majority of evaluations were also conducted either at the end of or within two years of the end of the intervention. This means that there is very little evidence of whether effects led to sustained changes in girls' later adolescence or adult lives. A few studies acknowledge that the evaluation took place shortly after the intervention ended and thus within such a short time the sustainability of the observed changes may not be ensured or there may not have been sufficient time to observe such behavioural changes. This is particularly the case for norm change interventions (IRH, 2011), especially those addressing harmful traditional practices (Upreti and Bhandari, 2010), or empowerment programmes where the end of the programme and relevant support may not enable girls to sustain their behavioural changes (Cadena et al., 2015). In one particular intervention targeting child labourers, the evaluation found that the positive effects on schooling and withdrawal from child labour were not sustainable after the intervention and project support ended (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014).

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Annex I: Nepal Interventions Table

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
Voice and agency interventions				
Decentralised Action for Children and Women (DACA) 1998-2010 UNICEF in collaboration with Government of Nepal (Ministry of Local Development). Targeted 71,841 children and created 3,848 DACA child clubs.	The child clubs' component of the programme targeted girls and boys aged 6-22.	The programme used a community development approach and aimed to improve the lives of children and women in disadvantaged communities. A key programme component was child participation and mobilisation, primarily through child clubs.	The qualitative evaluation used programme documents, surveys, reviews and national policy documents along with field visits with interviews, focus group discussions and observation of activities (Adhikary et al., 2009).	The programme established and strengthened child clubs in targeted areas. The number of child clubs in the 15 original districts increased from 4,000 to 5,000 within just one year. Clubs enabled children to get involved in decision-making that affected their lives and in community advocacy and policy influencing efforts. Child clubs at district and municipal levels advocated the right to quality education and the need to make the school environment child-friendly, and campaigned for improving health, hygiene and sanitation and tackling violence against children. In one case, working children's clubs were established and their network collaborated with the municipal government to increase budget allocations on children; the Biratnagar municipality became the only one in the country with the target to become child-friendly by 2015. In another case, child clubs from six districts in the central region prepared a convention which was submitted to the Prime Minister for the provision of free and compulsory education to all children and the prevention of child labour, child trafficking and sale of children. Yet child clubs were not fully integrated in the communities and worked in isolation. In many cases, children were not perceived and respected as positive change agents and citizens with rights (Adhikary et al., 2009).

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
<p>Building Demand for Reproductive Health Awareness (first phase) and Putting Learning into Action (second phase)</p> <p>Two-phase programme, implemented between 2004 and 2007.</p> <p>Implemented in three areas of Nepal (Baglung, Mahottari and Udayapur) by the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA).</p> <p>Targeted 3,000 girls and trained 504 girls as Peer Educators (PEs).</p>	<p>Adolescent girls aged 10-24, both in- and out-of-school.</p>	<p>This was a community-based non-formal education programme to address girls' understanding of menstrual prohibitions and their HIV and AIDS vulnerability, and to increase leadership and collective efficacy of peer leaders.</p> <p>In phase I, participatory discussion groups led by trained facilitators were set up to discuss girls' career and educational goals, self-awareness, marriage and parenthood, gender relations and women's rights, peer pressure, maturation, HIV and AIDS and reproductive health.</p> <p>Phase II entailed 'Putting Learning into Action' which was designed to address issues that the girls from Phase I considered most important. Thus 504 selected girls were chosen and trained as peer educators for 10 months on female anatomy and menstrual cycle, menstrual practices and beliefs across caste and ethnicity, HIV transmission and prevention, group</p>	<p>The baseline was administered in June 2006 and the end-line in December 2006. At the end of the project, 472 girls were interviewed. The quantitative evaluation used panel design to compare attitudes and behaviours of peer educators before and after programme participation. There was no control group (CEDPA, 2008). Posner et al. (2009) also presented findings on peer educators.</p>	<p>Leadership self-efficacy and perceptions of collective efficacy among participants increased. The programme proved that girls from different castes and educational backgrounds can work together to change individual behaviour and social norms. Peer Educators experienced improvements in their communication skills, and in the safety of their discussion groups were able to explore the sociocultural basis of menstrual rituals and to creatively deconstruct stereotypes. Almost all of the girls who had adhered to sociocultural menstrual restrictions at baseline had abandoned these restrictions by end-line. Community awareness of risky HIV-related behaviours and harmful menstrual taboos also increased.</p> <p>Girls' individual self-efficacy increased more among girls from high caste, from the Mahottari and Udayapur districts, and among those with completed primary education. Collective efficacy increased more among high caste girls, girls from Udayapur, and those with completed secondary education or higher (CEDPA, 2008; Posner et al., 2009).</p>

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
		facilitation, social mobilisation and advocacy. Peer educators then led weekly sessions with nearly 1,500 girls and 20,000 community members in nine months.		
Raising Her Voice (RHV) Started in 2008. Dailekh, Surkhet and Bardiya. Implemented by Oxfam and funded by DFID. 2,000 women.	Women (age not specified).	<p>The RHV programme has aimed to empower women of all ages by improving awareness of their rights, building their capacity and confidence, increasing their social capital through groups, associations and alliances, and motivating and enhancing their political participation, while also improving public awareness and support for the participation of poor and marginalised women in decision-making structures. It thus created Community Discussion Classes where women would come together for up to two hours daily to share their experiences, enhance their literacy and their knowledge of rights, and build their communication, advocacy and leadership skills under the guidance of local</p>	A mixed methods evaluation with intervention and control villages was conducted (Green, 2015).	<p>The Community Discussion Classes were successful in breaking down women's isolation. Many groups started collective savings and credit schemes, and others started organising large ward meetings, bringing together teachers, local government officials and others. Those groups therefore began to exert some level of influence over important local actors. Women's participation led to a prioritisation of public policies that focused on the poor, marginalised and excluded, including women's issues; public money was used to provide free services for pregnant women, mobile clinics and sanitation infrastructure. Women even traced and returned misused funds, brought cases of gender-based violence to justice, mediated disputes and tackled discriminatory practices.</p> <p>Moreover, 82% of women in intervention villages reported an increase in the number of women in community discussion classes compared to 18% in non-project villages. The literacy component strengthened women's voices. Women overall reported feeling more able to speak up. Furthermore, 70% of participants in focus group discussions felt that violence had fallen and awareness of violence increased; while 87% of respondents in intervention villages reported</p>

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
		<p>facilitators. Women were also encouraged to formulate action plans to tackle shared problems and to join local management committees dealing with education, health, sanitation or natural resources issues. They were also able to start savings and credit schemes. A national women's assembly and lobby meetings in the capital were organised to bring participants together in order to demand the implementation of existing policies such as quotas for women's political representation.</p>		<p>changes in the attitudes and practices of local service providers compared to 3% in non-project villages.</p> <p>Female participation in community organisations and committees also increased, especially in committees with quotas, with nearly 75% of participants in the classes taking up local leadership roles. The evaluation noted that the more influential and powerful women members were those who attended more training, were involved in more than one committees, and were fully supported by their family. Women's contribution to local governance was valued and supported; 91% of respondents reported increased family and community support to women's representation in project villages compared to just 15% in non-project villages (Green, 2015).</p>
<p>Adolescent Reproductive Health programme</p> <p>Kailali district.</p> <p>World Vision.</p>	Adolescent girls.	<p>Among other activities, the programme supported 64 child clubs to train young adolescents on leadership, drama and skills at hosting or running radio programmes. It also included sexual and reproductive health training, life skill training, peer sharing and street dramas.</p>	Ghimire et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative review of the programme.	<p>Participants became able to speak in public. They could express feelings without fear and had an increased knowledge about out-of-textbook issues and about livelihood strategies. They were also found to have increased self-confidence and increased ability to solve problems. They reported increased happiness, enhanced social networks and an increased ability to ask questions (Ghimire et al., 2015).</p>
<p>Choose your Future programme</p> <p>Started in 2005-6 with UNICEF funding in Kailali district. From</p>	The programme targeted Dalit, out-of-school, marginalised	<p>The project targeted adolescents who dropped out of school and provided them with livelihood and life skills training along with seed</p>	Ghimire et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative review of the programme.	<p>The project improved knowledge and understanding among adolescent girls about issues such as gender-based violence, discrimination, child marriage, trafficking and dropping out of school. Moreover, girls</p>

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2007-2008, it continued with government funds and the Department of Women's Development and was extended in all 75 districts.	and economically disadvantaged girls.	money. It also included formulation of savings groups. Its objective was to increase adolescent awareness and self-confidence, with a particular focus on adolescent girls. The project main activities included livelihood training, peer sharing, forming adolescent groups whose members met monthly, ran a savings scheme and carried out awareness-raising and peer education activities, and provision of information through counselling centres.		disseminated this knowledge to their peers through dialogue and to the wider community through street dramas. It also enabled girls to overcome their shyness and become able to speak in public, express their feelings in front of other people without being afraid of being ridiculed, and increase their self-confidence to fight harmful practices such as child marriage and trafficking; it also helped girls return to school, and enhanced their ability to solve problems in their daily lives (Ghimire et al., 2015).
Choices Piloted for three months in 2010. Siraha district. Save the Children. 309 young adolescents – 48% were girls.	Girls and boys aged 10-14 in 12 existing clubs.	Participants were provided with two-hour sessions weekly on gender issues, followed by discussion facilitated by child club graduates, one male and one female per club. The project was built around the Choices curriculum developed by Save the Children and eight participatory activities, all age and developmental appropriate for participants.	The Institute for Reproductive Health (2011) conducted an evaluation using a pre-post quasi-experimental evaluation design, comparing 12 intervention and 12 control clubs. Both the intervention and the control group included Dalit adolescents as well as adolescents from other disadvantaged castes. Quantitative data collection included card game, photograph sorting exercise, scenario game and time-use data from brothers and	<p>The study found that the intervention contributed to more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours among both participating boys and girls. Quantitative data showed improvements in indicators measuring gender discrimination, social image, control and dominance, violence, girls' education, gender roles, and acceptance of traditional norms. Qualitative findings also reinforced those findings as most adolescents recognised gender inequality and felt that it was unfair and had to change.</p> <p>More boys in the intervention group than in the control group were able to recognise gender inequality and pointed out that they started making small behavioural changes by helping their mothers and sisters with household chores</p>

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
			<p>sisters. Qualitative data collection included individual depth interviews, PhotoVoice activities and focus group discussions with parents (IRH, 2011). Another study also presented evaluation findings (Lundgren et al., 2013).</p>	<p>more frequently than before the programme started. Brothers also helped their sisters with school work, advocated for their sisters' education and against child marriage, and expressed and showed their affection to them more frequently. They also admitted discussing those issues with family members, friends and neighbours and advising them to act in a similar way. More girls in the intervention area confirmed that their brothers and other boys in the community did make small attitudinal and behavioural changes. Girls in the intervention area were also more comfortable expressing their opinion compared to girls in the control group, and overall felt empowered to talk to their parents about their future, and ask to continue their education and delay their marriage. Parents in the intervention area also reported that their sons were helping their sisters with chores and school work and that their households were enjoying more harmony and peace.</p> <p>Both boys and girls participants felt that there should be no discrimination between sons and daughters and that parents should provide both of them with equal opportunities. Girls in the intervention group said that women are capable of doing everything from earning money to working in the field and cutting wood. Yet in the control group most boys felt that girls should be prepared and encouraged to become good housewives and only a handful stated that girls may be unhappy with their lives. Most girls in the control group accepted the situation.</p>

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Promises and Voices 2011 Save the Children.	Young adolescents and their parents	<p>Save the Children developed a second behavioural change intervention called Promises, which targeted the community where Choices had been implemented with the objective to change gender-related normative values around child marriage, girls' education and domestic violence.</p> <p>The positive impact of Choices and Promises led to the development of Voices, an approach that uses the voices of mothers and fathers through testimonials to influence norm change among other parents in the community so that they become more supportive of the changes young adolescents make as result of their participation in Choices.</p>		<p>A process evaluation of Promises noted that the intervention led to behavioural changes with the key reason for the reported changes being taking 'advice from people they liked'. A second factor leading to change was the fear of scarcity or realisation of what would be lost, meaning that in case no change took place, girls would end up being unable to feel confident, learn skills, create friendships, and become economically independent (Save the Children, 2014).</p>
Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding project Launched in September 2014. Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding.	Adolescents and youth, aged 10-29, in conflict-affected districts.	<p>The project sought to increase adolescent and youth knowledge of rights, support them to become active citizens for peace, and facilitate their participation in local governance structures. A key component of the project was use of child and youth clubs, which</p>	<p>A qualitative evaluation assessed project impact (Bista and O'Kane, 2015).</p>	<p>The project increased adolescent and youth knowledge of rights, improved adolescent self-confidence and communication skills with peers and adults, promoted peaceful collaboration and reduced several types of discrimination, including age, caste and gender discrimination. Parents and elders started listening to adolescent and youth suggestions more than previously. Ethnic and caste discrimination also declined due to an increased understanding and continuous</p>

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Doti, Mahottari, Nawalparasi and Rolpa.		provided participants with the spaces and opportunities to gain knowledge and skills, build their confidence to assert their rights and start participating in decision-making that affected their lives. The project also invested in the creative use of sports, theatre and other cultural activities to help youth expression and community awareness.		<p>collaboration; youth-led initiatives and adult support led to a declaration of an untouchability-free Village Development Committee in one district. Moreover, girls reported that while their participation was initially less acceptable, the project started changing that and girls increasingly expressed their views and took action to reduce injustice. They thus contributed to the reduction of various forms of violence in their communities. Participants reported reduced rates of child marriage, Chhaupadi practice, domestic violence and scolding of children, while two youth initiatives supported alcohol-free VDCs to reduce domestic and community violence.</p> <p>Moreover, codes of conducts were developed by children, teachers and parents, and contributed to a reduction in corporal punishment, bullying and misuse of children by political parties in schools. In one district, youth also organised a peace festival to encourage peaceful opportunities to resolve conflict and promote social harmony. The evaluation also noted increased support to groups of vulnerable children and youth, including reintegration support for those affected by the armed conflict, and increased enrolment of girls and boys in schools.</p> <p>Yet provision for child and youth representation was lacking in Local Peace Committees at all levels. Moreover, participants in all districts stressed that traditional beliefs and practices hindered adolescent and youth participation in peacebuilding, particularly for girls, thus</p>

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				requiring a more gender-sensitive approach. Parental support was also deemed important for adolescents and female youth who faced mobility restrictions. Efforts to reach and involve out-of-school children and marginalised youth were more successful when skills training and income-generation activities for youth or family members were incorporated (Bista and O’Kane, 2015).
Meena Communication Initiative (MCI) UNICEF South Asia (ROSA).	Adolescent girls, boys and their families.	The initiative uses entertaining stories to improve the awareness, knowledge, attitudes and practices of the audience in relation to the status, rights and treatment of girls. The intervention is built around the stories of a nine-year-old South Asian girl named Meena, her family and community. Intervention materials are developed in collaboration with country offices and are linked to education, health and social development programmes undertaken by UNICEF. In Nepal, the initiative included posters, stickers, radio broadcasts, a television series, appointment of Meena as a goodwill ambassador and spokesperson for girls as well	The evaluation used qualitative and quantitative data, including household surveys and document review (Chesterton, 2004).	Nepali girls compared themselves to Meena and aspired to do what she does, while mothers said that Meena convinced them that girls should also be educated and that both girls and boys should be given equal treatment. Indeed, over 94% of the children exposed to Meena messages, reported being treated equally in their family irrespective of their gender compared to 84% of children not exposed to the intervention. In discussions, children also indicated that they preferred Meena to other programmes as it was both educational and entertaining (Chesterton, 2004).

