



# **Vocational Education to Address Child labour**

Child Labor Strategies Report 2009



Many children in Nepal are forced to work to support themselves or to help support their families. Many more work part-time to meet the costs of attending school in the advanced grades. These children are often highly motivated to work hard, and are determined to find ways to improve their long-term work options. For these children, some form of vocational training is often the most attractive option to escape exploitative labor situations.

Children in the worst forms of child labor come mostly from remote villages communities; from families that are poor and have little land or other resources; have dropped out from school with just the most basic skills or have never been to school; live in areas that have little economic activity and lack the resources to migrate safely for work; and enter the workforce early finding it difficult to compete with older more experienced workers unless they agree to exploitative conditions.

Nepal has a growing workforce. Each year more than 600,000 young people enter the workforce but census data suggests just 200,000 older people retire in the same time period. Historically, girls were limited to work in agriculture and make up the bulk of the agricultural workforce. Today, more girls are seeking opportunities in a wide range of occupations. Each year more students complete high school; in 2008- 66 % completed high school, and more than 400,000 candidates took the School Leaving Examinations. As more young people enter the workforce with secondary school qualifications, it makes the competition for scarce jobs harder for those without any qualifications. Responding to the need for these children to have marketable skills in Nepal's context - a range of options that prepare youth for both work with an employer or for self-employment and that encompass both urban and rural livelihoods - was needed.

Being committed to removing children that are under 14, the legal age for fulltime work, from full-time or exploitative work, World Education and its partners encouraged children to stay in school as long as possible. To this end, vocational education was only offered to children over 14 or in special circumstances - graduates of nonformal education classes who would turn 14 on the completion of their vocational training.



## Vocational Education For Working Children

Under Brighter Futures, four main approaches were used to provide vocational education or practical skills training including apprenticeships, use of skill training centers, Self-Employment and Economic Education Program (SEEP) and agro-forestry. The approaches varied depending on the labor type or sector and age of the children as well as the geographical area and training possibilities.

Over eight years, 33,412 children were provided with vocational training. The demand for vocational education was huge from older children in exploitative working conditions. However, as the priority was given first to younger children in the worst conditions, fewer older children wanting vocational education could be supported. Limited efforts were made to prepare children most at-risk of entering child labor with vocational training in rural areas.

### Identifying Viable Work Options

One of the greatest challenges facing NGO partners was helping children in the 14 to 18-age range to find work that was not exploitative. The Brighter Futures program coincided with a period of civil war coupled with a contracting economy and expanding workforce. Most of the new job opportunities were generated through migrant work in foreign countries – an option not available or suitable for the target age group.

NGO partners had to learn to do three things:

- assess local work options and then the options for youth migrating from the region
- help children determine their own abilities, interests and options
- identify suitable training options locally accessible to the children identified

Over time, the NGOs developed their skills to assess local work and training options. Working with the government's Centre for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT), a career-counseling guide called "Life and Work Planning" was developed to help young people choose viable career options.

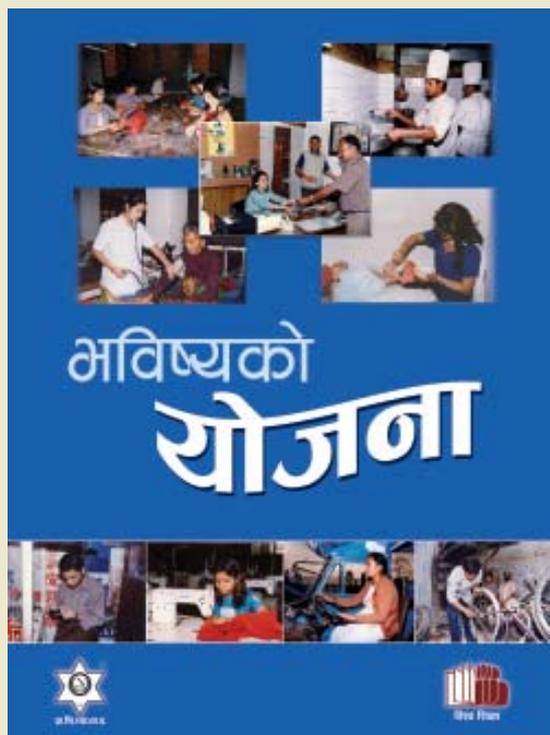


## Career Planning

There has been little attention paid to developing career counseling in Nepal. What few efforts there are, focus on high-achieving youth from urban areas to help them identify further study opportunities in foreign countries for careers in medicine or engineering. Little attention has been paid to disadvantaged youth and those forced to leave school without qualifications.

In rural areas, most teachers and staff of vocational training centers and NGO staff have a limited understanding of the job market or needs and so are not well positioned to give advice to these young people.

The “Life and Work Planning” module leads young people through a process of identifying their interests and abilities, doing research on the local job market and finding out what training is needed. Many NGOs found that prior to using this module young people would identify occupations they were ill-suited for or that were not viable in the home communities they were returning to. Others jumped in to occupations that paid poorly or chose occupations that did not live up to their expectations. Using the career planning module helped youth identify more appropriate and viable options and helped them make the commitments needed to complete training and get established in their chosen field.





## Apprenticeships

Providing apprenticeships, also known as ‘on-the-job training’, started as a pilot program in Banke and Bardiya, in 2003 involving 40 youth in welding, masonry and carpentry. The first group of apprenticeships transitioned from the program with jobs registering a 100% employment rate. This figure was encouraging and the approach was then expanded to involve more youth, with a wider selection of trades and skills in more project districts.



Working with local Chambers of Commerce, small business owners and the government’s CTEVT, the Brighter Futures partners participated in the development of curricula for 15 trades and started using these in the field. Employers agreed to take apprentices for several hours daily and to train them in the basic competencies set within the curricula for each trade. These trades included: Assistant Carpenter; Assistant Cook; Junior Bamboo Artisan; Junior Paper Artisan; Junior Wood Artisan; Metal Work Assistant; Junior House Painter; Assistant Plumber; Auto Mechanic; Cycle and Tri-cycle Worker; House Wiring Assistant; Junior Barber; Junior Ceramic Artisan; Senior Mason’s Assistant; and Water Pump Repair Assistant.

