Project Evaluation Report

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Notes:

Some annexes listed in the contents page of this document have not been included because of challenges with capturing them as an A4 PDF document or because they are documents intended for programme purposes only. If you would like access to any of these annexes, please enquire about their availability by emailing uk_girls_education_challenge@pwc.com.

Girls' Education Challenge

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List of Abbreviations

AYSRH	Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health
BL	Baseline
CPSP	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
CRM	Complaint Response Mechanism
DLS	Daily Living Skills
DTL	Distance Teaching and Learning
DYC	Divya Yuva Club
EE	External Evaluator
EL	Endline
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
IEMIS	Integrated Education Management Information System
ENGAGE	Empowering A New Generation of Adolescent Girls through Education in Nepal
ERO	Education Review Office
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FCHVs	Female Community Health Volunteer
FDM	Foundation for Development Management
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FM	Fund Manager

GEC	Girls Education Challenge
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GIEN	Girls and Inclusive Education Network
GSE	General Self Efficacy
HI	Handicap International
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IO	Intermediate Outcome
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LNGB	Leave No Girls Behind
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MFI	Micro Finance Institute
ML	Midline
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OOS	Out-of-school
PSS	Personalized Social Support
PTA	Parents-Teachers Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
ToC	Theory of Change

TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VSO	Volunteer Service Organization
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEC	Girls Education Challenge
GIEN	Girls and Inclusive Education Network
KII	Key Informant Interview
LNGB	Leave No Girls Behind
OOS	Out-of-school
PSS	Personalized Social Support
SIP	School Improvement Plan
VSO	Volunteer Service Organization
WGQCF	Washington Group Questions on Child Functioning

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Most importantly, I want to thank everyone who responded to the survey and consented to share their thoughts and experiences with the research team. I hope the data in this report may be used to solve the major problems and challenges they drew attention to.

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Executive summary

Background

VSO has been implementing the Empowering a New Generation of Adolescent Girls with Education (ENGAGE) project, with funding from the Girls Education Challenge (GEC), the flagship programme of FCDO UK, since 2019 along with its consortium partner Handicap International (HI). VSO's ENGAGE project sought to empower 2,525 highly marginalised, out-of-school girls including those with disabilities through education across three underserved districts in Nepal's Terai region. The project equipped girls with tangible and transferable skills for improved decision-making, more active roles in family decisions and the pursuit of their economic opportunities. ENGAGE did this through various interventions at different levels such as schools, community, local government as well as parents. Furthermore, peer support for adolescent girls, community interventions, social support for families of children with disabilities, and structured training for teachers and mentors were also conducted. In addition, ENGAGE focused on inclusivity including support to the Government of Nepal to adopt new standards in disability assessment and identification.

ENGAGE was implemented in three districts, seven municipalities and 34 schools of Banke, Parsa and Sarlahi to support marginalized girls and children with disabilities through various interventions such as formal and non-formal education, small-scale livelihood skills, teacher capacity development, parental empowerment, developing capacity of local governments in policy planning, data-based management and establishment/operationalization of the Girls and Inclusive Education Network (GIEN).

Project intervention

The project primarily aimed to improve the basic literacy and numeracy skills of the identified single cohort of 2525 girls over 4 years. Various activities, as outlined below, were implemented by the project to achieve the expected outcomes.

- Provide basic literacy and numeracy skills to girls through the provision of bridge classes and preparatory classes at the community level. The bridge and preparatory classes also provided skills related to the pre-identified enablers of learning empowerment: training on Financial Literacy, Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH), and Self Efficacy. These classes contributed to addressing the marginalized and disabled children's barriers to education and access and mobility.
- Provide vocational training to girls to transition to safe employment/entrepreneurship. The project also gave in-kind support to the primary actors based on their approved business plan required to initiate their approved business.

- The project has further supported parents through interactive programs and workshops focused on increasing parental support in girls' learning by addressing the barriers related to girls' excessive engagement in household chores.
- Train formal school teachers in gender-responsive pedagogical approaches.
- Train school head teachers and members of school management committees on effective school improvement plan (SIP) formulation
- Support schools for disability friendly infrastructure. The project also supports resource schools for children with disabilities to create a disability friendly school environment e.g. ramp, disability friendly toilet, support IEC materials, Braille provision of learning materials on sign language etc
- Mobilise big sisters for raising awareness among parents and community members and motivate parents for sending girls to schools and entrepreneurship.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project ran distance teaching learning (DTL) activities comprising of peer-to-peer education, group discussions and one-to-one coaching through household visits, radio schooling program, video dissemination, and psychosocial support.
- Mentoring and coaching support was provided to primary actors; Big sisters mentoring younger girls in the bridge class, remedial support class, and household visits, while international and national volunteers provided mentoring support to the school teachers by giving them literacy and numeracy training, pedagogical training to teachers, gender-responsive pedagogy and inclusive education training to the teacher, to increase both their learning and entrepreneurship skills.
- Moreover, for the low performance girls, the project provided remedial support classes and learning hubs.
- Psychosocial support: Personalized Social Support (PSS) Life skill/livelihood support to the girls
- Parental empowerment: Parenting education, parental engagement, Parents/caregiver support training (Children with disability)

Methodology

The evaluation adopted longitudinal mixed methods approach administering both quantitative and qualitative tools. Learning tests namely EGRA and EGMA were administered to girls to assess their learning levels at endline, along with a girls' survey to assess the transition questions. The survey also covered key characteristics and barriers. Furthermore, primary caregivers were also administered the household survey. The capacities of learning spaces to address inclusive education were assessed through the SIP assessment checklist, disability friendly infrastructure assessment checklist and classroom observation checklist. Qualitative consultations were carried

out with diverse stakeholders comprising girls, families, teachers, school management committees, community leaders and government officials to further explore the evaluation questions. Qualitative data collection comprised Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) with various stakeholders in the intervention group where a semi structured questionnaire was prepared. Since the project dealt with a single cohort of girls, the same group of girls was monitored at each evaluation point. The total sample of girls was 671 for endline where 496 girls who transitioned to the school were administered learning test along with girls survey, while the remaining 175 were administered only the girls survey. For data collection, a combined sampling strategy was used since the same girl who was tested for learning was also examined for transition. This meant that the same learning test was also be administered to 496 girls. Since the evaluation could not track all the girls from the midline because some of the marginalized girls had dropped out of the project and some were not available during the data collection period, there was an attrition rate of 45.9%.

To compensate for the attrition, the evaluation team undertook a one-to-one replacement approach which resulted in an additional 308 girls top up the total sample. Also 671 girls survey and household surveys were also conducted during the quantitative study to measure knowledge, attitudes, barriers as well as learning outcomes.

Characteristics and Barriers

The barriers identified by the project in the ToC were measured in both baseline and midline and based on the findings, the barriers to education were updated in the ToC. As per the updated ToC, the barriers such as extreme household poverty, sociocultural norms and unequal power relations, awareness regarding disabilities were measured. There had been slight changes in the characteristics of the girls in endline as compared to the baseline and midline. These changes might have been due to the variation in sample proportion due to the attrition in sample (which stands at 45.33%). For instance, there were 5.09% of girls who were single orphans in the baseline, 6.03% in the midline but 7.5% in the endline. As most of the girls were found to be living with their parents, the proportion of girls not living with both parents had changed from 2.89% in the baseline and 3.58% in the midline to 4.0% in the endline. There was a slight rise in the number of girls who got married. 4.5% were married at baseline, 5.5% at midline and 7.7% at endline. The proportion of girls getting pregnant under 18 years plummeted from 1.3% in the baseline and 1.9% in the midline to 0.2 % in the endline. Remarkably, none of the girls became mothers under the age of 16 during endline evaluation.

Regarding barriers, various aspects of extreme poverty were measured quantitatively. In the baseline assessment, 42.20% of households were unable to satisfy their necessities without charity, but this number increased by 42.20% in the baseline to 53.2% in the midline. However,

in the endline evaluation study, the percentage declined remarkably and dropped down to 16.8%. There was also a drop in parents who said it was difficult to afford education for girls. The figure at the endline was 50.87% compared to 84.48% during midline. The study also showed that the household chore burden has been decreased significantly during the qualitative consultations as well.

Outcomes

The three major outcomes – Learning, transition, and sustainability – were measured along with the intermediate outcomes of the projects.

Learning

The girls scored remarkably well in the EGRA tests at the endline with 110.75 mean score out of 260. This was a statistically significant improvement in the learning as their score was 41.98 during baseline and 83.51 during midline. The project had targeted for a 50% increase in literacy at endline (from baseline); however, the study showed that the score increased by 163.8%. The girls also scored well in overall subtasks and comprehension. There was an increase in the mean score of EGMA from 16.22 at baseline, to 19.97 at the midline and to 42.17 at the endline. Although the project expected the EGMA score to be 50% above the baseline result at endline, the current increase itself should be considered as a positive achievement considering the difficulty that girls face in Mathematics in public schools. Regarding children with disability, under literacy, it was found that average EGRA score for children with hearing impairment was 42 (ML-34.08, BL-10.1) while the average EGRA score for children with visual impairment was 55 (ML – 51, BL-15.6). In numeracy, it was found that average EGMA score for children with hearing impairment was 40 (ML -36.14, BL- 7), while the average EGMA score for children with visual impairment was 60 (ML- 55, BL -10). More number of children were able to complete subtask 1, 2, 3 and 4.

These improvements in the learning tests can be attributed to the various educational interventions such as bridge classes and preparatory classes, remedial support classes after school, big sisters mentoring and motivation throughout the project period through learning hubs. The distance teaching and learning activities, peer to peer mentoring, publication of audio visual learning material conducted during the COVID, when the schools were closed let the girls continue their learning although the regular classes were interrupted during the COVID pandemic. Besides, the teachers were also trained on teaching and learning pedagogies in various schools where the girls were transitioned which enabled the teachers to elaborate more on the concepts and address the issue of the girls regarding the subject matter.

Transition

The transition outcome was anticipated at the planning phase of the project, it was anticipated that the girls would choose between two main pathways: education or vocational training after completing the bridge class. The transition pathway for the younger girls in bridge class, who were between the ages of 10 and 14, was enrolment in a formal school. Similarly, the transition pathways for older girls (15–19) enrolled in bridge classes were either enrolment in formal education or vocational education for business skills. Out of 2525 beneficiaries identified at the beginning of the project, 1064 transitioned to school; 888 have adopted the vocational pathways and the remaining 573 dropped out of the project before transitioning. As of February 2023, among the girls who transitioned to school, 69 had dropped out of school and 995 remained in school. The girls who transitioned to livelihood pathways also includes 92 children with disability. In this study 496 girls were surveyed from educational pathways and 171 from the livelihood pathways.