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		as essay competitions, debates and street drama.		
<p>Enhancing Youth Participation in Decision Making in Nepal</p> <p>March 2009 – March 2010</p> <p>Search for Common Ground (SFCG). Funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).</p> <p>Four districts of eastern Terai namely Dhanusha, Mahottari, Siraha and Saptari.</p> <p>More than 460 youth in conflict-affected areas were made aware of conflict analysis and transformation, and acquired leadership skills.</p>	Youth in conflict-affected areas.	The project aimed to build the leadership capacities of young people to analyse and address the root causes of conflict and to foster the process of democratisation at community level. It thus provided training, district youth leadership development workshops, and community peacebuilding projects implemented by youth clubs.	The evaluation used a qualitative approach through key informant interviews and semi-structured questionnaires (Dhungana, 2009).	The project provided youth participants with knowledge and leadership skills in relation to the development of the community, conflict mediation, transformation and peacebuilding. Respondents reported applying those skills to their daily lives and activities, including convincing youth in armed groups to return to their communities. Moreover, youth clubs started building linkages and creating district networks. Youth clubs were also provided with seed grants used for community welfare and organised peace rallies, sports, dramas and debates to generate awareness about reconciliation, coexistence and community harmony. Positive youth mobilisation led to community recognition of youth potential and power, with older community members and leaders starting regularly inviting those youth to meetings and public gatherings. Girls participated along with boys and some respondents noted that while girls had not been allowed to attend community gatherings in the past, their project participation made them not only attending but actively participating, being listened and appreciated for their suggestions. While efforts were made so that equal numbers of boys and girls were offered training, data showed a higher participation of boys in district leadership development training workshops. However, participating girls felt being empowered thanks to the training they received (Dhungana, 2009).

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<p>Women Empowerment for Transformation in the Churia area (SAKCHAM-II) project</p> <p>January 2010 – December 2012.</p> <p>Austrian Development Agency and CARE Austria funded the SAKCHAM-II project.</p> <p>Kalika Community Women's Development Center , Rural Women's service Center, and Dalit Social Development Center were the three local partners implementing the programme in three districts.</p> <p>Chitwan, Makwanpur, and Kapilvastu districts.</p> <p>The project targeted 19,000 women and 4,000 men from 1,800 households.</p>	<p>Poor, vulnerable and socially excluded women.</p>	<p>The project aimed to enable conflict-affected women to exercise their rights, make decisions affecting their lives and participate in local and national peace processes. The programme thus created 200 women's groups which then networked from village to national level women networks. Those groups undertook activities such as capacity building, community mobilisation and organisation, psychosocial support, policy advocacy, and sensitisation.</p>	<p>The evaluation used qualitative techniques, including key informant interviews, physical observations of activities through field visits and document reviews (Khanal et al., 2012).</p>	<p>The project was effective as women participants became more aware of their civic and community rights, increased their confidence and ability to speak out in the household and in public places about issues that concerned them, and started requesting better services and participating in local peace committees. The project also targeted 4,000 men, provided training around gender roles and masculinities, and mobilised them as campaigners and advocates for gender mainstreaming; men started assisting women in their traditional domestic tasks such as caring for children and helping with household chores when their wives attended project meetings. Thus men played a key role in supporting the process of women's empowerment. The project also provided training, awareness and advocacy campaigns to stakeholders at community, district and national levels to promote the two UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 for the rights of conflict-affected women and girls and tried to incorporate women's issues into the new Constitution (Khanal et al., 2012).</p>
<p>Youth Initiatives for Peace and Reconciliation (YIPR)</p> <p>November 2006 – September 2008</p>	<p>Youth aged 16-30 in the five conflict-affected districts.</p>	<p>The programme aimed to mobilise 15,000 youth to promote their active engagement in community reconciliation and decision-making processes. It thus facilitated the formation and strengthening of youth</p>	<p>The qualitative evaluation methodology used both field research and document reviews (Sharma, 2008).</p>	<p>Both boys and girls were equally involved in youth clubs and all project activities. Participants reported that the project improved their leadership skills, increased their involvement in community issues, reduced caste and ethnic barriers and promoted youth collaboration, and enabled them to develop dispute resolution skills. Participants also said that the project</p>

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<p>Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Kailali and Kanchanpur.</p> <p>Implemented by Mercy Corps and funded by USAID with additional contributions from the NIKE Foundation.</p> <p>The programme mobilised 32,622 youth, created more than 840 youth clubs and committees, provided leadership and peacebuilding training to more than 4,700 youth, and involved more than 2,000 in decision-making bodies.</p>		<p>committees, conducted training and capacity building, held an annual youth general assembly, set up camps at the district level and held sports competitions and cultural show programmes. The programme also sought to promote the participation of youth in community service projects, dialogues and decision-making forums through coordination meetings with decision-making bodies and parents. Finally, the programme aimed to enable youth to promote peace and reconciliation through the development and broadcast of radio programmes, street dramas and competitions.</p>		<p>helped them improve their self-confidence and social interactions as they overcame their shyness and poor communication skills. They regularly held meetings to address pressing social issues in which all club members expressed their views, met with community leaders to discuss issues, and no longer felt intimidated by urban people or civil servants. Youth who did not participate in the project did not show such skills. The project also boosted participants' morale and increased their chances of finding employment. It also narrowed gaps between youth and adults at community level with village elders expressing their admiration for what those youth achieved, while they also became role models for younger children who were attracted to youth clubs. Before the project started, adults felt that youth were lacking skills and experience, and were vulnerable to crime, while youth saw adults as people sticking to tradition and resisting change. Thanks to the project, many adults thought that youth clubs transformed local communities, and youth realised that they could work with older people to improve their lives (Sharma, 2008).</p>
<p>Saathi Sanga Manka Kura (meaning 'Chatting with my best friend')</p> <p>Launched in 2001 by UNICEF Nepal.</p> <p>Over 8 million regular listeners.</p>	Adolescents and youth.	<p>This is a radio programme designed and developed by young people and targeting youth with a weekly episode of 45 minutes on issues of puberty, sexual and reproductive health, peer pressure and resistance, drug abuse and HIV and AIDS,</p>		<p>A recent survey found that 91% of Nepali youth have listened to the programme and pointed out that it is the most popular programme among youth listeners with three-quarters of boys and over two-thirds of girls aged 15-19 listening to it (http://ssmk.org/saathi-sanga-manka-kura-chatting-my-best-friend).</p>

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
		<p>education and work opportunities. Its aim is to provide adolescents and young people with the life skills that will enable them to make informed decisions about issues that matter in their daily lives and to empower them to solve their problems and tackle peer pressure (Ghimire et al., 2015).</p> <p>In collaboration with local organisations and village development committees, listeners have created their own clubs and organise activities such as training programmes and awareness campaigns on gender, caste discrimination or menstrual hygiene issues. Club members also engage with their communities to influence decision-making related to youth issues and help friends and family members seek appropriate services.</p>		
Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction project	Adolescents and their communities.	The project aimed to build the capacity of both government bodies and communities, including children and adolescents,	A qualitative evaluation assessed project impact (Plan International Nepal, 2012).	The project made adolescents and communities more aware about disaster risk reduction (DRR) and increased their ability to respond to disaster effectively instead of feeling helpless at the mercy of God. Hundreds of children and youth

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<p>Implemented in 2010 for 11 months.</p> <p>Plan International Nepal</p> <p>Sunsari district.</p> <p>Targeted more than 30,800 people.</p>		<p>and to strengthen their resilience. It used behavioural change communication materials, radio broadcasts, street drama and training sessions about what they need to do to reduce risk.</p>		<p>attended child-centred training, and around 120 of them (one-third girls) participated in first aid and search and rescue training sessions; they also received a first aid kit and search-and-rescue material to use. The training had a positive impact as trainees started to advocate for constructing more and safer toilets and drinking water facilities in their schools and for making these facilities more child-friendly. They also felt that they knew what to do in response to a disaster and identified areas of risk.</p> <p>Parents and teachers also became more aware of the risks that disasters expose their children to, including sexual abuse and trafficking. The project also created a number of participatory and inclusive DRR institutions to serve as child-centred DRR fostering resilience with the participation of girls and young women, and members of Dalits, indigenous ethnic groups, and people with disabilities. Children and adults also attended leadership training and skills training to enable them to voice their concerns and advocate for change. More than 1,300 children and youth participated in 12 DRR-related activities that increased their understanding of disasters and mobilised them to share their knowledge with peers, families and communities, convincing school management committees of the role children can play in DRR (Plan International Nepal, 2012).</p>
<p>Her Turn</p> <p>Started in 2013.</p>	<p>Rural adolescent girls. Initially young adolescent girls aged 10-14 had been</p>	<p>Four-week curriculum of education and empowerment workshops for adolescent girls organised</p>	<p>A mixed methods evaluation in 2014 with participating girls, teachers and parents (Her Turn, 2015).</p>	<p>Between baseline and end-line, participating girls improved their knowledge about health and menstruation with 33% more girls knowing about puberty and menstrual hygiene. Girls also</p>

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<p>Sindhupalchok and Gorkha districts.</p> <p>In 2014, it targeted 1,086 girls.</p>	<p>targeted, yet many trainers reported that girls aged 10-11 were too young to fully participate in project workshops, and thus the project targeted girls aged 12-16.</p>	<p>into groups of 20. Workshops are facilitated by trained young women from the community, belonging to low caste or marginalised ethnic groups. During the first week, girls learn about health, nutrition, hygiene and menstruation. The second week, they learn and discuss issues of violence and safety such as child marriage, trafficking, domestic violence and sexual abuse, become aware of existing laws and elect a group to form a Girl Support Committee; each committee works to resolve issues that hinder girls' wellbeing at school and community level. On the third week, girls work with trainers to develop their confidence and leadership skills, while on the fourth week girls design and implement a community project. The project also includes a mentorship scheme aiming to provide long term guidance and support to girls on a monthly basis.</p>		<p>improved their knowledge of laws and response mechanisms to violence, with 64% more girls becoming aware of domestic violence laws, 44% more knowing how to respond to such violence and 34% more learning the legal age of marriage. Girls also reported disseminating their knowledge to family members and friends. Most girls also reported increased confidence and ability to speak in public, while 28% more girls reported feeling powerful and 22% more girls feeling strong to deal with issues that affected their lives thanks to the training they attended. Teachers confirmed that participants improved their confidence levels and participated more in school activities. Community members and leaders also reported observing positive changes in girls' behaviour after programme completion. The Committees and mentors encouraged girls who had dropped out to return to school and improved school safety (Her Turn, 2015).</p>

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<p>My Rights, My Voice (MRMV)</p> <p>Implemented by Oxfam, funded by Sida.</p> <p>2012-2016</p> <p>During the first three years, MRMV worked in three districts with local partners and the national-level Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON). On the fourth year, a fourth district was added.</p> <p>MRMV reached more than 8,500 children and adolescents.</p>	<p>Marginalised children and youth, with a particular focus on girls and young women.</p>	<p>MRMV aims to engage marginalised children and youth, improve awareness of their health and education rights, and empower them to claim those rights.</p> <p>Women-led child Health Committees and Community Health Committees supported young people to increase their knowledge and campaign on health rights.</p> <p>Women led door-to-door campaigns to spread awareness, particularly among women on sexual and reproductive health issues.</p> <p>Radio programmes and forum theatre were also used to raise awareness among targeted communities. On the fourth year, MRMV worked with youth against child marriage.</p> <p>A young female leadership forum was set up, to bring female youth together and provide them with support to become leaders of local decision-making bodies.</p>	<p>Van Esbroeck et al. (2016) used an extensive analysis of programme documents, including the midterm evaluation, interviews with key resource people and field research.</p>	<p>MRMV has empowered children, youth and adolescent girls and young mothers to claim their rights to sexual and reproductive health and services to meet their needs. Many Community Health Committees have grown into institutions where women engage in a self-empowering process and continued advocacy work has resulted in over 1,600 young women being elected into key positions in local decision-making bodies. In many places, strong women's groups have become a force to be reckoned with in local politics. The collective efforts of women led to the authorities granting funds for the establishment of a community centre. Several other issues brought to the attention of government officials have led to improvements in healthcare infrastructure. Radio shows increased accountability and played a key role in linking communities with national level duty-bearers (Van Esbroeck et al., 2016).</p>
Bodily autonomy, integrity and freedom from violence interventions				
<p>Decentralised Action for Children and Women (DACAW)</p>	<p>Children, adolescents and women.</p>	<p>The programme aimed to protect children against</p>	<p>The evaluation used qualitative methodology,</p>	<p>Paralegal committees played an important role with 80% of child protection cases being resolved</p>

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
<p>1998-2010</p> <p>UNICEF in collaboration with the Government of Nepal (Ministry of Local Development).</p> <p>23 districts.</p> <p>A total of 482 Paralegal Committees were created along with more than 3,000 child clubs.</p>		<p>violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful traditional practices. Paralegal committees were established to serve as community pressure groups challenging those harmful practices, raising community awareness, seeking to prevent violence, and addressing problems of child protection. In addition, child and youth clubs were created, addressed child protection issues and engaged in rights advocacy challenging various forms of violence against children, including child marriage, child labour and child trafficking.</p>	<p>including programme and national policy documents review and field visits with interviews, focus group discussions and observation of activities (Adhikary et al., 2009).</p>	<p>by members of those committees, in particular cases of domestic and community violence against children (Adhikary et al., 2009).</p> <p>Paralegal committees typically consist of 13-15 volunteer women and use legal arguments to address protection abuses. In each district they are supported by the district resource group which consists of lawyers and social activists who train committee members and provide consultations. An evaluation carried out by the Royal Norwegian Embassy noted that paralegal committees enhance community welfare as they deal with cases not openly discussed within the community or brought to the formal justice system, such as cases of domestic violence and abuse, rape, harassment, child marriage and property inheritance; only complicated cases are referred to the formal justice systems (GoN and UNICEF, n.d.).</p>
<p>Ensuring recognition of sexual violence as a tool of conflict in the Nepal peace building process through documentation and provision of comprehensive services to women and girl survivors</p> <p>2010-2012</p> <p>UNFPA and UNICEF.</p>	<p>Women and girls survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.</p>	<p>The programme aimed at ensuring the recognition in the Nepal peace building process that sexual violence had been used as a tool in the conflict by documenting conflict-related sexual violence incidents, and providing services to survivors. The project provided mobile reproductive health camps as an entry point to document</p>	<p>The evaluation used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, an analysis of secondary data and reviews, field visits in six districts of different regions, observation of ongoing camps and logistics systems, and some informal discussions with beneficiaries (PHD Group, 2012).</p>	<p>The vast majority of beneficiaries (83%) found that camp services were good or very good as services and medicine were free and readily available, counselling was good, there was no waiting time to access services, and women service providers behaved in a respectful manner. The project also reached women and girls from disadvantaged groups, with 66% of beneficiaries being Dalits and Janajatis. Participants in the group discussions and the in-depth interviews reported that their reproductive health improved after the project. The impact of the media campaign was also</p>

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<p>Targeted 21,000 girls and women in 14 of the most conflict affected districts of the country (Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusa, Mahottari, Bardiya, Dang, Kalikot, Rolpa, Rukum, Surkhet, Achham, Bajura, Kanchanpur and Kapilvastu).</p> <p>It finally provided reproductive health services to more than 36,400 girls and women, psychosocial counselling to 3,500, and legal assistance to 1,000; it also documented more than 800 cases of sexual and gender-based violence during and after the conflict, and identified 70 cases as potentially eligible for consideration in the transitional justice process.</p>		<p>cases of survivors, as those camps provided a safe environment wherein survivors could access help in a confidential manner including medical, psychosocial and legal services. Each camp lasted for ten days and girls and women who participated were referred to the services they needed, provided with psychosocial and legal support, shelter, rehabilitation and even reproductive health surgeries. The project also included policy and media advocacy, using radio dramas and television serials to raise awareness on the issue of violence against girls and women in the country.</p>		<p>considerable, as Katha Mitho Sarangiko (meaning ‘Sweet Tales of the Sarangi’) radio series was very popular and raised public awareness on gender and violence issues (PHD Group, 2012).</p>
<p>Samajhdari (meaning ‘Mutual Understanding’)</p> <p>More than 3 million regular listeners.</p>	Youth.	<p>This is a weekly radio programme seeking to change attitudes and behaviours around violence against women and around HIV and AIDS through the</p>		<p>Findings from an impact study in 2010 showed that between one-fifth and a quarter of female respondents were adolescents aged between 15 and 19. As a result of listening to the programme, women’s willingness to speak out and report violence increased along with the proportion of</p>

