



David duChemin

Formal Education to Address Child Labor

Child Labor Strategies Report 2009

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Worldwide, keeping children in formal school and out of working situations has been one of the most successful strategies to end child labor. In Nepal in the late 1990s, there were just four million of seven million children in school. Of the children out of school most were working part-time or full-time. In 1995/96, ILO/IPEC estimated that 2.6 million children were working with 1.7 million economically active and 127,000 children in the worst forms of child labor. Children in the worst forms of child labor were mostly working full-time and not attending school.

Nepal has made good progress expanding access to education over the last thirty years. More schools have been constructed, and teachers trained with gradual improvements in the quality of education. However, the ten-year civil war started to reverse this positive trend. By 2004, enrollment and attendance were declining due to fear of violence or abduction and increasing poverty. Quality of education did not improve as the school system faced increasing stress. As part of its efforts under Brighter Futures, World Education entered into partnership with UNICEF and the Department of Education to work together to address issues of access and the quality of education. This collaboration resulted in a number of major efforts to reverse enrollment declines through the ‘Welcome to School’ campaign; to promote and mainstream best practices through the annual campaign; make schools more child-friendly; and to address the availability and use of data for better education planning, school management and good governance.



For individual children in child labor such indirect long-term approaches provided little immediate relief. To meet the needs of child laborers, scholarships were provided to working children to enable them to return to school or stay in school full-time. Parent Teacher Associations were developed to work at the school level to increase access, and support working children and those most at risk to attend. Through these Parent Teacher Associations, quality issues were addressed working together with teachers and the community. These efforts resulted in many supported communities being able to achieve 100% enrollment of children and increased attendance rates. Making these schools more welcoming and child friendly was also a major prevention strategy ensuring many more children at risk enrolled and attended school reducing the chances that they will enter child labor.



School Support for Working Children

To enable children in child labor to enter school for the first time, return to school or stay in school without having to miss schooling to work, the project adopted a number of strategies. Providing school scholarships was the first strategy. For younger children and children who had dropped out of school to work - this was particularly effective. It was also more effective in some work sectors as compared to others. World Education and partner NGO staff coordinated with the District Education Offices and concerned schools to facilitate the enrollment of working children. The numbers of children needing support far exceeded the resources available. Where possible, if children were eligible for government scholarships (for Dalits or girls) schools were requested to ensure these children got this support. Currently government scholarships provide Rs.300 annually for all Dalit students and half the girls. Fees were required at all levels at the start of Brighter Futures, but in 2004 free schooling was introduced for Grades 1-5, and in 2008 this was extended to include Grades 6-8. Despite this many schools complained they were under-resourced and under staffed and so continued to require 'donations' or request money for other reasons.

Prioritizing Children For Support

As a first priority, Brighter Futures provided support to children in the worst forms of child labor, children who wished to join school after nonformal education, children wanting to re-enroll who had dropped out to work or were

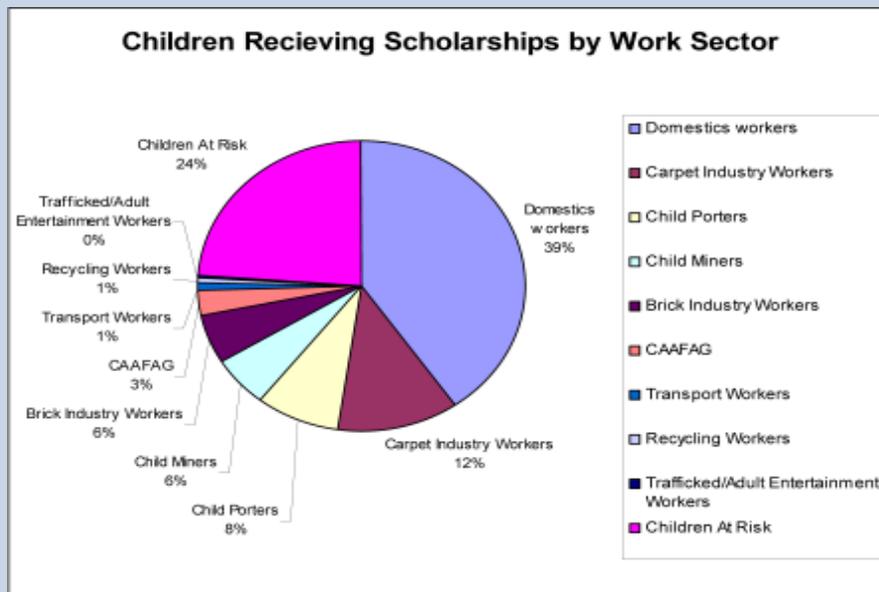


forced to attend irregularly as they work part-time. Additionally, the most at-risk children were supported to attend school, usually girls at high-risk of entering bonded labor as child domestics, using matching funds for private scholarships. Younger children and children who had not had the opportunity to complete primary school were given a priority over those attending high school.



Scholarship Beneficiaries

Over eight years of Brighter Futures, 18,788 children (9,174 in Phase I and 9,614 in Phase II) were supported to attend formal school with the help of scholarships. NGO partners found school scholarships most effective for children those in stable situations such as child domestics and porters and least effective for children migrating seasonally with families such as those in mining or brick factories. Even when children were in extreme situations, such as in recycling, provision of scholarships was a major incentive for children to leave child labor and attend school. Being in school was an enormous counter balance to the lure of the street and the social support and structure they received in the school discouraged them from returning to life on the street and recycling work. In addition, 4,503 children at-risk were provided with scholarships to attend school. Most were for girls graduating from NFE to support their initial transition to school.





In terms of caste/ethnic distribution, the highest representation was of Janajatis (27%) followed by Dalit (22%), Newar (3%), Brahmin/ Chhettri (17%), Tharu (10%), Muslim (8%), and Terai castes and other castes (6% each). The majority of these beneficiaries were in the 10-14 age group (80%) and the percentage of girls was 61%. These numbers reflect the overall proportion of children found working in the worst forms of child labor.

Of the above beneficiaries 87% were in primary schools (Grades 1 – 5) 10% in Lower Secondary School (Grades 6 -8) and 3% in Secondary School (Grades 9 – 10). The largest number of working children who received a scholarship to attend formal school were located in the Kathmandu Valley (28%) where a large percent were domestics, and in the Dhaulagiri cluster (26%) where mainly child porters were supported. Child porters were often from the poorest, most disadvantaged families and were found to be working to pay for schooling costs. These children often missed weeks of schooling to work and scholarships were an important strategy to ensure their regular attendance and retention in school.