In total, 247 youth received training as apprentices under the Brighter Futures program. Of these apprentices, 48% were Children Associated With Armed Forces or Armed Groups (CAAFAG), 20% were domestic workers, 13% were children at-risk, 10% trafficked children in the adult entertainment industry, and 6% were child porters. By age, the majority (91%), were in the 14-17 age range and the remaining 9% were in the 10-14 age range. In terms of caste/ethnic representation, 45% were Janajati, 22% were Brahman/Chhetri, 21% were Dalit, 4% Muslim, 4% Tharu, and 2% Terai caste groups.

Although not easy to coordinate (as the benefits of such an arrangement were not always obvious to potential trainer/employers), this was by far the most



successful approach for job placement. This type of training was also found to be the most cost-effective. Apprentices began their training at the entry-level, but the different skill sets were customized according to the individual trainee's capacity and employer's needs. While the competencies or skills taught followed those identified for the basic level by CTEVT, in some trades the apprentices found these were not sufficient in the very competitive job market in Nepal. The approach was however successful to the extent that youth who took part in apprenticeships a few years ago are today themselves training new groups of apprentices.



During these apprenticeships, the employers often prioritized teaching skills that they personally needed in their own business while evaluating the trainee's aptitude. Although there was no obligation for host businesses to employ the young people trained, youth often expected this and good apprentices were frequently hired by the business they trained with. Sometimes, when a number of apprentices were given training by a single employer it was not possible to provide a job to all the youth upon completion. However, the personal contact involved in the apprenticeship allowed the employer to take stock of the individuals and refer them to friends, relatives or colleagues in the same industry in the area or even in different region.

Over the course of Brighter Futures, World Education and its partners made concerted efforts to involve the business community and trade unions in apprenticeships and vocational education. An example of this outreach was the partnership with the Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), which provided training for youth in different parts of the country. World Education also worked with the ILO and the CTEVT to develop apprenticeship curricula for various trades. This was an important step in mainstreaming the apprenticeship approach, highlighting the quality skills formation and system of assessment and recognition that was a result of the competency-based vocational training.



## *Apprenticeship Leads To A Tailoring Business*

Anita Karki<sup>1</sup>, 17 years of age, lives in a rural area in Bhojpur District. She comes from a very poor family and during the war, had to dropout of school and join the Maoist forces. After the peace agreement was signed, she came back to her home village but she felt she was too old to re-enroll in school and did not know what to do with her life. When the NGO partner in the district, Rural Reconstruction Nepal, contacted her, Anita said that she would like to take a training to become a tailor.



Working with Anita, project staff determined that she had the interest and would be able to create a viable business after training. Anita undertook the basic and advanced skills training as an apprentice in a local tailoring workshop with support of the project. Later, Rural Reconstruction Nepal bought her all the equipment to

start her own tailoring business in her own village. Anita now runs her business and is able to earn Rs. 150-250 per day. She spends this income on food and other expenses for herself and her family and hopes that one day she will be able to expand her business and sell her clothing designs in the nearby villages as well.

<sup>1</sup> All names changed for confidentiality reasons



## Lessons Learned

- **Relevance of Job training** – Apprenticeship training in a locally-owned workshop by a carpenter, plumber, mason, or tailor is usually an ideal environment for vocational skills training. The trainee is able to receive hands-on training in a protective environment and learns the actual skills being used in the local context. In comparison those training in “training centers’ are often trained to use equipment not in use in the local work place.
- **Accessibility** – Youth in the worst forms of child labor are often unable to attend full-time training sessions and apprenticeships offer them the opportunity to access training.
- **Complementary Literacy and Numeracy Skills** – Young people in apprenticeships often need to gain more literacy and numeracy skills alongside practical skills in order to be able to perform math or documentation tasks.
- **Employment Opportunities Enhanced** – A good apprentice has the chance of getting employment with the same craftsman or others in the community.
- **Motivating Employers to Host Apprentices** - If an initial apprenticeship is successful, the craftsman is also more likely to take other students in the future. Social recognition by civil society groups, businessmen’s associations and government encourage employers to take apprentices.
- **NGOs Network with Training Providers and Employers** - Providing appropriate vocational training to beneficiaries becomes less challenging over time as the NGO partners develop stronger links and connections with the local vocational institutions and employers who can provide apprenticeships.



## Challenges for apprenticeships

- **Lack of Training Providers** - Many working children live in or come from remote areas and it is hard to find appropriate employers to host an apprentice in these areas.
- **Residential Options** – For youth from remote areas there is a need to have residential living linked to apprenticeships as often they live too far from host employers to commute daily.
- **Job Placement or Self-employment** - It is impossible to guarantee jobs for youth after an apprenticeship. Host employers, local business associations and NGOs can help but many youth will need to move to new locations and set up their business.

## Vocational Training Through Skill Training Centers or Special Courses

To provide occupation-specific training, many NGO partners found utilizing existing training centers in the community feasible. Others found that there were no suitable training centers in their community and instead needed to hire a specialist trainer to work with a small group of trainees. In one innovative effort Rural Reconstruction Nepal hired master craftsmen to build school classrooms while at the same time training several young people. Agriculture or agro-forestry related skills were taught through Farmer Field Schools.

These vocational trainings focused on a variety of skills that were taught in vocational skills centers or by skilled trainers in NGO centers. These skills included bamboo handicraft, Tharu traditional art, candle-making, mushroom cultivating, nylon bag manufacturing, carpentry, tailoring, cooking, baked goods manufacturing, knitting, plumbing, shell-craft production, paper bag manufacturing, pickle-making, driving, fabric painting, bead jewelry production, *tika* manufacturing, fabric painting, beautician, vegetable production, house wiring and electronics repair.