Sustainability

The project had planned for its long-term sustainability throughout the system, community, and learning space. The log frame consisted of three indicators pertaining to sustainability outcomes. The indicators included the 7 municipalities having a functional database system; 7 GIEN functionalized in the palikas; and 27 functional learning hubs in the schools and community promoting learning practices. All these indicators measured the sustainability of the project at the system, community, and school levels.

Qualitative consultations with the headteachers, subject teachers, municipal education officers and GIEN members were conducted in the project districts. Meanwhile, quantitative measures were also adapted to measure the sustainability outcome indicators of learning space. In this regard SIP assessment checklists, disability-friendly infrastructure as well as classroom observations were administered. These were used to measure the three indicators on learning space i) % of schools scoring acceptable or above in disability infrastructure sustainability assessment, ii) % of schools demonstrating acceptable or above on teacher training sustainability assessment, and iii) % of schools demonstrating acceptable or above in implementation of inclusive SIP sustainability assessment. The EE were unable to administer these in a few of the schools since some of the schools had exams and some schools were closed because of the cold weather. The EE were able to conduct 19 classroom observations due to the ongoing examinations and vacations during the evaluation period and review the SIP of 25 schools. Of the 25 schools, 80% of those had formulated a yearly action plan for the current academic year.

Integrated school based educational management information system (IEMIS) was maintained by all the schools. A total of 32 schools had been observed for the disability-friendly infrastructure out of which 62.5% of schools scored well for the school building which is double compared to that of midline (31.81%).

Conclusion

One of the most significant findings from the evaluation is the achievement in the learning outcomes of the girls. The scores attained by the girls in both the EGRA and EGMA improved from baseline and midline. The project interventions such as parental engagement, big sister's mobilizations and remedial classes were found to be the most effective forms of interventions to motivate girls to join schools and give continuation in education. The transformation of the learning hubs to community learning centers has been well appreciated by the girls as well as the community as it will give them a chance to engage as a group and conduct peer to peer learning. The attitude of the parents to give continuity to their girl's education, and support them in household chores were the factors contributing to the increase in learning, and their awareness on early marriage and importance of education were found to be evident as the parent are willing to let the girls complete at least high school education. The project's goal was to improve school learning environments and teaching quality by increasing school accessibility and teacher competence. Although classroom observations led to the adoption of learner-friendly teaching approaches, qualitative conversations highlighted the need to prepare instructors to help students with disabilities in the classroom through the availability of special educators in each school. The School Improvement Plan was inclusive as 75% of the 24 schools visited have plans and policies for gender and social inclusion. This can be attributed to the various efforts to strengthen the schools and local government through capacity building training. Most of the girls who have learnt the vocational skills have started earning or are planning to expand their business who already started. It has been suggested to bridge the gap between the market and the community for maintaining the career that many girls have decided to start but are unsure about the market access.

The focus on providing rehabilitation services, home modifications, and assistive devices has been effective in enhancing the physical development of these children, with an overall improvement of 8%. However, there are still areas of concern, such as language development and art, sports, and entertainment, which require further attention and interventions. It is important to continue working closely with parents and caregivers to identify the specific needs of these children and develop tailored action plans to improve their overall quality of life.

1. Background of the project

Project Context

Education is prioritized as a part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is the education goal which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." In line with

the goal, the government of Nepal has been implementing the School Sector Development Program (SSDP 2016 to 2023) to improve the access to education for all and strengthen quality, accessibility, and affordability. In addition, a new School Education Sector Plan (2022 to 2032) has also been formulated to strengthen the education sector. However, there are still many challenges including high drop-out rates, absenteeism, and repetition of grades that hinder goal achievement. 4.9 per cent of children aged 5 to 12 remain out of school in the country. Challenges persists in learners completing their schooling with only 76.6 per cent finishing basic education[1]. While there has been improvement in the school enrolment rate, challenges persist for students in completing high school. Inclusive education is another major area that needs to be worked on to retain admitted students at school. There is a lack of support services for girls with disabilities or functional limitation as well as socio cultural norms and lack of awareness that places a low priority on education in addition to poorly equipped educators and educational institutions to support the needs of OOS girls and girls with disabilities. The projects focus to empower the marginalized girls and children with disability to address the major socio-cultural norms that acts as a barrier to education. The project has been working on creating a disability friendly infrastructure, training teachers on disability friendly teaching pedagogy. Some of the interventions for disability friendly infrastructures are support in building ramps, accessible toilets as well as accessible infrastructure. Despite major policies being developed gaps in their implementation remain. This is largely due to the various barriers that hinder access to education at both the household and community level.

VSO has been implementing the Empowering a New Generation of Adolescent Girls with Education (ENGAGE) project, with funding from FCDO UK under the Girls Education Challenge (GEC)programme, since 2019 along with its consortium partner Humanity & Inclusion (HI). VSO's ENGAGE project sought to empower 2525 highly marginalised, out-of-school girls including those with disabilities through education across three underserved districts in Nepal's Terai region. This was done through equipping targeted girls with tangible and transferable skills for better decision-making, more active roles in family decisions and the pursuit of their economic

[1] School Education Sector Plan

opportunities. The project achieved this through various interventions at key levels; schools, community, local government as well as parents. Furthermore, peer-support for adolescent girls, community interventions, social support for families of children with disabilities, and structured training for teachers and mentors were also conducted. In addition, ENGAGE focused on inclusivity including support to the Government of Nepal to adopt new standards in disability assessment and identification.

Project beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the project are marginalized out-of-school (OOS) girls and girls with disability aged 10-19. The project had targeted 2,525 girls to be directly benefited from the project. Among the total girls identified, 1,313 were within the age group 10-14 and 1,212 were within the age group 15-19. In addition, among the total beneficiaries, 57% had never been to school whereas 43% had been to school but dropped out. Concerning ENGAGE's interventions, the project catered to three major subgroups.

i) girls between ages 10-14 who were only focused on learning interventions.
ii) girls between ages 15-19 who could select between learning interventions or interventions directed to their employment or businesses or both.
iii) girls with severe disabilities who were provided with support for performing their daily activities independently.

Different project interventions and approaches were planned for the specific categories of the beneficiaries. For the girls aged 10 to 14, the project supported them in learning through bridge classes and transitioning them directly to school in line with the government policies. For the girls aged above 14 years of age, a suitable transition path was identified through Personalized Social Support (PSS) which identified three options for transitions: bridge class to formal schooling, bridge class to livelihood /employment options and lastly direct to livelihood. The OOS male siblings of the targeted girls also received learning interventions along with the boys with disabilities. Moreover, to strengthen the schools to accommodate girls and boys with disabilities, professional development training has been provided to the teachers regarding child-friendly, gender-friendly and disability-friendly pedagogical practices. In the intervention schools, the teachers received capacity-building training on inclusive education focusing on disability accessibility and a disability-friendly working environment. Furthermore, parental education was also provided especially focusing on the education of girls, Gender-Based Violence, Adult Youth Sexual Reproductive Health (AYSRH), children with disability and child protection. In addition, the intervention schools were also supported in building disability-friendly infrastructure, capacity-building training on formulating a School Improvement Plan (SIP) and support in the functionalization of Complaint Response Mechanisms (CRM). Other key interventions during the project period included:

- Remedial Support Classes
- Distance Teaching Learning Methods
- PFA training for teachers
- Big Sisters Mentoring and Coaching
- Set up girl's livelihoods transition fund (micro-grants)

- Preparatory class for children with hearing and visual impairment
- Home Modification and Physical Rehabilitation therapy
- Awareness Raising Activities
- Preparatory and Bridge classes
- Collaboration with local government to implement the school reopening guideline
- Assistive Devices/ mobility aids for children with disability

In addition, interventions on the policy level were also conducted for system strengthening, policy advocacy and sustainability. One of the most significant supports was provided to the municipalities' offices on education policy planning along with training regarding climate change and women empowerment. Girls Inclusive Education Network (GIEN) was also formulated at the provincial level and was provided with capacity-building training. Furthermore, province and federal-level policy dialogue for GIEN were also conducted as a part of the intervention.

Table 1: Direct project beneficiaries by intervention

	Age	Number of beneficiaries	Major Intervention
OOS marginalized girls and girls with functional limitation	Age within 10-14 years Age within 15-19 years	2525	Bridge class PSS Transition into formal school or life skills In the case of formal school: Remedial support for struggling students in formal school In the case of life skill/vocational training: Financial literacy and business skills training Micro grant for small-scale business start-up
OOS girls and boys with severe disability	Age within 10-19 years	94	PSS Assistive devices Minimum Intervention (details in activities)
OOS functional limitation girls and drop out above grade 5	Age 15-19 years	60	PSS Financial literacy and business skills training Micro grant for small-scale business start-up Vocational training

	Age	Number of beneficiaries	Major Intervention
OOS girls and boys with hearing and visual impairments	Age within 10-19 years	40 (23 Hearing Impairment, 17 Visual Impairment)	Preparatory class Bridge class PSS Transition into formal or life skills Assistive devices If transition in formal school: Remedial support for struggling students in formal education If transition is life skills: Financial literacy and business skills training (if they are eligible and interested in life skills) Vocational training Micro grant

The following table shows the summary of direct and indirect beneficiaries of ENGAGE project.