In-Kind Scholarship Support

The Brighter Futures program did not provide any direct financial support to children or their families. Program funds were used instead to purchase school uniforms, books and stationary, footwear, schoolbags or to pay the fees for students in higher grades. The amount of support provided per child was based on need and the grade level, with increased support for children in higher grades with increasing fees and costs. Employers, or parents if children were living at home, were required to help with school costs and over time were expected to contribute more. As a result there were varying levels of support, but on an average in-kind scholarships were worth about Rs.2,500 annually. For subsequent years children received less support (up to three years) which was dependant on available resources. School support was renewed on a yearly basis depending on the performance and need of the child. Efforts were made by NGO partners in negotiating and encouraging the contribution by parents and or employers for continuing support.



Motivation and Support

Partner NGOs were responsible to collect and maintain data, and monitor and update the educational status/ performance of each child. Staying in school is a challenge for working children. NGO motivators visited regularly and worked with teachers to track children's progress. Parent Teacher Associations and child clubs were also mobilized to encourage and support these students to stay in school.



Lessons Learned and Best Practices

- **Employer and Parental Support** – Linking the provision of school scholarships to employer or parent commitments to contribute to support the child attending school was extremely successful. Once commitments were made, parents and employers were more supportive of school attendance and more likely to pick up additional costs.



- **Attending School Reduces Working Hours** – While there are often concerns that children with scholarships simply work longer hours early morning and late at night to compensate, the majority of children reported that once they started school they worked fewer hours.

- **Leaving Child Labor to Return to School** – Many child domestics only work as child laborers for one or two years before employers replace them with younger workers. Employers are reluctant to keep children longer as they demand increasing wages and other facilities. As NGOs push for the children to attend school, the longer they stay and progress through grades, the greater the

expense for employers. In the past, leaving work resulted in children being pushed into a child marriage or other work on their return to the village. Now, children who have been in school while working are more likely to want to leave child labor to focus on their schooling on their return to the village.



- **Government Scholarships** – The government scholarships are often inadequate to overcome the barriers working children and those at-risk face. With a basic school uniform (shirt and pants or shirt and skirt) costing about Rs.800, the Rs.300 scholarship does not even pay for a uniform. Dalit children and some girls benefited from government scholarships which helped keep them in school, but working children from Janajati, Muslim or other groups were not eligible for assistance.
- **Long-term Sustainability** – When poverty is the challenge, once a commitment is made to a child's education - parents, the student, NGOs, teachers and the school community make enormous efforts to keep the child in school. Each year hundreds of Brighter Futures' children who often started their education late through NFE, graduate from high school with a school leaving certificate (SLC). An initial scholarship proves to be a major motivating factor encouraging a strong commitment from all.
- **Family Livelihoods** – Addressing family poverty through family-based income generation efforts and microfinance has had a major impact on children staying in school with many parents now able to meet schooling costs and reduce the need for children to work.



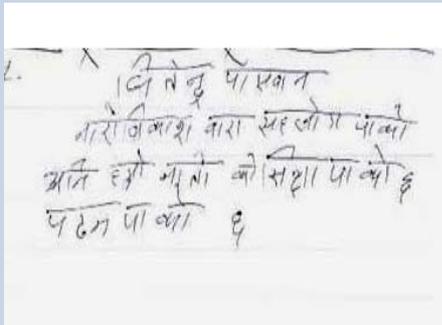
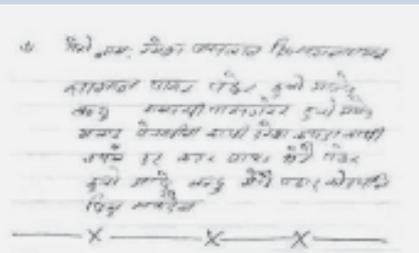


Scholarships Make School Possible

Scholarship students and their parents or guardians from across the districts have shared their appreciation of the school support. Many believe that without this support, joining school would never have been possible. Here are quotes from some of the children and their families in Morang, Dang, Salyan and Kathmandu:



I am Ramesh Paswan. I born in 1997 and am 12 years old. I am very happy to get pencils, copies, shoes and a school uniform. I'd like to study up to S.L.C and became a respected man. No one can take away my education.



I'm Jitendra Paswan. I'm very happy that my grandson received support from Nari Bikash and had the opportunity to get an education.



*If I didn't get educational support from **Sadika** my life would still be dark. At any cost I'll continue my study and I'm encouraged because everybody is helping me do that*

Narayani Wali - Salyan



*I'm Bishhu Chaudhari and am 15 years old. Our economic condition is very poor and my parents couldn't send me to school. We later on came to know that **Sadika** was helping children receive an education. **Sadika** gave me some support to enroll in school, and now I'm studying in grade four. I'm very grateful and thankful to **Sadika**. I'd like to be a teacher someday.*

Bishhu Chaudhari - Dang District

*I've been supported by **CDS** to continue my education since grade four. Now I'm studying in grade nine. If I didn't receive education support from World Education through **CDS**, I would still be working. **CDS** has supported me with uniforms, copies, books, and other educational materials.*

Mukesh Rayamajhi - Kathmandu District

*I'm studying in Nava Jagriti N.M.V School in grade seven. I've been given copies, pens, and a uniform from World Education through **Child Development Society**. If I didn't get this support through **Child Development Society**, I would not have been able to get an education. Being educated will help me be independent, able to do different kinds of work, take care of myself and my health, and contribute to my community and country.*

Meena Tamang - Kathmandu District



Re-integration of Working Children into Formal School

As the numbers of children attending formal school increases, the profile of children entering child labor is changing. This is true across all types of child labor including *Kamlabari* girls who are bonded domestic servants. More and more of these children needing rehabilitation are school dropouts. Some have participated in nonformal education programs while others have not. The main challenges in re-integrating them into formal school are:

- Most are older than children in their current grade and are embarrassed to be in lower grades than their friends.
- Being older than their grade level, they are more likely to drop out of school.
- They live in scattered areas and in small numbers making programming difficult and expensive.
- Many have been out of school for more than a year and find it difficult to readjust to being in the classroom and studying.
- They come from the poorest families and even with scholarship help need to do seasonal and other work to help support families.
- Some are older and have little hope of continuing their education till the end of high school and therefore would prefer more vocational education.

Over the last eight years, World Education and its partners have experimented with two different “enrichment program” approaches to cope with these emerging needs. Many nonformal education classes were followed by a Bridging Program which helped prepare students for entry in to more age-appropriate grades. Working with the government and UNICEF, new and more liberal promotion policies were





introduced for older students up to Grade 7. Once in school though, older working students still face challenges and many need extra help if they are to achieve the desired learning outcomes.