A total of 1,767 beneficiaries received non-agricultural occupation- specific vocational training of whom 28% were in the 10-14 age range and 72% above 14. In terms of the ethnic caste breakdown, 31% were Janjati, 21% Dalit, 19% Brahman/Chhetri, 10% Tharu, 5% Muslim, 4% Terai caste and others 5%. As for the labor sector representation, 32% were domestic workers, 14% CAAFAG, 13% carpet Factory workers, 9% trafficked/ entertainment, 4% porters and 3% brick kiln workers.

During the second phase of Brighter Futures, the program introduced a follow-up to the existing vocational training curriculum in the forms of advanced skills training and Business Development Services (BDS) that was especially targeted at CAAFAG - to master their specific vocation or to provide business and economic literacy skills to improve their employability prospects and provide an advantage in starting businesses.



A total of 362 beneficiaries in all eight districts that were received vocational training support were identified for this further follow-up support. Of these beneficiaries, 44 vulnerable children and CAAFAG trainees who had received vocational training and started their own business training received follow-up BDS training. In addition, 106 CAAFAG and vulnerable children who had attended skills training and needed further follow-up training received advanced skills training, and 212 beneficiaries received both these follow-up services. As part of the BDS training for trainees who started their own income generation/ business initiative, the program used World Education's developed economic literacy modules.

*"The project provided me with vocational training and I am now working in the village and earning my own money. If it is possible to provide more support to start my own business, I would like to open a convenience shop in my village."*

*Man Bahadur Lama, Sankhuwasava*



**House-wiring** and **motorcycle repair** have proven to be extremely successful vocational options for males. In Salyan, there was a large demand for employment in these vocations and the trainers were willing to provide accommodation and pay for the living expenses to all trainees to employ them afterwards. In general, house-wiring training was a preferred vocational option for males as many households in the target districts are currently getting connected to electricity and therefore a large demand to this skill. The house-wiring businesses can also be started with a small amount of capital, as the number of tools needed is limited. This being a mobile vocation it also does not necessarily require workshop space. In addition, this skill can be used for solar power electrification purposes, does not require a high level of education, and can be attained relatively quickly. Some youth involved with this vocation can also be engaged in it part-time and spend their remaining work time for agricultural work.



*"I am happy to have received motorcycle repair training. After the training, I started to work in a workshop and then received advanced skills training so I can now start own motorcycle repair workshop in the village."*

*Prakash Oli, Salyan*



**Computer training** is only beneficial for those trainees who have already passed the SLC exam and plan to continue on to higher education. As many youth beneficiaries who attended these trainings did not acquire sufficient formal education prior to their computer training, they found it extremely difficult to handle the curriculum without enough advanced English and mathematics skills. The demand for this training is high as there is a strong market value to computer skills. Youth recognize this demand and therefore finding it appealing to attend this kind of training. Nevertheless, in order to avoid frustration and dropouts, this should only be given to those beneficiaries who can successfully attend and complete this kind of training.



*"I lost my leg when I was involved with the party during the war. The NGO provided me support to get a prosthetic leg so I can now walk easily. I also received skills training in computers and I hope to work in this field in the future."*

*Jetha Rai*



Tailoring is a traditional vocation that has appeal for both female and male beneficiaries. Most of the trainees needed to attend advanced skills training to acquire sufficient skills to be able to respond to the demand in their locality. Most of the trainees were able to start business in their own VDCs rather than the district headquarters. Despite an enormous effort by NGO partners to assess and re-assess the vocational choices made by many females, tailoring still proved to be the popular choice for girls. There are many practical reasons behind this selection including: the lack of ready-made clothes in desirable styles in remote areas; cultural approval which may be even more valuable for girls' reintegration; and girls' lack of exposure to non-gender stereotyped occupations. Other vocational training options preferred by girls were weaving, hairdressing and beauty parlor operation.



*To remove Dilip Pariyar from child labor, the partner NGO decided to support him to develop skills to build upon his family's traditional occupation as tailors. With an established presence he and the family felt if they could learn new designs and improve the quality of their work they would be able to attract more customers and discourage people from going to the neighboring town. Dilip could open another outlet locally. Dilip though needed more advanced training to start his own tailoring business. After getting in touch with the team from REEC, he was provided with a three-month training and got the confidence to start his own business.*

*"Beside the traditional clothing, I can now design new trendy clothes which are in demand at the village" replies Dilip when asked about the number of people following similar traditional occupations in the village. He adds, "Today, I alone can provide the variety of ladies and gents clothes in my village".*



The **candle-making** businesses also proved to be extremely successful, especially as the load-shedding hours increase each year. The cost for starting this kind of business is relatively low and young women can be involved in this vocation and still combine this work with their house or farm chores and other responsibilities.

*"The project gave me the skills training I needed to open a beauty parlor in the village and earn some money."*

*Nima Tamang-Okhaldhunga*



## Lessons Learned

- **Career Counseling Essential Component** – Without career counseling young people chose vocational training in occupations most familiar to them or most popular locally. This meant too many youth would be trying for the same jobs or that youth would be training for occupations for which no jobs were available locally.
- **Supply-Driven Training Options** – Many training centers offer vocational options based on the availability of trainers rather than the market demand for occupations in a specific field. NGOs need to search out more viable options rather than steering children to the readily available choices.
- **Diversification of Training** – Vocational training institutions need to provide non-conventional skills (at the moment many focus on skills such as tailoring or driving.)
- **Gender Constraints** - As male youth enjoy more cultural freedom than female youth, including the ability to travel more freely, they were able to participate in a wider selection of skill trainings. Many occupations were seen male and therefore girls were discouraged from participation though many girls took part in non-traditional activities including carpentry and welding.
- **Lack of Trainers in Many Districts** – Many districts have limited vocational training available. In these locations it is necessary to negotiate with exiting training centers to occasionally offer different alternatives or for NGOs to conduct their own trainings using an experienced trainer from another district.
- **Job Placement for Graduates** - Vocational training institutions need to be more responsible in assisting with job placement after beneficiaries finish training. This should be indicated in the contract and helps ensure that providers make sure skills are as relevant as possible to the job market. Bonuses for successful job placement help discourage institutions from focusing on easily provided skills rather than marketable skills