Table 2: Summary of direct beneficiaries

Direct beneficiary numbers	Total figures
Total number of girls reached in cohort 1	2525 (OOS Marginalized and girls with functional limitation)
Total number of girls expected to reach by end of project	2525 (Being single cohort project, the cohort will be same at the end)
Education level	Proportion of total direct beneficiaries (%)
Never been to school	57
Been to school but dropped out.	43
Age banding	Proportion of total direct beneficiaries (%)
10 – 14	43
15 - 19	57

Table 3: Intervention pathways

Intervention pathway	Which girls follow this pathway?	How many girls followed this pathway by the end of the project?	How long will the intervention last?	How many cohorts are there?	What literacy and numeracy levels are the girls starting at?	What does success look like for learning?	What does success look like for Transition?
Formal school	Age between 10-14 years and 15-19 years	1,064 transitioned to school 995 remained in school by the end of February 2023.	Till the project end	Single	N/A	Improves literacy and numeracy	Transition to formal school after bridge class
Entrepreneurship	Age between 15-19 years (After PSS approach)	888 This includes 92 children with disabilities	Till the project end	Single	N/A	Increase the financial, self-efficacy and life skills level	After bridge class, they will transit into entrepreneurship or life skills
Minimum Intervention	Age between 10-19 years	94 (Children with Severe disabilities)	Till the project end	Single	N/A	Improve daily life activities	They will be receiving minimum intervention support

Table 4: Indirect beneficiary groups

Group	Interventions received	Total number
Boys with functional limitation	Remedial Support class, Community Awareness activities, assistive devices, PSS	118
Total big sisters	Approx. 33% in each three districts, PSS, Mentoring and Coaching, GBV training	400
National Volunteers	Training on Mentoring/coaching, AYSRH, literacy and numeracy training, Gender responsive training	9 (5 Male, 4 Female)
Community Mobilizers	Training on Mentoring/coaching, AYSRH, literacy and numeracy, Gender responsive training, PSS	18 (6 Male, 12 Female)
Teachers/ Educators	Training on inclusive pedagogy and orientation on appropriate mediums of instruction	309(185 Male, 124 Female)
Parents/care givers	Parents/careers of enrolled girls will receive support through linkages with livelihoods programmers' provision of training/assistive devices if their child is disabled, and support to understand the rights of Children with disabilities, parenting education training.	4120 (2060 Female, 2060 Male)
Community members	Awareness Raising activities	5500
Duty Bearers	Duty bearers, including elected municipal and district education and livelihood officers, and women and children officers, will be directly involved in consultations	314
Service Providers	Service Providers, including transport, health and social welfare workers, TVET and other livelihood services and district	143
Other in-school girls	in 203 schools (Remedial support class and WGQs)	13,365
Other in-school boys	in 203 schools (Remedial Support class and WGQs)	12,816

Theory of change

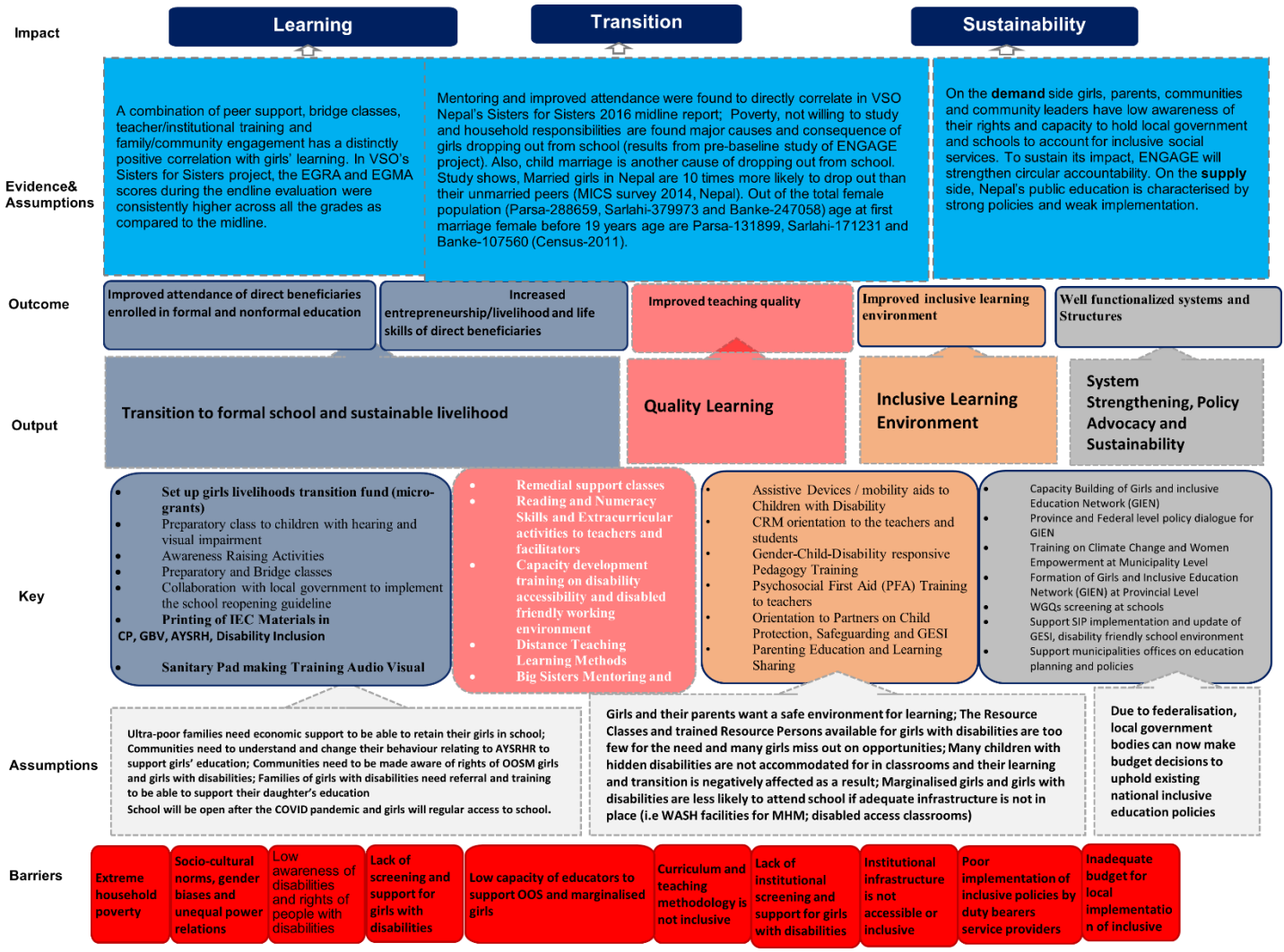
In the project districts, Banke, Parsa and Sarlahi, ENGAGE envisioned delivering a positive impact on the marginalized OOS girls in terms of their learning, transition, and sustainability. ENGAGE's theory of change was based on the evidence gathered from VSO's Sisters for Sisters project, where the EGRA and EGMA scores during the endline evaluation were consistently higher across all the grades as compared to the midline. This result was similar to this project as the average scores were significantly higher at endline compared to the baseline and midline scores. The project's intervention through the big sisters' mentoring approach had also contributed to the learning achievement. According to previous research, household responsibilities, unwillingness to learn, and poverty are all important reasons for girls dropping out of school (results from a pre-baseline study of ENGAGE project). Child marriage is also cited as another cause of dropping out of school. Research shows, married girls in Nepal are 10 times more likely to drop out than their unmarried peers (MICS survey 2014, Nepal).

To address these barriers, the project's theory of change emphasises, learning, transition, and sustainability as the three major outcomes for creating a transformational impact for targeted project girls. The intermediate outcomes are broadly categorised under five headings namely, (1) improved attendance of direct beneficiaries enrolled in formal and informal education, (2) increased entrepreneurship/livelihood and life skills of direct beneficiaries, (3) improved teaching quality, (4) improved inclusive learning environment and (5) well-functioning systems and structures. The key assumptions made on the learning was that both peer support and bridge classes would support girls learning when family and community engagement was encouraged, and teachers' training was conducted.

The main objectives for the ENGAGE project are to:

- Empower out-of-school marginalized and girls with disabilities through formal/non-formal education or employment by providing them with the support to pursue suitable transition pathways.
- Improve parental attitude and support towards marginalized girls with and without disabilities by engaging parents on girls' education and vocational skills, parenting education focusing more on right to education, child protection and safeguarding, gender-based violence and AYSRH.
- Improve attendance of girls with disabilities and marginalized girls in formal/non-formal education by mobilizing community volunteers mentoring approach, developing teacher capacity, and parent/community support.
- Improve teaching quality by enhancing learner-centred pedagogical practices, which include inclusive education, gender responsive pedagogy and child safeguarding practice.

- Promote inclusiveness in learning facilities by working with SMCs and PTAs to make schools more inclusive and improve safeguarding policies.


Impact
Learning
Transition
Sustainability
Evidence& Assumptions
A combination of peer support, bridge classes, teacher/institutional training and family/community engagement has a distinctly positive correlation with girls' learning. In VSO's Sisters for Sisters project, the EGRA and EGMA scores during the endline evaluation were consistently higher across all the grades as compared to the midline.
Mentoring and improved attendance were found to directly correlate in VSO Nepal's Sisters for Sisters 2016 midline report; Poverty, not willing to study and household responsibilities are found major causes and consequence of girls dropping out from school (results from pre-baseline study of ENGAGE project). Also, child marriage is another cause of dropping out from school. Study shows, Married girls in Nepal are 10 times more likely to drop out than their unmarried peers (MICS survey 2014, Nepal). Out of the total female population (Parsa-288659, Sarlahi-379973 and Banke-247058) age at first marriage female before 19 years age are Parsa-131899, Sarlahi-171231 and Banke-107560 (Census-2011).
On the demand side girls, parents, communities and community leaders have low awareness of their rights and capacity to hold local government and schools to account for inclusive social services. To sustain its impact, ENGAGE will strengthen circular accountability. On the supply side, Nepal's public education is characterised by strong policies and weak implementation.
Outcome
Improved attendance of direct beneficiaries enrolled in formal and nonformal education
Increased entrepreneurship/livelihood and life skills of direct beneficiaries
Improved teaching quality
Improved inclusive learning environment
Well functionalized systems and Structures
Output
Transition to formal school and sustainable livelihood
Quality Learning
Inclusive Learning Environment
System Strengthening, Policy Advocacy and Sustainability
Key
Set up girls livelihoods transition fund (micro-grants)
Preparatory class to children with hearing and visual impairment
Awareness Raising Activities
Preparatory and Bridge classes
Collaboration with local government to implement the school reopening guideline
Printing of IEC Materials in CP, GBV, AYSRH, Disability Inclusion
Sanitary Pad making Training Audio Visual
Remedial support classes
Reading and Numeracy Skills and Extracurricular activities to teachers and facilitators
Capacity development training on disability accessibility and disabled friendly working environment
Distance Teaching Learning Methods
Big Sisters Mentoring and
Assistive Devices / mobility aids to Children with Disability
CRM orientation to the teachers and students
Gender-Child-Disability responsive Pedagogy Training
Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) Training to teachers
Orientation to Partners on Child Protection, Safeguarding and GESI
Parenting Education and Learning Sharing
Capacity Building of Girls and inclusive Education Network (GIEN)
Province and Federal level policy dialogue for GIEN
Training on Climate Change and Women Empowerment at Municipality Level
Formation of Girls and Inclusive Education Network (GIEN) at Provincial Level
WGQs screening at schools
Support SIP implementation and update of GESI, disability friendly school environment
Support municipalities offices on education planning and policies
Assumptions
Ultra-poor families need economic support to be able to retain their girls in school; Communities need to understand and change their behaviour relating to AYSRHR to support girls' education; Communities need to be made aware of rights of OOSM girls and girls with disabilities; Families of girls with disabilities need referral and training to be able to support their daughter's education
School will be open after the COVID pandemic and girls will regular access to school.
Girls and their parents want a safe environment for learning; The Resource Classes and trained Resource Persons available for girls with disabilities are too few for the need and many girls miss out on opportunities; Many children with hidden disabilities are not accommodated for in classrooms and their learning and transition is negatively affected as a result; Marginalised girls and girls with disabilities are less likely to attend school if adequate infrastructure is not in place (i.e WASH facilities for MHM; disabled access classrooms)
Due to federalisation, local government bodies can now make budget decisions to uphold existing national inclusive education policies
Barriers
Extreme household poverty
Socio-cultural norms, gender biases and unequal power relations
Low awareness of disabilities and rights of people with disabilities
Lack of screening and support for girls with disabilities
Low capacity of educators to support OOS and marginalised girls
Curriculum and teaching methodology is not inclusive
Lack of institutional screening and support for girls with disabilities
Institutional infrastructure is not accessible or inclusive
Poor implementation of inclusive policies by duty bearers service providers
Inadequate budget for local implementation of inclusive