Gorahi is a small town in Dang where many children are brought to do domestic work. Most these girls are from Tharu families affected by bonded labor. On the edge of the town is the village of Arghau where many of these poor families live. In 2008 the community established a “Learning Center” to help their children do better in school. The children attend school during the day and visit the center mornings and evenings. The mothers group in the community believe that the center is helping the children do better in school. To help sustain the centre they are building a permanent building themselves and are supporting the tutor. The women are collecting the rock, timber and other materials and the women are also building the center themselves. “Before the Learning Centre our children used to roam and not do their homework. They were skipping school because they had not done their homework or were failing many subjects. After joining the Learning centre they have learnt better study habits and are much more serious about their studies. exams. We want to see this continue.”



Learning Centres

To help disadvantaged children in schools Brighter Futures worked with partners to develop a “Learning Centre” approach. Over five years, the project learnt a lot from this approach. Students attended school and a senior student provided tutoring in the early morning or evening in specially built learning centers or a specially out-fitted school classroom at the local school. The trained tutor helped with homework, using creative arts and even in some instances - computers. Through the Learning Centers, “Child Clubs” were also formed to engage in social service type activities while other formed environmental clubs. Having access to light, stationary and a supportive tutor made a huge difference. In these Learning Centers, Dalit students did exceptionally well with dramatic improvements in school results. In some schools, these formerly failing students, are now at the top of their class. School Leaving Certificate results for the older students were also impressive each year. Older students doing well could be double-promoted and advanced faster. Building on an initial pilot in Tanahau, World Education supported 16 Learning Centres in Dalit communities in Myagdi, Parbat and Baglung and in 31 *Kamaiya* affected communities in Bardiya, Dang and Kanchanpur.





Coaching Classes

For two years, the project piloted coaching classes with migrant children working in brick factories in the Kathmandu Valley. It was hoped that working children, with extra help in coaching classes, could be helped to transition to age-appropriate classes and then succeed in formal school. This approach was first piloted with children working in brick factories. Most of the children were with migrant families either displaced by conflict or in the area for seasonal work. The classes were popular, but the children were reluctant to return full-time to school in these temporary communities. Most of the learners in the pilot were also forced by necessity to work many hours a day to help support the families. Even with scholarships they could not recoup the lost opportunity costs of returning to school. For those who were able to return to school, the coaching classes helped transition them into more age-appropriate classes. After leaving the coaching class most of the participants scattered across Nepal from Rukum to Rhamechaap. Many planned to take their exams and re-enroll in school. While coaching classes were valuable for some students they were found not to be an ideal fit for highly mobile migrant children.





Hasta Goes to School

Hasta dreamed of being able to read and write and go to school like other children. That seemed an impossibility. Her parents were poor farmers in Dang with too little land to feed themselves and their three children. Hasta's older sister was a "Kamalhari" child domestic. To survive they take laboring jobs on local farms and in the town. Hasta Chaudary's dreams came a step closer when she got the chance to attend a nonformal education class using the Girls Access to Education curriculum. On graduation, as Hasta was at high risk of entering child labor, she was given a scholarship to attend school. Hasta gained admission in class four in Khaira Middle School. Now she is in grade five and is getting good marks. Her happiness knows no bounds when she is inside her classroom with her classmates, which was a distant dream for her some years back.

Hasta though, is now fourteen, and to make it through school she will need all the help she can get. Brighter Futures NGO partner, Gramin Mahila Uthan Kendra, has been helping establish "Learning Centers" running before and after school programs for disadvantaged students. Hasta is attending this new "Learning Center" which is helping her catch up and do better in school. She is doing her homework there, gets extra tuition in math and English. She also has access to a library corner and other learning and recreational materials. Hasta helps out with teaching the younger children.

Hasta's teacher and the "Banguan Learning Center" facilitator say, "Hasta is very sincere and committed in her studies. She is taking a keen interest in extra-curricular activities too." They share that Hasta secured first position in races on sports day, is participating in the school drama and came second in the school song competition. "She is a promising student; her future is bright if she can access higher education through a scholarship program." says Kausalya Chaudhary, a local VDC leader.

Hasta in a cheerful mood adds, "I think I am lucky to go to school, while many of my friends are still not able to get this opportunity." Everyone notices how much Hasta has changed and how she is now self-confident and inspired. First the friends and facilitator in the literacy class and now those in the Learning Center encourage and support her to overcome the obstacles to getting an education. Now her parents too are committed, appreciative of her studies, and very positive about supporting her to continue.



Lessons Learned

- **Enrichment Programs Well Accepted** – While these are a new concept in Nepal they are well received and supported by the community.
- **Improved Learning Outcomes and Higher Retention** – Students go from failing and repeating to achieving higher scores. Many that would have dropped out are now going on to complete high school.
- **Increases Accountability Of School Teachers** – As parents, facilitators, community leaders and NGO staff are tracking the progress of these disadvantaged students the teachers are more concerned about the academic performance of all the students.
- **Parental Engagement Increased** – As the Learning Centers are based in the “tole” close to parents they are constantly being engaged in their children’s education. Being more aware of the homework, examination outcomes and school activities they show a greater interest and are more supportive of their children’s studies.
- **Children Gain Confidence** – Many children transitioning from NFE to school do not usually play as active a part in school life particularly extra curricular activities. Learning centers build confidence for more holistic participation.
- **Scale** – In many these communities large numbers of children need access to a Learning Center after school. They lack the home environment to do the homework and parents are not in a position to help. How to scale up efforts in these communities remains a challenge.
- **Sustainability** - In some communities parents are constructing a special building and raising an income. Ideally each center needs its own sustainability plan and income generation activity.





Mobilizing Parents To Support Schools

A look at the success of NGO nonformal education programs for children as compared to government programs using the same curriculum, budget and methodologies, showed that the main difference was parental involvement. NGO programs generally have much higher completion rates, better learning outcomes, and far greater transition to formal school as parents and community leaders are engaged through Class Management Committees, pre-class orientations and regular interactions. The initial motivation for Brighter Futures to involve parents in schools and their children's education was to replicate this success, and improve the transition and retention of children entering school from nonformal education classes. It was also expected to help children at-risk to stay in school until they were of legal working age.

In 2002, at the start of Brighter Futures, there was no formal provision for any organization for parents in Nepal's public schools. To determine the steps needed to engage parents in informal Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), World Education initially established a small pilot with a number of schools in Banke and Bardiya.



These schools embraced the concept and formed vibrant PTAs that became the models for future expansion of the approach. As Brighter Futures expanded the formation of PTAs in schools with large numbers of working children or in origin communities for child labor- the government formally mandated the PTA concept under the Seventh Education Amendment in 2002/3. UNICEF has also helped develop the capacity of these Parent Teacher Associations by supporting them to develop district networks and through two regional conferences.