- **Self-employment Needs Greater Promotion and Support** – Many vocational skills training programs focus on technical skills and pay little attention to entrepreneurial skills. Many young people need to set up small service enterprises or shops through which to work. Many return to communities in which there are few employers to hire them but where through self-employment they can create a viable livelihood.
- **Access to Government Programs** – Most young school dropouts are ineligible for government programs. Nearly all programs have criteria such as for those not passing SLC but Grade 10 complete, are limited to women, specific disadvantaged groups or adults. Little provision is made for school dropouts in the 14 -18-age groups.
- **Allocating budgets for vocational training-** it is important not to standardize budgets for vocational training but to consider factors such as the occupation, distance between the trainee and the training center/apprenticeship and provide funds accordingly.
- **Need for Advanced Skills** – Some occupations such as tailoring require first basic then advanced skills training in order for trainees to master their vocation. Advanced training is needed to attain sufficient professionalism to be competitive.
- **High Costs of Residential Vocational Training** - NGO partners sometimes needed to move the children to the district headquarters for training and there were not sufficient funds to cover the residential and training costs. The youth from remote VDCs who participated in trainings in the district headquarter often need to go home to visit their families on weekends and miss training days.





## Self-Employment and Economic Education Program (SEEP)

Many thousands of young people need to work but cannot find a decent job. They are left with either a choice of exploitative labor or starting their own business. Not all young people have the entrepreneurial flair needed to start a business but with help many can learn and earn as much or more being self-employed rather than accepting exploitative labor conditions. Many young people now see self-employment as a stepping-stone and use the skills gained to later find other better jobs or to expand and build a business. The challenge for Brighter Futures was to find ways to make self-employment a more viable option.

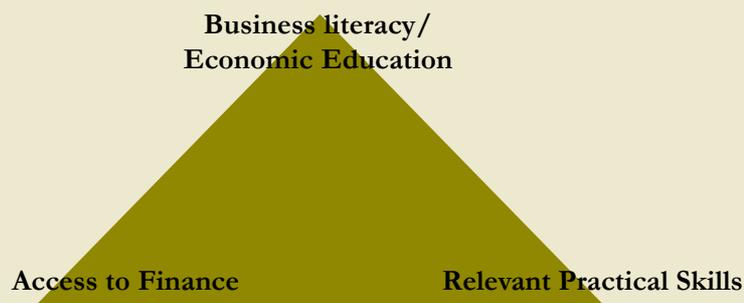


The SEEP approach was developed by World Education based on an economic literacy and microfinance program for women that now targets out-of-school disadvantaged youth. In designing the program it was necessary to take into account the special needs and learning style of youth. Women in adult programs have had many different experiences that they can reflect on. Young people have had fewer chances to experiment or learn from experience. They also have less access or control over family resources. They generally have more time and energy and are able to take part in learning activities and to access seasonal work opportunities. To meet young people's needs different models were tried over two years to develop the SEEP model. Parents and community members are also engaged to support and mentor youths starting businesses.



SEEP helps youth combine three components in order to be successfully self-employed

- 1/. **Business literacy/Economic Education** – youth need to understand the basics of selecting an enterprise, managing a business, marketing, keeping accounts, planning and making linkages to markets and resources.
- 2/. **Relevant Practical Skills** – youth need the specific skills for a viable business.
- 3/. **Access to Finance or Resources** – youth need to either be able to access start-up capital and resources to get started and later to expand the business either through the program or from the family.



Through a “discovery learning” process young people acquire the knowledge and develop the skills they need to be self-employed. NGOs have trained staff that facilitate and support youth through this process. The time needed is dependent on the situation of the participating youth. In urban areas where youth are working and attending part-time, they usually complete the learning phase in six months and NGOs provide mentoring and support over the next six months. In rural areas, the participants have less time to attend and often meet three times a week. They usually complete the course over six to twelve months. For young widows of the conflict and others in extreme circumstances, they use the modules intensively, spending many hours a day working with the facilitator and can complete the course in as little as three months.



A Class Management Committee is formed of parents, community and business leaders and representatives from the local government who commit to supporting the program and encouraging and mentoring the participants for one year.

SEEP provides an added measure of nonformal education which helps boost literacy and numeracy levels of participants and better prepares them for the business aspect of their self-employment activities. The first six months of the SEEP course participants use a nonformal education approach to gain the theoretical knowledge surrounding savings, benefits of group formation, accounting, feasibility study,

business planning and marketing. As part of this process they do an actual feasibility study for a small business, prepare and business and marketing plan and set up accounts. Micro-savings groups are formed by the participants or they join other existing microfinance groups in their area. Participants then settle on a business idea for their “experiential” business and submit a business plan for review. Participants identify the practical skills needed for their



selected businesses as part of this plan. The NGO and World Education staff, assess the viability of this plan and the participants are then supported with funds for the raw materials or other costs and the training needed. Participants then set up and run their business and complete the activity by conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis to determine how their business did and how it could be improved. Through the process participants learn to understand local markets and the opportunities and competition, the steps in starting a business and the risks and rewards.



Participants received no financial incentives or allowances to take part in the course but were able to keep any income gained from their experimental business. Many graduates have been able to use this income to reinvest in expanding their businesses or to invest in other enterprises. The range of businesses selected varied depending on the community and the opportunities available. Some youth have started businesses producing readily salable goods such as soap, candles, *tikas*, snack foods or incense. Others are providing services such as hair cutting, childcare, electrical repair or shoe repair. In rural areas those with access to public, family or leased land are producing commercial vegetables, medicinal plants or raising livestock. Many more have opened retail shops or tea- shops.

