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Nonformal Education to Address Child Labor

Child Labor Strategies Report 2009



Not being in school puts a child at greater risk of entering child labor. Nepal's net enrollment rates for formal schooling have been rising dramatically and have increased from 60 % in 2002 when the Brighter Futures program started to 91 % in 2009. Of the seven million school age children in Nepal, this still leaves an estimated 630,000 children out-of-school between the ages of 6 to 16. Of these children not in school, many more are girls than boys and most come from the most disadvantaged families and are more likely to be from Dalit or Janajati (ethnic minority) families. These children are more likely to join labor or to already be in child labor compared to those in school.

Historically most out-of-school children had never been to school. This situation has changed dramatically in recent years with many more of the out-of-school children having once been in school and having dropped out. In Nepal, the formal education system is comprised of three levels; primary, lower secondary and secondary. However, children from rural areas as well as urban working children often drop out of school. With no recent census or student tracking, accurate figures are not available. Based on the government's Education Management System and Examination data for 2008, about 19% of the 16 year olds had not completed primary school and a further 22% had dropped out from Grades 6-10. While this is improving each year the numbers of out-of-school and in need of alternative education remain significant.



Traditional nonformal education programs in Nepal were based on the assumption that all out-of-school children had never been to school and all had the same learning needs. This is no longer the case with children now having a range of educational backgrounds. More flexible programs offering a range of levels and approaches are now needed to transition younger children to the formal system and to prepare older children for vocational education.



Nonformal Education For Working Children

The children in child labor that are out of school often need nonformal education even though they are literate and numerate and want to return to school. Many have been out of school for months or years and need to readjust to studying so that when they return to school they enter age appropriate grades and successfully complete those grades. Many of the children have suffered abuse in child labor and need to rebuild their confidence and self-esteem and nonformal education plays an important role is socialization prior to school enrollment. For older children unlikely to return to school many have completed basic school grades but have never related what they learnt in school to their current lives or future life and work plans. For these children more practical life related content and skills are needed to help them improve their current lives and future prospects.

The hours, location and approaches used in nonformal education classes need to be adjusted to meet the needs of children in different work sectors.

Children in domestic servitude are usually too busy in the early mornings, late afternoons and evenings to attend nonformal education classes. For them the middle of the day works best. For girls trafficked into sexually exploitative work the early morning works better as many work in the afternoons and evenings. For some groups of children intensive seasonal approaches are needed such as for porters who are on the road for weeks on end during a work season and need nonformal education during the off season.

In each location an In-depth analysis is needed to determine the learner profiles to select the most appropriate curriculum and program design.





Nonformal Education For Children At Risk

The children at risk of entering child labor are usually living with families in rural communities or urban slums. Many are not in school because of gender discrimination, poverty, dysfunction in the families and lack of awareness about the importance of education. At the start of the Brighter Futures program many more girls than boys were not in school. Older girls are often kept home initially to mind younger siblings and are later sent in to child labor to help support the family. When families have little cash income, sons are given preference and scarce resources are used for a son's education ahead of a daughter's. As girls marry and leave the family home this is seen as a less valuable investment. Huge efforts over recent years have resulted in a narrowing of the gender gap in schooling but regional variations still exist with greater numbers of girls not in school in remote hill communities and in the conservative and impoverished families in the central and eastern Terai. Increasingly there is a poor under-class whose children (both sons and daughters) are not in school. These families are often landless and have some internal problems such as domestic violence, a second marriage, alcoholism, contributing to their children not being in school. These factors are also likely to increase their chances of entering one of the worst forms of child labor or to be trafficked.



As with children already in child labor those at risk also have an increasing array of learning needs. Many have dropped out of school. Another factor complicating provision of alternative education programs is that as more children are in school the out-of-school children are increasingly scattered and more creative approaches are needed to cost-effectively reach these children.

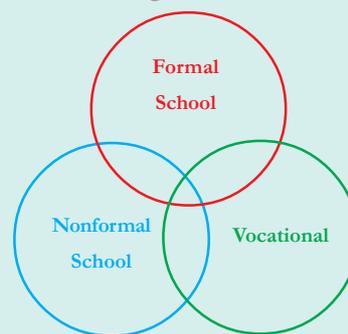


Designing Nonformal Education for Working Children and Children at risk

The children and youth in need of nonformal education have usually dropped out of the primary level grades or have never attended school. A small but increasing percent have dropped out from the high school level and from the 6th, 7th, or 8th grades. Many want to proceed with their education but have no means and resources to access school. These children have different needs and literacy levels. For those working, their work hours often limit the time they can attend programs and the time of day they can attend. Until they are completely withdrawn from child labor nonformal education needs to be adjusted to meet their needs. The two most important variables in the nonformal education program are the choice of curricula and delivery approach. Other factors such as the management, selection and training of facilitators, monitoring and technical support, complimentary activities, such as the provision of access to health services, psychosocial care or recreation, also play important roles and contribute to the success or failure of nonformal education in Nepal.

Matching Learners with Appropriate Curricula

A range of curricula options exist. Nonformal education can use a general curricula to prepare children for entry to the school system while developing literacy, numeracy and life skills. The government's Naulo Behana curriculum is an example of a general curriculum. An integrated curriculum can have a focus on specific content of interest and relevance to the learners. The Lalima curriculum World Education developed for out-of-school girls with a health focus is an example of this. To meet the needs of multi-level learners of different ages are using modular approaches that can accommodate a range of learners with different backgrounds and needs. Jeevan Shiksha curriculum developed by World Education for working children is an example of this. Nonformal education increasingly intersects with formal schooling and vocational education and is less often distinct from these other educational activities.





More nonformal education programs are being linked to formal school. The Flexible Schooling Program uses a condensed package based on the government's school curriculum. Learners using this package can complete the first five years of schooling within three years attending classes for three hours a day. This package can now be used for learners not in school but wishing to complete high school through Grade 10.

Learners in vocational training often need nonformal education to develop the literacy or numeracy skills they need to compliment the practical skills they are learning. Modular approaches offer great potential to help a young boy learning to be a carpenter, to master the math he needs to advance in his profession or a young girl with a small micro-enterprise to develop the business literacy she needs. Under Brighter Futures two curricula were used that used nonformal discovery learning approaches to develop vocations – Farmer Field Schools for agriculture and the Self-employment and Economic Education Program which are discussed in greater depth in the thematic report on vocational training.

The Curricula

The Brighter Futures Program adopted a variety of nonformal education curricula and different delivery for each approach. Nonformal education was the main major 'entry level' intervention for working children and a major strategy for prevention of child labor for children-at-risk. Nonformal classes provided an educational environment for working children, bolstering their literacy skills, reducing their time in the workplace and, eventually, mainstreaming many of them into the formal education system.

During the first year of the Brighter Futures program, two nonformal education curricula were used for both WFCL and CAR. The first, 'Naulo Bihan' ('New Morning') is a government developed curriculum which is used nationwide and which was originally designed to reach out-of-school children, 8-14 years of age. The other curriculum, known as 'Lalima', ('Dawn's Glow') was developed by World Education and targeted out-of-school adolescent girls. While Lalima was still very useful for girls and particularly girls at-risk, neither

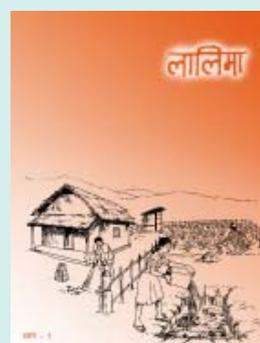


curriculum met the complex needs of mixed groups of working children. UNICEF had developed a curriculum for working children Naya Jeevan but this curriculum had a number of serious defects and needed major revision. It also failed to meet the needs of school dropouts. After extensive discussions with UNICEF and the government, World Education developed a new modular curriculum Jeevan Shiksha. This can be used taking a more flexible approach to learning and suits the interest of both different educational levels and children in different labor sectors.