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		provision of information to help people find solutions. The programme was broadcast weekly for thirty minutes between 2008 and 2010 and reached more than three million regular listeners. Listeners groups were also set up in 60 rural communities bringing women together weekly to discuss and take action on the issues raised in the radio programme.		respondents who would seek legal action. Both men and women listeners became more willing to intervene in cases of violence, with an increase of 66 percentage points among men and 63 percentage points among women. Yet there was no significant change in men's views on whether women should tolerate violence in order to keep the family together. Regular listeners also felt empowered to speak openly among family members about their rights and choices and the low status of girls in Nepal. Respondents in focus group discussions indicated that increased knowledge and the broader messaging of the programme contributed to changing attitudes (Marcus and Page, 2014).
Saathi Sanga Manka Kura (meaning 'Chatting with my best friend') More than 8 million regular listeners.	Youth.	This is a radio show broadcast weekly for 45 minutes with over 8 million regular listeners. The show aims to provide youth with information about puberty, sexual and reproductive health, peer pressure, HIV and AIDS, education and work opportunities, and to enable adolescents and young people to make informed decisions about issues that matter in their daily lives.		Between 2014 and 2015, the issues discussed focused on adolescent participation, menstrual hygiene management, love and relationships in adolescence, physical and mental health, financial literacy and livelihoods, and child protection. A study on the importance of communication initiatives for adolescent girls in Nepal noted that since its start, the programme received more than 40,000 responses where people talked about changes in their lives and communities after the SSMK experience. These were usually about stopping dowry, child marriages or sexual abuse by guardians (Ghimire et al., 2015).
Chhaupadi Elimination programme	Girls and women of reproductive age.	The project aimed to increase by 50% the percentage of girls staying at home during menstruation,	The evaluation team used a participatory qualitative approach with field visits, focus group discussions and	The project raised awareness on harmful traditional practices and improved local capacity. Particular activities appeared to have a positive impact, including involvement of men, use of

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
2008 Achham district. Save the Children and Women and Children Development Office (WDO).		and to ensure that all girls went to school during menstruation. It involved mothers as role models and gatekeepers of traditional values and practices, targeted local committees and child clubs with awareness-raising activities, used mass media such as local radios and newspapers providing information about the practice, established and mobilised watch groups including youth and local leaders, provided training to police personnel on the rights of children and women, established health camps and a reproductive health fund for treatment of cases, provided instructions for the preparation of homemade sanitary pads and their hygienic disposal, constructed girls' toilets and water tanks at schools, and built capacity.	interviews (Upreti and Bhandari, 2010).	mass media to raise awareness, and collaboration with religious leaders who spoke against the practice and in some cases kept their own daughters and wives at home, thus making other community members follow their example. Community members also realised that the practice is a form of violence against women and girls that threatens their wellbeing. Parents and teachers understood that every girl has the right to go to school and should not stay at the Chhaupadi house, thus most girls started going to school during menstruation and learnt how to manage it effectively. Through training, girls and women also became confident about discussing health and menstruation without hesitation. Between 24% and 58% of adolescent girls and women in the 19 VDCs where the project was implemented, started staying at home during menstruation. Results were positive and three wards in one VDC were even declared Chhaupadi-free (Upreti and Bhandari, 2010).
Safer Environment for Girls Programme 2000-2010	Children at grades 6 to 9 in 47 schools with a special focus on girls, their parents, teachers and	The programme aimed to establish and strengthen child groups and their networks as well as child protection committees, and to empower children and	This evaluation was qualitative and included a desk-review of documents, key informant interviews and observations (Gautam, 2012).	Participants reported that life skills training helped them solve their problems through sharing and discussing with their peers, and increased their confidence and ability to express themselves in public. With support from the child clubs, girls started sharing their experiences and

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Save the Children. Kaski district (one sub-metropolitan city, one municipality and three villages) and Tanahun district (one municipality and four villages).	child protection structures.	<p>especially girls to protect themselves against child marriage, sexual violence and abuse; support infrastructure maintenance, such as drinking water and toilet facilities, and provide educational materials; and promote coordination between related stakeholders, including child protection committees, paralegal committees, village protection committees and district child protection committees.</p>		<p>reporting cases of violence and abuse. Boys participated actively and recognised their role in fighting violence and supporting girls. Child clubs and their networks at village and district levels, also enabled children to get involved in the formulation of child-related plans and policies, while children also participated in the district child welfare board and the district child protection committee and in VDC meetings. The evaluation also reported a considerable increase in reporting and responding to cases of child rights violations. Numerous rallies and campaigns were organised and children participated in events and competitions around the prevention of violence. Parents, and women's groups also became alert to child marriage and informed the local NGO about such cases. Teacher training led to a reported improvement in teacher behaviour. Training was also provided to key stakeholders, police, district structures and parents, while street drama was used to sensitise the community. Child clubs engaged in community awareness-raising activities around violence and child marriage and were even able to stop a few cases of child marriage. The Women and Children Services Centres of the District Police Office became operational and improved the protection of children in school settings, while also working to raise awareness and enable children to protect themselves from violence, abuse and exploitation. Teachers reported that parents started sending their daughters to school regularly, even when menstruating, as the</p>

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				programme introduced sanitary pads for girls in school, established complaint box mechanisms and implemented codes of conduct in schools. Survivors of violence also attended school regularly. Yet the project objective to tackle child marriage was not effective, partly due to project's inability to address the socioeconomic factors underlying the practice (Gautam, 2012).
Girl Power Programme Nepal: Promoting Equal Rights and Opportunities for Girls and Young Women 2011 - 2015 The programme was implemented through six Dutch civil society organisations, including Plan Netherlands and Child Helpline International. This was a multi-country programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	Adolescent girls and young women aged 10-24 (the child helpline component targeted children and adolescent girls and boys).	<p>The Girl Power Programme aimed to build the capacity of local civil society for gender equality and support the empowerment of girls and young women and their protection against violence.</p> <p>The Child Helpline International, worked with a local partner, the Child Workers in Nepal Concerted Centre, between 2012 and 2014 to provide a child helpline (Cusack, 2015).</p>	The midterm evaluation used mixed methods to assess programme impact between the baseline and the follow-up (Transition International, 2014).	The programme significantly increased girls' ability to say no to sexual activity between baseline and midline. Girls also changed their attitudes towards violence and accepted less violent behaviours. For example, girls of all age groups disagreed with the statement that child beating by adults is acceptable with 85% of adolescent girls aged 14-17 disagreeing in midline, while more than 60% agreed at baseline. Yet in the case of community members and their attitudes towards beating children, the majority of young and older men as well as older women agreed that children may be beaten by their parents and teachers. In addition, more women than men over 24 years old believed that their peers would agree that a man is allowed to beat his wife/girlfriend, indicating that this is a culturally accepted behaviour. When asked whether they knew how to act when in need of protection against violence, only 35% of girls aged 10-13 said they knew. This age group also had the least knowledge of protection services. The majority of girls and young women – with a significant increase compared with the baseline – also reported that it was possible to join groups and discuss freely in places where girls and young

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Women Empowerment for Transformation in the Churia area (SAKCHAM-II project) January 2010 – December 2012.	Poor, vulnerable and socially excluded women.	The project sought to empower women and girls, raise their awareness and enable them to tackle gender-based violence. It created 200 community-based women's groups in	The qualitative evaluation used key informant interviews, physical observations of activities through field visits and project document reviews (Khanal et al., 2012).	<p>women meet; the highest percentage was reported by young women, followed by adolescent girls aged 14-17. Participation in groups also enabled girls and young women to increase their influence within the community with positive effects on the number of child marriage cases in intervention areas (Transition International, 2014).</p> <p>The child helpline was used heavily each year by both boys and girls, and by those aged 13 to 15, followed by young adolescents aged 10-12. Most frequent calls aimed to seek information, with callers being mostly boys. Adolescents also called to talk about commercial exploitation, with most callers in 2012 being boys, while in 2013 they were girls. Another key reason for calling was homelessness. Girls accounted for almost all cases of children calling about sexual abuse in 2013 and 2014, while almost equal numbers of boys and girls reported physical abuse. The local partner in Nepal also provided adolescent girls with life skills workshops and awareness-raising activities about their rights and the services available. The organisation also undertook a massive outreach campaign to increase awareness on child protection issues, child labour and child marriage (Cusack, 2015).</p>
				<p>The evaluation found that 50% of women reported that violence against women at the household and community level was reduced – although in one district it increased while in another district it decreased; in addition, 37% of survivors of gender-based violence used available services (Khanal et al., 2012).</p>

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<p>Austrian Development Agency and CARE Austria funded the SAKCHAM-II project.</p> <p>Kalika Community Women's Development Center, Rural Women's service Center, and Dalit Social Development Center were the three local partners implementing the programme in three districts.</p> <p>Chitwan, Makwanpur, and Kapilvastu districts.</p> <p>Beneficiaries included 19,000 women and 4,000 men from 1,800 households.</p>		<p>which more than 4,400 women were involved; groups met once a week to learn about existing laws, discuss gender-based violence cases reported in the community, and find a collective solution. A 28-minute radio programme was also aired to sensitise women against violence in project areas. These community-level groups also networked from the village to the national level and thus the project effectively created support networks for women's rights. Other group activities included capacity building, community mobilisation, policy advocacy and psychosocial support.</p>		
<p>Chunauti (meaning 'Challenge')</p> <p>2008-2011</p> <p>CARE</p> <p>Dhanusha, Mahottari and Rupandehi.</p> <p>70 school-based anti-gender-based-violence forums and 210</p>	<p>Adolescent girls, families and their communities.</p>	<p>The project aimed to transform social norms underpinning gender-based violence through peer educators, leaders, schools, community-based organisations and a widespread behavioural change communication campaign; to scale-up promising practices; and to advocate laws and policies</p>	<p>A mixed methods evaluation was used to assess project impact (CARE, 2015).</p>	<p>The project created an enabling environment that rewarded families who delayed their daughter's marriage, contributed to the development of young female leaders in the community, and increased awareness among men and women in the targeted communities. Between baseline and end-line, knowledge about the legal age of marriage increased among parents from 21% to 84%, and among adolescent girls from 21% to 88%. More than 97% of adolescent and parent respondents also reported disagreeing with the practice. By the end of the</p>

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young girls' clubs with more than 1,000 members were formed and provided with training on gender-based violence.		addressing child marriage and other forms of gender-based violence. It thus used three strategies, behavioural change communication, social mobilisation and private sector engagement. School-based anti-gender-based-violence forums and young girls' clubs were formed and provided with training on gender-based violence, while they collaborated actively with child marriage eradication committees to raise awareness about the harmful effects of child marriage and violence. The project also used mass media, local and national celebrities, and peer educators who reached nearly 30 households every month, promoting messages against gender-based violence, raising awareness and advocating for law enforcement. Volunteers also worked with religious leaders and match-makers to speak publicly against child marriage. The private sector engagement consisted of working with private		project, 66% of adolescents reported discussing the effects of child marriage with family and neighbours, up from 32% at the beginning of the project. Key stakeholders at district and national levels also spoke publicly against it, and law enforcement mechanisms were activated (CARE, 2015).

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		providers of wedding services to boycott child weddings, showcase their commitment to preventing the practice, and introduce codes of conduct.		
Tipping Point 2014-2017 CARE 16 Village Development Committee areas in Rupandehi and Kapilvastu districts.	Adolescent girls at risk of child marriage and their communities.	<p>The project seeks to identify the tipping points for shifting social norms that restrict the lives and roles of girls and boys and uphold the practice of child marriage and dowry. The project aims to create spaces for dialogue between adolescents, parents and community members to promote communication and support for gender equality; provide them with awareness of gender equality and rights; promote gender equitable norms and celebrate such behaviours; and encourage networks, groups and organisations to collaborate, shift discourse and act to support gender equitable opportunities for boys and girls (Karim et al., 2016).</p>		
Stromme Foundation Project 2010-2015	Poor and marginalised girls and women.	The project aimed to improve the social and economic status of poor and marginalised women and	A midterm evaluation used qualitative methodology (Rijal et al., 2013).	The project helped adolescent girls become aware of problems that affected their lives such as child marriage, trafficking and domestic violence, and provided them with the skills to

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Makawanpur, Rautahat, Rupandehi and Surkhet. Stromme Foundation. 5,230 adolescent girls and their parents became aware of trafficking and other forms of violence, 4,100 girls and their parents actively engaged as watchdogs against trafficking, 45 trafficking and domestic violence cases were registered in the local government authority, 181 interest groups were involved in anti-trafficking efforts, and 28 cases related to anti-trafficking and social issues were successfully solved by interest groups.		girls, and to empower them to work collectively against social exclusion, violence and limited education and economic opportunities.		solve those problems themselves. Adolescent girls also improved their awareness about health, hygiene and sanitation and social issues such as caste-based discrimination. Many girls also increased their confidence and overcame their shyness in speaking in public about issues that threatened their wellbeing, while they also started trying to solve their problems themselves (Rijal et al., 2013).
Allies for Change: Creating a safer environment for girls, women and boys 2008 Surkhet. Save the Children Sweden.	Girls, boys and young men.	The project aimed to mobilise boys and young men and support them to work with girls in child clubs in order to tackle violence. It included a behavioural change approach, addressing gender-based violence and promoting more gender-equitable norms to challenge traditional notions of aggressive masculinity. The		The project involved nearly 200 boys and 140 girls as peer educators who then reached 44,500 children and youth, and led to the increased support of the district administration office and the community police in punishing perpetrators and controlling the prevalence of violence in intervention areas (Save the Children Sweden, n.d.).

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		project encouraged boys to reflect and challenge stereotypes and harmful notions of masculinity and, along with girls, to develop strategies preventing violence in the community. Awareness-raising activities and advocacy campaigns were also carried out at community and district levels.		
Work in Freedom project 2013-2018 DFID and ILO Chitwan, Dolakha, Ilam, Morang and Rupendehi. Targeted 40,000 Nepali girls and women.	Girls and women at risk of trafficking.	The project seeks to reduce trafficking of girls and women from India, Nepal and Bangladesh into the domestic and garment sectors and to support their economic, social and legal empowerment by helping them migrate safely and access decent jobs. In particular, it aims to improve the awareness, information and skills of girl and women migrant workers, ensure that recruitment agencies adopt ethical recruitment criteria which are monitored and enforced, enable migrant workers in domestic work and in the garment sector to enjoy better collective representation and support		Over 210,000 girls and women in all three countries have benefited from outreach activities on how to make informed migration decisions; more than 170,000 received pre-decision orientation to help them make informed decisions about migration and reduce their risk of being trafficked; over 200 recruitment beneficiaries have been trained on fair recruitment; and over 29,000 women workers have been organised in migrants' destination areas to help them access services, provide peer support and lobby for improved working conditions. Yet a number of challenges remain, including devising strategies to deal with informal recruiters in order to reduce girls' and women's vulnerability to exploitation (DFID, 2016b).

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		services, and ensure the implementation of laws and policies that protect women migrants' rights (ILO, n.d.).		
Psychosocial wellbeing interventions				
Classroom-Based intervention 2006-2007 Banke, Bardiya, Dang and Kailali. 325 students.	School-going children aged 11-14 – 49% of them girls.	This was a 5-week programme with 15-sessions of approximately one hour, provided by trained counsellors in order to reduce adolescent psychosocial problems and promote their resilience through strengthening their coping, pro-social behaviour and hope. The group intervention combined psycho-education, socio-drama, movement-drama, group cohesion activities, stress inoculation techniques and trauma processing through narrative exposure through drawings.	A cluster RCT was used. The intervention was implemented in two districts and in two schools per district; districts and schools were randomly allocated. Participants were also randomly selected from a list of all children of the targeted age in the chosen schools. The two other districts and two remaining schools in each district were randomly allocated to serve as the control group. The intervention thus was implemented in eight schools, with 164 adolescents in four schools being the intervention group and 161 others in four other schools as the control group. The study used the Child Psychosocial Distress Screener. This is a brief instrument that assesses non-specific child	The intervention improved pro-social behaviour and reduced psychological difficulties and aggression, but did not result in any reduction in mental disorder symptoms. In particular, the intervention moderately reduced general psychological difficulties and aggression for boys, increased pro-social behaviour for girls, and increased hope for older adolescents (Jordans et al., 2010).