Brighter Futures-Supported Schools

To support working children and children at-risk to attend school 713 schools were identified for direct support in project districts. These schools fell in to three broad categories:

- public schools in cities and towns attended by the urban poor and working child migrants many of whom were domestic servants;
- rural public schools in communities that were sources of working children
- *madrassas* that served the Muslim communities of the Terai Districts

These schools were then supported to form a PTA. Once a PTA was in place, training was provided for the PTA along with the School Management Committees (SMC) so that they could carry out their respective roles and responsibilities. Schools prepared five-year School Improvement Plans and



designed strategies to raise funds to carry out the plan. The PTAs then prepared a mini-grant proposal and were given in-kind support to either start income generation schemes to support the school or to make direct improvements to the school. Through collaboration with UNICEF, these schools were also provided with a basic “tin trunk library” and

wind-up radio to enable staff to access distance education programs. NGO staff were trained to act as “mentors” regularly visiting schools, helping solve problems and supporting parents, teachers and students.



After formation and training, Parent Teacher Associations were mobilized to improve the access to and quality of education in their schools. Popular activities included:

- Mobilization to identify out-of-school children through community mapping and enrolling children in school.
- Upgrading the physical infrastructure of the school – with repairs, addition or improvements of toilets and sanitation, playground construction.
- Making schools more child-friendly through decoration of grade one classrooms or by assisting with child clubs, school concerts, outings or sports days.
- Supporting the use of more child-friendly teaching-learning methodologies by helping establish and manage school libraries, assisting on field trips, or by helping teachers develop learning materials.
- Participating in school governance by participating in elections for School Management Committees or Parent Teacher Associations and participating in social audits of the school activities and accounts.
- Helping to raise additional funds for the school for major construction activities, to provide additional teachers or staff, to purchase teaching- learning materials or to provide scholarships or uniforms or learning materials for the most needy students.





Community Mobilization Brings Change

Laxmi Lower Secondary School was established 21 years ago in Hetauda municipality, of Makwanpur district. The community, District Development Committee and the Municipality all helped in the effort to meet the children's educational needs. Initially, the school was grades 1-5 and was later extended up to grade VIII as a Lower Secondary School. Although the children got opportunity to study the quality of education was very poor due to lack of teachers and infrastructure. The government budget allocated for the school was not enough to maintain the school or provide necessary resources. There was School Management Committee (SMC), but its role was limited. The majority of the SMC members were from elite groups who sent their children to private schools and so took little interest in the school. There was little parent representation.



When the government introduced new policy and formed Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) it was expected to raise parent's participation for the quality education and overall development of the school. In this school the PTA formation was a formality and as a result was inactive. No training or support was provided to help them understand or meet their role and responsibilities. Parents felt little attachment towards the school and for several years nothing had improved. The number of out of school children was high (more than 56 % were not in school) in school's catchments area due to lack of awareness towards the importance of education.

Child Welfare Society, the Brighter Futures NGO partner selected the school for support in 2004. Training was provided to strengthen the PTA and SMC along with community mobilization. Over time the impacts of the effort have been:

- **Grade Teaching Replaces Subject Teaching** - In this school subject teaching was started in grade one but after training grade teaching was introduced. In subject teaching, the teacher has not



enough time to get to know each child and their learning needs. In grade teaching, the teacher can stay full time in a single class that helps to build good rapport with the students and makes it easier to create a child friendly teaching- learning environment in the classroom.

- **More Children in School** - The number of out of school children in school's catchments area declined rapidly. Of 47 out of school children 28 were enrolled as a result of organizing door to door visits and distributing invitation cards to parents for the children's school enrollment at the beginning of the school year.
- **Reduced Dropouts Grade Repetition** - One of the major achievements was to reduce the drop out and class repeaters rate to zero in grade one whereas the national rate for the same years was 38 % drop out rate in grade one.
- **Improved Physical Infrastructure and More Teaching Learning Materials** – Through the efforts of the PTA and SMC Active participation the school has managed to establish and expand a library mobilizing support from World Education/Unicef and later Room-to-Read program. The school now has a dedicated library room being used by students for class and in their leisure time. The school also managed additional rooms by accessing support from other organizations and through its own fundraising efforts.
- **Income Generation to Support the School** – In the past the school relied heavily on school fees. With matching support from Brighter Futures the school bought five rickshaws investing NRs 47,000. The income from the rent of these rickshaws is Rs 2,625 per month. This income is used for a teacher's salary and provides scholarships to 4 students which it is planned to expand to more students.
- **Improved Participation and Governance**- The PTA and SMC meet regularly and there is much more engagement of parents in the school management and activities. Parents, teachers and the Principal all say that now there is much more community ownership of the school. Now that everyone feels concerned about the school it is getting more help to improve and meet the student's needs.



Welcome To School Campaign

At the start of Brighter Futures, most local NGOs and UNICEF were heavily focused on enrolling children in nonformal education and then later mainstreaming them to formal school. Follow-up studies found many did not continue in school. In 2003, when the Department of Education, UNICEF and World Education decided to tackle the issues of quality education together, the first step was to identify best practices. It was found that school enrollment campaigns were being done at a local level in individual schools and were very effective. It was decided to scale these up. The Welcome to School Campaign started in a small way in 2003 in priority VDCs and districts where UNICEF



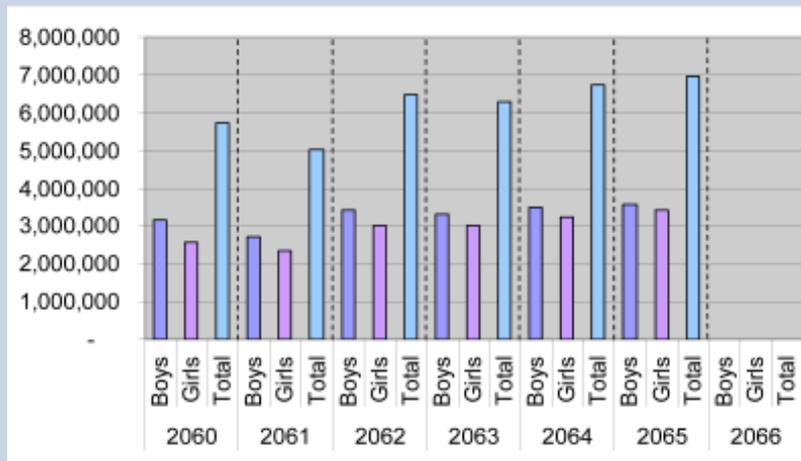
and World Education were working with District Education Offices. These schools were particularly affected by conflict at that time with schools constantly being closed by *bandhas* and/or parents removing their children due to fear. In the districts that held Welcome to School campaigns, this trend was reversed and was so successful that in 2063 (2005), the government decided to make this a nationwide campaign.

The results were astounding. In one year more than 500,000 additional new children enrolled and an equal number who would have dropped out stayed in school. Schools across the country were bursting at the seams. The government, other donors, INGOs, NGOs and communities all responded and, despite dire predictions, these children stayed in school. New classrooms were built, additional teachers hired, even extra early childhood education classes were funded along with more textbooks and scholarships.