A total of 59,670 children received the NFE curricula of whom 4% are below 10 years of age, 79% are in the 10 – 14 years age range and 17% are in the 14-17 age range. In terms of the caste/ethnic breakdown, 23% are janjati, 22% Dalit, 18% Tharu, 12% Brahman/Chhetri, 8% Terai caste, 2% Newar and 8% others. As for the child labor sector representation, 49% are at-risk children, 27% are domestic workers, 9% children in carpet factories, 5% porters, 3% brick kiln workers, 2% children in recycling, 1% transportation workers and 1% girls in entertainment.

Lalima - Girls' Access To Education (GATE)

The Lalima curriculum was originally developed by World Education to address the combined needs of adolescent girls for literacy and information on reproductive health issues. The curriculum includes components on literacy, numeracy, reproductive health, migration and awareness about the risks of trafficking. The materials are used in two-hours classes six days a week for nine months.



A total of 33,536 girls received this curricula of whom 3% are below 10 years of age, 81% are in the 10-14 age range and 16% are above 16. In terms of caste/ethnic representation, 22% are Dalit, 20% Janjati, 19% are Tharu, 10% Brahman/Chhetri, 10% Terai caste, 8% Muslim and 1% Newar. In terms of the labor sectors, 73% are at-risk girls, 14% domestic workers, 5% carpet factory workers, porters 3%, Mining 1%, brick kiln workers 1%, transport 1% and recycling 1%.



Naulo Bihan – Government Out-of-School Curriculum

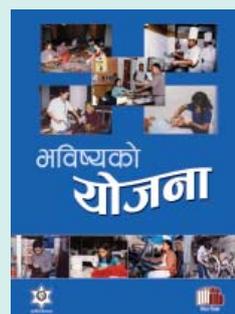
‘Naulo Bihan’ (‘New Morning’) is a government developed curriculum which is used nationwide and which was originally designed to reach out-of-school children, 8-14 years of age. This curriculum is most useful for mainstreaming younger children to school. This curriculum is used for nine months for two hours a day in regular classes.

A total of 3,124 beneficiaries received this curriculum, 81% in the 10 to 14 age range. In terms of the caste/ethnicity breakdown, 21% are Janjati, 18% Dalit, 14% Tharu, 13.4% Brahman/chhetri, Terai caste 7%, Muslim 6%, 3% Newar, and others 19%. As for the labor sector, CAR 40.04%, Domestic workers 43%, porters 5%, Carpet factory workers 5%, brick kiln workers 5%, Mining 2%, , transport 0.1 % and recycling 0.4%.

Jeevan Shiksha (Education for Life) – Modular Curriculum

Jeevan Shiksha was developed as flexible curriculum that could be used for working children that were never schooled or were school dropouts. Designed to accommodate the needs of children with different educational backgrounds and abilities it is divided into three levels- beginner, intermediate and advanced. Content includes health, vocational, and other topics and helps build life skills as well as literacy and numeracy. It is more focused on preparation for children joining the workforce rather than those wishing to join school.

A total of 19,323 beneficiaries received this curriculum. As for the age breakdown, 5% were below 10 years of age, 77% in the 10 – 14 age range and 18% in the 14-17 age range. As for the ethnic/caste breakdown, 26% are Janjati, 24% Dalit, 14% Tharu, 13.5% Brahman/Chhetri, 7% Muslim, 6% Terai caste, 3% Newar and others 6%. As for the labor sector representation, 42% domestic workers, 17% carpet factory workers, 16% at-risk children, porters 7%, mining 7%, brick kiln workers 6%, transportation 3%, recycling 1% and entertainment 1%.





Developing the Jeevan Shiksha curriculum

To develop a modular curriculum, the team first conducted research to find out the needs and aspirations among working children. As part of the needs assessment, the team involved community members to learn about what types of education/skills they think are most appropriate for this target group.

The following stages were part of the needs assessment that was taken for developing the curriculum:

- **Observation visit**– The team visited and observed the target groups, following their daily life routine and discussed with the local NGOs regarding what kind of content will be most appropriate for working adolescent youth.
- **In Depth Discussions**– Discussions with the target group including individual interviews and focus group discussions to find out about their needs and desired knowledge and skills.
- **Implementers Views**– Visits to organizations that provide educational activities to the target group. These included discussions regarding the issues and challenges that they are facing during implementation.
- **Workshops**– Conducting small workshops and discussions with related experts and organizations to discuss the needs of children in the worst forms of child labor.
- **Curriculum Grid**– The team developed the curriculum grid and content and shared it with experts, government and NGO personnel to get their feedback.
- **Pilot Materials Tested and Revised**– The completed materials were piloted in Parbat, Chitwan and Kathmandu. The text book evaluation questionnaires were later collected from the facilitators and revised and finalized based on the feedback.



The Jeevan Shiksha curriculum is being used with two delivery approaches –

1. **Regular Daily Classes** – Learners meet at a fixed time and location for two hours daily.
2. **Open Learning Centers** – uses a center based approach where learners drop in regularly at their own convenience and work in small groups. The Open Learning Centers used the same curriculum but in a more flexible environment. The facilitator guides the children individually according to their interest and keeps the performance record of each child in the program. In one Open Learning Center there might be one group of learners using the basic level to master basic math skills. Another may be working on developing their English skills using intermediate level books while a third group is learning bookkeeping skills to run a small business at the advanced level

A total of 2,944 beneficiaries received this curriculum. A total of 7% were below 10 years of age, 71% in the 10-14 age range and 22% in the 14-17 age range. As for the caste/ethnic breakdown, 33% are Janajati, 23% Tharu, 19% Brahman/Chhetri, 13% Dalit, 5% Muslim, 4% Newar, and 2% Terai caste. As for the labor sector represented; 52% are domestic workers, 7% porters, 6% at-risk children, 5% mining, 5% brick kiln workers, 4% carpet factory workers, 3% transportation, 1% recycling and 1% entertainment.



Flexible Schooling – Open School

This curriculum has been developed by the government and uses a condensed version of the government school curriculum. Learners attending for three hours daily can complete grades 1-5 in three years, grades 6 to 8 in two years and Grades 9 and 10 in one year. This curriculum has enormous potential to enable working children that can not continue in regular school for financial or other reasons to eventually complete high school. The government delivery mode usually requires groups of learners start and end together. Keeping an intact cohort of learners is difficult as the children needing this curriculum tend to migrate heavily.

Bridging Classes - For Transition to School

Classes for nonformal education start at different times depending on when children are identified or start work. High turnover of children in domestic work takes place after the Dasai festival. These children then need to attend NFE classes and be ready for school enrollment by the start of school in April the following year. For children at risk those who have not enrolled in school are identified and start classes in May or June. For those children finishing weeks or months before formal school starts a "bridging program" helps keep

up their motivation and interest to join school and helps them prepare for a higher grade level if appropriate. The Brighter Futures program used the government's flexible schooling curriculum and the English modules from Jeevan Shiksha in Bridging Classes to improve transition to school of NFE graduates.





Best Practices

Matching Programs to Learners Needs

In Nepal, nonformal education is normally offered based on the program. This results in many learners being in classes that use curricula or designs not suited to their needs. One of the most important best practices of Brighter Futures was to first identify and map the working children and children-at-risk in a given community. An individual learner needs assessment including testing was then done to identify the learning needs of the children. Based on this assessment classes were offered for girls only, or boys and girls using the most suitable curriculum.