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Rehabilitation Package for Child Soldiers study 2011-2012 Government of Nepal and UN agencies. In July 2012, around 2,231 of the 4,008 child combatants enrolled in the rehabilitation package and 73% of them fully completed the package.	Former child soldiers – boys and girls.	The rehabilitation package aimed to support the reintegration of child soldiers into civilian life. This included formal education support consisting of formal enrolment in school, financing of a micro-enterprise, vocational skills training and training in the health sector. Psychosocial care was also provided through regional counsellors who also provided information on the various rehabilitation packages.	psychosocial distress through distress and resilience indicators; this instrument was validated for the Nepali context (Jordans et al., 2010).	
			The baseline took place in April-May 2011 and the follow-up in January-March 2012. The study used both the Hopkins Symptoms Checklist and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist – validated in Nepal - to measure mental health problems. The Generalised Estimating Equation was used to identify both the protective and risk factors over time. The majority of study participants were boys and young men, while girls and young women comprised 36% of all participants; in terms of age, 19% of all participants were adolescents (Adhikari et al., 2014).	The prevalence of anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the sample declined significantly between baseline and follow-up, while depression symptoms did not change. Poor social support and inter-caste marriage which often led to social stigma, abuse from family and rejection from the community, were identified as the strongest risk factors for psychosocial wellbeing. There were different mental health outcomes depending on the region with respondents from eastern regions showing the lowest levels of psychosocial and mental problems, while those from the western regions had the highest; the study suggested that this may be due to lower rates of participation in the rehabilitation packages, lack of employment opportunities and difficult living conditions in the western regions. Caste/ethnicity also appeared to be important as Janajatis showed the best outcomes, while Dalits reported the highest levels of anxiety and depression, a finding potentially linked to social hierarchy issues and cultural norms of different caste groups. Younger age also appeared to be a risk factor as the younger the participant, the higher the risk of persistent mental problems. On the other hand, education, economic status and gender had no significant impact on overall psychosocial

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				wellbeing. However, boys showed greater depression and PTSD symptoms reduction than girls, who actually showed worsening of depression and PTSD symptoms over the nine months. Thus the study questioned the benefits of the rehabilitation intervention, but stressed the critical importance of family and community support for the reintegration of former child soldiers (Adhikari et al., 2014).
<p>Ensuring recognition of sexual violence as a tool of conflict in the Nepal peace building process through documentation and provision of comprehensive services to women and girl survivors project</p> <p>2010-2012</p> <p>UNFPA and UNICEF.</p> <p>14 conflict-affected districts.</p> <p>3,500 women and girls were provided with psychosocial counselling.</p>	<p>Girl and women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Nearly one in eight women were under the age of 18.</p>	<p>The project aimed to support girls and women survivors of the conflict-related violence, document such violence and support sustainable peace by improving survivors' access to justice. The project provided mobile reproductive health camps as an entry point to document cases of violence, as these camps provided a safe environment wherein survivors could access help in a confidential manner. Each camp lasted for 10 days and girls and women who participated were referred to the services they needed and provided with psychosocial and legal support, shelter, rehabilitation and even reproductive health surgeries.</p>	<p>A mixed methods evaluation assessed project impact (PHD Group, 2012).</p>	<p>Before coming to the camp, nearly half of respondents shared their psychosocial problems with friends and 24% with their husband, while one in five did not share them with anybody. After receiving counselling in the camp, they reported feeling differently, relieved and more hopeful. During the counselling they learnt that resting from time to time, talking to their husband or parents, living in harmony with family members, avoiding child marriage, engaging in income-generating activities, working for children's future, and not worrying about problems but keeping on working as usual, were important for their psychosocial wellbeing. Around 95% of respondents said that counselling was good or very good and female service providers treated them kindly (PHD Group, 2012).</p>

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Women Empowerment for Transformation in the Churia area (SAKCHAM II) 2010-2012 19,000 women.	Poor and marginalised women.	The project aimed to empower women participants and help them exercise their rights and improve their lives. It also included provision of psychosocial support to women in order to increase their self-esteem and help them take control over their lives along with information about domestic violence against girls and women, and men's discriminative and harmful conduct.	A qualitative evaluation assessed project impact (Khanal et al., 2012).	The project developed 42 Community Based Psychosocial Care Workers through a series of training packages and coordinated with 59 traditional healers who also received psychosocial and gender-based awareness sessions for referral cases to help women overcome such problems. The qualitative evaluation found that women participants reported increased self-confidence and ability to speak out in the household and in public about issues that concerned them (Khanal et al., 2012).
Employment Fund (EF) including the Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative (AGEI) in 2010 EF started in 2008 as a partnership between the NGO Helvetas and the Nepali government. The Fund benefited more than 40,000 boys and girls over a period of three years.	Youth aged 16-35 with less than 10 years of formal education and of low economic status. The AGEI additionally included 4,410 girls and young women aged 16-24.	The Fund is one of the largest youth training programmes in Nepal. It provides female participants also with 40-hour life skills training.	Its quasi-experimental evaluation focused on the 2010-2012 cohorts and found that two years into the programme, the Fund had positive impacts (Chakravarty et al., 2015).	Apart from increasing non-farm employment and earnings for trainees – for adolescent and young women more than for their male counterparts – the programme also had important non-employment impacts. Female trainees reported significant increases in self-confidence both in life and with regard to entrepreneurial activities. The evaluation also used 10 psychological empowerment indicators which included self-ability to control impulses and establish control over life with positive impacts recorded on six indicators, which was interpreted as predicting future labour market success (Chakravarty et al., 2015).

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<p>Psychosocial Intervention to Earthquake Survivors</p> <p>2015</p> <p>Implemented for 8 months.</p> <p>Centre for Mental Health and Counselling (CMC-Nepal).</p> <p>8,907 people received individual counselling services, 1,300 youth were mobilised into clubs, 13,000 received psycho-education and 260 teachers and health workers received psychosocial training.</p>	<p>Communities affected by the 2015 earthquake.</p>	<p>This intervention aimed to provide psychosocial support and counselling services to people affected by the earthquake in 10 affected districts. It initially involved provision of psychological first aid immediately after the earthquake. It then continued through recruitment, training and mobilisation of Community Psychosocial Workers and Psychosocial Counsellors. The programme also included home visits, mental health assessments and referrals of severely affected people to specialist services. Teachers and local health workers also received training on how to identify and support people with mental health problems. The programme also raised awareness about the importance of psychosocial counselling and mental health (CMC Nepal, 2016).</p>		

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
Economic empowerment interventions				
Stromme Foundation Project 2010-2015 Stromme Foundation. Rupandehi, Rautahat, Makawanpur and Surkhet. 8,400 families and 5,450 girls.	Poor and marginalised families and adolescent girls.	The project used a holistic and integrated approach to improve the economic and social status of poor and marginalised families and girls through empowering them and increasing their capacity to organise and work collectively. It thus included facilitating and strengthening self-help groups (SHGs) and providing participants with skills training and financial and other services to create assets and improve their livelihoods.	A midterm evaluation used a review of project documents and qualitative methodology (Rijal et al. 2013).	The project enabled 3,570 poor households to engage in SHGs, and more than 4,700 to get involved in savings and credit activities. More than 3,000 households involved in SHGs increased their group savings by 25%. Moreover, more than 3,100 individual participants, including adolescents, improved their knowledge and skills on on-farm and off-farm trades. Participants also received input support in the form of seed, fertiliser, goats or machinery and most started income-generating activities. More than 400 households reported being able to increase their annual income by 60% and with project assistance they opened bank accounts in local commercial banks. Yet adolescents had limited income sources and opportunities and thus their income did not increase significantly although they reported that the project helped them develop saving habits (Rijal et al., 2013).
Employment Fund Founded in 2008 Operated by Helvetas (a Swiss NGO) in partnership with the government of Nepal. Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), DFID and World Bank.	Youth aged 16-35 with less than ten years of formal education and of low economic status. In addition, girls and young women aged 16-24, participants of the AGEI.	This intervention provided skills training and employment placement services. The Fund annually sponsors about 600 training courses which last from a few weeks to three months. In 2011, the programme also introduced 40-hour life skills training for women in all its training courses. A subset of trainees also received a short course in basic business	The evaluation used a quasi-experimental design with a treatment group and a control group consisting of youth who applied but were not finally selected. The evaluation employed difference-in-difference and propensity score matching and propensity score weighting methodologies (Chakravarty et al., 2015).	Participation in the programme increased non-farm employment by 15 and 16 percentage points, thus increasing non-farm employment overall by 50% to 54%. Participants also had an average monthly earnings gain of about 72%. Impacts were larger for women compared to men, while younger AGEI participants (16-24 years) experienced the same improvements as older women (24-35 years). The evaluation also investigated which trades had better employment and earnings impacts, and found that beautician training showed large impacts along with electronics and tailoring, although no

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<p>National programme which benefited more than 40,000 Nepalese youth over a period of three years.</p> <p>In 2010, it expanded to also include 4, 410 girls and young women of the Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative (AGEI), launched by the World Bank.</p>		<p>skills. Incentive payments to service providers were offered to those responsible to train and place more disadvantaged groups (including women). The programme also included communication and outreach to ensure that poorer, less educated and more vulnerable girls access training.</p>		<p>explanation is provided. Moreover, while female participation in non-traditional female trades was encouraged, most training courses were gender-segregated. Overall, female trainees reported having more money of their own, more control over household spending, and more access to mentors who could advise them on work-related issues. They also reported significant increases in self-confidence both in life and with regard to entrepreneurial activities. Trainees identified life skills training as one of their favourite parts of the course, with the evaluation indicating that the life skills along with the technical skills learnt may have contributed to the increased employment impact found particularly for women. No impacts were detected on desired fertility, HIV knowledge, household food security or protein consumption (Chakravarty et al., 2015).</p>
<p>YouthSave</p> <p>Started in 2012.</p> <p>YouthSave Consortium, led by Save the Children in collaboration with the Bank of Kathmandu.</p> <p>Within the first two years (2012-2014) the Bank opened more than 6,100 youth accounts, of whom 5,800 account holders agreed to participate in the</p>	<p>Youth aged 10-22. The average age of participants in the evaluation was 16; those aged 10-12 accounted for 24% of account holders, and those 13-15 for 23%.</p>	<p>This youth savings initiative aimed to promote youth financial inclusion and economic empowerment. The Bank offered the youth savings account and along with its NGO and community partners also organised financial education workshops and outreach through visits to schools and youth clubs in all five regions of the country.</p> <p>The Bank provided small cash incentives to account holders</p>	<p>Johnson et al. (2015) conducted a mixed-method evaluation including descriptive information on the number of youth clients who adopted a particular savings product and the amount they saved. Statistical analysis was used to identify characteristics of youth and households associated with saving. Data was linked to other financial capability interventions such as workshops and clubs to</p>	<p>Youth who received the incentive had statistically significantly higher average monthly savings than those who did not receive it, suggesting that such incentives have a positive effect on account uptake and youth savings. Younger account holders saved more than older youth, with such savings coming from parents or gifts. Those who said that they learnt about the account through family, friends or mass media saved more than those who learnt through the bank campaign, the school or a relevant workshop. The number and amount of deposits and withdrawals made by account holders using electronic transactions were also significantly higher than those made in the traditional way, thus indicating that</p>

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<p>study. Over an average 13 months, those adolescents deposited more than US\$4,590,000, with a total net savings of US\$665,000, and the average balance per account being US\$114.</p>		<p>for seven months with nearly 25% of all Nepali youth account holders taking advantage of the offer to open their accounts.</p> <p>The programme did not have specific gender targets, and initially more boys signed up for an account than girls. After this data became known, partners attempted to reduce this difference by targeting girls' schools and clubs. Indeed, girls increased their participation from 35% at the beginning of the rollout in 2012 to 44% of account holders in May 2014.</p>	<p>control for the possible impact of those activities on savings performance.</p>	<p>electronic banking could help increase savings amounts while also reducing bank outreach costs.</p> <p>Girls saved more than boys, and this difference was statistically significant. The programme faced particular difficulty to attract out-of-school youth (less than 6% of all participants) either because the outreach strategy focused on schools or because the provided products and services might not have been tailored to the needs of that group. Out-of-school girls comprised only 33% of out-of-school participants, indicating their greater difficulty in accessing formal financial services (Johnson et al., 2015).</p>
<p>Improving the Lives of Marginalized Youth and Families (ILOM)</p> <p>2010-2011</p> <p>Save the Children with local NGOs.</p> <p>Banke and Bardiya.</p>	<p>Poor and socially disadvantaged youth aged 16-24 and their families.</p>	<p>The project aimed to improve the status of youth and their families and thus provided skills training, micro-enterprise development and the mobilisation of a revolving fund through local cooperatives to help trainees start their business. Skills training included business planning, product marketing, financial management and account keeping.</p>	<p>The evaluation used mixed methods to assess the intervention (Adhikari, 2012).</p>	<p>The project created employment opportunities for marginalised youth, the majority of whom were unemployed before the project; around 265 youth were engaged in on-farm commercial enterprises as well as off-farm jobs with nearly half of them belonging to landless Dalits and Badi households. The majority (56%) of participants were girls. Participants were able to increase their household income by 58% and thus contributed to improved food security, with 67% having sufficient food for almost one year compared to just 8% before the intervention. The vast majority also reported improved health and reduction in sickness incidence. Possession of assets such as water pumps, bicycles, mobile phones, televisions, radios and computers also</p>

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				increased. Participants also got involved in various community groups such as Village Development Committees, cooperatives and community committees enabling them to access resources such as credit and seeds. The majority reported that their overall living conditions considerably improved and as a result 55% of beneficiaries said that their sense of dignity increased. However, the evaluation stressed that many participants were rather young and thus often unable to start a successful business (Adhikari, 2012).
Jobs for Peace Programme: 12,500 Youth Employed and Empowered through an Integrated Approach project 2009-2011 Terai More than 34,000 participants found employment and more than 1,200 youth accessed credit.	Youth aged 15-29 in conflict-affected areas with a focus on women and marginalised groups.	This intervention aimed to contribute to national peace building and poverty reduction through employment and empowerment of youth in a conflict affected area. It intended to enhance conflict-affected youth's access to resources and skills critical for their livelihoods, and create opportunities for productive and decent employment. It also promoted the peaceful gathering of young people and communities through business development and social development activities, facilitating communication and interchange.	Kumar-Range and Acharya (2011) used a mixed methods evaluation.	More men benefited from skills training and entrepreneurship development, yet women accounted for the vast majority of those provided with access to finance, cooperative development and the trust fund for youth employment. Quality of provided training was good and over 95% of participants in the off-farm skills training passed the tests by the National Skills Testing Board. Participants admitted being satisfied with their achievements and reported increased economic independence and improved psychosocial wellbeing. Adolescent girls and young women comprised 58% of participants, and youth from marginalised groups 38% (Janajatis, Dalits and Muslims). Those involved in community infrastructure activities worked together for a common cause despite their ethnic group, socioeconomic status or political differences. Youth also improved their status within their communities and started voicing their concerns in village meetings, with their opinions being accepted and shaping public

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
				decisions about community needs (Kumar-Range and Acharya, 2011).
Youth Livelihood project Restless Development Funded by DFID. Dolakha district. Nearly 250 boys and girls.	Adolescent girls and boys in grade 7 th to 9 th in eight schools, and out-of-school adolescents in young clubs.	The project aimed to help youth take up productive livelihoods and employment opportunities in order to contribute to household and community economic development. It thus tried to build key life skills which are necessary for successful engagement in livelihood opportunities.	A rapid cross-sectional quantitative assessment was carried out in March 2015 in three schools, covering 33% of the total target population of the project. The evaluators used a short-self-administered questionnaire (Restless Development, 2015).	The assessment found that out-of-school adolescents improved their indicators compared to the baseline more than the in-school adolescents. Those out of school demonstrated better critical thinking and decision-making skills, interpersonal communication skills, self-management, financial literacy skills and knowledge, and livelihood options knowledge compared to those in school. They also increased by 400% their engagement in money-making activities compared to the baseline. However, in-school adolescents had access to much better or more information on job opportunities and were more involved in decision-making on their livelihood options compared to out-of-school boys and girls. A high percentage in both groups reported that the project supported them to set their livelihood goals (Restless Development, 2015).
Karnali Public Works Programme (KEP) Started in 2006. Financed by the Government of Nepal. Implemented in the 5 districts of the Karnali Zone.	Very poor households without any employment opportunity or source of income.	KEP is a public works scheme which aims to provide one member per unemployed household with 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in unskilled manual work in a given fiscal year.	Vaidya et al. (2010) evaluated the scheme through investigating four main components: a sample household survey; focus group discussions with KEP participants; assessment of administrative and technical capacity and arrangements at the District Development Committee and Village Development Committee levels to manage KEP; and	The average number of days worked per person was 15 and the average daily wage was 200 rupees (US\$1.80). Most participants used their earned income to purchase food for their household. The study found payment delays and differences between the amount paid and the amount mentioned in the original agreement. Yet the vast majority of participants stated that they would participate again in the following year, while there was no evidence of discrimination against Dalits or ethnic minorities.