*"The SEEP program taught me to be a responsible person in my life. Before this I didn't know anything but now I know about savings and I'm participating in a savings groups and also saving on my own. From our savings we have started a candle manufacturing business in a group. From this business, we were able to make a profit. I spent all my profit and saving to buy land in Makwanpur as I want to return home in the near future".*

*Prajwal Lama, 17 - Carpet Factory Worker - Kathmandu*

## Enrollment in the SEEP Program

In all 15,673 young people have used the SEEP curriculum as part of the Brighter Futures program. Of these 63% were the 14-17 age range, 36% in the 10-14 age range and 1% were below 10. In terms of ethnic/caste breakdown, 28% were Janajati, 22% Dalit, 15% Brehman/Chhetri, 16% Tharu, 6% Muslim, 5% Newar, 4% Terai caste and others 4%. The labor sector representation included, 33% domestic workers, 19% children at-risk, 18% carpet factory workers, 11% porters, 7% brick kiln workers, 5% mining, 5% recycling, 1% transport workers and 1% entertainment workers. While analyzing the gender breakdown, 76% girls and 24% boys benefited from SEEP. Boys were usually more interested to do individual businesses or to attend vocational/apprenticeship program.



SEEP classes reached a high number of youth in the Kathmandu Valley and Eastern cluster. In mid-west, the majority of the children were child domestics. In the central cluster, Chitwan district had many child domestics in SEEP class. SEEP was also provided to children in mining and portering in Dhading, carpet and brick factory workers in Sunsari, Sarlahi and Lalitpur and children at-risk in districts of the western and central Terai.



*"I never ever imagined that there was basic information about banks and financial institutions, which we should know before starting any business or saving account. It is because our facilitators encouraged us to go for field visit. I could gather lots of information as well as ideas"*

***Bimala Gurung - Trafficked / Working in Entertainment Industry***

*"When I first joined Change Nepal's SEEP program, I never dreamed that I would get so many ideas and concepts that would help me start my own business. Today, I am not only handling my vegetable shop independently, but am also gaining a good profit daily and can now support myself doing this business."*

***Sapana Tamang- Trafficked/Working in Entertainment Industry***



## Gaining Valuable Life Skills

While the SEEP program sets out to help youth to be self-employed many participants, parents and community members mention the life skills gained as being as important as the business skills. The ones they mention most often are:

- **Money Management Skills** – many young people in child labor come from families with poor financial management skills. A cycle of debt keeps them in poverty and debt bondage. Many child laborers earn a good income but manage it poorly and save little. This is most noticeable with child porters and children trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation. Learning to track and manage money leads to savings, less debt and greater control over their lives.
- **Ability To Access Information** – Participants learn to gather information on markets, resources and where to find help or services while developing their plans. This empowers them to ask questions and gather information for other purposes.
- **Behavior Change** – Wanting to save and manage money better helps youth focus on unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol or buying junk food and motivates them to significantly reduce other unnecessary expenses.
- **Communication and Marketing Skills** – Being in the SEEP program requires young people to approach many different business people, customers, government and training organizations. Having to gather information and prepare and present a business plan helps develop written and verbal communication skills. Running the experiential business makes them develop marketing skills and communication skills to work with suppliers and customers.
- **Self-Esteem and Self-confidence** – Through running a business and earning a profit young people gain a new sense of their own potential and regain the self-esteem that many lose being in exploitative child labor. This gives them the confidence to start over in a new business or occupation.





*"I don't want to work in a brick factory in the future because people dominate and scold us and we are not safe here I want to expand my snacks manufacturing business and want to be able to support myself."*

***Srijhana Kapali – Brick Factory Worker - Lalitpur***

"My name is Rupa Chaudhary and I am 17 years old. When I joined the SEEP program I was 14. I learnt many important things in my SEEP class such as how to save, how to prepare a feasibility plan, marketing, banking etc. When we started to collect savings in the group we started with five rupees and now we have expanded this to 20 rupees. We used the Rs. 7000 we got from SADIKHA our local NGO in Dang to start our experimental business. I have also taken Rs.1500 as a loan from our savings and bought one piglet in June 2008, which hasd 10 piglets in March 2009. Since then I have sold eight and made Rs. 16,000. I am still keeping two piglets. I have spent some of the money on my education, while the rest is in a bank. Now I don't need to go to work at the landlord's house. I go to school every day and it is very easy for me to buy stationary and my school uniform through my savings."

**Rupa Chaudhary - former Kamalahari - Dang**

*"This program is very good because it helped our family and now I don't need to send my children to other's homes to work"*

***Bipti Chaudhary - Rupa's mother***

*"Some of our members are raising goats and pigs and getting lots of profit. Their houses have improved. I am waiting my turn to take a loan and am thinking to buy a piglet like Rupa"*

***Aasha Chaudhary group member***

*"This program is very innovative and appropriate for working children who are helping support their family. This program makes children independent and I hope that the program will continue"*

***Lalmuni Chaudhary- Chair Class Management Committee***



## Challenges and Lessons Learned

- **Time Needed To Build A Viable Business** - Some participants find it difficult to find time to invest in their new businesses as they are forced to work as child laborers until the new business generates sufficient alternative income.
- **Modest Options for Experiential Business** - The time needed or the small amount of funds for experimental business limits the participants in terms of business options. Some businesses identified in the feasibility study require a relatively large monetary investment that in some cases is not realistic for these children. Others need a long business cycle.
- **Employer Resistance and Lack of Co-operation** - In some cases, it is difficult to convince the employers to allow the children to attend the SEEP classes as they see this as a threat, fearing the child worker will leave their employment once the course is complete. Some children (especially domestic workers) find it hard to manage their time and devote sufficient efforts and energy to their experiential business due to their workload.
- **Supportive Employers** – Despite some resistance many employers of participants were very supportive and allowed them enough free time to participate in their new business initiatives and encouraged them to develop the skills they needed for the future.
- **Participant Mobility and Loss of Access** - The girls working in the entertainment sector tend to be very mobile and often leave the groups. This increases when police raid dance bars and massage parlors in Kathmandu. Girls are forced to hide or go under cover. This creates a tremendous challenge in sustaining the groups and businesses, and maintaining the trust among the group members. Carpet factories have been experiencing internal conflicts and have been affected by the economic downturn. As participants lose jobs they are forced to leave the program and migrate denying them access to ongoing support to start a business.