Class Management Committees – One factor that has a major impact on the success of any nonformal education class is the level of parent and community participation in the management. Community orientations at the planning phase and engagement of parents, employers and community leaders in the Class Management Committee help build a support system for facilitators and learners. Initially Brighter Futures partners were skeptical as to whether they could get parents and employers of working children involved in these committees. Over time these committees have proven to be a best practice. These committees exert social pressure on parents or employers to ensure children attend classes regularly and that they are not constantly missing classes to work.



More women are becoming members of Class Management Committees. Their participation and involvement in NFE classes is gradually increasing. These members play a significant positive role in influencing the community member's opinions and actions towards the benefit of their children's education and future. Class Management Committee members are also helping the class facilitators with house visits in order to encourage regular and punctual attendance in the classes. They are also involved in the process for finding space for NFE classes and motivating parents (especially mothers) to enroll their children in the program.



Regular Involvement of Parents and Employers

Engaging parents and employers on the learners' progress builds recognition and support for a child's right to education. Parents and employers of children who completed the NFE programs are often more involved in the children's school enrollment. They realize that the children are keen to continue their education in a grade appropriate to their age. In addition, children who complete the four, which minimizes school expenses and is more cost effective for the children's parents/guardians.

Engaging Older Learners As Mentors

The facilitators in the Open Learning Centers receive support from older children who function as mentors. These young mentors help to facilitate the classes as during some parts of the day, a large number of children attend the centers at once. Also, these mentors take the lead on facilitating the class themselves in cases when the facilitator is absent. The mentoring responsibilities help to develop these children's confidence and leadership qualities.



A Multi-grade Environment

As the complexity of learning needs grows with children at so many levels in the same community more effective cost-effective approaches are needed. Offering all children a basic nonformal curriculum results in the more advanced learners quickly becoming bored and dropping out. The multi-grade or multi-level approach is more challenging for facilitators but allows children at different learning levels to participate in one learning environment. The more advanced participants are able to help the weaker ones with their studies.



The advanced participants do not need to join the class from its beginning but instead can join at intermediate or advanced levels. After finishing the NFE, the participants can join grades two to six in the formal school system.

The Brighter Futures Experience

Over eight years, the Brighter Futures program worked with 41,900 children in the worst forms of child labor and 72,142 children-at-risk. Younger children in the most hazardous conditions were given a higher priority. As a result, the greatest educational need was for nonformal education in preparation for mainstreaming to school or for vocational education. As the profile of learners change curricula that were once cutting edge become less valuable or meet the needs of fewer learners. In the initial years of Brighter Futures there were large concentrations of out-of-school girls making the GATE curriculum most effective. Over eight years though there have been dramatic increases in the numbers attending formal school. Some districts and remote trafficking prone communities and those with serious gender discrimination still have need of this curriculum. With evolving needs, the Jeevan Shiksha curriculum has proved to be most useful especially for working children, with school drop outs and those at high risk of entering.



Jeevan Shiksha

The Jeevan Shiksha curriculum was completed in the third year of the Brighter Futures program and quickly became the number one choice of curriculum for working children. The curriculum currently includes three levels: The Basic Level is designed for the neo-literate or illiterate children, the Intermediate Level for learners with skills equivalent to grades two and three the Advanced Level for those with grade four or higher skill levels. It usually requires 5.5 months to complete the Basic Level, 3.5 months for Intermediate Level and 5.5 months for the Advanced Level. The Jeevan Shiksha curriculum was used for 22,267 learners.

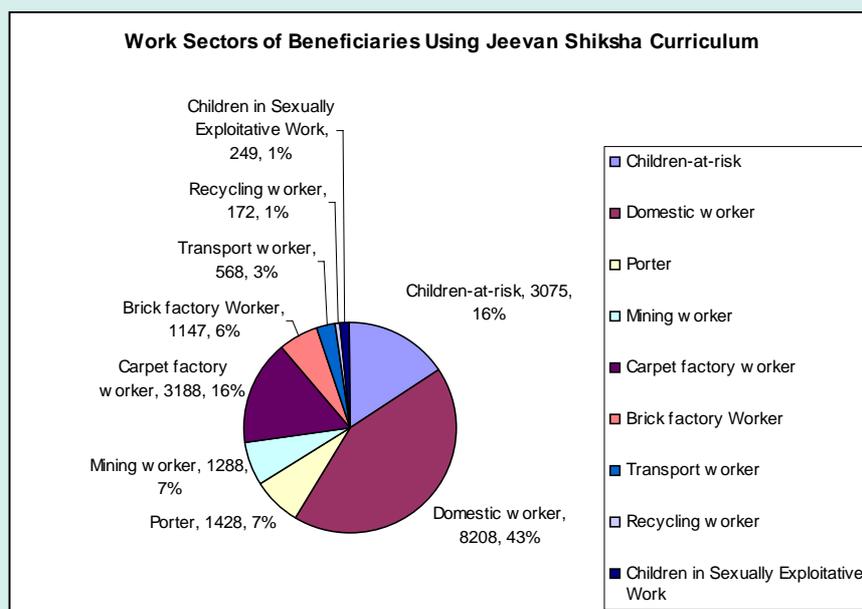


Jeevan Shiksha Through Daily Classes

In all 19,323 (9,752 boys and 9,571 girls) used the Jeevan Shiksha curriculum in regular daily scheduled classes. The majority of beneficiaries were in the 10-14 age group.

Jeevan Shiksha Class Beneficiaries by Age

The Jeevan Shiksha curriculum proved popular in many of the child labor sectors. Children Associated With Armed Forces and Armed Groups were not able to access nonformal education as most were isolated learners in scattered locations. Girls in the hotel and entertainment sector particularly those in massage parlors, were more likely to have never been in school and in need of a program with a more comprehensive basic level.





Ethnicity and Caste

The numbers of children using the Jeevan Shiksha curriculum reflect the proportions of children in child labor. The greatest numbers were children from ethnic minorities (Janajati) with 40% coming from these communities. Tharu children are highly affected by child labor and made up 35% of Janajati participants. Participants from Dalit communities made up 24% of participants with smaller numbers from other groups.

Below 10 yrs		10-12 yrs		12—14 yrs		Above 14 yrs		Total		All Girls and Boys
Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	
347	638	506	518	1039	881b	2389	1138	9571	9752	19323

Participants by Geographic Region

Altogether, the Jeevan Shiksha curriculum was used in 22 districts. The largest number of beneficiaries were in the Kathmandu Valley, followed by Banke, Bardiya, Kaski and Jhapa. Most of the beneficiaries in the Kathmandu Valley were migrant children working as domestic servants or in the carpet factories. In Banke, most of the beneficiaries worked as domestics in bonded labor. Demand for classes or centers grew as facilitators and NGOs became experienced in using a multi-level approach.





District	No. of participants	District	No. of participants
Jhapa	1399	Morang	1102
Sunsari	431	Udayapur	234
Dhanusa	354	Dhading	1099
Valley	3424	Makawanpur	754
Parsa	255	Chitawan	934
Kaski	1401	Myagdi	485
Parbat	565	Baglung	946
Nawalparasi	135	Rupendehi	328
Salyan	198	Dang	1142
Banke	1503	Bardiya	1452
Kailali	306	Kanchanpur	876
Total			19323



"It really is a fun filled and interesting class. The focus was not books but on learning. I am wiser now."