3. Endline Evaluation approach and Methodology

The theory of change for the ENGAGE project envisions empowerment of its target beneficiaries through improved teaching in the classroom and upon completion transition into formal education or the livelihood pathway for economic improvement. The project worked with marginalized girls, their parents, teachers, community members, and the local government to achieve the required result. This Endline Evaluation has been conducted to understand the impact of its key interventions and assess progress against set outcomes. The research seeks to address the following:

- What is the impact of GEC funding on the transition of highly marginalized girls in the project's operational areas and what is the status of these beneficiaries at closure? What new challenges to the learning and transition of girls have emerged and how have they been addressed or mitigated? Has the project achieved value for money in terms of delivery of activities with speed, and quality, and at a reasonable cost? or could implementation have been done at a quicker lower cost?
- Has the project been able to identify and assess the barriers faced by marginalized out-of-school (OOS) girls and girls with functional disabilities for learning and transition.
- Test the project's Theory of Change and generate necessary evidence on project intervention
- Explore local government's possibilities to replicate the best practices of ENGAGE program on girls' education (not limited to OOS and CWD) from the municipality. If yes, do they have the capacity to undertake this or not?
- What impact did the project have on the transition of marginalized OOS girls and those with disabilities in small-scale business and livelihood?
- Which aspects of the project worked best and what did not? What could have been better? What were the unintended outcomes of the project, if any?
- What works to facilitate the transition of marginalized OOS girls and those with disabilities through skill development interventions and increase their employability? Will they be able to continue in the absence of project support?

Overall Evaluation Design

The evaluation of the project focused on an approach that helped to measure and see changes that could be rigorously contributed to by project interventions. Therefore, the project adopted the pre-post design allowing the project to measure the changes in the outcomes because of project interventions.

The evaluation for ENGAGE was guided by a longitudinal mixed methods approach, which was tested across the three evaluation points- baseline, midline, and endline across a four year implementation period. As the project worked with the girls in a single cohort, the same sample of girls was tracked at subsequent evaluation points. A joint sampling approach was employed for data collection as the same girl sampled for learning was also assessed for transition. This implied that the same girl was sampled at school or in resource class at home. In regard to the household survey, the sample girls' households were surveyed.

Data Collection Process

The evaluator has used both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather the data and evidence for the endline evaluation. While quantitative tools provided numerical measurement of the assessments during the end phase of the project, qualitative tools focused on the experiences and the context. A semi-sequential approach was carried out for the data collection, where the quantitative data was collected first to understand the areas of inquiry for the qualitative data collection. This method allowed for the comprehensive contextual analysis of the factors that affected the trends as shown by the quantitative data.

Establishing a relationship between IOs and outcomes

The project had outlined the assumptions linking the overall outcome to the intermediate outcomes (IOs) as mentioned in its theory of change. The MEL framework of ENGAGE discusses the factors that directly affect transition outcomes. Extreme household poverty, socio-cultural norms, gender biases, and unequal power relations have led to girls dropping out of school. Other contributory factors such as the age of the girls, low capacity of educators to support out of schools (OOS) and marginalized girls, curriculum and teaching methodology not being inclusive, institutional infrastructure not being accessible or inclusive, poor implementation of inclusive policies and a limited budget for local implementation of these policies are also important issues for girls to remain in schools.

In the endline evaluation, the level of parental engagement was assessed alongside the tendency of girls going to school based on the willingness and actions taken by parents concerning

investment in their children's education, knowledge, attitude, and perception towards girls' education. The qualitative findings assessed the attitude of parents towards the education and employment of girls. The relationship of the transition outcomes with factors such as poverty, household chores, willingness to study, age, marriage, and other forms of support extended to girls was also found to be relevant to assess in the endline evaluation.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) standards

The data collection tools ensured that the tools covered the questions relevant to GESI while also ensuring that the language of the tools was gender and culturally sensitive. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematical Assessment (EGMA) tests were verified by the Education Review Office (ERO).

The evaluation provided attention to ensure representativeness in terms of ethnicity and age while selecting the sample during baseline. The sample was designed to represent the actual target population, girls across different age groups. The same cohort of girls was tracked during the endline evaluation and was administered with the Girls' survey and EGRA and EGMA. The parents or the primary caregiver of project girls completed the household survey questionnaire.

In terms of data collection, enumerators who had language proficiency in the local language were recruited to understand the language of communication. As the girls' survey compromised of questions on sensitive topics, like, AYRSH, for which the girls would not be able to open with male enumerators, only female enumerators were assigned to interview the girls. Also, for the qualitative data collection, female researchers were assigned for conducting any interaction with girls.

In terms of the assessment of functional limitations in girls, the project employed the same set of Washington Group Module on Child Functioning consisting of 24 questions in the household during the baseline, midline and endline evaluation. The project team carried out a detailed orientation on the long set of questions to the EE team during the endline evaluation. The External Evaluator (EE) was well-equipped in administering the WGQCF. The trained evaluators and VSO staff carried out the training for enumerators in the endline study. Most of the enumerators were selected who had previously administered the WGQCF.

WGQCF was included in the household survey to which the primary caregiver of the intervention girls responded. The extended set of 24 questions assessed child functioning across these domains- visual, hearing, mobility, cognition, affect (anxiety and depression), pain, fatigue, communication, and upper body functioning. The test further addressed functioning with and without the use of devices/aids, where applicable. As per the WGQCF guideline, the girls with

disabilities followed the criteria of “cannot do at all” or “a lot of difficulties”. For the girls with functional limitations, in addition to this, the criteria of “some difficulty” were also considered. Hence, girls with functional limitations entailed the girls who have checked in either “cannot do at all”, “a lot of difficulties” or “some difficulty”.

Evaluation adherence to log frame and MEL framework

The endline evaluation was guided by the log frame and MEL framework. There were no changes in the sample size since the same cohort of girls was tracked during the endline evaluation. However, attrition and replacement were the factors in consideration while tracing the same cohort of girls in the project intervention areas.

Evaluation Ethics

Ethical standards were maintained by the EE from planning and data collection, data analysis, storage and report writing and dissemination to ensure quality of research. The evaluation team followed strict research ethics, ensuring that it operated using agreed standards whilst upholding the principle of fairness and respect. The key ethical principles of fairness, transparency and confidentiality were adhered to in the process.

The EE also assured technical and professional inputs from both VSO ENGAGE team and the GEC Fund Manager were taken to maintain the quality of research standards. Reviews were assured in quantitative and qualitative checklists as well as the data collection plan. The EE was committed to taking great care when involving vulnerable individuals, especially from marginalized communities and girls with disabilities. Necessary policies and protocols relating to child protection and safeguarding to protect participants from exploitation and abuse during research and assessment activities were strictly adhered too. The research field team were well-trained on ethical considerations and made accountable and responsible while initiating the fieldwork for the endline in the intervention areas

Quantitative Evaluation Methodology

Quantitative Evaluation Tools

Tool Name	Relevant Indicators
EGRA	Outcome 1: Learning Literacy

EGMA	Outcome 1: Learning Numeracy
Girls Survey	Outcome 2: Transition IO2: Increased life skills of OOS, disabled and marginalized girls
Household Survey	Outcome 2: Transition IO3: Increased parental support to girl's education and employment or business
School Observation	IO4: Improved teaching quality (Teachers adopt child safeguarding practice and gender-responsive pedagogy)
SIP Assessment	IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school
Disability-friendly Infrastructure Assessment	IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school

Enumerators

Enumerators who were aware of the context and local language were selected for all three districts, Parsa, Sarlahi and Banke. The enumerators were selected from the EE's available pool and those who were familiar with the project, the locations of the households and the survey questions were prioritized for recruitment for this research. The enumerators selected had prior knowledge and experience in administering the quantitative tools. The girls' survey was administered by female enumerators whereas the household survey was administered by male enumerators. One Field Supervisor was recruited in each district to coordinate with the enumerators. These Field Supervisors were assigned with the primary responsibility of ensuring the quality of data collected by the enumerators as well as ensuring that the research ethics were being followed by the enumerators along with field coordination and planning.

After the selection of enumerators, the EE organized a three-day training event in Kathmandu for the team. The training provided an in-depth knowledge to the quantitative team about the project, the endline evaluation including the WGQCF. The enumerators were also oriented on quantitative tools – learning tests (EGRA and EGMA), Household Survey, Girl Survey, classroom observation and disability-friendly infrastructure assessment. The training also helped enumerators to get acquainted the enumerators with child safeguarding policies and the basic etiquettes to be maintained during the data collection. In the last day of training, evaluation team conducted a mock survey with each other, which helped the participants to be familiar with the

questions and identify the challenges. The challenges they faced during the mock session were discussed and provided with proper strategies to mitigate those challenges. Their feedback on the questions were noted and minor changes related to skipping logic were noted and were changed accordingly. After the completion of three days of training, the enumerators were mobilized to the field.

Quantitative Data Collection

Timing and during of the quantitative data collection

Quantitative data collection was collected simultaneously in all the three project districts.