- **Initial Business Choices** - Many groups selected candle-making as their experiential business as this requires a low initial investment and training and has an immediate return, making it appealing to youth. However, this is driven by convenience and short-term considerations, and these participants do not consider starting other businesses that require more financial and educational investment.
- **Lack of Affordable Business Venues** - In some cases, local government and police officials hampered small street stall businesses. These types of initiatives were extremely successful in the beginning but were sometimes forced to shut down when officials prevented them from operating their businesses in the public parks, open spaces and streets. More “special zones” need to be created by local governments for youths in start-up businesses.
- **Weak Rural Markets** – Even when skilled and highly motivated youth start enterprises to provide services or produce goods weak local markets are a challenge. Local governments and business leaders need to be encouraged to support youth entrepreneurs by sourcing as many goods and services as possible locally.
- **Mentoring** - The Class Management Committees assisted participants in coordination, with local business owners and consumers, and to explore markets to their new businesses. They also assisted in cases of internal conflict, advised on better handling of their money, and assisted participants to hold monthly meetings, record savings and maintain ledgers and passbooks. Many members emerged as valued “mentors” helping the new young entrepreneurs.
- **Links to credit** – After starting their own micro-enterprise, using their learned skills, the beneficiaries should be linked to local credit schemes so that they can get sufficient capital for buying the necessary equipment.
- **Mobilization Of Additional Support** - NGO partners were able to leverage additional funding from other donors in order to provide specific skills/vocational trainings to SEEP group participants.



“My parents never had enough to feed us all. My parents work as wage laborers and so do my brothers and sisters. That’s the reason I had to go away to work in the circus”. She adds, “Going to the circus for work never eased my hard life as I had thought it would. Instead I had to work 18 to 19 hours a day. Not only that, if I refused to work because I was sick then I would not be provided my daily meal. I had to do dangerous stunts and was living life in hazardous conditions”.

After working for two years the situation got so bad that Monika returned back to her poverty-stricken family. Nothing had changed. Monika had the opportunity to enroll in the SEEP classes. Monika says with pride and worry “I am now literate and involved in a savings group but still sometimes I am scared as being in a group is helping me earn some money but whether or not I will be able to continue doing business. Sometimes the thought of going back to circus due to a lack of work scares me”.

**Monika Rumba, 17 years old Makawanpur**





## A Special Effort For Girls Trafficked Into the Adult Entertainment Industry

During the first phase of Brighter Futures, World Education and its NGO partners experienced challenges in retaining participants from the entertainment sector involved in NFE and SEEP classes. One of the main reasons for non-completion with this group was that the girls were typically not able to quickly earn the kind of wages they make in the entertainment sector with a post-SEEP income generating activity. Although interested, many get distracted by the money they make in the entertainment sector and don't equate the skills gained in an NFE class with non-exploitative livelihoods. Many also need health information and life skills to motivate them to protect themselves from harm until they are removed.



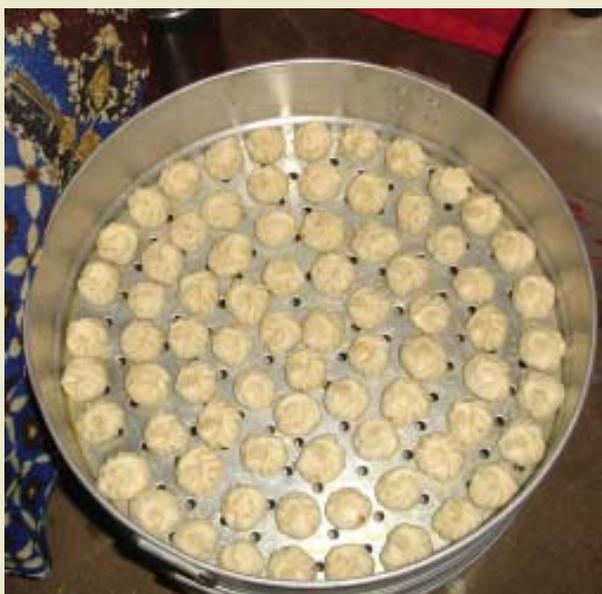
In response to this dilemma, Brighter Futures experimented with an expanded SEEP-Plus approach for girls in this sector. This expanded package combined more basic literacy/numeracy skills and health education with the economic education and practical business application. Over one year the course was tailored to incorporate more content related to health and included supplementary modules that focused on trafficking.

In the beginning, the employers and owners of the commercial sex establishments were resistant to the program and reluctant to send the girls to attend the classes. Today, the facilitators have gained their trust and they are



more supportive of the girls' attendance in these classes. The Reproductive Health Modules have proven to be extremely effective for these girls. They developed their knowledge and understanding around STDs and the risks and consequences of unsafe sex with multiple partners. This has helped motivate many of the girls to quit their occupation and return home.

Participation in SEEP-Plus also helped participants share their experiences, as well as social and economic prospects, with their peers. Coping with their personal situation is sometimes difficult and overwhelming, especially for young, uneducated and inexperienced girls. Being part of a group with a mutual goal, where the members shared similar experiences and ambitions, was extremely meaningful for these girls and provided vital support for their efforts towards a new start in life. It was also noticeable that the 'fast' learners were extremely helpful in supporting the 'slower' ones in their studies.