Gita – Thamel Entertainment Worker



Ex-kamalari Sunita's School Wish Fulfilled

For years Sunita labored in other peoples houses and watched with envy as other children went to school. Sunita's parents live on the outskirts of the city in Kanchanpur on a one katha plot of land. The parents work on other's fields on contract and work as daily laborers to support the family of seven. With these earnings it was very difficult for this family to meet their expenses, and Sunita was forced to work as a Kamalari (bonded child worker). While working as a Kamalari, Sunita was identified by BASE, Kanchanpur and enrolled in a Jeevan Shiksha class in the community nearby. Right after the graduation from the NFE class in 2007, Sunita was selected for a scholarship and enrolled in the Laxmi Secondary School in Grade 4. Sunita is now in Grade 6 and is 16 years old. Under the school support program she has received school uniforms, stationery and school admission fees. Right after she got enrolled in the school she withdrew from work as a Kamalari. Impressed with her success, Sunita's parents also have become supportive of her education. If this support continues, Sunita plans to continue her education through Grade 10. Sunita shares her happiness with everybody she comes across. Sunita says, "When I saw other girls going to school, I also dreamt of going to school one day and my dream has come true. For me it's a great opportunity, I will continue my education, and will be a big person. Even though it's very difficult to manage time for education and work, I won't give up." For Sunita being a big person means being a teacher and help educate other children like her. Sunita's mother is also determined to help make her daughter's dream come true.





Jeevan Shiksha Through Open Learning Centers

While nonformal education is one of the more successful strategies to provide an education to working children and gradually remove them from child labor there are a number of challenges. Earning money is the first priority of these children and their parents, while employers usually look for the maximum work from the children. Education is seen as a low priority and the child's right to



education is often ignored. Working children desperately wanting to attend and complete nonformal education classes were often forced to be irregular, absent or discontinue classes even when they were just for two hours a day. Some learners would become disappointed if were unable to meet their own expectations from the class, especially, school dropouts and fast learners forced to read the lessons below their level and capacity. To meet the needs of

children who could not attend regularly, those portering on remote trails or with un-cooperative employers it was decided to introduce a learning center approach. By offering greater flexibility it became more difficult for employers or parents to claim that children "were too busy" to attend and enabled children to attend sessions at suitable times and at suitable levels or grades.

Open Learning Centers aim to serve the learners in three ways:

1. Flexibility in the class time that allows the learners to attend the class at convenient times and be a part of the educational activities as long as their time permits them to do so,
2. Offer curriculum that meets learners' interest matching with their age and learning capabilities, and
3. Create a child friendly learning environment that will encourage children to stay longer, spend more time on learning activities and reduce their working time.



The Centers

Open Learning Centers are generally called "Our Learning Center" by the child participants. Most of the beneficiaries of the centers were children in the worst forms of child labor with most being illiterate when first attending or school dropouts from Grades 1 through 3. Centers stay open for 6-8 hours a day with about 40-50 children attending each day. The center is run by the facilitator and the Center Manager provides technical assistance to the facilitator including supervision of the center. Centers also provide a library and recreational activities as an added incentive to learners to attend and to make centers more child-friendly.

Open Learning Centers were a new approach that are more costly than conventional fixed classes. For this reason they were used where there were concentrations of learners or learners unable to attend fixed classes. In all, 25 centers were run in 11 districts with 14 partners.

Facilitator Training

Facilitators need to be more educated and have more training to cope with a wide range of ages and abilities in an Open Learning Center. Prior to opening a center pre-service training was provided for facilitators. Being a new approach, special attention was given to the training aspect. To start with this required introducing a new concept, multi-age, multi-level and open attendance policies, train facilitators on how to conduct education sessions in more participatory and child-friendly ways, document progress of each child and update it. Facilitators were supported by Center Managers who looked after several centers. As the complexity of issues arising in these centers were greater, in addition to conducting training for the facilitators, more focus was needed on supervision techniques and skills. In-service trainings were also provided for the facilitators to upgrade their knowledge and skills as many continued through several cycles of learners.



Center Management and Community Participation

For the effective and smooth implementation of the center and for getting local support, the partners formed a Center Management Committee (CMC) consisting of 5-7 members. In order to gain community and stakeholders and especially employers and parents trust, Village/Community Orientation meetings were held and at these meetings a CMC was formed. Partners at the local level and World Education staff were responsible for the monitoring and supervision of the centers.

Expected Outcomes for Participants in Learning Centers

- Greater access to educational opportunities for all working children at suitable times based on their educational level and capacity using multi-level/ multi-grade teaching concepts.
- Access library, recreational and other complimentary activities to increase their participation/ involvement helping to reduce their working hours.
- Knowledge and skills to enable them mainstream into formal education.
- Life skills and enhanced creativity to enable them to access different work options.





Strengths of Learning Centers

Learning Centers Become Focal Points For Working Children to Access Services

The Learning Centers developed into focal points for working children and children at risk to access other services. Community members also saw the Learning Centers as recognizable focal points through which they could channel and link other support for the most needy children. In Chitwan, community members supported children and provided clothing and meals on special occasions. NGOs were able to turn these Learning Centers into access points for psychosocial counseling services, referrals to medical care, microfinance meetings, recreation and other activities. Centers were able to work closely with community police reducing harassment of children forced to live on the streets.

Increased Participation in Education

Children in difficult circumstances often find it difficult to attend classes either due to their inability to concentrate, worries about social problems, or urgency to earn a living. As children get used to attending the centre and complete learner modules of interest to them, they gradually increase the time they spend at the centers learning. Being flexible, children in sectors where they work on piece rates, such as in carpet factories or mining, adjust the times they attend to be present with friends at the same level or when the center is busy or quiet depending on their preference.

Hard to Reach Groups More Engaged

Children working in recycling and trafficked girls in commercial sexual exploitation are usually very hard to reach. Learning Centers became important venues at which to interact with friends and NGO staff away from employer and peer pressure. For youth needing to make major changes in their behavior and lives, this creates an important space. Conventional nonformal education classes are less effective in this regard as learners and facilitators tend to gather and depart on a schedule leaving less time for informal exchanges and counseling.



Full-time Facilitators Develop Greater Skills

Facilitators working full-time in the centers gradually develop skills to engage children and promote their learning. Some of the actions taken by facilitators that have contributed to the success of the centers have been;

- Compilations and display of the children's art work stories and poems
- Use of continuous assessment of learners
- Creation of healthy in-house competition among the children related to learning activities
- Use of drama in the center and as outreach in the community
- Display of children's attendance chart in the center to encourage attendance
- Recognition of children with best record for regularity
- Create more opportunities for learners to practice their newly acquired skills through creative writing, artwork and action research.
- Lively Learning Centers also created opportunities through visits and interactions for children to develop valuable life skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving and information collection that help them in many aspects of their lives.



Child protection and Mentoring

The Learning Centers also acted as a motivation for greater child protection efforts by Class Management Committees, Child Protection Committees and Monitor's Committees. These groups acted as both mentors and watch groups monitoring the child labor situation and supporting children to participate in center activities and to completely leave child labor. They also took on different responsibilities like class management, solving disputes among participants, take care of the class in absence of the facilitators and door-to-door visits to collect children when they failed to attend. The children themselves formed Child Support Groups to help one another. Some centers were able to provide ID cards for children attending the center which helped them to access other services as bonafide students in an educational program.



Microfinance

Working children often have relatively good incomes, but poor money management skills and a lack of access to savings institutions prevent them from benefiting from the income. Much of the income is wasted on unnecessarily expensive food items, recreation, cigarettes and alcohol. Through Learning Centers children were able to form self-help groups or join other microfinance programs learning to use their income to improve their life situation, enable them to return to school, start a small business or help their families get out of debt. Microfinance proved to be one of the most valuable complimentary activities with these working children that helped remove them more quickly from child labor.

Learning Achievement and Impact On Working Children

Planning For the Future— Child laborers are usually so concerned with their current situation and survival they have little ability or confidence to think about or plan for the future. Learning centers proved valuable venues through which to work with these children to help them develop ideas and plans for a future beyond child labor. Some decided that a return to school was possible even if they were over age while many others focused on a return to family or joining a vocational program or apprenticeship in a less exploitative field of work.