The Welcome to School campaign is now a nationwide effort. Posters, brochures and invitation cards are distributed. Schools do door-to-door visits, perform



street dramas and hold welcome programs. This mobilization at the school level was helped along by liberalization of the policy requiring birth registration, generous scholarship provisions and a commitment to provide additional teachers, Early Childhood Development centre allocations and classrooms where high enrollment resulted. Six years later, the impacts are clear with 1.9 million more children attending school. In 2008, 6.9 million children attended primary and secondary schools. While many quality issues remain, the fact is that more children are getting a basic primary education than ever before despite years of war. Net enrollment at the primary level is now at more than 91%.



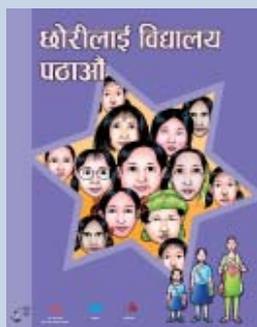
Total Enrollment Grades 1 – 10 Source – MOES Flash Data

Today, there are almost as many girls as boys making their way to school neatly turned out in sky blue blouses and dark blue skirts clutching a large pile of tattered textbooks and notebooks. Not only did Welcome to School bring more children in to school, it dramatically increased the numbers of girls in school. Gender parity shifted from 75 girls to 100 boys in 2002, to 96 girls to 100 boys in 2008.

As Nepal works to address inclusion of all groups, those still left out of school are from the poorest families or hard to reach populations - Muslim communities; remote hill communities with limited access to schools; conservative Madeshi communities in the eastern and central Terai; the poorest of the poor; children in child labor, and Dalit communities that historically suffered from discrimination. The challenge now is to see to it that all Nepal's children get the education they deserve for as long as they can continue in school.



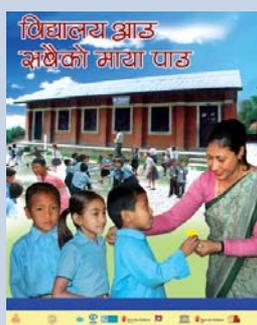
Welcome to School – Timeline



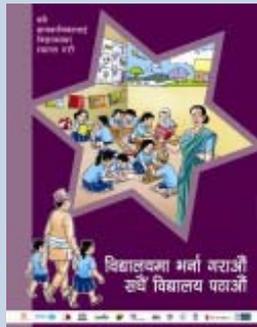
Welcome to School 2061 – Small piloted efforts scaled up for focused efforts to enroll girls in priority UNICEF and World Education supported districts. Campaign results in dramatic increases in enrollment of girls. School system sees 315,774 additional students enroll with districts like Saptari crediting the campaign with enrolling an additional 10,000 children. Numbers attending school continue to drop in conflict-affected districts.



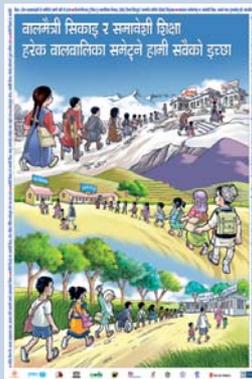
Welcome to School 2062 – With the success of the previous years campaign the government makes campaign nationwide effort. DANIDA provides extra support. Campaign focuses on getting Dalit, Janajati and the economically poor into school. The MOES compliments this with extra scholarships and guarantees of support to build classrooms and provide teachers. An additional 400,000 children enroll or re-enroll and attend school straining the system at the seams. The system struggles to cope but manages to keep most new enrollees in school.



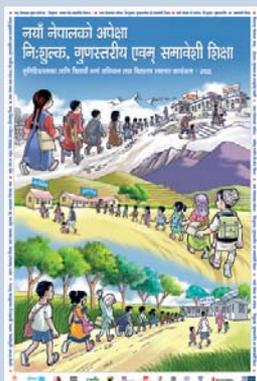
Welcome to School 2063 – Overwhelmed by the success of the first nationwide campaign government commits to continuing holding nationwide campaigns until the EFA goals are met. Many more organizations get involved in supporting the campaign and the focus shifts to most needy VDCs in priority districts and on retaining those enrolled in 2062. The campaign continues to enroll high numbers in Terai districts but hill districts focus more on keeping children in school and going on to higher grades.



Welcome to School 2064 – The focus shifts to not just getting children enrolled but to encouraging them to attend school regularly. Child friendly Grade One classrooms are promoted and there is a greater effort to reduce the bottleneck in Grade One. The campaign results in more children in school with fewer in Grade One as had been hoped.



Welcome to School 2065 - Addressing inclusion all ethnicities, castes, socio-economic conditions and the disabled is seen as the need of the nation. The campaign also encourages retention and to reduce the number of underage children in Grade one. Schools enroll underage children and the government then increases the provision of ECD to schools with sufficient children in this category.



Welcome to School 2066 - Campaign efforts are concentrated in Terai districts with large numbers out of school. Extra government, UNICEF and World Education support are provided in Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusha, Mohattari, Sarlahi, Rautahat and Bara of the Terai and Bajhang and Bajura districts of the Far West. Campaign efforts see the active participation of many Madeshi groups.



Improving Governance

To mobilize parents to form and engage in a Parent Teacher Association, Brighter Futures' NGO partners first met with parents and teachers and then held mass meetings in the schools. Once there was a broad consensus to form a PTA, discussions were held for community representation desired on the PTA. Factors that affected the make up of a PTA included: representation by geographic area of the school catchment areas, concern about equal ethnic and caste representation, engagement of women, and representation by grade level so as to ensure good co-ordination and support from all classes parents. Schools with just a primary level tended to form smaller committees whereas schools with both primary and secondary levels formed larger committees to mobilize more parents. According to the government's decentralization of education, the executive committee for PTAs is restricted to 11 members but many schools also form special committees for construction projects, school



lunch management or special events like school concerts or sports days. To help improve the governance and management of schools World Education provided training, mini-grants and on-going technical support throughout the program period to strengthen a number of aspects: community participation in democratic election or selection process for improved representation and accountability; fiscal management with greater resource management and transparency; and preparation of School Improvement Plans.

Community Participation in Democratic Elections

Over eight years Brighter Futures supported 713 schools to form a PTA. During the second phase from 2006-2009 many more schools were found to have an official PTA but these had usually been formed without proper community involvement and without any training as to their roles and responsibilities. To help schools promote more democratic and inclusive PTAs training was provided on their roles and responsibilities and the correct formation processes. As a result of the 225 new schools supported in Phase II, 205 of 225 schools had the active participation of parents and community members in process. This included madrassas supported by the program. Many school communities preferred to reach a consensus on candidates rather than an election process in the conflict and later post-conflict situation of this period.