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			rapid technical appraisals of a selection of projects completed under KEP.	<p>Women's participation in the scheme was low, about 23% on average, with some variations between districts. Women raised concerns about their inability to benefit from the programme and gain some financial independence if a man from the household participated. The evaluation noted that due to programme requirement for only one participant per household, women's low participation may reflect household choices and priorities.</p> <p>Youth participation was also low, although youth unemployment and underemployment is a major problem in the country. Survey data showed that 17% of surveyed KEP participants were aged 15-19, 32% aged 20-30 and 22% aged 31-40. Qualitative evidence confirmed that this type of employment was not attractive for youth due to its short duration, with young people preferring to look for other employment opportunities or migrate. Yet an alternative reason could again be the one person per household restriction, making older men in the household joining the programme and thus blocking youth participation (Vaidya et al., 2010).</p>
WORTH (originally known as WEP – Women's Empowerment Programme) Created in 1998. Pact with USAID funding. Nepal's southern Terai.	Rural women in targeted areas.	The programme initially provided women with groups and microfinance so that they could borrow and invest in their own business or other income-generating activity. When the programme was renamed WORTH, it targeted women with a combination of	Two evaluations were available for the WORTH programme. Ashe and Parrot (2001) and Valley Research Group and Mayoux (2008) which collected both quantitative and qualitative data.	In just two years, women had accumulated over US\$500,000 annually and had a total of US\$1.9 million if group savings prior to joining WEP are considered. Only 4% of groups had ever made a loan on which a woman defaulted. Moreover, women members of the groups were earning up to 24% annual returns on their savings and thus were able to improve their economic wellbeing. The majority (71%) also got involved in income-generating activities, whereas two years before,

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130,000 women.		literacy training, savings-led microfinance and business training to enable them to become entrepreneurs, social activists and leaders bringing about change in their communities.		<p>only 14% of those women did so. Nearly 64,000 women learnt to read with a curriculum that focused on basic business literacy to help them improve the success of their enterprises. And an average of 89,000 women reported increased decision-making authority in the areas of family planning, child marriage and girls' schooling. Respondents frequently stressed that the programme changed their lives, improved their self-confidence and social influence (Ashe and Parrott, 2001).</p> <p>The second evaluation found that Village Banks held more than three times more assets than in 2001, with every woman member of WORTH having an average holding of US\$116. Literacy sessions continued as 97% of respondents felt that being literate was very important to their lives, and 83% reported that because of WORTH they were able to send more children to school. Two-thirds of women's groups reported that members asked for advice and help with personal and domestic problems, including domestic violence, caste discrimination and trafficking. The vast majority indeed reported helping their members deal with those issues. Thus 43% of women stated that their membership in a WORTH group changed their degree of freedom from violence and one in 10 reported that the group actually helped change their life as they no longer faced violence. Half of the groups also reported efforts to reduce gender discrimination in the community. Moreover, the majority of respondents reported that the programme increased their access to</p>

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				<p>health services, enabled them to engage in community action and even to help others in the community as the village banks helped build and repair village infrastructure and financially assisted vulnerable individuals and families. Women also felt that the programme increased their self-confidence and enabled them to become leaders in their families and communities, also helping them cope with the conflict and the lack of services.</p> <p>Survey data showed that 5% of WORTH women were younger than 20 years old, meaning adolescent girls could participate while also benefitting from the programme indirectly; many women reported that as they started attending WORTH group sessions and became aware of their legal rights, they realised how harmful practices such as child marriage were and started advocating and interfering with parental decisions stressing that both boys and girls should be given equal opportunities in life and that girls should not be seen as financial burdens to be released at a young age through marriage. Their efforts contributed to raising the age of marriage for girls in their communities (Valley Research Group and Mayoux, 2008).</p>

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Women Empowerment for Transformation in the Churia area (SAKCHAM II) 2010-2012 Chitwan, Kapilvastu and Makwanpur. Targeted 19,000 women and 4,000 men.	Poor, vulnerable and socially excluded women.	The project aimed to empower women affected by the conflict and enable them to exercise their rights and improve their lives. It provided them with business and cooperative training and also supported loans from a revolving fund.	The evaluation used qualitative methodology (Khanal et al., 2012).	Women participants increased their involvement in savings groups and income-generating activities including sewing and candle-making along with starting small businesses such as grocery shops. Women also reported positive changes in their access to and control over private property in terms of sharing earnings and making joint decisions with their husbands. They also increased their access to and control over public property; for instance, they obtained VDC land to construct offices (Khanal et al., 2012).
Education for Income Generation Project (EIG) 2008-2012 USAID Nepal 15 districts of the mid-western region, with a history of conflict and inter-ethnic tensions. More than 74,000 trained youth. More than 400 Dalit youth (46% of them women) received scholarships. More than 11,000 youth – half of whom were women – completed technical skills training, and more than 80% of the trainees were able to find employment. More than	Disadvantaged, conflict-affected youth aged 16-35. Attention was paid to out-of-school youth, illiterate young women and those displaced by the conflict.	The project aimed to enable youth to access education, training and employment opportunities in order to lead productive lives and mitigate the impact of the conflict. It thus provided literacy, numeracy and life skills training; technical and vocational skills training linked to employment; training to increase agricultural productivity, product marketing and raise rural incomes; and targeted scholarships to Dalit youth to increase their access to higher education. All participants were also provided with peace and reconciliation education to help them develop their	The evaluation used mixed methods, including interview with stakeholders/ implementers, meetings, focus group discussions with beneficiaries, interviews with beneficiaries in households and case studies (USAID, 2013).	Overall, 85% of male and 74% of female participants were employed. Yet employment was higher for men who benefited from the vocational training, agricultural productivity and scholarship schemes, and for women who completed the literacy and life skills programme. A positive contribution of the project was that it trained women in non-traditional trades such as masonry, carpentry and electrical wiring. Women participants reported becoming financially independent, understanding the importance of saving up, acquiring new skills and using them in the daily lives, and increasing their self-confidence. They stressed that they were no longer afraid of speaking out and that their community interactions increased, including their participation in local community groups wherein most decision-making positions (chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer) were now held by women. Their employment also enabled them to improve their nutrition, hygiene and sanitation. They also learnt about their rights and

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<p>25,000 youth also received agricultural training and were able to more than double their average income. More than 54,000 youth (81% of whom were young women) were trained in agricultural production.</p>		<p>knowledge, attitudes and skills for conflict resolution, peacebuilding and human rights promotion.</p>		<p>understood that they did not need to stay out of home during menstruation. Yet the evaluation found that women's employment was greatly influenced by marriage and their child responsibilities, and thus younger women participants who got married could not have full-time employment (USAID, 2013).</p>
<p>Education for Youth and Youth for Peace and Development (EYYPD)</p> <p>2007 to 2011.</p> <p>Implemented by the Underprivileged Children's Education Project, with financial support from Save the Children Nepal.</p> <p>20 districts in the mid- and far-western regions.</p>	<p>Adolescents aged 13-19, especially conflict victims, internally displaced people, and other marginalised youth.</p>	<p>The programme provided technical education and vocational training in 10 different trades, followed by two or four weeks of on-the-job-training along with additional life skills training, psychosocial counselling and post-training support (material support, stipend or placement follow-up) to help adolescents build their livelihoods.</p>	<p>The Nepal Evaluation and Assessment Team (NEAT, 2012) conducted an impact evaluation which combined quantitative and qualitative methods.</p>	<p>The project benefited girls and marginalised youth as 38% of the nearly 400 trainees were girls, 30% Janajatis and 27% Dalits. In terms of age, 2% of trainees were between 13 and 15 years, 30% between 16 and 19 years and the majority were young adults. The proportion of trainees finding employment after the training was very high: around 70% were employed and the majority were satisfied with their job. The average salary of those employed was around 5,000 rupees (US\$46) monthly, while nearly 33% earned between 11,000 and 15,000 rupees (US\$101-137) monthly. Both trainees and their employers said that the quality of training was good. Trainees also reported that the project helped them build their financial planning and management skills and increased their self-confidence.</p> <p>Yet the evaluation stressed that the number of youth trained was small compared to the number of youth who needed training. Local partners were responsible for selecting participants, thus selection criteria were not objectively verifiable and comparable with each other. Trades in which training was provided were not that relevant to the particular local</p>

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				context and trainees had to migrate to urban areas for employment. Training provided was largely male-centred and the rate of employment after training was higher for boys than for girls – 76% of male trainees were employed compared to 61% of female trainees; they also had higher starting incomes. Marriage was identified as a key factor not allowing girls to take up full-time employment (NEAT, 2012).
Brighter Futures Programme Phase II 2005-2009 28 districts.	Children and adolescents in child labour.	The project aimed to withdraw and prevent children from exploitative child labour and help them access quality education. The programme had three main components: non-formal education and formal education for younger participants; vocational skills training for older participants aged 14-17, including the self-employment economic education scheme, specific vocational skills training and apprenticeships; and parental support through microfinance.	A qualitative evaluation assessed programme impact (ICF Macro, 2009).	Older adolescents particularly benefited from the vocational training combined with self-employment opportunities, as conventional vocational skills training is not linked to income-generating opportunities. Adolescents reported that the project helped them become more self-reliant, learn about business, develop a savings habit, be practical and solve problems around the house. Their parents also expressed their appreciation of the income-generating opportunities provided (ICF Macro, 2009).
Nepal Education Project 2010-2015.	Boys and girls aged 8-18 of former and current Kamaiya and Haliya bonded labourers.	The project aimed to end the exploitation and poverty of targeted children and to help them access education and skills training. Younger boys and girls aged 8-15 were provided with bridging	A mixed methods evaluation assessed project impact (Adhikari and Robertson, 2015).	Most of those who received training, reported being employed or having work; some reported earning double the income that they would earn as daily wage labourers. Employed adolescents reported supporting themselves and their families. However, the duration of the provided training was short – just three months – and the

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		classes to return to school, while older out-of-school adolescents aged 16-18 received vocational skills training by two local NGOs.		curriculum lacked key components such as business skills required by youth with small businesses. In addition, most of the girls attended traditional vocational subjects – sewing/cutting and knitting training – and only a few participated in mobile phone repair training (Adhikari and Robertson, 2015).
Adolescent Livelihood Programme Save the Children.	Out-of-school adolescents.	The programme provided adolescents with skills training and capital to enable them to become economically independent and contribute to family income.		Participants reported that their self-confidence increased as they were able to earn a living and felt less pressure to migrate to urban centres in search of work. In particular, girls reported being able to earn their own income and thus become more self-confident and experience less pressure from their families to marry early (Save the Children USA, 2006).
Skills for Employment Programme (SEP) 2015-2019 DFID-funded 100,000 beneficiaries.	Disadvantaged Nepali youth, especially women and youth from marginalised groups.	The project aims to provide Nepali youth with the opportunities to improve their employability, productivity, income and decision-making. It continues and expands DFID's work on skills training in Nepal by providing skills training to at least 100,000 poor and disadvantaged youth with a particular focus on those from marginalised groups and young women – a minimum of 50% of participants in skills training should be women. In response to the 2015 earthquake, one programme		

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
		component will provide skills in earthquake-resistant housing construction to help with the enormous reconstruction needs in the earthquake-affected districts (DFID, 2016a).		
Youth Information Centres (YICs) Restless Development and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. All districts.	Youth.	The project establishes information centres where youth can access information on youth issues of interest, particularly in the fields of livelihoods and life skills training.		An assessment report found that youth who most frequently visited those centres were more likely to be male, from urban areas, between 15 and 30 years old, unemployed or college students; adolescent girls and young women were less likely to use them as those centres were often located in the building of the district sports committee where most of the staff were men. Moreover, most employees at the centres were male too and thus parents might think that their daughter was not safe there. Traditionally, girls face mobility constraints and have fewer opportunities to move freely and thus to visit the centres. Youth from rural areas were also unaware of the centres or had transportation problems. Younger adolescents, both boys and girls, were also less likely to visit them (Restless Development, 2013).

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Towards Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour as Priority (ACHIEVE) 2013-2016 Funded by the Embassy of Denmark in Nepal.	Children involved in the worst forms of child labour and those at-risk of engaging in child labour and their families.	In collaboration with the government, the ILO, trade unions and NGOs, the project aims to provide area-based models for child labour-free zones/communities which could be scaled up, to contribute to a more conducive policy environment and to build stronger institutional capacity for preventing and eliminating child labour (ILO, n.d.).		
Kamlari Abolition Project Plan International Nepal By 2014, 3,640 Kamlari girls were rescued.	Kamlari girls involved in domestic servitude.	The projects rescues and supports Kamlari girls, provides them with life skills and technical training, and assists them along with their families to get involved in income-generating activities and become economically independent.		Many of these girls who were supported to start a new life, reported becoming aware of their rights and gaining confidence to join the campaign against the harmful practice (Plan International Nepal, 2014).
Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT) 2011- World Bank.	Youth.	The project aims to expand the supply of skilled and employable labour in Nepal by increasing access to quality training and strengthening the technical and vocational education and training system.		A recent project document reported that the project made satisfactory progress in all key performance indicators: 72% of graduates have found employment for at least six months after completion of training; over 70% of youth have passed the national skills test and received their certification; and the combined share of girls, Dalits and disadvantaged Janajatis enrolled in supported institutions has already reached 55%,

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
				surpassing the initial 50% target (World Bank, 2016).
Education and learning interventions				
Scholarships and Incentives Government, UN agencies and the donor community.	Girls along with children of disadvantaged communities (Dalits, poor). Girls in primary and lower secondary school.	Scholarships and incentives have become a key strategy to promote girls' education in Nepal. These schemes have targeted girls and children of disadvantaged communities and aimed to improve their enrolment, attendance and learning outcomes. Yet most scholarships intended to increase enrolment rather than retention and completion.	Phuyal et al. (2003) used a mixed methods study to assess the impact of three government incentive programmes, the Educational Incentive Programme for Girls (EIPG) implemented as a pilot in 17 districts for disadvantaged girls, the Primary School Scholarship for All Girls implemented in 40 districts, and the Dalit Scholarship implemented in all districts. Acharya and Luitel (2006) used qualitative methodology to assess the effectiveness of scholarship and incentives programmes, including the 50% Girls Scholarship, the Dalit Scholarship, the WFP Food-for-Education programme (providing a mid-day meal for students in public primary and lower secondary schools and two litres of vegetable oil monthly for girls with 80% attendance), UNFPA and UNICEF financial assistance,	Phuyal et al. (2003) reported an increase in the enrolment of girls after the introduction of the EIPG programme in the sample districts over a period of three years. Retention rates also increased, yet more among younger recipient girls aged 6-10 than among older girls aged 11-15 in the surveyed districts. The number of Dalit students also increased, while in the case of the third programme no significant increase was identified. Participation of girls and children from disadvantaged caste or ethnic groups in the programmes was low as: girls' names were missing from the programme list along with the names of out-of-school girls; parents aimed to marry off their daughters early instead of sending them to school; the Muslim community preferred madrasas as knowledge of the Quran was essential for girls' marriage; and many schools suffered from inadequate infrastructure and teacher supply. The modality used for selecting recipients along with the amount provided often varied among districts. Moreover, scholarship quotas were often inadequate to meet the needs of all eligible students. An additional problem identified was lack of programme monitoring and follow-up. Finally, there were limited community initiatives to increase parental awareness of the scholarship programmes or children's right to education, and to mobilise communities for girls' education

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			<p>and various NGO and donor schemes for disadvantaged children.</p> <p>Another mixed methods evaluation assessed the 50% Girls' Scholarship Programme and its successor, the 100% Girls' Scholarship Programme (ERDCN, 2011).</p> <p>Another study used child time-use data from the 2010 Nepal Living Standards Survey III (NLSS3) and coarsened exact matching, to investigate whether scholarships promoting schooling reduce the incidence and intensity of child labour in Nepal (Datt and Uhe, 2014).</p>	<p>which could help programme implementation and uptake.</p> <p>Acharya and Luitel (2006) found that the schemes increased girls' school enrolment and attendance. Recipients were regarded highly by their families and reported that they were respected and their ideas were valued. In some cases, girls who brought the scholarship money home were valued more than boys in family decision-making. Yet some girls were sent to schools in order for the family to access the cash assistance. In the case of the Dalit scholarship, some recipients did not want to be labelled as Dalits and wanted the scholarship to be named differently. Apart from providing financial or material assistance, these schemes did not explicitly try to address discriminatory social norms, which often remained unchanged and hindered programme effectiveness.</p> <p>Other problems identified, included inadequate communication mechanisms and lack of information about the availability of the various schemes; inconsistent understanding of the purpose of the schemes; lack of a proper data management system and performance-associated indicators; budget not released on time and delayed quota division and allocation to students. Provided amounts were also rather small compared with the actual cost of schooling, including hidden costs (Acharya and Luitel, 2006). The ERDCN (2011) evaluation found that the 50% scholarship contributed to increased girls' enrolment and school attendance over time compared to non-recipients whose increase was</p>