Development of Self-learning Skills— Participants were found to be more actively involved in learning activities using multi-level teaching approach. They were encouraged to learn by themselves and with each others help and through peer learning. These self-learning skills will be especially important for children once they migrate or return home.

Acquisition of Literacy and Numeracy and Life Skills – Participants that had not been able to attend regularly in other programs were able to gain valuable literacy and numeracy skill such as reading, writing





and simple math. These gains were measured through a continuous assessment process that marked milestones and tested regularly. Children also developed their creative skills and life skills.

Behavior Change – Learning Centers increased participants knowledge on good health habits. Being in a supportive environment to which they wanted to "belong" helped participants change behaviors that were unacceptable and develop better personal hygiene. Children in recycling work have the greatest difficulty due to the nature of the work and the social environment of the street which discourages them from changing their life style.

Issues and Challenges For Open Learning Centers

Creating long-term facilities in the community is challenging and expensive and as a result most nonformal education programs are transitory in nature. Also, as programs for children succeed the numbers needing the programs decline as children join school or vocational programs. In rural areas Community Literacy Centers are being established in some communities which could integrate more programming for out-of-school children and older working children. In town centers there is likely to be an ongoing need for centrally located Learning Centers. These could be more multi-purpose centers for youth that incorporate a room for an Open Learning Center. Some of the main issues and challenges that emerged for these centers were:

Sustainability of the Center – The centers were supported through project funding. Ideally these centers for working children and youth need support through government education budgets, local government or have income generation activities such as income from a shop or computer center that can help meet rent and staff costs.

Motivation Of the Hardest To Reach Children – Learning centers can quickly become busy and have large numbers of learners. NGOs running centers need to stay focused on reaching the children in the worst forms of child labor and the most exploited children. These children are most likely to become irregular and drop out.

Finding Appropriate Locations – Many NGOs have great difficulty finding an appropriate room for a Learning Centre at an affordable price. Working children usually cannot afford the time or money to commute to a centre.



Prime locations are usually expensive. In addition many landlords are reluctant to have migrant working children coming in and out of their buildings for security reasons. Greater efforts to create rooms connected to schools or local government buildings or youth club premises are needed.



Staffing – Most centers have 60 learners attending regularly which is enough to warrant a fulltime facilitator but not enough to justify two full-time staff. As numbers of children peak at certain times or facilitators get ill or need leave, keeping the centers open six days a week is challenging. Strategies for greater mobilization of volunteers, or combining centers with other services so staff can share responsibilities are needed. Facilitators often have learners wanting to

improve their English for transition to school or better employment but most facilitators are weak in this aspect and need more training. More advanced training in also needed for Center Managers.

More Materials and Activities –More Child-Friendly – If there are limited materials for the numbers of learners it is difficult to make learning sessions child-friendly. If this happens facilitators use more traditional methods. Increasing the number and variety of teaching materials, library, art and recreational materials is costly. First Aid kits were also needed as many children would turn up at centers with injuries. Some centers were able to provide kits but others had to send learners to local government health services.

Seasonal Centers – Most working children need centers that are open year round. However children in seasonal work in mining and brick factories need seasonal options.

Discreet Centers for Trafficked Children in Sexually Exploitative Work – The Brighter Futures project used matching USAID support to provide extra centers with girls in the adult entertainment industry. These girls need separate Learning centers as they are unable to interact freely with other working children due to their situation.



Active Management – The most successful Open Learning centers have active Center Management Committees. In centers where the committees were not so active it was more difficult for the facilitators to get the support they needed or to attract the extra needed resources.

Financial Support – Full-time centers with a range of activities are more expensive than conventional NFE classes. NGOs feel greater budgets and more staffing are needed. Balancing the increased against the limitations of fixed locations and fewer centers for access needs to be done on a case by case basis.

Suggested Improvements

NGO staff and child learners became very attached to their Learning Centers and have many suggestions for improvements. These include:

- Provide more stationery and materials
- Provide snacks for learners so they can stay longer in the centers
- Have at least two facilitators
- Change training content
- Provide more orientation for Center Management Committee (CMC) members on Learning Centers and their roles and responsibilities
- Keep Learning Center open long-term or more closely time center opening months to baseline surveys of working children
- Keep expanding module choices at all levels
- Provide support for formal schooling at least for three years or vocational training as incentives for course completers

Open Learning Center Outcomes

In total 2,944 children attended Open Learning Centers using the Jeevan Shiksha curriculum and other complimentary activities. Of them, the majority were children in the worst forms of child labor with 2,755 children- 1,516 child domestic workers, 511 children in recycling, 193 child porters, 127 carpet factory workers, 97 in the adult entertainment industry, 21 transport workers and 189 children-at-risk. A total of 35% (1,024) children were below 12 years of age and 65% (1,920) were above 12 years of age.

"I am studying in the school now, and I want to start a garage of my own in future."
– Raja Shaha, Jeevan Shiksha graduate



The majority of the beneficiaries came from 10-14 years age group followed by above 14 age group. This reflects the fact that the largest numbers of child laborers and most exploited fall in the 10-14 age group. The younger learners are desperately interested in acquiring foundation skills to mainstream to formal education. Older children are looking for skills to use for future vocational pursuits. The Brighter Futures program discouraged the enrollment of children below 10 years so that Learning centers do not turn in to a substitute for the formal education system. However NGO partners found children under 10 out of school and either working or at high risk with no other options available. Often school enrollment was closed for months to come and the centers were the only option and as a result 7% of children were under 10. The number of children above 14 years age shows the children's interest and need for education with 21% of learners in this age range. Even though they were older few objected to being in classes with a range of ages.

Below 10 yrs		10—14 yrs		Above 14 yrs		Total		
Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Grand Total
98	121	1036	1065	411	213	1545	1399	2944





The Open Learning Centers were most effective for child domestic workers and children in recycling work. Most Open Learning centers were located in urban centers. Child porters from remote areas dropped in and used centers on visits to town with loads. These children from scattered communities had no alternative access to education in their communities. As any other NFE approach this approach failed to bring in many children from the transport sector. These children start early in the morning and work in to the evening and are constantly on the move. This approach attracted a few of these children but is unlikely to be able to reach many learners unless evening hours are extended. For girls working in entertainment sector especially girls working in massage parlors this approach seemed good and learners appreciated being able to access education and other services through the same center.

As with all child labor the largest numbers of participants were Janajati (55%) with 40% of Janajatis being Tharu mostly in domestic work. Dalit children made up 13% of participants with 195 from Brahmin/Chettri, 5% Muslim and others also attending.

Open Learning Centers were run in 12 districts. The largest number of centers was in the Kathmandu Valley where there are also the largest concentrations of child laborers. Dang also had high participation in centers as this district still has significant child labor issues.

No. of participants by Geographic Region

Districts	No. of participants	Districts	No. of participants
Jhapa	190	Udayapur	78
Vallley	1293	Makawanpur	63
Chitwan	105	Kaski	69
Myagdi	52	Salyan	146
Dang	586	Banke	60
Bardiya	115	Kanchanpur	185
Total			2944



Moving On With Life

Jit Bahadur Lama lost his father to an illness. His mother remarried, and he moved to the streets of Hetauda, the nearest town. For almost a year he scrounged food and earned a little money here and there doing odd jobs, recycling plastic and bottles and occasionally snatching food from busy restaurants and living under the bridge.

Jit Bahadur eventually found his way to the Learning Center where his friends were taking classes. At first he was so difficult, the teacher kept making him leave. What caught Jit Bahadur's attention was the way everyone else was learning math and about money. Gradually he settled in to the class. Over the following months Jit Bahadur started to save money and take better care of himself. The NGO then helped him to get an apprenticeship at a local garage. Jit Bahadur is excited with the skills he has learned in the class and the apprenticeship is helping him to gain the skills he needs to get work as a mechanic one day.