Quality assurance of quantitative data

Firstly, the three-day training to the enumerators was helpful to lay down the specifics of the requirement on the quality of data. Secondly, the data for girls and household survey were collected digitally which allowed FDM team to ensure real time monitoring. The Field Supervisor ensured data quality and provided feedback and ensured that the enumerators followed the field protocols and back-checking. The unique codes were rechecked by field supervisor and research coordinator on a regular basis and relevant feedback and suggestions were forwarded whenever deemed necessary.

Quantitative data cleaning and storage

The endline data for girls and households was carried out on a digital platform. All the data was verified and uploaded on the server firsthand by the field enumerators. A unique code was assigned during data collection to the girls who were surveyed for girls' survey, learning test and the same code was used for the household survey of the same girl. The process of data cleaning commenced when all the data was exported to excel.

The endline data for girls and households was collected using a digital platform and a unique code was assigned to each girl. The data cleaning process involved steps such as frequency analysis, appending missing data, standardizing data, arranging variables in order, checking for coding errors, ensuring correct variable measures, and conducting frequency analysis again. Spelling errors and typos were checked and vague responses were given numeric values. Learning tests were carried out on paper and checked for unnatural responses, with a double-entry mechanism and backup database maintained to mitigate data loss risks.

Quantitative data analysis

Following the data cleaning after the quantitative data collection, a preliminary analysis was carried out through SPSS to identify the trend of findings. The analysis helped to identify the areas which needed to be further explained and explored through qualitative consultations. The findings of the preliminary analysis were very helpful in adapting the qualitative checklist based on the outcomes and the intermediate outcomes accordingly.

Furthermore, the research team carried out the field-based debriefing session with field supervisors after the completion of field level data collection. This session was useful to make sense of the contextual aspects and the situation of girls and households.

Descriptive statistical techniques including frequency measurement, central tendency measurements and measurement of dispersion or variability were carried out during the analysis phase. For the factors that required relationship assessment, normality test using both box plot and bell curve was conducted. This allowed for the identification of outliers and check for skewness. This also helped in determining the suitable tests for the variables.

The findings were also segregated by the intervention subgroup and characteristic subgroup wherever applicable. The project had identified age- 10-14 and 15-19 as the major intervention subgroup. Within the sample girls, girls from subgroups mentioned below were of further interest to the project, as girls from these groups were more vulnerable and at risk to educational marginalization. The subgroups include:

- Girls living without both parents
- Girls living in household headed by a female
- Girls from poor households
- Girls whose mother tongue is different from the language of instruction at schools
- Girls from households whose head has never been to school

Learning Tests

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematical Assessment (EGMA) were used to measure the learning outcomes of the project. EGRA is a custom-built literacy assessment framework containing sub-tasks which evaluates the literacy skills of students in various aspects. Likewise, EGMA is a custom-built numeracy assessment framework containing sub-tasks which evaluate the numeracy skills of students. Both the comprehensive learning assessment tools have different levels of difficulty of the subtasks with the difficulty level increasing following each subtask. For the evaluation of the ENGAGE project, five different versions of the tools were prepared as prescribed by the GEC learning test guidance and referred to the Education Review Office approved tools. It was ensured that the tests aligned to the content and style of teaching

in bridge classes taught in schools. The tests were developed in Nepali since the language of instruction in the schools in the project intervention areas is Nepali.

The five versions were then piloted for testing and calibration to finalize the learning assessment tools which have questions that are age specific and appropriate. The tools were checked for the potential ceiling and floor effects. After finalization, the learning tests were administered to the beneficiary girls who were currently attending schools in all three intervention districts.

The following table discusses five subtasks for learning tests and the factors included in the test.

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)	SUBTASK	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA)
Comprehension: This section has a comprehension passage to be read out aloud by the enumerators. Girls taking tests are required to listen to the passage and answer five simple questions based on the test.	1	Number identification: The section had random 20 numbers up to 2 digits to be identified by girls in a minute. The girls were scored for this subtask based on the correct numbers they identified in a minute.
Letter identification: There are hundred random Nepali letters which the girls are expected to identify. The score is provided based on alphabets that they are able to identify correctly in a minute.	2	Larger number identification: This subtask had ten questions in which the girls were required to find out the larger number among the two numbers in each question. They were scored by the number of correct answers that they gave.
Symbol identification: There are hundred Nepali alphabets associated with symbols that gives a different sound in the letters in the subtask. The score is provided like the Subtask 2.	3	Missing number identification: There were ten questions in this section. In each question, there were three numbers and the girls were required to fill in the missing fourth number which were spanned by equal intervals.
Word identification: There are 50 simple words commonly used in the project intervention areas. The girls are expected to read the words correctly. The score is provided based on words that they are able to correctly read in a minute.	4	Addition and subtraction: There were ten addition and ten subtraction questions in the section from the logic of simple to complex within one and two digits. The girls were scored by number of correct answers provided.
Reading and comprehension: This is the most complex subtask out of all in the EGRA test. The girls are expected to read the passage and further answer questions based on the text that they have read. The test measures the word read out correctly in a minute and the number of correct answers they can provide	5	Word problem: There were six word problems in the section which required girls to perform simple mathematical calculations including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The girls were scored based on the correct answers that they provide in the section.

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)	SUBTASK	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA)
among the five questions based on the passage.		

For EGRA, girls who took the test were allowed to stop a subtask and move to the next task if they were not able to read out any of the letters/words correctly from the first row of a subtask. While in EGMA, girls were allowed to stop the subtask if they were not able to answer similar nature of questions in a subtask. For example, if a girl was not able to perform addition, they were asked to try the subtraction questions. If she was not able to perform any of the two then she was asked to go for the next subtask. These instructions were clearly outlined to the enumerators.

For scoring, all the individual marks obtained by each girl in each subtask was converted into percentage in both tests. These scores were added and divided by the number of subtasks in each subtask. For EGMA, the sum of score obtained by a girl in each subtask was divided by 5 to get the average EGMA score. For EGRA however, although the number of subtasks appear to be five, there are two tasks within the subtask 5 which involves them to read out the passage based on which the word per minute is assessed while also answering the questions based on the comprehension passage read out. This implied that the sum of the individual score of each subtask was divided by six.

Quantitative sample selection

Out of the total beneficiary population of 2525 identified by the project, the EE retained the same sample size as achieved during the baseline and midline. The midline sample size retained during the endline, as presented below, followed the GEC recommended criteria of 95% confidence level, 80% power and 30% attrition buffer. Learning tests and girls' survey were administered to the girls while household survey was administered to the household of sampled girls.

Apart from the girls and household, schools were also assessed during the quantitative data collection. Schools were assessed for the teaching quality as well as the safeguarding practices and its sustainability. School Improvement Plan checklist, Disability-friendly infrastructure assessment checklist and classroom observation were administered in schools for the purpose.

Tool name	Sample achieved in Baseline	Midline evaluation sample (Based on sample achieved during baseline)	Endline evaluation sample (Based on sample achieved during Endline)	Remarks on why the sample achieved in endline is different than midline
Learning tests (EGRA and EGMA)	496	496 (10-14) – 254 (15-19) – 242	496	
Girls survey	530	530	671	
Household survey	529	530	671	
SIP assessment	30	22	31	NA
Disability infrastructure assessment	30	22	29	Few observations could not be done due to closure of schools
Classroom observation tool	26	22	19	Limited number of classroom observations done because of examination and closure of schools

Representativeness of the sample

The evaluation team made a conscious attempt to ensure the representativeness of the sample which is reflected in the following tables.

By intervention pathways, the project intervened in the two broad age groups of 10-14 and 15-19. The girls within the age group 10-14 were enrolled into formal education after bridge class. Girls within the age group 15-19 were enrolled either into formal education or participated in skill development training and then got into employment. In terms of districts, the project intervened in three districts in Terai- Sarlahi, Parsa and Banke. Banke had a slightly higher proportion followed by Parsa and Sarlahi. The girls who had the two levels of difficulty- “a lot of difficulties” and “cannot do at all” were disaggregated by the domains of difficulty. Overall, 5.5% girls were stated to have at least “a lot of difficulty” in either of the difficulty domains outlined.

Table 5: Sample breakdown by intervention pathways

Intervention pathway	Sample proportion of intervention group
Girls within age group (10-14) who enrolled into formal education after bridge class	32.3
Girls within age group (15-19) who enrolled into formal education or skill development training and employment	67.7.
Source: Girls survey	
N= 671	

Table 6: Sample breakdown by regions

District	Sample proportion of intervention group
Sarlahi	30.7
Parsa	35.0
Banke	34.3
Source: Girl's survey	
N= 671	

The mean age of sample girls in the endline sample was 16 years with most of the girls being 16 years of age (16.1%) as shown in table 7. The major difference in the sample composition by age is caused by girl's age growth from baseline to endline and due to the attrition of the sample. While a one-to-one replacement strategy was used, the two age groups 10-14 and 15-19 tried to match rather than the exact age of the girls.

Table 7 Sample breakdown by age

Age	Sample proportion of intervention group BL	Sample proportion of intervention group ML	Sample proportion of intervention group EL
Aged <10	0	0	0
Aged 10	6.98	0.6	0
Aged 11	6.23	0.8	3.6

Aged 12	12.45	6.6	6.6
Aged 13	13.58	8.9	7.3
Aged 14	11.89	13.2	14.9
Aged 15	17.92	16.2	14.5
Aged 16	12.45	14.3	16.1
Aged 17	8.11	19.6	10.4
Aged 18	5.85	7.4	12.1
Aged 19	4.34	7.2	5.2
Aged 20+	0	5.3	9.4
Unknown	0.19	-	0.0
Source: Girls survey			
N= 671			

Challenges in endline data collection and limitations of the evaluation design

The biggest challenge was attrition, which stood at 45.33 % at endline. A one-to-one replacement strategy was applied to compensate for the lost sample. Hence, a total of 308 girls were added as a top-up sample to the original sample.