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				<p>less than that of the scholarship recipients. The dropout rates of girls recipients was also lower than the overall student dropout rate – on average around 3%. Although the majority of parents thought that the amount provided was inadequate, 85% said that it helped their children to study. The vast majority of girls also thought that the scheme helped their studies. Yet the amount of money was small, and information about the project was inadequate.</p> <p>Datt and Uhe (2014) found that higher value scholarships (those valued at 5% of the poverty line) decrease the work of girls aged 8-16 by 7.5 hours weekly compared with an average of nearly 23 hours for the control group, and this is a statistically significant effect. These hours are mostly spent on economic and extended economic activities, such as fetching water, collecting firewood, taking care of animals and weaving; on the other hand, scholarships had little impact on hours spent on household chores and care responsibilities. The study also estimated that the effect of scholarships on work hours for girls is statistically significant and becomes positive at the threshold of 2% of the poverty line. Interestingly, scholarships of similar value were not found to have any effect on the work hours of boys.</p>

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
Poverty Alleviation Fund Started in 2004. World Bank 40 poorest districts. More than 2.5 million people benefited since its start.	Households in targeted districts.	The Fund was a community-driven development programme aiming to improve rural welfare.	The evaluation used two rounds of survey data and a difference-in-difference combined with instrumental variable estimation method (Parajuli et al., 2012).	The programme led to a 14 percentage point increase in school enrolment for all children and adolescents aged 6 to 15 years; girls benefited more with a 21 percentage point net increase. Parents were able to send their daughters to school, while community mobilisation as part of the community organisations established by the programme may have convinced and motivated parents about the importance of schooling (Parajuli et al., 2012).
Nepal Education Project 2010-2015 Implemented in 10 districts.	Children aged 8-18 of former and current Kamaiya and Haliya bonded labourers.	The programme aimed to end the exploitation and poverty of these children by facilitating their access to education and skills training. The project provided preparatory bridging classes to help children – both boys and girls aged 8-15 – to return to mainstream school and attend regular classes along with child clubs and advocacy activities, including the use of media to improve duty bearers' responsiveness to the rights and needs of those children and adolescents. Older adolescents aged 16-18 were provided with vocational skills training.	The study combined quantitative and qualitative data and fieldwork took place between July and August 2015. Focus group discussions, key informant interviews, case studies and observations were included (Adhikari and Robertson, 2015).	<p>Many children were able to access and continue their education, although several others were not finally reached. Interviews with students, teachers and district officials indicated that the preparatory bridging classes were successful and helped both Kamaiya and Haliya participants return to school. Once in school, those students attended regularly and had a high pass rate. However, monitoring of their school progress was often low and inconsistent.</p> <p>The project also improved child and parental knowledge and understanding that all children have the right to go to school. Interviews with students suggested that nearly all participants acquired a basic understanding of their right to education and some even voiced their concerns. Older students who received training through the Child's Rights and Awareness Groups were able to articulate their rights better. These school-based groups aimed to empower student participants and enable them to make decisions about policies and activities that affected their</p>

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				<p>classmates (e.g. caste discrimination) as well as out-of-school children who needed support to return to school. Data shows that 455 boys and 445 girls were directly involved in these groups, with 38% of them being Kamaiya children and 30% Haliya. Largely through these groups, the project improved student participation and decision-making; yet the Kamaiya and Haliya children were generally less vocal and less assertive than other children in those groups (Adhikari and Robertson, 2015).</p>
<p>Decentralised Action for Children and Women (DACA W)</p> <p>1998-2010</p> <p>Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-Western regions. The programme expanded into a total of 23 districts.</p> <p>UNICEF in collaboration with the Government of Nepal (Ministry of Local Development).</p> <p>71,841 children became members of 3,848 DACA W child clubs.</p>	Girls and boys aged 6-22.	<p>DACA W was a multi-sectoral programme that also aimed to increase access to quality basic education for girls and children from disadvantaged groups and to provide learning opportunities for at-risk children and adolescents and for those out of school in both urban and rural areas. Both boys and girls were encouraged to participate in child and youth clubs and advocate for their right to education and a child-friendly school environment.</p>	The evaluation (Adhikary et al., 2009) included programme and policy document review, surveys and field visits with interviews, focus group discussions and observation of activities.	<p>The programme increased school enrolment and literacy rates and contributed to community awareness of children's right to education. Parents learnt to appreciate the importance of giving their children quality education and this led to increased demand for better educational services with the majority of communities asking the district education office to allocate more resources to local schools. School infrastructure improved along with teachers' skills and school governance, creating a more child-friendly environment with increased transparency and accountability. Moreover, communities requested the provision of alternative education opportunities for out-of-school working children along with children from most disadvantaged households. Child and youth clubs also engaged in rights advocacy, while in some areas teachers became more aware and sensitive to the learning needs of their students.</p> <p>The programme also linked education to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene initiatives to address girls' disadvantage and improve their school</p>

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				attendance through the provision of separate toilet facilities. In particular, girls' enrolment increased from 87% to 89% between 2007 and 2008 in the DCAW districts, an increase above the national average. Dalit enrolment also increased with the increase again being proportionally greater in DCAW districts compared to non-DCAW districts. Moreover, the programme helped both rural and urban out-of-school adolescents aged 10-19 to improve their basic literacy, numeracy and life skills, with more than 60% of them girls (Adhikary et al., 2009).
Girls' Education Programme (GEP) February 2014 to March 2015. Kalikot, Mugu, Achlam and Bajura. It targeted nearly 11,250 adolescents - 5,735 girls and 5,512 boys; created 84 child clubs; provided more than 5,700 girls with peer-support homework groups, sports activities and cultural activities; and provided nearly 2,360 parents – both fathers and mothers with a daughter or a daughter-in-law aged 10-19 – with training sessions.	Girls and boys at grades 5 to 9.	The programme aimed to empower girls and help them stay in school and to inspire parents to keep their daughters in school in communities with high dropout rates. It had three main components: engaging girls regularly in school activities, including child clubs, to increase their interest in attending school and to empower them; providing them with life skills and livelihood information in peer-led sessions to make education more relevant to girls and highlight its practical benefits; and raising parental awareness of the importance of girls'	The evaluation in March 2015 compared the end-line results to the baseline and used mixed methods (Alejos, 2015).	Girls' participation in school activities – mostly child clubs – increased from 11% at baseline to 31% at end-line with a statistically significant difference. Girls' dropout rates also declined by 28% and their attendance increased from 15-16 to 21 days monthly. Girls also reported feeling empowered with increased self-confidence and ability to speak out in public compared to their previous shyness. The programme also increased the number of students with a good level of knowledge on livelihood options and life skills, especially students in grades 5 to 8 with the difference being statistically significant. This increase was more significant among girls than boys, and particularly for life skills. The programme also changed parental attitudes towards girls' education: trained parents increased their positive attitudes towards girls' education by nearly 28 percentage points, and stated that they were willing to promote girls' education in their community. In addition, they

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		education through four radio programmes, meetings, community events, and training sessions.		reported increased awareness about the harmful practice of dowry and early pregnancy. Yet some girls felt that the programme should have focused more on parents as the key decision makers for girls' education, and that it should have also addressed the role of poverty (Alejos, 2015).
Literacy Programme Room to Read.	Boys and girls in primary school.	The Literacy Programme is a comprehensive programme that aims to support children to become independent readers through publishing children's books in local languages, building new classrooms and libraries, providing reading and writing instruction to teachers to deliver high quality literacy education to children and establishing school libraries and reading activities.	The evaluation used mixed methods, including a survey, interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation (Cadena et al., 2015).	The Literacy Programme influenced and encouraged children's reading habits, especially those in grade 4, with 70% of them reading five or more books a month. Both boys and girls read about the same number of books in a month and the majority used a school library to find books and choose the ones they would like to read. However, girls spent more time reading than boys. Students reported enjoying reading on their free time and believed that it is an easy and enjoyable activity which would improve their education and provide them with better opportunities in the future. Those who participated in the reading and writing instruction programme had better reading abilities and habits. Yet the evaluation noted that the programme suffered from lack of stakeholder involvement, short project time and sustainability. Parental involvement in reading activities, and provision of additional training to teachers, librarians and school staff could maximise programme impact (Cadena et al., 2015).
Girls' Education Programme 2001-	Adolescent girls from economically disadvantaged areas.	The programme aimed to help girls complete secondary school, acquire the life skills they need and	A mixed methods evaluation in Bardiya district assessed	Girls' enrolment and retention rates improved. Girls were also able to improve their overall performance and complete their secondary education. Parents and communities understood

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Room to Read. Since its launch, it benefited more than 4,800 girls.		<p>make informed decisions about their lives, improving their self-awareness, self-efficacy and social awareness. Girls attend life skill sessions provided by social mobilisers; these are local women who mentor girls, work closely with them and their families to ensure that girls stay in school, and advocate in the community on girls' education.</p>	<p>programme impact (Cadena et al., 2015).</p>	<p>the importance of girls' education, while girls themselves felt empowered to talk to their parents, siblings and communities about their education and how it can contribute to national development. Girls also reported enjoying the life skills sessions and gaining valuable knowledge which they could apply in their daily lives such as problem-solving skills, saving habits, time management ability and public speaking. Girls overcame their shyness and were able to express themselves in public along with improving their communication skills and their ability to interact effectively. Parents also reported that their daughters increased their self-confidence and self-awareness, especially in relation to how their body functions, and were thus less anxious during menstruation. They also mentioned that their daughters developed leadership skills and were more confident speaking in public. In addition, some girls used their acquired skills and supported by social mobilisers were able to prevent or at least prolong an early marriage (Cadena et al., 2015).</p>
Schooling Incentives Project Evaluation study Implemented by a local NGO, the Nepal Good Weave Foundation. Kathmandu Valley. 660 adolescents.	<p>Adolescents aged 10-16 at high risk of engaging in child labour in the carpet factories.</p>	<p>The intervention aimed to assess the impact of a scholarship and stipend intervention promoting the schooling of children engaged in child labour in the carpet factories.</p>	<p>The study used an RCT. A lottery allocated those children in three groups: the first group received a scholarship to cover school expenses, the second the scholarship along with a stipend of food rations conditional on regular school attendance for one year, and the third served as the</p>	<p>Participants in the first group received the scholarship at the start of the school year but its effects faded after just two months, with children in this group showing a similar attendance rate to that of the control group. Children in the second group benefited more as the funds from the stipend lasted throughout the school year with participants attending 11% more days, being 10% more likely to have sat the end-of-year exams, 46% less likely to have failed their grade, and 48% less likely to have worked</p>

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			control group (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014).	as carpet weavers. The study notes that the intervention had larger effects on girls' attendance, yet those effects were not statistically significant. However, girls who received the stipend were 64% less likely to weave, and 66% less likely to fail their grade. The study also found that those effects on schooling and child labour of participants were not sustainable after the intervention and the support ended (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2014).
Brighter Futures Programme Phase II 2005 to 2009 28 districts.	Children engaged in ten different child labour sectors.	The project aimed to get children out of exploitative child labour or prevent them from entering it by expanding their access to and improving the quality of basic education. It provided non-formal education, formal education and vocational skills training. The non-formal education component included non-formal education classes, learning centres and the Girls' Access to Education (GATE) scheme, providing girls with bridging classes to enable them to continue to mainstream schools; the formal education component included scholarships for children, parental mobilisation, including the development of Parent-	The evaluation took place between March and April 2009. The project was completed in September 2009. The evaluation methodology included document review, focus group discussions, interviews, observation and stakeholder meetings. Children, parents, community members and teachers as well as local and central government officials and international organisations representatives took part in the evaluation (ICF Macro, 2009).	The programme withdrew nearly 19,600 children from the worst forms of child labour, prevented more than 14,500 children at risk from entering into such labour and provided services to more than 72,200 beneficiaries – exceeding its original target by 4,000. The non-formal education scheme with its flexible sessions was particularly effective in engaging out-of-school or difficult-to-reach children. Those who received a scholarship noted its importance in helping them continue and focus on their schooling. Parents also appreciated the scholarships. All boys and girls who participated in the programme agreed that it significantly improved their lives as they were able to go to school, learn about their rights and become more confident to speak up. However, the evaluation also notes that the programme was unable to provide follow-up, had to limit the duration and access to learning centres and schools, and social mobilisation activities were limited. Programme components were sometimes carried out in fragmented ways in different locations. While parents appreciated the project, they did not always understand their

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		Teacher Associations, and policy level work with the government and UNICEF to improve the quality of formal education through the development of teacher training materials, school enrolment campaigns, and education planning and monitoring; and the vocational education component targeted older participants aged 14-17 and included vocational training, apprenticeships, self-employment and parental support through microfinance.		personal responsibility in keeping their children out of the worst forms of child labour (ICF Macro, 2009).
Winning People's Will 2004-2005 UNESCO Two impoverished communities in the Kathmandu Valley.	Out-of-school Dalit girls aged 4 to 22.	The project sought to improve access to school and retention of targeted girls. Its main component was community mobilisation to address discriminatory social norms and gain people's will on girls' education through home visits, formal meetings and intensive discussions to first identify the main barriers to the education of Dalit girls and then make community members – leaders, elders, parents and	UNESCO (2005) undertook an action research project.	The project changed the perceptions of parents who started supporting their out-of-school children, including girls, to return to school. Local education committees assisted with the enrolment process and offered support to girls who returned to school. The project also provided income-generating and health education activities in the one community along with the establishment of a women's literacy programme in the second community. However, the follow-up, four months later, found that some girls had dropped out of school as they lacked uniforms, felt ashamed being in a class where they were too old for their grade, or faced other self-esteem problems (UNESCO, 2005).

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		the girls – aware of the need for girls' education.		
Girls Access to Education (GATE) Launched in 2011 in Saptari district. Part of the UNICEF-funded Let Us Learn programme.	Out-of-school girls aged 10-18.	The project sought to help girls participate in community-based, non-formal education in order to build their literacy, numeracy and life skills, increase their knowledge of social and health issues, mainstream those girls into public schools, and improve their overall wellbeing. Apart from providing flexible two-hour class sessions, six days a week, using child-friendly pedagogies, the project also included community advocacy.	The evaluation took place between end of July and end of September 2014. The evaluation used primarily qualitative methodology, including interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries, UNICEF field staff, government and other stakeholders (Gaible, 2015).	The project was effective in providing literacy, numeracy and life skills to targeted out-of-school girls; 47% of girls were finally mainstreamed into government primary schools. Participants also reported improved hygiene and menstruation practices. Yet older girls aged 15-18 (about 42% of participants) were unable to continue to formal education as they did not attain the skills enabling them to be mainstreamed into age-appropriate (lower-secondary or secondary) classes. Thus participants and other stakeholders requested additional instruction, particularly provision of technical and vocational education and training, to enable those girls to find employment. Girls also noted that the life skills content of the GATE curriculum was only partially relevant to their lives and thus had to change. Participants also identified two major obstacles to their school attendance: household chores and the labour they had to perform as they were hired out to other adults to work on their fields during the paddy planting and harvesting periods (Gaible, 2015).
After-School Programme for girls (ASP) Launched in 2012. Part of UNICEF-funded Let Us Learn programme.	Girls in grades 6-8 from disadvantaged communities with large Dalit and Muslim populations.	The ASP aimed to improve girls' attitudes towards lower secondary school and improve their regular attendance through the provision of school-based sports clubs, homework clubs and menstrual hygiene instruction by trained female	The evaluation took place between end of July and end of September 2014. The evaluation used primarily qualitative methodology, including interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries, UNICEF field	The project was effective in terms of increasing girls' attendance. Interviewed girls and head teachers reported that project participants attended school more regularly. Girls attributed this to the menstruation hygiene instruction they received and to their participation in the homework groups. They also said that their physical and emotional wellbeing improved and linked it to their participation in sports activities.