Lalima and the GATE – Girls Access To Education Program

Despite nonformal literacy and formal education efforts in Nepal, the need for special efforts for girls remains great especially in the Terai districts. Many families and especially certain ethnic groups of the Terai give a low priority to educating daughters. Despite progress a larger percent of the children not in school are girls. The reality in rural Nepal is that many girls do not have time or freedom to attend school for 6 to 8 hours each day. Girls are often forced to stay at home to care for younger sibling, fetch water and firewood, cook meals and do other household chores. Girls in this situation are often frustrated and so are more vulnerable to trafficking or to be forced in to child labor or child marriage.

Formal education for girls is still not a priority in many Nepali communities, where educating boys is seen as more important and ultimately more profitable to families. Some, who better understand the importance of educating girls, prefer to send them to nonformal classes. In 1998, World Education recognized the need to specifically target this large number of out-of-school girls to provide an age-appropriate education program for adolescent girls and to change community attitudes to girls education. The Lalima curriculum was designed for use within a approach called Girls Access to Education that linked nonformal education with mobilization of mothers and communities. The Lalima curriculum has a strong health focus with reproductive health issues and trafficking being addressed. This content has a particular appeal to young adolescent girls denied access to other learning opportunities and faced with life changes and the prospect of an early marriage and child rearing.

The GATE curriculum uses an integrated literacy approach aimed at supporting the educational growth and healthy development of adolescent girls.

" We could express ourselves in our Learning Center. We could show our talents and exchanged views on different topics."

Sita – Entertainment worker Kathmandu



*"After completing school education,
I will be a teacher"*

Kavita is 13 years old, and few people seeing this energetic and smart Grade 5 Kathmandu student would guess at the challenges she has faced to get there. Although small in height for her age, and older for her grade level, she had already 'lived' a lot. To reach to this grade, Kavita had to struggle a lot. Her mother was ill and had leg problems while her father was unsupportive. Kavita and her mother joined a carpet factory to earn a livelihood for their family of five. While working at the carpet factory, Kavita met the Open Learning Center facilitator and with her help enrolled. There she gained the foundation skills she needed and was then able to enroll in grade 3. Kavita is keen to continue her studies at any cost and be a "miss" - the popular name for women school teachers. For Kavita her facilitator is a role model and she wants to be just like her and educate other children like herself. Kavita is interested in drawing and in different games. Kavita's mother says "I feel sorry for my daughter. Due to my health problem I can not work for the whole day and do more for her, but I wish to educate my daughter to be a teacher."





Over nine months, A nonformal education program provides them with foundation skills while simultaneously building their knowledge, skills and healthy attitudes on issues of personal health, child rights, and safety and protection from sexual exploitation, and abuse. As cases of trafficking of girls (internal and external) are on the rise and girls of this age are most prone to trafficking, this program also aims at protecting the girls from being trafficked. For this purpose special supplementary packages were developed with support from USAID on trafficking and safe migration.



The GATE Program has been designed for girls aged 10 – 14 years and include those who have never had the chance to enroll in school as well as those who have dropped out of school during the first years of primary school. The classes were mainly provided under Brighter Futures for girls at risk of being

trafficked or ending up in domestic servitude though some girls from other work sectors also benefited from classes. Every effort is made to help girls smoothly transition into formal school or to link them with vocational training and livelihood development activities. This kind of link is critical for the future of adolescent girls, as the overall goal is to enable them to develop life skills that can have a sustainable impact in their live encompassing literacy and numeracy skills, self-confidence, knowledge of health and safety issues, as well as livelihood development skills.



GATE Strategy

1. **Village Orientation Program (VOP)** – to inform stakeholders, the community, parents and girls about the program and get their support.
2. **Class Management Committees (CMC)** – are formed to get parents, local leaders, social workers, ward representatives and girl-participants to support the class. CMCs help mobilize communities to provide space to run class, motivate parents to regularly send their daughters to the class, protect classes from outside disturbance and help graduates enroll in school, as well as participating in regular monitoring and supervision of the class.
3. **Selection and Training of Facilitators** – Identify a motivated female facilitator acceptable to the community and provide quality training and support.
4. **Regular Class Visits by Supervisors For Technical Support** – each class is visited by local supervisors twice a month; Class Management Committees, partner NGO personnel and World Education program staff also visit regularly.
5. **Intergenerational Activities** – Inter-generational activities are organized where girls interact with their family members, especially with mothers, Sisters-in-law and sisters about different issues that they have learnt in the class. Mostly, they discuss puberty, menstruation, consequences of early marriage, early pregnancy including the age of marriage and child birth, effects of discrimination on girls and trafficking of girls for prostitution.
6. **Assessment and Reporting** – Learners' progress is assessed regularly and all beneficiaries are tracked and records are updated. Regular class reports are submitted to identify and resolve issues and challenges.
7. **Monitoring and Evaluation** – This take place at different levels to help measure the progress, and assess the impact and sustainability of the GATE program. Regular monitoring and supervision visits are complemented by regular stakeholder meetings at the community and district levels. Review meetings include representatives of DEO, DHO, and other local stakeholders including CMC representative and participants.
8. **Support For Graduates** – Girls able to join school are supported to enroll and older girls are linked to vocational programs in the community wherever possible.



Specific Objectives of the GATE Program

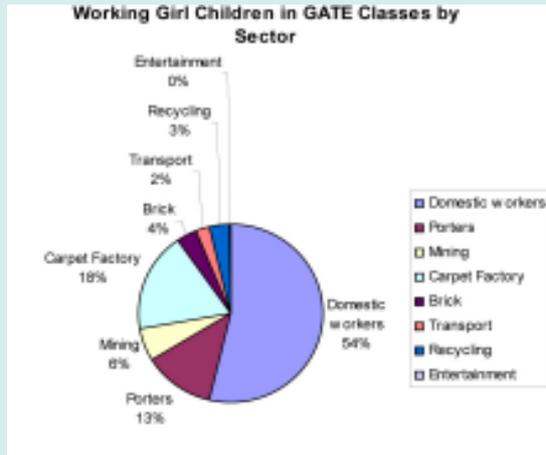
- To provide out-of-school adolescent girls with the opportunity to become literate, so as to expand their options and opportunities in life. To motivate adolescent girls to enroll in school through development of literacy skills.
- To provide access to age-appropriate health education to enable adolescent girls to make informed decisions about marriage, healthy living and timely use of health services (including family planning)
- To raise girls' awareness about girl trafficking, child labor, HIV&AIDS and other risks, and to empower girls to take appropriate preventive actions.
- To work closely with local NGOs and the Ministry of Education's district level offices (DEO) to help GATE graduates join the formal school system at an age appropriate level.

Use Of the GATE Program and Lalima Curriculum by Brighter Futures

Brighter Futures supported 33,536 children to participate in GATE classes. Of them 9,022 were girls in the worst forms of child labor and 24,514 were out-of-school girls at-risk of entering child labor or of being trafficked. Use of the GATE approach was seen as a cost-effective way of reaching large numbers of girls at greatest risk of being trafficked or becoming domestic servants. Most of these girls were from poor families while others belonged to certain communities and ethnic groups that because of social factors and gender discrimination were considered vulnerable. Among the 33,536 girls

large numbers were 10 – 14 years of age and a significant percent were Dalit girls (7525 girls – 22%). Of the working children the greatest numbers were child domestic workers. Although NGOs discouraged the enrolment of girls under 10 years of age in the program 908 girls were enrolled due to a lack of other immediate options for these girls.