Cohort group	Baseline sample (n)	Midline sample (total) (n)	Endline sample (Total) (n)	Endline (recontacted) (n)	Endline attrition (%)
[Cohort 1]	530	530	671		45.33

Qualitative evaluation methodology

Qualitative data collection tools

Table 8: Qualitative tools

Tool name	Relevant indicator(s)
Focused Group Discussion (FGD) with girls aged 10-14 and 15-19	Outcome 1: Learning Literacy and numeracy Outcome 2: Transition IO2: Increased life skills of OOS and marginalized girls IO3: Increased parental support for girls' education and employment or business
FGD with parents	Outcome 1: Learning Literacy and numeracy Outcome 2: Transition IO2: Increased life skills of OOS and marginalized girls IO3: Increased parental support for girls' education and employment or business
FGD with big sisters	Outcome 1: Learning Literacy and numeracy Outcome 2: Transition IO2: Increased life skills of OOS and marginalized girls IO3: Increased parental support for girls' education and employment or business
FGD with school girls	Outcome 1: Learning Literacy and numeracy Outcome 2: Transition IO2: Increased life skills of OOS and marginalized girls

	IO3: Increased parental support for girls' education and employment or business
KII with Teachers	Outcome1: Learning Literacy and numeracy Outcome 2: Transition IO4: Improved teaching quality (teachers adopt child safeguarding practice and gender responsive pedagogy) IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school
KII with head teachers	Outcome 2: Transition IO4: Improved teaching quality (teachers adopt child safeguarding practice and gender responsive pedagogy) IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school Sustainability: Schools scoring acceptable or above in disability infrastructure sustainability assessment Schools demonstrating acceptable or above in teacher training sustainability assessment Schools demonstrating acceptable or above in implementation of SIP sustainability assessment
KII with GEIN representative	Outcome 1: Learning Literacy and Numeracy Outcome 2: Transition IO3: Increased parental support for girls' education and employment or business IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school Sustainability: Sustainability of project Interventions
KII with Municipal Education Official	Outcome 1: Learning Literacy and numeracy Outcome 2: Transition

	IO4: Improved teaching quality (teachers adopt child safeguarding practice and gender responsive pedagogy) IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school Sustainability: Schools scoring acceptable or above in disability infrastructure sustainability assessment Schools demonstrating acceptable or above in teacher training sustainability assessment Schools demonstrating acceptable or above in implementation of SIP sustainability assessment Municipality having functional database system with disability and marginalized girls' education planning
Disability Based Network	Sustainability: Well-functionalization of disability-friendly infrastructures Providing security allowances and disability cards to PwD.

Qualitative sample selection and sample sizes

After analyzing the preliminary trends of findings from the quantitative approach, the areas that needed further exploration were identified by the evaluation team. Based on the questions that emerged, the evaluation team mapped suitable stakeholders. The MEL framework, which had outlined the quantitative sample, was taken into consideration while mapping the stakeholders and the number of consultations. Therefore, the qualitative sample groups corresponded with the subgroups and key indirect beneficiaries highlighted in the theory of change.

The girls aged 10-14 and 15-19 were consulted from the project intervention areas. Parents from the same locality were interviewed. GEIN members and local educational officials were also interviewed accordingly. Furthermore, the potential schools from the same locality in which the girls were enrolled were mapped and visited. Teachers and head teachers from these schools met.

Purposive sampling method was adopted to identify research participants in the communities to yield rich information on girls' education and the underlying context in the project intervention areas. Purposive sampling was also useful to ensure representativeness in the qualitative discussions. Primarily, sex, age and ethnicity were the factors that determined the participation of the stakeholders in the qualitative discussions.

The sample size and composition were based mostly as agreed in the MEL framework.

Table 9: Qualitative sample size and composition

Tool (used for which outcome and IO indicator)	**Beneficiary group**	**Sample size**
FGD Outcome 1: Learning - Literacy Outcome 1: Learning - Numeracy Outcome 2: Transition IO2: Increased life skills of OOS disabled and marginalized girls IO3: Increased parental support for girls' education and employment or business IO4: Improved teaching quality (teachers adopt child safeguarding practice and gender responsive pedagogy)	Girls who have transitioned to school Girls who have transitioned vocational training Big Sisters Boys Parents/Primary Caregivers	Girls(10-14 and 15-19) = 12 [4 per district] Girls (15-19) = 6 [2 per district] Big Sisters = 6 [2 per district] Boys =3 [1 per district] Parents/Primary caregivers = 6 [2 per district]
KII Outcome 1: Learning - Literacy	Girls and Inclusive Education Network	Municipal Education Officers = 6 [2 per district]

Tool (used for which outcome and IO indicator)	Beneficiary group	Sample size
Outcome 1: Learning - Numeracy Outcome 2: Transition IO2: Increased life skills of OOS disabled and marginalized girls IO4: Improved teaching quality (teachers adopt child safeguarding practice and gender responsive pedagogy) IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school		Subject teachers (English/ Math/ Nepali) = 7 [1 per palika] Head Teachers = 6 [2 per district] SMC representative =6 [2 per district] Girls and inclusive education network= 6 [2 per district]
Sustainability	People with disability	Project Staff= 3 [1 per district] Disability-Based Network =3 [1 per district]

Qualitative field researchers

The qualitative researchers were deployed from within the EE team for the data collection. Gender balance was ensured while selecting the team members for the study to ensure a comfortable sharing environment for the research participants as the previous experiences of the BL/ML showed that the girls were more comfortable talking to female rather than male researchers, especially when there are questions related to reproductive and sexual health.

The researchers selected from within the team had extensive experience in conducting qualitative consultations with adolescents as well as adult stakeholders including the government. Moreover, at least one member of each team had been previously engaged in

qualitative study for GEC projects. With their experience, they were well-versed in field etiquette and had skills to ensure the active participation and engagement of the research participants.

Before the field mobilization of the researchers, the research coordinator provided a day orientation on the qualitative checklist along with a discussion on the project objectives, log frame and the quantitative finding which informed the areas of inquiry outlined in the qualitative checklist. It was ensured that the researchers internalize the sense of questions and rationale for asking the right question to get rich information from the field.

Qualitative data collection

The endline study adopted a semi-sequential mixed method; hence, the qualitative checklists were informed by the quantitative findings. Qualitative researchers were well acquainted with the quantitative findings and the specific areas to be explored through the qualitative inquiry. The qualitative exercise took place after a week of quantitative data collection. A preliminary analysis was carried out of the quantitative findings and the qualitative checklists were informed accordingly. FGDs and KIIs were carried out with relevant stakeholders in all three districts simultaneously.

Semi-sequencing was adopted where the preliminary findings and analysis of the quantitative data brought about necessary adaptations in the qualitative checklists. After the review and finalization of the qualitative checklists by the FDM, a field-level qualitative exercise was rolled out and inquiries were also drawn from the initial findings. All the interviews and discussions were electronically recorded by the researchers with the consent of the respondents. Every qualitative consultation was initiated with general talks and rapport building and only then research questions were asked when the stakeholders felt comfortable sharing their opinions. At the end of each day, the researchers informed the research coordinator regarding their experience and the type and trend of information they got from different stakeholders and the areas that need to be prioritized and probed when deemed necessary. Researchers' reflections during the qualitative consultations were also recorded. After the qualitative exercises concluded in all the three districts, an extensive debriefing session was held among all the field researchers who shared and discussed their experience, findings, and observations during the qualitative exercise.

4. Key characteristic subgroup and barriers analysis

The project has defined major barriers to learning in its ToC. On the basis of the ToC, the EE has measured the characteristics and barriers in the endline.

Characteristics

Table 10: Characteristics group in educational marginalization

	Baseline sample proportion	Midline sample proportion	Endline sample proportion	Variable Name and Source
Single orphans (not having either one of the parents)	5.09	6.03	7.5	Girls Survey, Intro_6
Double orphans (not having both the parents)	0.37	0.37	0.4	Girls Survey, Intro_6
Living without both parents	2.89	3.58	4.0	Girls Survey, Intro_6
Married	4.5	5.5	5.7	Girls Survey, Intro_5
Mother under 18	1.3	1.9	0.2	Girls Survey, Intro_5b
Mother under 16	0.2	0.56	0	Girls Survey, Intro_5b
Material of the roof (Mud and thatch)	33.71	23.2	21.5	HH Survey, HE_3
Poor household (Unable to meet household needs without charity)	42.2	53.2	16.8	HH Survey, HE_10
Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	3.47	6.6	3.1	HH Survey, HE_11a
Non-Nepali speaking household	92.87	91.7	81.2	HH Survey, GB_6
Girl doesn't speak language of instruction (LoI)	70.33	59.8	40.7	HH Survey, GB_5

Head of household (HoH) has no education	19.46	25.5	77.5	HH Survey, HH_21
Primary caregiver has no education	76.11	62.8	77.6	HH Survey, HH_20
Muslim household	35.8	38.1	52.2	HH Survey, HH_6
Terai Janajati (caste)	25	26.8	27	HH Survey, HH_5
Terai Dalit (caste)	22.7	20	18.5	HH Survey, HH_5
Girls with functional limitation (at least some difficulty in functional limitation)	37.96	19.2	15.6	HH Survey, WG_CF1 to WG_CF24
Children with disability (at least a lot of difficulty in functional limitation)	7.13	5.5	4.2	HH Survey, WG_CF1 to WG_CF24

There had been slight changes in the characteristics of the girls in endline as compared to baseline and midline. These changes might have been due to the variation in sample proportion due to the attrition in sample (which stands at 45.33%). For instance, there were 5.09% of girls who were single orphan in the baseline, 6.03% in the midline but 7.5% in the endline. As most of the girls were found to be living with their parents, the proportion of girls not living with both the parents had changed from 2.89% in the baseline and 3.58% in the midline to 4.0% in the endline. There was a slight rise in the girls who got married. 4.5% were married at baseline, 5.5% at midline and 7.7% at endline. The proportion of girls getting pregnant under 18 years plummeted from 1.3% in the baseline and 1.9% in the midline to 0.2 % in the endline. Remarkably, none of the girls became mother under the age of 16 during endline evaluation. This change might have occurred as an impact of the ASYRH related classes conducted by the project.

Regarding the living situation and economic situation of girls, there were still some households who were poor. Having said that, a significant decrease was seen in the proportion of the poor households. The percentage of households reporting as poor increased from 42.2% in the baseline to 53.2% in the midline but dropped significantly to 16.8% in the endline. The midline evaluation had been conducted amidst the COVID-19 pandemic which had naturally affected household incomes and associated livelihoods. However, during the endline, many of the households had resumed their work and their livelihood had improved. The households that did not speak Nepal language had not changed significantly. However, the girls who did not speak

the official language of instruction had dropped at endline reaching from 59.8 % in the midline to 40.7% in the endline. The Nepali literacy classes might be the contributing factor for this change as the score in EGRA had also been improved. Details on this part will be highlighted in the outcome section.