Election Versus Selection Process

Under education decentralization, the two governance bodies are the School Management Committee and the Parent Teacher Association. The law provides for two alternative formation processes. An election can be held with all parents and teachers voting, or the candidates can be finalized through a consensus process. In many schools there are problems with “elite capture” of School Management Committees. Village elites from upper castes, influential families, or politicians seek election effectively excluding actual student parents or disadvantaged groups from participating. Many do this for reasons of social prestige, political exposure or to “capture” the schools resources for personal gain. Once on the School Management Committee there have been problems with members hiring relatives and creating unnecessary positions for peons and other staff and then charging poor parents unnecessary fees to pay salaries.



Most of these committee members do not send their own children to these public schools but send their children to private schools. As a result they have little stake in the educational performance of the schools. Making a provision for elections gives parents the chance to change school committees, but election processes are usually done by a show of hands. This discourages poor parents from resisting the pressure of dominant groups. At school elections many community members without a direct stake in the school turn up to vote. Even PTA positions are highly sought after and now many candidates are self appointed “guardians” - not actual parents or teachers. Some communities have a history of democratic elections in a range of community organizations and so their school governance bodies are democratically elected but others perpetuate a system dominated by certain groups or families.



School Finances

A lack of school funds is the major constraint for schools to improve quality and to reduce the cost of education. The government of Nepal has gradually been increasing the funding for public schools. At the start of Brighter Futures, a typical government school supported under the project was getting Rs.12,000 in addition to teacher salaries each year. Many supported schools had insufficient teachers allocated from government funding and from 2008 under per capita funding provisions will be provided with additional budget to hire directly. Each year the government has been allocating additional teachers and new buildings are being constructed. However many schools are still forced to charge fees to be able to pay teachers salaries and make the upgrades necessary to enable students to compete with those in private schools. To address school finances Brighter Futures worked with UNICEF and the government to develop and use quality education modules that improved school accounting, income generation, fiscal planning and social audits.

Income generation

While budgets have recently increased, many schools need to generate their own income, if they are not to charge fees. To help schools invest in quality improvements and reduce fee barriers for poor students, Brighter Futures helped PTAs develop income generation activities. PTAs developed proposals for income generation and school investments and were provided with in-kind grants (of materials, supplies etc) to get started. Schools undertook a wide range of income generation activities depending on their environment, skills, and local resources. These included fish farming, rental of rickshaws, rental of small shops, agro-forestry, rearing livestock, commercial vegetable crops, selling stationary, and holding special religious events to raise funds. These schemes have generated



varying levels of funding with the most successful generating more than Rs 2,00,000 in a year and the more modest schemes Rs. 2000-3000 a month. The income earned has been invested in maintenance, physical improvements, adding classrooms and toilet blocks, improving water supplies, paying additional teachers, adding books to school libraries, providing stationary and scholarships to needy students and purchasing teaching-learning materials. These schemes have not only generated much needed funds but have made parents and communities more aware of the schools finances and expenses and have created a greater ownership and commitment.



Unity For Progress !

Nepal Rastriya Secondary School in Mohammadpur VDC, Bardiya district was established in 1964 with a thatch-roofed house. After constructing a building of four rooms it was upgraded to the lower secondary level. At that time, the SMC, PTA and the community faced a financial crisis as to how to pay for the teachers and for other expenses. Brighter Futures NGO partner - Tharu Women Upliftment Center - encouraged them to form a Parent Teacher Association and provided training in May 2003. This resulted in a PTA committed to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

All the stakeholders (PTA, SMC, teachers, students and parents) of the school unanimously decided to start an income generation project to support the school. To get started they raised Rs.15,000 from the families in the school's catchment area and World Education matched this. The income generation activities chosen were to rear pigs and goats and grow mustard and musuro (a kind of pulse). Over the next two years the school earned an income of Rs.55,960 from the profits and has an ongoing income stream.

With a strong unity and success of the income generation efforts the stakeholders decided to upgrade the school to the secondary level 2004 - the only secondary school in the VDC. The community applied for the "Management Ownership" of the school in April 2005, and constructed a building of two rooms with the money raised and the school ownership was formally handed over to them by the District Education Office.



Today, the school has seven pig worth Rs.25,000 and 21 goats worth Rs. 30,000. With the income, the school is distributing scholarships to students on a merit basis. The school is now planning to expand the scholarship program to reach the marginalized, disadvantaged and Dalit students and improve the quality of teaching-learning by providing training to the teachers to improve their teaching skills in a child-friendly way and appointing new teachers as well, if necessary.



Social Audits

Many of the schools had poor record keeping and parents were distrustful of how schools were using the funds available. This distrust made them reluctant to support the school financially. Brighter Futures Program efforts to increase transparency through social audits helped schools build a better relationship with parents. As school budgets grew the government realized the need for this process and has now made social audits mandatory. From the 2066 (2009) fiscal year a proper external financial audit of schools is also being required.

School Planning

Every government school is required to have a five year School Improvement Plan. Too often these have been developed by head teachers with the help of a few School Management Committee members. As a result most parents and community members were not aware of what was in the plan nor were they supportive to implement the plan. To engage parents more participatory assessments were done of schools involving parents, students, teachers and community members. These schools assessments identified a range of issues faces schools. Some were physical, especially poor classroom conditions with bad lighting, insufficient furniture, cramped conditions poor ventilation or poor toilets, a lack of drinking water or no playground environment. Others were to do with financial management, student-teacher ratios, inappropriate school calendars resulting in to few teaching days, or many children being out of school.

Another problem was the poor attendance by both students and teachers with high absenteeism interrupting learning and contributing to high failure and repetition rates, often followed by students dropping out of schools. PTAs brought teachers and parents together to discuss ways to improve the schools and to develop the 'School Improvement Plan'. Recognizing and addressing the number of days the schools stays open and getting students and teachers to attend regularly and on time was one of the greatest successes for PTAs. This improved attendance resulted in improved pass and promotion rates, reduced congestion and overcrowding in the junior grades with a better spread of students across grade levels. In the Brighter Futures Phase II – 206 of the 225 supported schools developed a new updated School Improvement Plan including 14 *madrassa* schools.



Mainstreaming Madrassas

Muslim boys are heavily engaged in child labor in the Terai region of Nepal and many are sent to India to work. Many Muslim communities are relatively under-served by government schools. This scarcity of schools coupled with a preference by many Muslim families for schools that integrate religious education has led to the growth of *madrassa* schools. Many of these schools though only offer the basic grades and boys then join the work force after just two or three years schooling.