In addition, to create the most effective learning environment, NGO partner, Change Nepal, initiated a grading system for class facilitators. The intention was to create a sense of competition between the classes that will serve as an incentive to promote teaching and learning. Classes were evaluated according to a number of criteria. After handing the grades, the facilitator who received the highest scores was assigned to teach the other facilitators about their teaching approach to help improve their performance and achievements.



## Agro-Forestry: Rural Livelihoods

Many of the children that enter child labor come from remote and impoverished rural communities. Most are from the families with the smallest land holdings or are landless. To meet their needs three approaches were used: promoting increased food security and commercial agriculture through Farmer Field Schools; through developing agro-forestry to produce non-timber forest products and through developing on farm family income generating activities. In all, 15, 725 children and their families participated in these activities.

### Farmer Field Schools – Student Field Schools

To support children and their families in rural areas to either prevent children entering child labor or to provide a viable alternative for older child Farmer Field Schools (FFS) were run in the community. These proved extremely popular and had three major impacts. Firstly, they were able to increase agricultural production improving food security and reducing the need to send a child to work. Secondly, they helped families to diversify crops and increase income from commercial crops. Thirdly, they gave families or



landless youth the skills they needed to grow a commercial crop motivating hundreds of youth to lease land and move in to commercial agriculture.



A **Farmer Field School (FFS)** meets weekly for a full crop season (in rice, usually 12-15 weeks, from transplant to harvest). There are at least two field plots in a field school, where farmers compare their standard farming practices to IPM practices. Each week farmers



practice agro-ecosystem analysis which includes observation and collection of insect pests and natural enemies to pests as well as observation of plant health, water management, weather, weed density, and disease surveillance. In a shady area close to the field plots, the results of agro-ecosystem analysis (composed in small groups as a summary drawing and calculation of what was observed in the

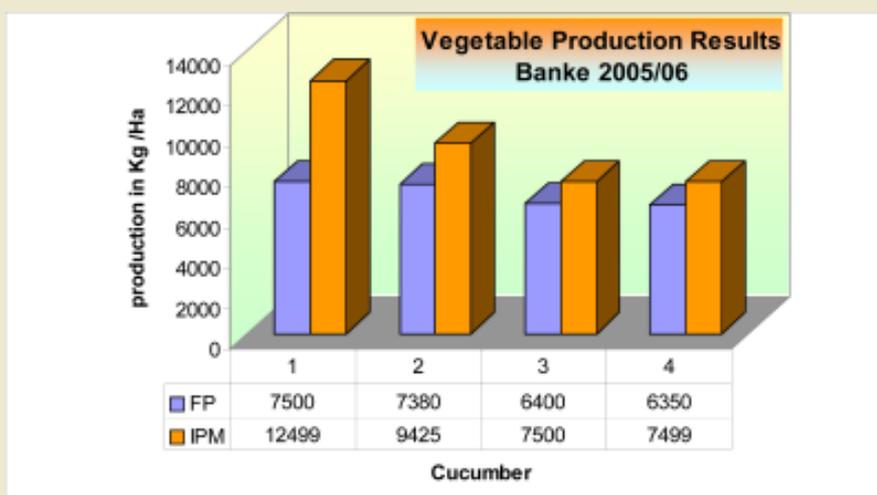
field) are then used by farmers to make decisions on management of the field plots. In addition, special topics relevant to the stage of plant growth as well as group dynamics activities are included in weekly sessions. A similar activity linked to a school is called a Student Field School.

The production gains from improved agriculture varied greatly depending on the quality of the land, irrigation available and the past cultivation and management practices. The poorest families affected by child labor often had very small plots of land and FFS helped them to intensify production.

Using Integrated Pest Management or improved technologies recommended by the government, were often seen as time consuming or complicated. The FFS and SFS demystified these techniques and helped participants gain confidence in trying new things. The final decision as to which crops to grow or which technologies to adopt was determined by the yield or increased incomes. Growing different crops or new crops of higher value is often easier than making changes in the way you grow the crops. By comparing relative yields using an integrated approach with local practices, farmers saw clear benefits especially in vegetable production.



In the eastern Terai and Kavre where agriculture is fairly efficient 30% increases in production were common. In the western Terai rice production in a single season was doubled and in many communities in Salyan and Bardiya new vegetable crops were introduced which added a new production season dramatically increasing incomes. In communities already growing vegetables as in Banke production increases of 17% to 67% were achieved in cucumber crops while costs were reduced.



Over eight years, NGOs involved in providing Farmer Field Schools developed a great deal of expertise for their local areas. In Bardiya the Tharu Community Development Forum pioneered integrated Fish-In-Rice cultivation so that participants could raise small fish in their paddy fields. The young farmers participating were fast to identify local insects and solve problems in their fields. Over time they have contributed to the knowledge base for farmers wanting to increase production in their locality.



### *Making Money from Vegetables!!*

“My name is Kamala Chaudhary. I live in Madhuban village in Chilhiya VDC of Rupandehi district. I have five members in my family. My father is a farmer and my mother looks after the house. I am 17 years old. I have attended school through Class 4. My family has 12 Kathas of



land (0.4 hectares). We grow rice, wheat and mustard in that field. Many years ago my father had planted vegetables but due to a lack of knowledge of vegetable cultivation, management and pesticides we didn't get a good crop and stopped growing vegetables. When we heard that the NGO was running an IPM/FFS my friend suggested that we participate in this training. I attended this Farmer Field School and we learnt about different aspects of rice crop management, their insect pests, varieties etc. Later we requested the NGO for vegetable studies as a follow-up

activity. In these studies we learnt about tomato and cucumber cultivation. I now know about beneficial and harmful insects and their control by use of management practices and herbal pesticides.