A notable change was observed in the households' education level. The figure was 19.46% in the baseline and 25.5% in the midline but had increased to 77.5% in the endline. Again, sample replacement might be the major reason for this change. Similarly, more than half the girls belonged to the Muslim household (52.2%) compared to 35.8% during baseline and 38.1% during midline. Only a slight variation can be seen in the ethnic background such as Terai Janajati and Terai Dalit. The representation of Terai Dalit decreased from 20% in the midline to 18.5% at the endline.

Washington Group Questionnaire Child Functioning Module were administered in the household to examine the situation of functional limitation of the girls. There had been a significant decline in the girls with at least some difficulties in functional limitation. While the proportion of girls with functional limitation was 37.96% during baseline and 19.2% during midline, it stood at 15.6% at endline. Likewise, children with disability, especially those who had maximum difficulty in functional limitation, comprised 4.2% at endline.

Barriers

The barriers identified by the project in the ToC were measured in the baseline and midline and based on the findings, the barriers to education were updated in the ToC. As per the updated Toc, the following barriers were measured.

- Extreme household poverty
- Socio-cultural norms, gender biases and unequal power relations
- Low awareness of disabilities and rights of people with disabilities
- Lack of screening and support for girls with disabilities
- Low capacity of educators to support OOS and marginalized girls
- Curriculum and teaching methodology are not inclusive
- Lack of institutional screening and support for girls with disabilities
- Institutional infrastructure is not accessible or inclusive
- Poor implementation of inclusive policies by duty bearers/service providers
- Inadequate budget for local implementation of inclusive policies
- Transportation facilities available to school

The prevalence of these barriers has been measured both qualitatively and quantitatively by the EE.

Table 11: Barriers

Barriers	Percentage			Source
Extreme household poverty	BL	ML	EL	
Gone to sleep at night feeling hungry many days	3.47%(n=519)	6.7% (n=530)	3.1% (n=671)	HH Survey, HE_10
Gone without enough clean water for home use	9.06%(n=519)	10.3%(n=530)	4.4% (n=671)	
Gone without medicines or medical treatment	7.51%(n=519)	13.4%(n=530)	7.2% (n=671)	
Gone without cash income	13.10%(n=519)	29.8%(n=530)	17.3% (n=671)	
Unable to meet basic needs without charity	42.20%(n=519)	53.2%(n=530)	16.8% (n=671)	
Parents reported difficulty to afford for girls to go to school	50.87(n=519)	84.48%(n=530)	76.8%(N=671)	
Low awareness of disabilities and rights of people with disabilities	BL	ML	EL	
HHs that think children with disability do not have right to education even though they are not in school	0.77%(n=519)	0.6%(n=530)	0.9% (n=671)	HH Survey, PA_3
HHs that think children with disability do not have right to employment	6.17%(n=519)	2.1%(n=530)	3% (n=671)	HH Survey, PA_6
Violence in and on the way to school	BL	ML	EL	
Parents who think journey to and from school is unsafe because there might be harassment by other children	7.84% (n=51)	8.7% (n=57)	10.3% (n=29)	HH Survey, EQ_6c.7

Parents who think journey to and from school is unsafe because there might be harassment by adults	3.92% (n=51)	3.5% (n=57)	10.3% (n=29)	HH Survey, EQ_6c.8
Girls who have never attended school stating it is unsafe to travel to and from school	1.23% (n=244)	2.58% (n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.3
Girls who have never attended school stating it is unsafe to be in school	2.05% (n=244)	1.7% (n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.4
Girls who have never attended school stating teachers mistreat at school	1.23%(n=244)	0.86% (n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.11
School drop-out girls stating it is unsafe to travel to and from school	2.10%(n=286)	3.17% (n=126)	1.6% (n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.3
School drop-out girls stating it is unsafe to be in school	3.15%(n=286)	3.96% (n=126)	1.6% (n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.4
School drop-out girls stating it teachers mistreat at school	1.40%(n=286)	1.58% (n=126)	0% (n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.11
Parents who think that their children may be physically harmed or teased at school or on the way to/ from school	22.54% (n=519)	15.8% (n=530)	4.2%(n=671)	HH_Survey, PA_14a
Low capacity of educators to support OOS and marginalized girls	BL	ML	EL	
Parents who stated that the girl is not enrolled in education because teachers do not know how to teach a child like her	2.10%(n=519)	Not measured in midline	Not measured in endline	
Girls who have never been to school stating teachers do not know how to teach	1.20%(n=244)	0.86% (n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.10
School drop-out girls stating teachers do not know how to teach	2.80%(n=286)	0.79% (n=126)	0.8%(n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.10

Curriculum and teaching methodology are not inclusive	BL	ML	EL	
Parents who think school does not meet the physical or learning needs of the child	24.90%(n=519)	Not measured in midline	Not measured in endline	
Parents who said the girl is currently out of school because she needs special services or assistances such as speech therapy	1%(n=519)	Not measured in midline	Not measured in endline	
Parents who said the girl is currently out of school because she needs assistive device/ technology such as braille textbook	0.40%(n=519)	Not measured in midline	Not measured in endline	
Parents who said the girl is currently out of school because the school does not have a program that meets her learning needs	1.20%(n=519)	Not measured in midline	Not measured in endline	
School drop-out girls stating special services or assistances such as speech therapy are not available at school	0.30%(n=286)	2%(n=126)	0.8%(n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.8
School drop-out girls stating that assistive device/ technology such as braille textbook are not available at school	0%(n=286)	0%(n=126)	0%(n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.9
School drop-out girls stating that school does not have a program that meets their learning needs	0.70%(n=286)	2%(n=126)	0.8%(n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.15
Girls who have never attended school stating special services or assistances such as speech therapy are not available at school	2.90%(n=244)	3%(n=116)	4.1%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.8
Girls who have never attended school stating that assistive device/ technology such as braille textbook are not available at school	0%(n=244)	1%(n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.9

Girls who have never attended school stating that school does not have a program that meets their learning needs	0.40%(n=244)	0%(n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.15
Lack of institutional screening and support for girls with disabilities	BL	ML	EL	
Parents who said the girl is not enrolled in school because she was refused entry into the school	0.20%(n=519)	Not measured in midline		
School drop-out girls stating she was refused entry into the school	0%(n=286)	1%(n=126)	0%(n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.12
Girls who have never attended school stating they were refused entry into the school	0.40%(n=244)	0%(n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.12
Institutional infrastructure is not accessible or inclusive	BL	ML	EL	
Parents who said the girl is not enrolled in education because she cannot move around the school or classroom	1%(n=519)	Not measured in midline	Not measured in Endline	
Parents who said the girl is not enrolled in education because she cannot use the toilet at school	0%(n=519)	Not measured in midline	Not measured in Endline	
Girls who said they dropped out of school because they could not move around the school or classroom	0.30%(n=286)	1 (n=126)	0%(n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.13
Girls who said they dropped out of school because they could not use toilet at school	0%(n=286)	0(n=126)	0%(n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.14
Girls who have never attended school stating they cannot move around the school or classroom	0%(n=244)	0(n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.13
Girls who have never attended school stating they cannot use the toilet at school	0%(n=244)	0(n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.14

Transportation facilities available to school	BL	ML	EL	
Parents who said girls are not enrolled in education because transportation facilities to/ from school are inadequate	1.20% (n=519)	Not measured in midline	Not measured in Endline	
Girls who said they dropped out of school because transport services are inadequate	3.50%(n=286)	5%(n=126)	8.8%(n=125)	Girls Survey, GH_1c.7
Girls who have never attended school stating transport services are inadequate	2%(n=244)	6%(n=116)	0%(n=49)	Girls Survey, GH_1d.7

Poverty

During the household survey, various aspects of extreme poverty were measured quantitatively. In the baseline assessment, 42.20% of households were unable to satisfy their necessities without charity, but this number increased by 11% to 53.2% in the midline. However, in the endline evaluation study, the percentage declined remarkably and dropped down to 16.8%. There was also a drop in parents who said it was difficult to afford education for girls. The figure at the endline was 50.87% compared to 84.48% during midline.

While 23.8% of the households relied on daily wage for income, more than half of the households were engaged in agriculture (54.1%) where the income is seasonal, and people wait for months to earn cash income through agriculture. It emerged during the qualitative study that poverty was the underlying cause for the children to drop out of school. Boys were expected to work outside the home to back up the family income while girls were responsible to uphold household responsibilities. For instance, the girls who had transitioned to vocational stream shared that they had opted for tailoring because they did not have to travel away from home for work and they could take care of household duties as well. The project officer from Parsa asserted that older girls in the household were responsible for looking after their younger siblings which led to irregularity and finally dropping out of the school. Likewise, Municipal officer from Sarlahi also claimed that if a boy went to the border side and brought a sack of onion and sold in the village, he could earn a good sum because of which they opted to drop out of school for such work. Quantitative finding corroborated this. When the reason for dropout was explored, the primary reason stated was low income of parents (45.1%).

Socio- cultural norms, gender biases and unequal power relations

High chore Burden

The burden of household chores had been identified as a significant barrier to girls' education during baseline and midline studies. However, this had changed at endline. The surveyed girls shared that their household chores were not a barrier anymore as their parents had been giving them time to study at home. Household duties were also shared by other female members of the family. Only 36.5% of the girls spent more than a quarter of their day doing household chores. This proportion was significantly higher during baseline (93.3%) and midline (88.5 %). Due to parental engagement activities such as effective participation in PTA meeting, regular visit to schools to discuss about girls education and progress, parents were determined to minimize household chores and provide time for the girls to study at home. Also, 98 parent groups were formed where the discussion on importance of right to education, child protection and gender-based violence were discussed. undertaken by the parents, parents now gave the girls time to study. This was validated by the girls themselves, who said that parents now asked them to assist in domestic duties only after they had finished their schoolwork. Parenting classes, awareness-raising events, and the project's production of IEC materials on children's rights and protection had had a significant role in changing how parents perceived their children's education. Along with this, the support that the parents had received in the form of stationery for their children, monetary support to buy bicycles had further encouraged parents to give their children more time to study.

A parent from Banke, asserted that till she could afford, she would send both her son and daughter to boarding school. If there was ever a shortage of financial resource, she said she would send both to government school, instead of sending her son to boarding school and her daughter to government school, as is the trend in many villages. Another parent from Sarlahi, for instance, expressed that they now trusted their daughters even if they wished to borrow money to grow their business since they had noticed changes in the girls' willingness and dedication in expanding their vocational skill.