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Parsa and Saptari districts.		teachers. The programme particularly sought to address barriers to regular attendance by adolescent girls such as lack of friends, play and social capital, incomplete homework, and the role of menstruation.	staff, government and other stakeholders (Gaible, 2015).	Girls also strengthened friendships, increased their self-confidence, felt equal to boys, and improved their relationships with their parents and teachers. The programme also trained 346 Young Champions – 117 of them female. Yet the project had limited impact on learning outcomes, as girls did not find that the homework groups improved their school performance. Another problem was the limited involvement of girls from disadvantaged groups due to a combination of factors including the low enrolment of Dalit girls in schools, limited participation of low-performing girls, and the parental approval required to allow girls to participate in sports clubs and homework groups (Gaible, 2015).
Stromme Foundation Project 2011-2015 Stromme Foundation Makawanpur, Rautahat, Rupandehi and Surkhet. 8,400 families, 5,450 adolescent girls and 3,650 children.	Poor and socially excluded families, adolescent girls and children.	The project used a holistic and integrated approach to improve their status, including support for quality basic education, particularly for girls and children who were out of school.	The midterm evaluation used qualitative methodology (Rijal et al., 2013).	The project assisted children and adolescent girls who had dropped out of school to attend the 181 non-formal learning centres and provided 550 children with material support to re-enrol in school, and 150 children from marginalised families with scholarships. Teachers received training to deliver quality education and schools received infrastructure, repair and maintenance support. Comparison of baseline and follow-up data showed that enrolment of children from marginalised families increased by 76% (Rijal et al., 2013).

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Sisters for Sisters' Education in Nepal Ongoing DFID funded. Dhading, Parsa, Lamjung and Surkhet.	Girls who have never been to school or who dropped out in grades 1 to 3.	The programme trained marginalised girls to become the 'Big Sisters', mentoring, providing academic and emotional support, and acting as positive role models to other marginalised girls, their 'Little Sisters'. The overall aim is to support girls to stay in school and promote gender-friendly environments (DFID, 2015).		
Supporting the Education of Marginalised Girls in Kailali (STEM) Ongoing Mercy Corps DFID funded. Kailali District, Far West Nepal.	Adolescent girls in secondary school.	The programme aims to improve the education outcomes of 5,400 girls. A key component is creation of girls' clubs to enhance girls' learning, help out-of-school girls and those who dropped out in the past four years to return to formal education, and encourage girls already in school to remain and complete their education. These out-of-school and after-school girls' clubs provide reproductive health education and life skills training to participants and operate as safe spaces for peer support and social networking. Girls who completed their formal education or are unlikely to		

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		<p>return to school are also provided with financial literacy and business skills.</p> <p>The project also includes two large-scale education campaigns using mass media and rallies to raise awareness about the importance and the impact of educating girls. In order to create a supportive environment for girls' education, the project also works with parents and teachers as well as with communities and even includes infrastructure improvements and provision of solar lights to increase girls' study time. STEM also set up the Kailali Girls Transition Fund, a large revolving fund, through Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies, to provide post-education support as girls transition into adulthood (DFID, 2015; Mercy Corps, 2014).</p>		
Sexual and reproductive health, health and nutrition interventions				
Putting Learning into Action	Adolescent girls aged 10-24 both in-school and out-of-school.	This was a community-based non-formal education programme to address girls' understanding of menstrual	The CEDPA evaluation used panel (longitudinal) design to compare attitudes and behaviours of peer educators	The evaluation found that between baseline and end-line, HIV knowledge among peer educators increased by 15% and the average number of menstrual prohibitions decreased, especially for

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<p>Second phase of the CEDPA programme implemented between 2004-2007.</p> <p>Implemented in Baglung, Mahottari and Udayapur.</p> <p>CEDPA worked with a community-based organisation to identify and train 3,000 girls.</p>		<p>prohibitions and their HIV and AIDS vulnerability, and to increase their leadership and collective efficacy.</p> <p>In phase I, participatory discussion groups were set up where girls discussed career and educational goals, self-awareness, marriage and parenthood, gender relations and women's rights, peer pressure, maturation, HIV and AIDS and reproductive health.</p> <p>Phase II entailed 'Putting Learning into Action' which was designed to address issues that the girls from Phase I considered most important, menstruation prohibitions and HIV and AIDS. Girls were trained as peer educators to lead community events and discussions and raise awareness of the two issues.</p>	<p>before and after programme participation (CEDPA, 2008). Posner et al. (2009) also presented findings for the peer educators who facilitated Phase II of the programme.</p>	<p>high-caste girls. Leadership and perceptions of collective efficacy increased. Leadership self-efficacy was a strong predictor of increased HIV knowledge and fewer menstrual prohibitions (CEDPA, 2008; Posner et al., 2009).</p>
<p>Nepal Adolescent Project (NAP) 2000-2003</p> <p>Implemented in collaboration between EngenderHealth, ICRW, and local Nepali NGOs.</p>	<p>Adolescents aged 14-25, married and unmarried.</p>	<p>The NAP used a community-based, participatory approach to improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health in rural and urban Nepal. It offered adolescent friendly services, peer education and</p>	<p>Malhotra et al. (2005) used a quasi-experimental case-control study design with two control and two treatment sites (rural and urban). Adolescents were randomly assigned to treatment or control sites. In</p>	<p>The evaluation focused on key outcomes in HIV and AIDS knowledge, prenatal care and institutional delivery. Improvement was recorded across all four sites, but no statistically significant differences were found between intervention and control sites. The two maternal health outcomes – prenatal care and institutional delivery – improved more at the control sites, yet</p>

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Rural sites in Nawalparasi and Kawasoti districts and urban sites in Kathmandu.		<p>counselling, information and education campaigns, adult peer education and youth clubs, as well as street theatre, teacher education and the provision of livelihood opportunities.</p> <p>The programme took a participatory approach with youth and with community as a whole, and aimed to test the effectiveness of the participatory approach in defining and addressing adolescent reproductive health concerns.</p>	<p>control sites, participants did not receive the full package but only adolescent friendly services, peer education and counselling and teacher training. The treatment participants received the full package including information and education campaigns, adult peer education and youth clubs as well as street theatre on social norms, teacher education and the provision of livelihood opportunities. The evaluation also used quantitative household and adolescent survey data, qualitative and participatory data.</p> <p>In addition, another study presented findings from the project (Mathur et al., 2005).</p>	<p>this reflects the small sample sizes. The participatory approach was positive in reducing differentials in youth reproductive health outcomes between different social groups. Relevant disadvantages (location, wealth, education and ethnicity) varied by outcome: access to prenatal care services was significantly associated with urban-rural residence and household wealth, institutional delivery for the first pregnancy with urban-rural residence, and knowledge about HIV transmission with gender and educational differences. Qualitative data indicated that the participatory approach in intervention sites was successful in increasing access or knowledge for the disadvantaged compared to the standard approaches used in control sites (Malhotra et al., 2005).</p> <p>The project enabled rural female participants to improve their understanding and identify how norms influenced and constrained their sexual and reproductive health behaviour; women identified the negative impacts of seclusion during menstruation and after pregnancy, lack of mobility, child marriage and early childbearing, the constant threat of husbands taking on a second wife, and the housework burden. Community mobilisation approaches enabled participants – boys, girls and adults – to acquire a better understanding of the sexual and reproductive health needs of youth before and after marriage, and contributed to a broader shift in norms and attitudes along with increased access to services. The intervention also enabled a shift in the attitudes of health care providers;</p>

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				prior to the intervention, they reported embarrassment discussing sexuality issues with youth and were often judgemental and less attentive to youth needs, but the programme enabled them to change their behaviour towards young service users, maintaining confidentiality and providing better quality services compared to the control sites, where services continued to be considered of low quality (Mathur et al., 2005).
HIV/AIDS Peer Education Programme Urban secondary school.	Urban ninth-grade students aged 13-16 – 46% were girls.	This programme used an adapted model of the Teens for AIDS Prevention (TAP) programme and consisted of five 45 minute sessions where trained peer educators – 10 th grade students - provided HIV and AIDS information to adolescents.	Mahat et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study of the programme. Data collection took place prior to the implementation of peer education and four weeks after programme completion.	The study found that both HIV and AIDS knowledge and self-efficacy for limiting sexual behaviour improved between baseline and end-line and the difference was statistically significant. The highest increases were seen among those who initially had the lowest scores. Boys had slightly higher HIV knowledge mean scores than girls; yet there were no gender differences on overall self-efficacy mean scores. Only in two self-efficacy items, gender differentials were identified: boys scored significantly higher on self-efficacy to buy condoms in a drug store and significantly lower on self-efficacy to refuse sex with someone unknown than girls. More girls than boys reported that it was appropriate for girls to carry condoms; and more girls worried about getting HIV infection than boys, yet this was not statistically significant (Mahat et al., 2011).
Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Programme – Better Life for Youth	Youth aged 10-21 both in-school and out-of-school.	The project sought to improve the sexual and reproductive health of in-school and out-of-school youth, improve service	The mixed methods study assessed a range of project interventions (peer education, reproductive health services and the social	The project improved knowledge, attitudes and skills among adolescents in project schools compared to those in non-project schools: 45% of those in intervention schools had very good knowledge of changes in puberty compared to

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1999-2004 Save the Children, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Initially implemented in Kathmandu and Kailali, then extended into Kanchanpur and Siraha through partners. More than 24,000 youth.		accessibility and quality, and create a supportive social and policy environment. The intervention used a peer education approach which chose and trained adolescents to become peer educators and created a network of youth groups. These groups met on a regular basis and discussed youth reproductive and sexual health topics. A telephone hotline counselling programme was also established. The programme also worked with teachers, parents and service providers offering training and advocacy activities around delaying marriage and childbearing, as well as with the Ministry of Education to review and revise the school course book and incorporate age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health material.	and policy environment) and changes in reproductive and sexual health, knowledge, attitudes and skills (Save the Children, n.d.).	24% in control schools; 28% had very good knowledge about menstruation and sperm development compared to just 9%; and 56% had a good knowledge about the adverse consequences of early childbearing compared to 34%. A larger proportion of students in intervention schools also felt very confident about successfully convincing a sexual partner to use a condom. However, behavioural changes were reported to be more limited. The project also successfully bridged the gaps between adolescents and service providers and raised awareness of adolescent reproductive health issues among government officials, school leaders and the public (Save the Children, n.d.).
A GIFT for RH Project (Adolescent Girls Initiate for their Reproductive Health) 2000-2002	Out-of-school illiterate girls aged 10-19.	This programme targeted illiterate and out-of-school girls and provided them with non-formal literacy classes focusing on reproductive health issues in order to	The CEDPA (2002) mixed methods evaluation used a baseline sample survey, a study of the relationship between literacy and reproductive health, and the	CEDPA's evaluation found that the programme improved communication between girls and parents and their knowledge of reproductive health issues. The proportion of girls aware of physical changes during adolescence increased from baseline to end-line from 49% to 100%

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<p>CEDPA and a national NGO, Aama Milan Kendra (meaning 'Mothers' Clubs').</p> <p>Baglung District.</p> <p>900 girls.</p>		<p>make informed decisions about their reproductive health and rights. Groups of 11 girls were established and facilitators were hired to run 27 chelibeti kaksha (meaning 'girls' literacy classes') as well as other activities such as improving toilets. The programme also facilitated girls' congress and participation in Women's Day and Polio Day.</p>	<p>end-line survey in 2002 along with qualitative methodology, including case studies and focus group discussions.</p>	<p>among those aged 10-14, and from 77% to 99% among girls aged 15-19 years. In addition, while at baseline, 76.5% of 10-14 year olds and 23% of 15-19 year olds were unaware of how pregnancy occurs, at end-line only 1% of both age groups were unaware of it. The programme also led to an increase in knowledge of family planning methods, sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS as well as slight declines in experiences of health problems and increases in health seeking behaviour. Finally, 99% of girls who had experienced health problems reported sharing their problems with their parents (CEDPA, 2002).</p>
<p>Reproductive Health for Married Adolescent Couples Project (RHMACP)</p> <p>2005-2007</p> <p>ACQUIRE Project (with CARE Nepal) – funded by USAID.</p> <p>Parsa and Shanusha.</p>	<p>Adolescent married couples.</p>	<p>This programme used a peer education network to disseminate relevant information, support local health facilities for youth-friendly services, and foster an enabling environment to increase adolescent access to and use of services. Project components also encouraged spousal communication and joint decision-making along with greater participation of husbands in maternal health.</p>	<p>A mixed methods evaluation combined quantitative methods, such as surveys and qualitative methods, including focus group discussions and case studies of peer educators and married adolescents (ACQUIRE Project, 2008).</p>	<p>The proportion of married adolescents visiting government health clinics rose from 36% in 2005 to 42% in 2007. The proportion of adolescent girls who made four or more antenatal care visits during their last pregnancy increased from 29% to 50%. Positive changes were also found in spousal communication; 37% of girls and 57% of boys at baseline thought that husband and wife together were responsible for family planning decisions, but 65% of girls and 79% of boys did so at end-line. In addition, the proportion of married adolescents discussing with their spouse where to deliver, increased from 24% to 40%. The project also increased contraception awareness, but its use before the first pregnancy remained low.</p> <p>Married adolescents' knowledge of HIV and AIDS and its symptoms, transmission and preventive measures also increased significantly, yet levels of awareness remained lower among girls. Moreover, many peer educators became</p>

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
				champions for youth behavioural change; female peer educators became powerful role models for adolescent girls and promoted their access to basic health services. At community level, the project raised awareness of the rights and needs of married adolescents and led to an attitudinal shift which facilitated adolescent access to reproductive health information and services. The project also encouraged debates on social norms affecting adolescent health, including child marriage (ACQUIRE Project, 2008).
Dance4Life 2010-2013 Restless Development. The programme reached 18,200 youth in 89 schools in 7 districts.	School-going youth at secondary school level (aged 13-19).	Dance4Life used dance and music sessions and interactive methods to engage and mobilise young people to become aware of and fight against HIV and AIDS. The programme was implemented in four phases. In the first phase (Inspire), students accessed basic HIV and AIDS knowledge through music and dance workshops. During the second phase (Educate), trained peer educators provided smaller groups of students with in-depth information about HIV and sexual and reproductive health. In the third phase (Activate), students supported raising awareness activities among their peers; and in the last phase	Data was collected between December 2013 and January 2014 in 7 schools in 3 different districts. The evaluation was conducted internally with around 100 respondents, including students, teachers, volunteers and Restless Development staff. A qualitative methodology was used because a baseline survey had not been conducted ahead of programme implementation (Savoie and Bhatta, 2014).	The interactive approach of the programme raised awareness of key health issues through dance and music with 88% of surveyed students giving the right answers to all HIV and AIDS related questions. In addition, 95% of students said that they would 'remain friends with someone who has HIV'. The evaluation pointed out that one of the areas where students learnt the most was on how to develop their confidence to openly discuss sexual reproductive health issues and protect themselves; 97% of students said that they would not take drugs even if their friends offered them and 89% that they would refuse to have sex even if their boyfriend/girlfriend made it a condition for continuing their relationship. However, the evaluation found that some programme components such as the skills4life and act4life were too short, preventing long-term changes occurring. Respondents also said that a supportive environment was missing, particularly because adults – parents and community

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
		(Celebrate), students met other agents of change and celebrated their collective achievements (Restless Development, 2014).		members – were not involved in the programme (Savoie and Bhatta, 2014).
Enhancing Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Young Women 2012-2014 Ipas Nepal. Kailali district.	Adolescent girls and young women ages 15-24.	The project sought to help them prevent unwanted pregnancy and obtain safe abortion services as well as improve the availability and quality of sexual and reproductive health services for young women. It organised a series of educational events and workshops on youth-friendly services with key stakeholders, provided training to service providers, and established a network called Didi Dai (meaning 'Big Sister/Big Brother') that trained young men and women from 31 VDCs to serve as peer educators on safe abortion and other sexual and reproductive health and rights issues in their communities. These peer educators held sessions for thousands of in- and out-of-school adolescents, conducted door-to-door counselling visits and held	The project was evaluated comparing the intervention with a control group (Ipas, 2015).	Girls and young women were very satisfied with the services offered at the facilities, with 96% saying they were either satisfied or totally satisfied, and 100% saying they would recommend that family or friends visit the facility for abortion services. Youth in project areas increased their knowledge about the legal status of abortion and the facilities where safe abortion was available; 88% knew where a woman could obtain a safe abortion compared to 77% in control areas. At the end-line, young people were aware of the legality of abortion for married and unmarried women and also knew the gestational age limit for terminating a pregnancy. Interaction with peer educators proved to be effective as 88% of youth who did so knew that abortion was legal in Nepal compared to only 62% of youth with no such interaction. Peer educators also reported referring 163 women for comprehensive abortion care and 3,066 male and female community members for other reproductive health services. Health providers' knowledge on youth-friendly abortion care also improved along with their understanding of the barriers that girls and young women face in accessing such care and how to facilitate access instead of contributing to barriers (Ipas, 2015).