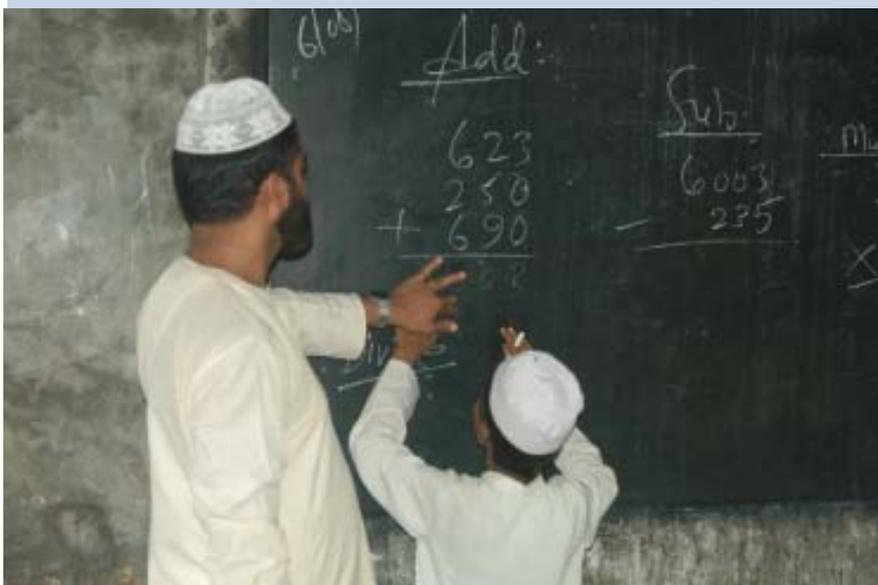
Muslim leaders in Banke district approached World Education seeking help to improve the quality of education that they can offer and to mainstream their *madrassas* into the national education system. With the help of the Islamic Schools Association and UNESCO Club Banke – Brighter Futures NGO partner – a small effort was initiated.



Principals - the *maulana* or heads of the *madrassas* from 25 *madrassas* in Banke were supported with training to form a PTA and develop a School (or *madrassas*) Improvement Plan. Follow-up meetings brought together government officials, District Education Officers, UNICEF and representatives of *madrassas* from Bardiya, Kapilbastu and Rupandehi. Representatives from the *Islamic Sang* also attended because they play a role in determining role *madrassa* registration and integration in to the national education system. At



the meetings, the advantages and disadvantages of registering at the District Education Office for national recognition were discussed. Muslim women representatives also took part in the meetings.



By 2007, 70 Madarasas were registered with three Madarasas left to register in Banke District. These schools now receive free textbooks, scholarships and School Improvement funds from the government. Currently, the government is working to provide a teachers quota that all community schools are entitled to.

Many challenges still remain: how to integrate the religious curriculum; how to provide more teachers' training; whether to upgrade beyond the primary level or transition to public schools; how to upgrade the physical infrastructure and many other challenges. Despite these challenges with registration they now have experience with the national curriculum, have started receiving government support, and Muslim communities are mobilized and conscious of the need to upgrade *madrassa* education. The government is also more aware of the education needs and concerns of Muslim communities.



Child-Friendly Teaching-Learning

Children dropping out of school and joining the workforce often cite failing and repeating grades in school, or teachers' attitudes and treatment as reasons for having dropped out from school. Improving the quality of the teaching-learning experience can do a lot to address high failure rates and the lack of a child-friendly classroom environment. A number of program activities contributed to addressing this aspect of education in formal schools.

Promoting Child-Friendly Teaching-Learning Methods

While the better schools in the country make use of modern techniques that are child-friendly, many untrained teachers and those in over-crowded

classrooms resort to traditional rote learning and memorization by students. The Brighter Futures program provided basic orientations to teachers in supported schools to introduce more creative teaching-learning methods. Working with the Department of Education, the National



Centre for Education and Development and UNICEF the “best practices” for teaching-learning in the primary grades were identified and incorporated in to the ‘Quality Education Resource Package’. The techniques introduced included more activity-based learning, use of field trips and experimentation, use of drama, poetry and song, inclusion of local content in the curriculum and use of grade teaching. The Quality Education Resource Package is now being used within the government’s regular in-service teacher training through Resource Centers. Windup radios to enable teachers to access distance education programming were also provided by UNICEF and distributed to 7000 schools across the country including the 713 Brighter Futures-supported schools in



child labor- prone communities. Of the 225 schools supported in Phase II, 206 developed new School Improvement Plans or updated current plans with 185 being able to actively involve parents and community members.

Child-Friendly Classroom Environments

Most of the Brighter Futures supported schools had poor classrooms environments when first supported. Most had fixed benches and cramped conditions. Parents mobilized

by PTAs immediately helped with basic classroom repairs that helped motivate students and teachers. Through efforts with UNICEF and the Department of Education, schools were provided with a basic start-up library (in a tin trunk) and posters and charts to both decorate classrooms and use for teaching-learning activities. However schools found these printed materials



were not very durable in poorly built classrooms. Monsoon moisture caused them to deteriorate quickly. Many schools were able to invest in “wall painting” with schools hiring local signboard painters to paint murals of the alphabet, numbers, world maps, science, English and social studies related content on to walls. Schools also mobilized parents to help make materials to use in math teaching such as games and puzzles. Some schools also applied to Room-to-Read and other donors and were able to access support to add a school library, science lab or computer equipment.

Teacher-Student Ratios and Attendance

The numbers of students per teacher has been very variable across Nepal. Lacking resources, the government has not been able to provide the numbers of teachers needed. This shortage was compounded in many remote area schools, affected by child labor, as teachers were reluctant to be assigned there.



Congestion in the junior grades caused by underage and overage enrollment and high repetition rates compounds this problem. The mobilization of PTAs to address the regular attendance of both teachers and students helped increase the numbers passing and reduced the numbers in junior grades.



Solving the shortage of teachers was more complex. Increasing the fees or forcing parents to make donations was not an option in many of the poorest communities. While the communities advocated for more government teachers many resorted to income generation projects to raise funds for additional teachers. In the 225 schools supported in Brighter Futures Phase II, 136 schools



supported additional teachers through profits from income generation activities. Many of the schools in Phase I that initially provided community support for a teacher were able to get a government supported teacher in subsequent years. As a long-term solution, efforts were made to improve data management and district-level planning to ensure better teacher distribution within districts.



Child Friendly At Last

Shree Shiva Primary School has been declared as one of the model schools of Kanchanpur District. Just a few years ago it didn't even have enough classrooms for each grade. Grade Five students and the staff shared a room. One of the school building leaked, there was dirt everywhere, and cattle were always grazing on the playground. There was no drinking water and no toilets. The classrooms could not be locked leading to the educational and sports materials being stolen. The students attended school without school uniforms and were irregular. The annual promotion rate of the students was very low at 40- 45%.