Last year after being in the FFS my father and I planted two kattha of bottle gourd and two kattha of cucumber. We earned eight thousand rupees net profit from these vegetables. We carried the vegetables to Bhairahawa and Thutipipal for sale. We used that money for repairing our house. We were also able to eat more vegetables. I am now confident that we can grow vegetables using very little or no pesticides. This season I also earned Rs. 1,500 from seedlings that I sold. This season I have planted two katthas of cabbage and broccoli and hope to make a good income again. Many thanks for giving us the FFS training !!”



## Student Field Schools

There are many concerns about the relevance of the formal school curriculum for students in rural areas. To use Student Field Schools to encourage children at risk of entering child labor to stay in school and to help them develop agriculture as a viable alternative, NGO

partners worked with government schools in the most child labor prone communities. Teachers identified recent school dropouts and senior students not expected to continue in school.



Many of these students were either poor students that had repeated grades or came from families unable to afford the school fees in the advanced grades. The NGO trainers and the teachers worked hard to motivate and support students. Not only did the students

learn a great deal and produce successful crops, but there were many other unexpected benefits from integrating vocational education into the school.



## Lessons Learned

- **Whole School Community Provides Support** – seeing the relevance of the Student Field School, brought parents, students, teachers, School Management Committees and the whole community in to help support the effort. Relationships with parents improved as schools and parents came together around the Student Field Schools and parents became more supportive of children continuing their education when they felt it had more relevance to their future roles in farming.
- **Positive Academic Impacts and Increased Retention** - Students who had been doing poorly in their studies suddenly showed a greater interest in other subjects and attended more regularly. Failing students made amazing gains particularly in science and math as these directly related to



skills and knowledge promoted in the field schools. Teachers found they did better in other subjects as well as they were more enquiring and asked many more questions. Many who had been expected to drop out decided to stay on in school.

- **Generating School Income** - Many schools found the Student Field Schools extremely profitable as barren land suddenly produced a good income. Schools used this to continue running agriculture activities or supported other school improvements.

- **Homework and Replication** – Including the provision of seedlings and requiring “homework” resulted in thousands of families starting kitchen gardens and growing new varieties of vegetables improving family nutrition and preparing families to commercially produce these crops.



## Agro-forestry For Non-timber Forest Products

The agro-forestry initiative was started in Phase II of Brighter Futures initially in Baglung, Parbat and Kaski Districts, with children as well as parents. The groups were given one year's intense support. As these groups proved successful, the program later expanded for new groups covering larger numbers of youth and adult beneficiaries. A total of 225 beneficiaries received agro-forestry support, of whom 4% were below 10 years of age, 61% in the 10-14 age range and 35% above 14. Of these 45% were Dalit, 29% Janajati, 13% Brahman/Chhetri, 11% Tharu, 1% Muslim, and 0.4% Terai caste. As for the labor sector, 52% were domestic workers, 28% porters, 8% brick kiln workers, 5% transportation workers, recycling 4%, mining 2%, children at-risk 0.5% and entertainment sector 0.5%.

Local stakeholders in the districts such as the District Forest Office, Area Forest Office, District Agriculture Office, Small Cottage Industries and Community Forest Users Group were extremely supportive and involved in the program. The NGO partners also had good relationships with Community Forest Users Groups that provided appropriate community forestry land to implement the program.





### *An Easier Life for Hukum*

Hukum Rokka lives in Salyan District. She is 15 years old and lives with her father and younger sister. She attends Grade Five at the Rastriya Higher Secondary School. Her mother died five years ago and the family is struggling both emotionally and financially. When she has time, between classes and household work, Hukum does seasonal portering work to support her family and buy school supplies for her and her sister.

Introduced to the Brighter Futures NGO partner, SADIKA, Hukum attended the agro-forestry program in her village. There are 35 members in her group and it is producing vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, tomatoes and other green vegetables. They sell their vegetables in the nearest market and share the earnings between the group members. She is also using the new skills she has learned to grow vegetables on their private land to increase her monthly earnings. Now, she has little difficulty in buying necessary school materials for her and her sister and to help her father financially. Most importantly she enjoys the agriculture work, and no longer needs to be engaged in other forms of labor such as portering.





Participants in these groups are now growing vegetables and medical plants on both their group and individual plots. All the earnings from the community plots are channeled towards group savings and the vegetables grown in the home plots are used for self-consumption or sale. The adult members in the group also assist the children with the group tasks and responsibilities.

The participants continuously share the learned techniques with neighbors and other community members which has had a positive replication effect.

Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Mother's Groups members in neighboring communities have also expressed interest in receiving technical support for running agro-forestry programs in their area.



These groups are not asking for financial assistance, assuring that they will independently raise all the sufficient funds for running the program and only need some technical support. In total, the program supported nine agro-

forestry groups and the total cumulative savings amount of all these groups combined is Rs. 202,500 (US\$2,700). The groups provide loans for reinvestment and other purposes.



## Challenges and Lessons Learned

- **Success Creates Demand** – As groups have shown that small areas of marginal forest land can be better managed and generate an income from poor families, interest has grown. The challenge for NGOs and communities is to ensure that the poorest of the poor are able to share the access and benefits of these efforts.
- **Wider Participation For Ownership** - The involvement of other community children will allow more ownership on behalf of the community members and enhance both their full engagement and long-term investment in the activities. A priority could be given to children at-risk who meet vulnerability criteria.
- **Sustainability and Turnover of Government Officials** - The main challenge of the agro-forestry activity is sustainability. One-year support is provided and the local community and government stakeholders commit to supporting these groups in the future. The government officials in these districts are frequently moved to new posts and therefore it is hard to build relationships, follow up on commitments and develop local capacity around sustaining these activities.
- **Policies on Leasehold Forestry** - Collaboration between the DFOs and the national level forestry office is needed to decentralize policies related to community forestry land and agro-forestry programs, and therefore assist with mainstreaming the methodology of this program in other districts as well.



**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**



Funding provided by the United States Department of Labor under cooperative agreements