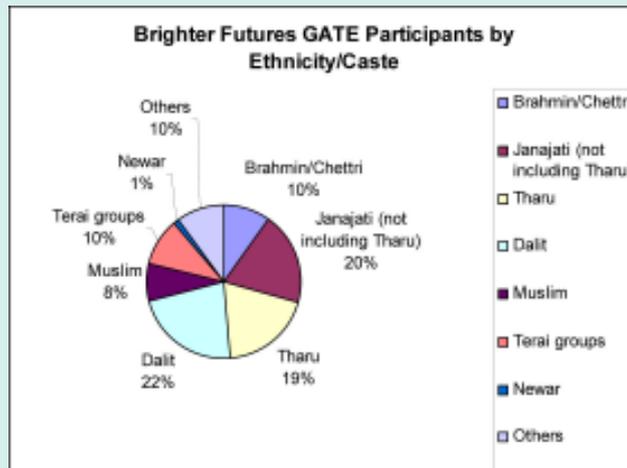




Sector-wise, girls working as domestic laborers made up the largest group of child laborers that were GATE participants (4830), followed by girls working in the carpet factory (1625), porters (1148), and mining (535) with small numbers in other sectors.

Caste and Ethnicity

To run GATE classes all the out-of-school girls are identified in the community. Within a few years it is hard to find sufficient girls for a class as more and more attend school. The caste and ethnicity of the girls largely reflects the districts but is a good indicator of which communities still have large numbers of girls out of school. Of the girls identified and enrolled by Brighter Futures the data shows large numbers of girls belong to the Dalit and Tharu communities as well as other Janajati groups with smaller numbers from Brahmin/Chettri, Terai and Muslim groups. The Dalit, Tharu and other Janajati groups have the greatest numbers in child labor.





Nonformal education classes using this girls only program were run in 23 districts. The data below shows the greatest numbers of girls were from Dang, Banke, Makawanpur, Dhanusha, Baglung and Bardiya. These six districts had greater numbers of Janajati, Tharu and Terai groups who have traditionally not given girls education a priority. By the later years of the program though the numbers of out-of-school girls needing the program in districts such as Baglung and Bardiya had declined dramatically as the impacts of the nonformal education efforts and school enrollment campaigns increased the numbers attending school.

Districts	No. of girls	Districts	No. of girls	Districts	No. of girls
Jhapa	1326	Morang	1562	Sunsari	589
Udaypur	876	Dhanusha	2260	Sarlahi	1433
Valley	1494	Dhading	1916	Makwanpur	2677
Parsa	1849	Chitwan	706	Kaski	925
Myagdi	916	Parbat	736	Baglung	2203
Nawalparasi	953	Rupandehi	1051	Salyan	741
Dang	3452	Banke	2279	Bardiya	2144
Kailali	493	Kanchanpur	953		
Total					33533

There is still a need for a Girl-focussed program in the central and eastern Terai and in hill districts prone to trafficking but increasingly in many districts there are insufficient out-of-school girls to warrant classes in most communities and new strategies are needed.

Impact of GATE program

To assess the GATE program's impacts on learners, annual evaluations do an in depth assessment of a random sample and look at the literacy skills of adolescent girls, their attitudes about schooling, their health knowledge, and their knowledge and attitudes about trafficking and other risks that they face. Another related goal of the evaluation is to assess the impacts on host communities, with respect to changes in attitudes towards, and activities to promote the education, health, safety and development of adolescent girls.



Summary of Findings 2008 GATE Evaluation

- 155 adolescent girls, average age 13 were randomly selected, in communities with many ex-kamaiya girls in four districts: Banke, Bardiya, Dang and Kanchanpur and 45 class facilitators
- The majority of the girls were Tharu, half had never been to school, with one-third engaged as farm or domestic workers.
- 87.7% could understand Nepali very well, but only 7.7% spoke Nepali at home.
- Large increases in health related knowledge on important health topics
- Behavior change with girls and their families improving sanitation and constructing toilets.
- Increased knowledge and changed attitudes to family planning, child marriage, maternal health care during pregnancy and post-partum.
- Increased knowledge on the prevention of HIV/AIDS
- Increased knowledge on trafficking and safe migration.
- The post tests proved that the girls significantly increased their literacy and numeracy skills in comparison to their results in the pre test.





Major Challenges

- **Mainstreaming to School** – Girls graduating from GATE classes want to enroll in schools. Schools lack the resources for equipping schools with the needed furniture and teachers. Parents lack the resources to pay admission fees, buy uniforms and school supplies. With about four thousand girls graduating each year providing all with scholarships is not possible.
- **Enrollment to Age Appropriate Grades** – GATE graduates have progressed a lot in nine months. Most do not speak Nepali at home and must master a second language as well and literacy and numeracy skills. Many are disappointed by not being able to access higher grades. More access to flexible schooling classes for rapid promotion would be helpful.
- **Low Priority Program** – Girls education is a low priority for communities and NGOs are less interested in this program compared to other development programs. Nonformal education class rates are based on government rates and so generate little interest. Small women-led NGOs give the program a high priority but often have less capacity for management compared to larger NGOs.
- **Community Ownership** – As the GATE program reaches increasingly disadvantaged and socially excluded girls in the community it becomes harder to gain community support. These families and their children are often seen as outsiders or of low caste and overcoming this exclusion to build community ownership of the program is a challenge.
- **Class Venues** – Finding space for running the class becomes a greater challenge as you reach in to poorer and more disadvantaged communities. More resources may be needed to build temporary shelters for classes.





"I completed my nine-month GATE education and got admitted into the school. World Education supported me and paid my admission fees and convinced my parents to enroll me in school. I could not get admission before because of my poverty and workload. I had to look after my brothers and sisters. My parents encouraged me to join the school and study further. They encouraged me to study and I aim to be a famous person and build my future."

"I was illiterate then. Whenever I saw my brother and small sister going to school and reading books, I felt sorry for myself. It was a great day when I was selected to enroll in the GATE class run by Ama Milan Kendra in Chhampi, Lalitpur. In the class I learnt to read and write and more that will be useful in my future life too."

Rosint, 13, Class 5, Kaski District

Bimala learnt a lot about reproductive health issues and trafficking. Bimala says " Now I know how the traffickers lure the simple and naïve poor girls and traffic them into prostitution. I also know that girls are trafficked not only to India but in our own country, too."

Now I can read and write letters, do mathematics. In the class I made new friends, and we used to share our sorrows and happiness there. In the last days of the GATE class I got upset that I would soon be missing all the friends. It was a real fun to participate in the GATE class. GATE class days were the happiest days of my life.."

Bimala Thing, Chhampi 9, Lalitpur

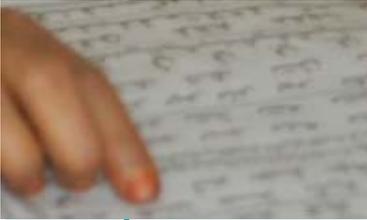
" Before coming to Change Nepal's class, I had never expected that I would be able to study, but things turned surprisingly. Only after 4-5 month's class attendance, NFE class has taught me to sign my name and read easily. Now, I do not need to use fingerprints in banks and offices and I am also free of the fear that others will laugh at me."

Nima – Entertainment Worker Thamel



*Deena Gets Kanchi Home to Nepal **

Deena Baniya, had been learning about trafficking of girls in her GATE class. At her friend's house she saw a letter sent by Kanchi, a local girl who had been trafficked. Kanchi had escaped from a brothel in Mumbai and had been given shelter in someone's home. One of the members of the family she was staying with had helped her and written a letter to her family in Nepal. Once Deena knew what had happened to Kanchi she was determined to help her. She and the other friends in the GATE class



approached the local political leaders and helped get her back to Nepal. She was then given shelter at Maiti Nepal and after a few months Kanchi's parents took her to home. Kanchi is now married and happily settled with her in-laws. Both of the traffickers are currently on trial for trafficking.