Getting an active Parent Teacher Association going turned the school around. After Brighter Futures partner BASE started supporting the PTA, all the school stakeholders joined hands to bear the responsibility to improve the school. Three school buildings were constructed; a separate cottage made of bamboo was built for the early childhood development center; Grade one and two were fully decorated with teaching materials made by the students themselves; and quotations of learned people were painted on every wall of the school; a



"Code of Conduct" of parents, students and teachers was drawn up and agreed; and a map of the school catchment's was created and hung in front of the school. The representation on the PTA and SMC was increased and made more inclusive to create greater ownership of the school.

Today, no out-of-school children are found and students' dropout rate is below one percent. The annual promotion rate has crossed 90% and the school is well equipped with a science lab, library, computer, phone electricity and other teaching aids. The school's income generation activity (Vegetable Farming) is helping to meet all the extra expenses and is actively supported by parents. According to the Head Teacher, Mr. Hans Raj Sharma, "We want to show results rather than speak about them" He adds, "World Education and NGO, BASE helped us explore our strength when training our Parent Teacher Association. The efforts of all the teachers, students, parents and community members have transformed their school truly making it a model for child-friendly schools in Kanchanpur.



Education Planning and Data Management

While Brighter Futures was mainly focused in specific communities where children work or originate assisting in developing the capacity of the whole education system was seen as being critical to the long-term sustainability of efforts at the local level. One of the aspects identified by the Department of Education, UNICEF and World Education as being critical to improving the quality of education was improving the planning and response mechanisms at the district level.

Comprehensive data was being collected but was often not accessible to district level staff or too complex for use in regular planning. World Education provided technical assistance to the government, at both the national and district level, to improve district level management of data and to develop district education planning process. As a result simple ways to extract planning information for the school and district levels were developed resulting in annual “microplanning” exercises to prepare annual plans and now to feed in to the new five year District Education Plans.

Another important aspect was to develop School Report Cards so that teachers, parents and the School management Committee can gauge progress against their past performance and that of other schools locally, in the district and nationally. These are shared with schools and are available on the internet at www.doe.gov.np. Making data more accessible and useable increases the ability of the planners at the school, VDC and district level to identify schools in need of help and to ensure that all schools meet minimum standards.





Supporting Capacity Development and Policy

To support the efforts to improve the quality of education in Nepal's schools, and efforts to make schools more inclusive, World Education and its partner NGOs have participated in a number of important policy and capacity building efforts. The most significant of these have been to remove barriers to enrollment (such as requiring birth certificates), liberalizing promotion in the junior grades; facilitating the mainstreaming of *madrassa* schools; and introducing free and compulsory education. The new School Sector reform plan incorporates many of the needed policies.



To help make these policies a reality the Brighter Futures staff have worked closely with its partners in the Department of Education and UNICEF to build the capacity of government counterparts at the school, district, regional and national level through training and technical assistance.

Recently Ministry of Education officials visited Andhra Pradesh in India, to observe efforts to achieve “Free and Compulsory Education” and the use of education to prevent child labor. The team visited bridging centers to see programs preparing school dropouts, out of school children and children removed from child labor for a return to school. They also met with parents, village activists, teachers, local education officials, police and welfare workers to learn how they go about removing working children and reintegrating them in school. This visit was extremely useful for helping the staff of the Department of Education understand and explore future steps needed to achieve continued progress on “Free and Compulsory Education” and the connections between child labor and the education system.



Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- **Mobilization of Communities Around Education** – Communities respond well when encouraged to be more involved in the education system. Through engagement in PTAs, the Welcome to School campaign, school planning and income generation, and Learning Centers they have become very active.
- **Formation of Parent Teacher Associations** - To form successful PTAs real community participation in the formation or election is needed followed by proper orientation and training. Busy parents learn by doing rather than attending long trainings. Mentoring and assistance to actually undertake activities is most effective.
- **NGO Role/Government Role to Promote PTAs** – The government has official policies to promote PTAs but lacks the staff to provide the training and mentoring that is needed. Government staff feel constrained by the large numbers of schools they need to support and the lack of transportation and other resources. NGOs that are very embedded in the community can support PTA development and can effectively mobilize parents, communities and access extra resources for schools. They proved very effective in mobilizing local government funds for repair of buildings, adding toilet blocks and water supplies and advocating for the weakest most neglected schools.
- **Parent Teacher Associations Can Transform A School** – Engaged parents can help resolve long standing issues and energize a school. Trust is built between teachers, School Management Committees, parents and communities that result in action. Being involved in planning and decision making makes them aware of the needs and more supportive of helping raise resources. Being involved in regular monitoring of the school makes everyone more accountable.
- **Networking of Parent Teacher Associations** – To build commitment, local PTA networks play an important role in developing the concepts and policies. These new networks need nurturing to evolve as supportive organizations.



- **Improved Fiscal Management** – Greater transparency around financial decisions and budgets through social audits helps build trust and generates more community support for schools. Parents are more willing to engage in income generation activities to support schools.
- **Scaling Up Nationwide For Impact** - Best practices need to be scaled up for major impact. Working with the government and UNICEF many of these best practices are now in place nationwide. The challenge is to ensure the quality of efforts in all schools to achieve minimum standards.
- **Education Planning** – Development of School Improvement Plans, Village Education Plans and District Education Plans based on quality data will be needed to ensure the weakest schools get the resources and help they need. Ad hoc planning results in many missed opportunities and through participatory planning, many new initiatives to improve schools emerge.
- **Awareness of Child Labor** – Through Parent Teacher Associations, community mapping and Welcome to School thousands of communities across the country have become aware of the children working in their communities or absent because they are in child labor. This has motivated parents and communities to keep children in school and out of child labor.
- **New Education Policies** – Nepal has introduced many new and important policies in education that have reduced barriers for poor children to attend school. Removal of birth certification requirements, “Free and Compulsory” education, recognition of *madrassa* schools and many other policies are helping. Enforcing these policies nationwide will reduce child labor. Further efforts are needed to introduce more liberal enrollment policies for migrating children.



World Education Brighter Futures partner NGOs provided services for

- **children working in private homes**
- **children working as porters**
- **children working in mines**
- **children working in brick factories**
- **children working in the adult entertainment industry**
- **children working in carpet factories**
- **children working in recycling**
- **children working in the transport sector**
- **children associated with armed forces and armed groups and**
- **children at risk of entering child labor**

The Brighter Futures Program is an eight year initiative supported by the USDOL with matching support from UNICEF, WFP and private donors to eliminate child labor through education. Over eight years the project has provided educational and other support to 43,291 children working in the worst forms of child labor in Nepal and 72,140 children at risk.

**Child Labour Status Report 2009
prepared by World Education and its NGO partners**



World Education

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