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
		more than 100 street drama performances.		
Menstruation and Education in Nepal project November 2006 - January 2008. Four schools in Chitwan district. 198 girls were enrolled in the study.	Seventh and eighth grade girls in four schools.	<p>The study aimed to measure the effect of menstruation and sanitary products on school attendance. It thus used a randomised design. In the first meeting, girls were given a booklet of time diaries for each month with a menstrual calendar on which girls had to note the start and end date of their period each month. At the end of the meeting, a public lottery took place and 25 girls in each school were assigned to the intervention group and were provided with a menstrual cap and instructions on how to use it. The intervention and the control group used the menstrual calendars and the collected data were combined with school attendance data from the official school records. Girls were followed for nearly 15 months and then after the follow-up survey was administered, girls in the control group were also given menstrual cups.</p>	Oster and Thornton (2009) used a randomised design to estimate the impact of the menstrual cup on school attendance. They compared rates of attendance for girls in the treatment group (who were given the menstrual cup) and girls in the control group.	Oster and Thornton (2009) found that the impact of menstruation on school attendance was significant and negative, but extremely small. Girls were 2% less likely to attend school on days they had their period, and this amounted to 0.4 missed days in a 180-day school year. Moreover, the menstrual cups had no effect on school attendance. Girls who randomly received the cups and girls in the control group did not have statistically significant differences in school attendance (Oster and Thornton, 2009).

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
<p>National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) Programme</p> <p>2010–2015</p> <p>Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP).</p> <p>By November 2012 the programme had covered 516 health facilities in 36 districts.</p>	Adolescent girls and boys aged 10-19.	The National ASRH programme sought to increase the availability of and access to information about adolescent health and to provide opportunities to build the skills of adolescents, service providers and educators; increase the accessibility and utilisation of adolescent health and counselling services; and create a safe and supportive environment for adolescents in order to improve their legal, social and economic status.	Baral et al. (2013) assessed the implementation of the National ASRH Programme in a midterm evaluation in selected health facilities in Doti and Banke. Data was collected in March 2013 in semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions, mainly with health workers and adolescents, supplemented by peer ethnography interviews and observation.	The evaluation showed that although all health workers were aware of the programme and its components, and health facilities implemented community awareness activities which were deemed essential to facilitate youth access to services, few adolescents visited health facilities to access those services. In particular, adolescent girls reported visiting less than boys, although they had a better understanding of the particular services offered. Those girls who visited health facilities did so for menstrual problems, to access contraception, or had friends who went to the facility for an abortion. Married adolescents reported visiting for antenatal check-ups and vaccinations. Most adolescents who visited the facilities stated that they were happy with the health workers' behaviour and assistance, while those who had not used the services were concerned about issues of confidentiality in addition to feeling embarrassed to talk to older people, whom in some cases they already knew, about sexual and reproductive health issues. On the other hand, health workers also reported significant changes in their behaviour as a result of the programme, including increased awareness of the importance of maintaining privacy and ensuring confidentiality. The evaluation also found that only a few boys and girls had read the information materials available in the health facilities, although both adolescents and health workers admitted that they were very helpful (Baral et al., 2013).

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
<p>Building Demand for Reproductive Health (BuD for RH)</p> <p>A two-year project on adolescents' health and development, following on from GIFT project.</p> <p>Funded by USAID Nepal through the Global CATALYST Consortium Project and implemented by the Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA). Implementing partners of this project were Aama Milan Kendra, Nepal Red Cross Society and Nepal Technical Assistance Group.</p> <p>Implemented in Baglung, Udayapur and Mahottari.</p>	<p>Low-income, illiterate girls aged 10-19 years, living in conflict-affected areas.</p>	<p>BuD for RH Project's primary goal was to improve the ability of girls to make informed decisions regarding reproductive health and access health services and formal education. The programme mobilised individuals, their families and communities to advocate for and participate in disseminating information, as well as delivering a range of services in their own communities.</p>	<p>A quantitative evaluation used a structured questionnaire (CREHPA, 2005).</p>	<p>The evaluation showed sharp increases in girls' awareness about the types of physical changes occurring among girls and in knowledge regarding why menstruation occurs in girls. The project also provided information to girls and led to positive changes in their personal hygiene during menstruation, such as taking a bath daily, changing their sanitary cloth daily and drying underwear in the sunlight. Between baseline and follow-up, girls also significantly increased their knowledge about ways to get pregnant or to avoid getting pregnant. Moreover, a steady increase in knowledge on harmful practices for pregnant women was observed among participating girls (CREHPA, 2005).</p>
<p>Network for Addressing Women's Reproductive Rights in Nepal</p> <p>3-year programme, November 2005 – January 2009.</p> <p>Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA).</p>	<p>Women and girls of reproductive age.</p>	<p>The programme sought to improve women's access to safe abortion and post-abortion care. To this end, it mobilised private paramedics and chemists and linked them to safe abortion service centres managed by the government and NGOs; trained service providers and offered services; worked to</p>	<p>A baseline survey was carried out in 2005 assessing baseline knowledge, attitude and perceptions of the target population. The end-line survey was confined to the same six districts. The evaluation used questionnaires and surveys, interviews and field work</p>	<p>Knowledge about the abortion law and legalisation of abortion increased significantly between baseline and end-line among married and unmarried women of reproductive age (15-45) and married and unmarried men (aged 15-59). The proportion of respondents who agreed that abortion is a woman's right as well as that unmarried women also have a right to abortion also increased. However, the majority of men disagreed that an unmarried woman has a right to abortion. The reported abortion rate also</p>

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
<p>Programme partners: Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities, Family Planning Association of Nepal, Forum for Women Law and Development and Safe Motherhood Network Federation-Nepal.</p> <p>Implemented in 16 districts.</p>		effectively implement the abortion law and advocate legal reforms to make the law more gender-sensitive; and conducted grassroots advocacy and awareness-raising activities among community health providers, youth, married woman of reproductive age and other stakeholders about the abortion law and safe abortion services.	observations (CREHPA, 2009).	increased between baseline and end-line among married women from 4% to 10%, while none of the unmarried women at end-line reported ever having an abortion. Almost all respondents, including men, said that they liked the topics covered by the project and almost all felt that they benefited as they accessed useful information. The project also led to an increase in the knowledge about the abortion law – reaching 100% – among private paramedics and chemists (CREHPA, 2009).
<p>Girls' Access to Education (GATE) programme</p> <p>7 districts</p> <p>UNICEF funding.</p> <p>6,000 girls.</p>	Out-of-school girls.	GATE provided life skills and informal classes for out-of-school girls. In particular, since girls from poor families are often unable to afford sanitary napkins – and use old pieces of torn cloth instead – the programme taught girls how to produce low-cost, reusable pads from locally sourced materials (Sommer et al., 2013).	A qualitative evaluation assessed programme impact (Gaible, 2015).	The evaluation focused on the programme educational effects, but also mentioned that girls improved their knowledge, and their hygiene and menstruation practices (Gaible, 2015).
<p>Aama Surakshya Karyakram (Aama meaning 'Mother')</p> <p>2009 onwards</p> <p>Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP).</p>	Pregnant women and girls in poor districts of Nepal.	The Ministry introduced the Maternity Incentive Scheme in 2005, providing cash incentives to pregnant women delivering in public health facilities to cover their transport costs. The scheme was succeeded by the Safe Delivery Incentive		

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
		<p>Programme (SDIP) which again did not meet the goal of raising the number of institutional deliveries as it did not address the most important barrier, the institutional cost. In 2009, the government removed user fees for delivery care and introduced the Aama programme.</p> <p>Under Aama, pregnant women receive cash incentives for completion of four antenatal care visits. They are also provided with free delivery care and a cash payment to cover their transport costs to a health facility to give birth. Meanwhile, health staff receive an incentive for attending both health facility and home delivery. Larger payments are offered for complicated deliveries and for caesarean sections, and to women in mountainous and hill districts (MoHP, 2015).</p>		
Multi-sectoral nutrition plan (MSNP)	Pregnant women and children under the age of 5.	The MSNP aims to improve maternal and child nutrition and reduce chronic malnutrition, offering a		

Programme name and details	Target group	Main activities	Impact evaluation and if so, methodology	Programme impacts
2011-2016 Ministry of Health and Population.		package of interventions with priority strategic objectives by sector that should contribute to a reduction by one third in the current prevalence rates of chronic malnutrition (MoHP, 2015).		

Annex II: Methodology

Search grids for Google and Google Scholar

Annex Table 1: Gender and empowerment

Population	Theme	Intervention type	Thematic terms	Research terms
Girl	Empowerment	Girls club	Attitude	Impact
Adolescent	Norm Change	Peer support	Gender norm	Evaluation
Youth	Nepal	Mentor	Social norm/norm change	Assessment
'Young women'		Adolescent/Youth development programme	Expectation	Analysis
		Social network	Perception	Research
		Life skills	Physical violence	Results
		Rights	Sexual violence	Programme /Project
		'Soft skills', 'interpersonal skills'	Harassment	Intervention
		'Behaviour Change Communication'	Rape	Interview
		Media	Workplace violence	Participatory
		Campaign	Transactional sex	Study
		Marketing/social marketing	Age of marriage	
		Community discussion	Empowerment	
		Youth group	Early/child/forced marriage	
		Positive deviance	Negotiation skills	
		Radio/TV	Decision making	
		Magazine	Leadership	
		School material	Voice/Speaking out	
		Theatre/drama/skit/puppet	Confidence	
		Cell phone/SMS/internet/ICT/computer	Friends/social network	
		Safe spaces	Participation	
		Masculinity	Self-esteem	
			Mobility/freedom of movement	
			Discrimination	

Annex Table 2: Education and learning

Population	Theme	Intervention type	Thematic terms	Research terms
Girl	Education	Education	Enrolment	Impact
Adolescent	Nepal	Literacy	Attendance	Evaluation
Youth		School	Exam results/grades/ qualifications	Study
'Young women'		Cash transfer/in-kind transfer	Learning outcomes	Assessment
		School building	Vocational skills	Analysis
		Primary school	Accessible service	Research
		Secondary school	Staff attitudes	Results
		New schools	Violence	Programme/Project
		Quality	Attitudes towards violence	Intervention
		Teachers	Physical violence	Interview
		'Girl friendly'	Sexual violence	Participatory
		Non formal	Harassment	
		Informal	Rape	
		Second chance	Transactional sex	
		Catch up	Early/child/forced marriage	
		Bridge	Corporal punishment	
		Ration	Social network	
		Girls clubs	Confidence	
		Club	Friends	
		After school club	Decision making	
		School feeding	Expectation	
		Scholarship	Negotiation	
		Mobile school	Retention	
		Radio/Newspapers	Transition	
		Computer/Internet	Completion	
		SMS/Cell phone/Mobile	Distance	
			Household/domestic chores	
			Time use	
			Menstruation	

Annex Table 3: Economic empowerment

Population	Theme	Intervention type	Thematic terms	Research terms
Girl	Economic Empowerment	Economic empowerment	Assets	Impact
Adolescent	Nepal	Skill	Income	Evaluation
Youth		Business	Savings	Assessment
'Young women'		Entrepreneurship	Livelihoods	Analysis
		Grant	Labour force participation/employment	Research
		Start-up capital	Ownership	Programme/Project
		Financial literacy	Inheritance	Intervention
		Microfinance	Social network	Participatory
		Savings	Confidence	Study
		Bank	Friends	Interview
		Loan	Decision making	Results
		Cash transfer/In kind transfer	Expectation	
		Work experience/apprenticeship	Negotiation	
		Training	Transactional sex	
		Economic opportunities	Migration	
		Vocational skills	Child Labour/Bonded labour	
		Mobile/SMS/cell phone/ICT/computer/internet	Sex work	
		Informal economy	Trafficking	
			Domestic work	
			Unemployment/underemployment	
			Land	
			Agriculture	
			Street children	
			Workplace violence/harassment	
			Work	
			Public works	

Annex Table 4: Physical and psychosocial wellbeing

Population	Theme	Intervention type	Thematic terms	Research terms
Girl	Health	Youth friendly service	Weight	Impact
Adolescent	Nepal	Sexual health service	Nutritional status	Evaluation
Youth		Reproductive health	Contraception/birth spacing	Assessment
'Young women'		HIV/AIDS	Fertility	Analysis
		Nutrition	Maternal health	Research
		Supplement	Pregnancy	Results
		Staff training	Emotional wellbeing	Programme /Project
		Counselling	Abortion	Intervention
		Support	STI	Interview
		Helpline	Anaemia	Participatory
		Mental health	Malaria	Study
		Psychosocial /psychological wellbeing	TB	
		(sex) health education/ information/training	Anxiety	
		Health insurance	Depression	
		Fee waiver	Micronutrient deficiency	
			HIV/AIDS	
			Friends	
			Social network	
			Confidence	
			Relationship	
			Happiness	
			Life satisfaction	
			Service access/use	
			Height	
			BMI	
			Antenatal/postnatal	
			Alcohol	
			Tobacco	
			Menstruation	
			Conflict	

Annex Table 5: Academic databases searched and search strings used

Name	Search strings	Searched within
Global Health	(sc:"HE") AND Nepal AND "economic empowerment" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	(sc:"HE") AND Nepal AND psycho* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	(sc:"HE") AND Nepal AND "empower*" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	(sc:"HE") AND Nepal AND "educat*" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	(sc:"HE") AND Nepal AND "health*" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	(sc:"HE") AND Nepal AND "norm change" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	(sc:"HE") AND Nepal AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
SocIndex	Nepal AND "economic empowerment" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND psycho* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND empower* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND educat* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND health* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND "norm change" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
EconLit	Nepal AND "economic empowerment" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND "psycho*" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND "empower*" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND "educat*" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND "health*" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND "norm change" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text

Web of Science	Nepal AND "economic empowerment" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title
	Nepal AND psycho* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title
	Nepal AND empower* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title
	Nepal AND educat* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title
	Nepal AND health AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title
	Nepal AND "norm change" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title
	Nepal AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title
IBSS	Nepal AND "economic empowerment" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND psycho* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND empower* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND educat* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND health AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND "norm change" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
	Nepal AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Full text
ERIC	Nepal AND "economic empowerment" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title and Abstract
	Nepal AND psycho* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title and Abstract
	Nepal AND empower* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title and Abstract
	Nepal AND educat* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title and Abstract
	Nepal AND health AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title and Abstract
	Nepal AND "norm change" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title and Abstract
	Nepal AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Title and Abstract
Child Development	Nepal AND "economic empowerment" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract

& Adolescent Studies	Nepal AND psycho* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND empower* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND educat* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND health AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND "norm change" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
	Nepal AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Abstract
Bibliography of Asian Studies	Nepal AND "economic empowerment" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Entire record
	Nepal AND psycho* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Entire record
	Nepal AND empower* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Entire record
	Nepal AND educat* AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Entire record
	Nepal AND health AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Entire record
	Nepal AND "norm change" AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Entire record
	Nepal AND (girl OR adolescent OR adolescence OR youth OR "young wom?n" OR child*)	Entire record

Annex Table 6: Databases and websites searched

Academic databases searched
EconLit
SocIndex
Web of Science
IBSS
ERIC
Global Health
Child Development and Adolescent Studies
Bibliography of Asian Studies
International organisation websites
Asian Development Bank
DFID
ILO
Norad
UNAIDS
UNDP
UNESCO
UNFPA
UNGEI
UNICEF
UN Women
USAID
UNCDF
WFP
WHO
World Bank
International NGO websites
Asia Foundation
CARE International
Girls Not Brides
International Center for Research on Women – ICRW
Ipas
Mercy Corps
Plan International
Population Council
Restless Development
Save the Children
World Vision

National NGO websites
Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities - CREHPA
Maiti Nepal
Pourakhi
Transcultural Psychosocial Organization – TPO
National government websites
Central Bureau of Statistics
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health and Population
Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
Ministry of Youth and Sports
International reports
Education for All Country Reports
National Human Development Reports
UNFPA State of the Population Reports
UNICEF State of the World’s Children Reports
World Bank Country Poverty Assessment Reports
World Bank World Development Reports
International data
DHS Country Reports
MICS Country Reports
OECD/SIGI Country Report
WHO Country Statistics



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About GAGE

Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a nine-year longitudinal research programme generating evidence on what works to transform the lives of adolescent girls in the Global South. Visit www.gage.odi.org.uk for more information.

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