The facilitator of this GATE class says, "All credit goes to Ama Milan Kendra and World Education, because of both the organization's girls like Deena Baniya and many more girls attending GATE class have got educational opportunities that were denied by their parents. The program has developed their awareness level, developed confidence to stand against social evils and fight back. Without this an illiterate Deena would not have been able to read the letter and Kanchi would have been left in India."

Chhampi VDC, Lalitpur.

" Being in the nonformal education class has enabled me to read all the advertising and sign boards, names of the roads and locations easily. Now, I do not have to tell lies to my friends pretending that I studied. This class has made me conscious and also saved my self-respect. "

Sapana – Entertainment Worker Gongabu

* names changed for confidentiality reasons)



Bridging NFE to Formal School

After adolescent girls use the health focused curriculum "Bridging Classes" were held for those wanting to join formal school. Most had either never in formal school or dropped out from Grades 1, 2 or 3. During the "Bridging Classes" the participants make use of the government's flexible schooling curriculum and other books to compliment. Over two to three months they focus on the aspects not well covered in the NFE stage such as science, English and mathematics in preparation for sitting entrance examinations for appropriate grade levels. The Grade level they are able to enter in formal school is usually dependent on their age and individual abilities. Most get admission to Grade 3 with the more able getting in to Grades 4 and 5. They are rarely able to manage the District Board Exams without attending grade 5 in school. The length of the course is determined by when the girls graduate from NFE or return to the community and the time from then until school admission. The strengths of using a "Bridging Class" before transition to school are:

Graduates Enter Higher Grades - Bridging classes using the government flexible package enables children to enter more advanced grades with just three months additional study. Most are able to enter one grade higher after just two or three months of study than the grade they would otherwise enter. Schools often put NFE graduates in to grades where they quickly complete the syllabus and while some schools are willing to give them rapid promotion other schools are reluctant to do so even though this is the government's policy for overage children in junior grades.

Good Curriculum – The government's flexible schooling curriculum is good and introduces students to the school curriculum content while still using nonformal education methodologies. This makes for a smoother transition for girls entering formal school.

Builds Confidence – Girls who have been in nonformal education and may be older than children in the grades they will enter often lack confidence and are not sure how they will cope with the school environment and curriculum. By using the flexible schooling curriculum in bridging they understand the differences and similarities and are more confident about joining school.

Parents Psychologically Prepared to Send to School – After seeing daughters complete NFE and then going to school, parents adjust to the reality and generally become supportive of the move to formal school.



Challenges and Issues

- **Facilitator Skill Levels** – Usually the same facilitator runs the Bridging Classes as for a short session it is hard to find and train someone new and it takes them time to build a rapport with the learners. Many of these experienced facilitators struggle when faced with more challenging math and English content.
- **Supervisors Level and Capacity** – Most literacy program facilitators have modest educational qualifications and have not worked with the formal school curriculum for years. They find it difficult to support the Bridging Class facilitators and need more training.
- **English and Math** – The subject content for English and math present the greatest challenge to learners and facilitators and more advanced training would help improve outcomes.

Flexible Schooling

For children that have been removed from school and relocated for child labor or because they were displaced by conflict and Brighter Futures experimented with using the government's Flexible Schooling curriculum and design. Brighter Futures used this in both urban areas where youth were relocated and in remote rural areas with child porters. The curriculum is a condensed version of the formal school curriculum taught using NFE methodologies. The curriculum is well presented and easy to use. Learners are expected to attend 4 hours a day, six days a week for three years to complete primary level. The expectation is that the children enrolled in one cohort will be of similar educational level start and continue for three years together.

The curriculum is of high quality and very useful for children wanting to transition to school or complete school through alternative schooling. Brighter Futures has made greatest use of this curriculum for bridging NFE graduates to school. Using this curriculum with children in the worst forms of child labor we encountered the following challenges:

- **Desire to Be in "Regular" School** –The use of the Flexible Schooling curriculum helped learners catch up with their education. Most learners though were reluctant to stay in the NFE environment and for many reasons wanted to be back in "regular" school. Many of these were to do with social recognition and acceptance by the community.



- **Migration and Turnover of Learners** – The greatest challenge with this approach is that the children all join and leave classes at different times throughout the year.
- **Range of Ages and Education Level** – They are also at different levels requiring facilitators to manage a multi-level class often with a wide range of ages and educational experiences.
- **Skilled Facilitators** – Teaching Flexible Schooling becomes more and more challenging the higher the grade level. Finding facilitators capable of teaching all the subjects is very challenging. Much more subject specific training is needed.
- **High Cost** – The costs for the program are high as facilitators working four hours daily capable of handling this sort of class need reasonable remuneration or they do not stay. The government makes a three year commitment but the numbers of learners decrease each year making the per learners costs high.
- **Class Duration** – For children in the worst forms of child labor classes for four hours were difficult to adjust to. Employers were also resistant and un-cooperative. Children who attend spend longer but most working children start from NFE with shorter hours.

The government has recently unveiled its new flexible curriculum (Open Learning Program) for the Lower Secondary Level (2 years) and High School (1 year). We have not yet had the chance to use them. These are still in a piloting phase with the government. Overall we find the government's condensed materials good but the design is not easy to use with such mixed ability groups. The whole concept of the Open Learning Program is a great addition to the educational options for working children and migrant children to complete their schooling but more refinement of the delivery systems are needed if they are to be cost effective and accessible.





Evolving Needs and Future Directions

The education system in Nepal is changing rapidly and new "free and compulsory" education policies will continue to reduce the numbers not in school especially for younger children. For years to come though large numbers of working or highly vulnerable children will continue to need nonformal education but trends suggest that the priorities and needs will change. Some of the changing needs and future directions include:

- **Learners With Range of Ages and Education Backgrounds** – As more children attend formal school working children or those at-risk needing literacy and numeracy or ongoing education will come from a wider age range and have different educational backgrounds. More complex and multi-level approaches will be needed that can accommodate illiterates, semi-literates and school dropouts.
- **Nonformal Education For Prevention of Child Labor** – An estimated 630,000 are out of school. This averages out to about 19 children per school in the country or 2 missing per grade level. It will become increasingly difficult to find groups of learners for nonformal education classes in many communities making it too costly to run for a few learners. More creative solutions linking out-of-school children to school outreach or flexible schooling or mixed adult/child classes will be needed. In some areas intensive residential "camp" approaches may be needed.
- **Unmet Needs For Girls Education**– The need for special girls education is declining there remains a great need two areas. In the trafficking prone hill districts where large numbers of adolescents are not in school and in the central and eastern Terai districts where gender discrimination and poverty keep girls from attending formal school.
- **Greater priority for working children** – A number of stakeholders provide NFE for out-of-school children, including the government, UNICEF, Save The Children Alliance and local NGOs. Greater efforts to include working children into these programs are needed.
- **More Disadvantaged Learners** – As more children attend school, those out of school and in child labor, are increasingly from disadvantaged Dalit and ethnic minority groups and from dysfunctional families or with a learning disability. Supporting these children will take more effort and resources and they will need more support to successfully transition to school or vocational programs.
- **Migration** – Children migrating with families or for work make up an increasing number of those in child labor. More creative use of seasonal schools, flexible schooling and school transfer systems will be needed for these children.
- **More Creative Designs** – As more semi-literate children need of ongoing learning opportunities increase new approaches need to be tried. School outreach efforts, integration of youth programs in to Community Literacy Centres and greater use of distance education connected with radio.

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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