Other barriers such as age of the girls, migration of their parents, geographical condition such as distance to schools were also in existence. Out of the 174 girls surveyed who opted for vocational training, 71.3% reported that they chose vocational over school because of their age. This finding corresponded with the findings from FGD conducted with older girls at Khajura Municipality as they felt that they were old to study in grades 3 or 4. Vocational training had helped them in a positive way as they were able to generate money themselves. Only 8.8% of girls during the endline survey reported that the main reason they dropped out of school was due to a lack of transportation services.

In addition, Child marriage, religious beliefs, mobility restrictions, the attitude of the parents, and lack of facilities in the school are the major barriers for girls to go to school. Child marriage is another cause of dropping out from school. Study shows, married girls in Nepal are 10 times more likely to drop out than their unmarried peers (MICS survey 2014, Nepal). This has been reflected in the project's theory of change as well. In Muslim households, madrasa education was considered sufficient education for girls; however, the intervention of big sisters at home resulted in a significant change in the household's attitude towards formal education. One of the little sisters from Malangwa shared that while studying at Madrasa, they were only taught Urdu and Hindi and had no knowledge of maths. They were able to attend regular school after the project intervention and learn a variety of subjects. Their parents were also gratified to see the changes in them.

In regard to marriage, an increase in awareness was noted amongst parents. Parents said that they would not want their daughters to experience challenges and troubles related to health by marrying early. Parents also stated that a girl who was educated and assertive would be valued in her family and could participate in decision-making.

If a girl is educated or earns for the family, she has an upper hand in making her own decisions. I don't want her to be married early because I don't want her to be like me. – a mother from Kaudena, Sarlahi

Barriers	Proportion of sample with these characteristics BL	Proportion of sample with these characteristics ML	Proportion of sample with these characteristics EL
Household who are unable to meet basic needs	42.2	53.2	16.8
High chore burden (Girls have to spend more than quarter of the day doing the household chores)	93.3	88.5	36.5
Schools which have not scored the acceptable level in disability-friendly infrastructure	96.67	80.1	53.15
Language barrier (Girls do not speak LoI)	70.33	59.8	40.7
Source: Girls and Household Survey			

Significant roles of big sisters

In each of the project areas, Big Sisters had been mobilised from the initial phase of the project to facilitate in the bridge class and support in the transition of the girls. They had played a significant role in educating the parents regarding the importance of education. Big sisters were able to make positive impact on little sisters in terms of education, confidence level, self-esteem. The big sisters were also considered as a role model by the little sisters as well as community. In the quantitative survey, 55.1% of the girls responded that they were motivated to enroll in schools because of the support they received from the big sisters. The little sisters especially acknowledged the peer support from the big sisters as they were able to work even after the school hours with them and easily accessible as they were from the same community.

"We have witnessed the change in little sisters in terms of their willingness to learn and their self-confidence. Previously in the beginning phase girls were irregular but after some time because of proper guidance and counselling from us, girls were regularly attending the classes."- A big sister from Banke

The parents also appreciated that the big sisters were regularly encouraging the parents to support girls in their education and vocational training during the FGDs. Even a day of absence in the school made the big sisters to call their parents to inquire and motivate them to send to schools. In addition, the big sisters' support in conducting the distance learning (DTL) classes and mentoring even during the covid pandemic were highly acknowledged by the parents. However, things were not easy for the Big Sisters. During the FGD with the big sisters, they said that they had to face numerous challenges during the initial year as the parents were not ready to send their daughters to schools and the big sisters used to be excessively criticized for their involvement. The role of big sister was even more challenging in the Muslim community as they did not want their girls to be outside their community and preferred to teach them in Madrasa. Similarly, the big sister also faced challenges in convincing their parents in sending them to school.

I feel confident that I can convince my parents for education that I want to study. I say to them that I want to be respected like big sister in community, respected by all. – A girl from Banke

During focus group discussions with parents of girls who transitioned to education pathway, it was revealed that older sisters are playing a significant role in facilitating their younger sisters' attendance in bridge classes. This involves frequent home visits, meeting with parents to promote the importance of girls' education and encouraging them to reduce household chores and delay early marriages. The big sisters also continue to support the little sister after their transition to school by liaising with teachers, coordinating with schools, and facilitating parents'

attendance at parent-teacher meetings to stay informed about their daughters' education and progress.

I was really impressed by the action of big sisters, they called us when my daughter was absent in the school, even just for a day. – a parent from Sarlahi

The little sisters also expressed gratitude towards the work of big sisters who have played a significant role in promoting education. During the focused group discussion with them, they acknowledged big sister's efforts in convincing parents to send their daughters to school, which were challenging at first where girls are expected to prioritize household chores and marriage over education. Additionally, big sisters provided support and guidance to the girls in their studies by informing them about the training and helping them with assignments whenever they faced difficulties. This support was crucial in keeping the girls motivated and engaged in their education, which may have otherwise been a struggle for them.

Initially, the girls used to walk all the way to the school but, they were bullied and teased on the way. The issue was addressed when the project provided bicycles to the girls for easy means of transportation. Now, the girls went to school in a group which minimized the risk of bullying. The big sisters expressed confidence that the girls would continue to go to school on their own even in their absence and phase out of the project. The establishment and management of the learning centre by the respective wards had also played a big role in providing continuous knowledge to the little sisters.

Furthermore, big sisters took their responsibilities seriously and ensured that the girls were able to attend school regularly by accompanying them to school. This not only helped the girls to overcome any safety concerns but also provided a sense of security and encouragement to them.

Big sisters went to school with us for some says to give us company. She always helped in explaining the lesson no matter how much time we asked her to repeat. – a little sister from Parsa

Perception of parents toward education

Parental attitudes towards girls' education was found to have improved. While 86.7% of the parents in baseline had said that it was worth investing in girls' education even when the funds were limited, the figure was 93.8% at midline. When inquired about their interest to continue girls' education, parents confidently shared that they will be able to invest in girls' education even after the project phases out. A subject teacher from Dhobini shared that because of parental engagement activities of the project at school and community, most of the parents had understood the importance of education. Previously, the role of the male member of the family

was being the breadwinner, but gradually after the project's interventions, the male members of the family are also starting to help in the household chores.

"I am interested in educating my children and sending them to school even though I have limited resources."
- A parent from Sarlahi

In addition, while some parents wanted their girls to get proper higher education, others wanted them to improve their skills by starting tailoring and becoming independent. Nonetheless, the parents appreciated the project's activities and wanted to see their girls being independent and confident. Most of the parents (Mixed Group – Disability and Marginalized parents) agreed that the proper age to get married was between 18 to 20 and 20 was the legal age to get married. This was discussed by parents of girls who went to school from the age group 10-19. The changes in the perception of parents were the result of parental education provided to the parents quarterly and regular follow up with the parents through big sisters.

"I did not get a chance to do anything since I was married off early, I want my daughter to be independent and make her own decisions when she grows up."
– a parent from Kaudena, Sarlahi

The qualitative finding also generated a nuanced picture wherein parents expressed some level of skepticism. The focused group discussion with some parents of the girls who chose livelihood pathways showed that even though they valued education, they feared sending girls to school could also increase their 'chances of eloping'. Although the parents have understood the importance of educating girls, this fear is rooted in the belief that girls might get distracted that may encourage girls to seek independence from their families and run away from home. This has been expressed by the parents of the older girls aged 18 or 19. They want their daughters to be educated, but they also want to protect them from the potential negative consequences as the trend of eloping during teenage occurs in the society.

While the EE acknowledges efforts of the big sister to change the perception of the parents, some social and cultural norms are so deeply rooted that it takes a lot of efforts and time to entirely change the perception. More effort is needed form stakeholders such as local government to implement the laws and policies strictly. Also, project's have had a huge impact in the society as they were able to mainstream the girls into education who have never been to school and dropped out.

Others, for instance, said they did not hold any accountability in the girl's life after they got married as it was completely upon their in-laws whether they wanted to educate their daughter-in-law or not.

"There is the risk of girls running away if they don't get married at early age, so some parents don't want to risk their reputation and wants their daughter to get married at early age"
-A parent from Sarlahi

Apart from the fear of parents, social norms also prevented some girls from enrolling to school. The big sisters from the project areas discussed that the parents felt reluctant to educate their girls to higher level because there was a norm that if girls had studied higher, the education level of the groom should be higher than that of girls; and the more educated the groom was, higher the amount of dowry the parents of the girls had to offer to the grooms' family.

Low awareness of disabilities and rights of people with disabilities

Even though low awareness of disabilities and the rights of people with disabilities had been stated as one of the barriers during previous evaluation points, it did not hold true at endline. The table indicates that in the baseline survey, 0.77% of households (519 out of the total sample size) believed that children with disabilities do not have the right to education even if they are not in school. In the midline survey, this percentage decreased to 0.6% (530 out of the total sample size), and in the endline survey, it increased to 0.9% (671 out of the total sample size) in the baseline survey, 6.17% of households (519 out of the total sample size) believed that children with disabilities do not have the right to employment. In the midline survey, this percentage decreased to 2.1% (530 out of the total sample size), and in the endline survey, it increased to 3% (671 out of the total sample size). The parents of the children with different disabilities hoped that their children would have better future if they got educated or were engaged in some sort of profession. Hence, this barrier did not hold true in the endline.

Low awareness of disabilities and rights of people with disabilities	BL	ML	EL	Source
HHs that think children with disability do not have right to education even though they are not in school	0.77%(n=519)	0.6%(n=530)	0.9% (n=671)	HH Survey, PA_3

HHs that think children with disability do not have right to employment	6.17%(n=519)	2.1%(n=530)	3% (n=671)	HH Survey, PA_6

Outcome Findings

Learning outcomes

Learning was one of the major outcomes of the project. Improving the overall learning of the girls had been one of the major targets of the project. The learning outcomes were measured amongst girls who had transitioned to schools and was derived by administering the EGRA and EGMA tests among the 496 school-going girls. Since the study was designed as longitudinal, the evaluation team had an initial plan to track the same respondents who participated in baseline and midline studies, but due to the sample attrition, 45.9% of the girls were replaced. The EGRA test was administered to assess the literacy level and the EGMA test was administered to assess the numeracy level. The following table represents the characteristics subgroup of the girls taking the learning test.

Table 12: Breakdown of girls taking learning tests by characteristic subgroup.

Categories	Proportion of girls taking tests (N=496)	Proportion of girls taking tests (N=496)	Proportion of girls taking tests (N=496)	Remarks
	Baseline	Midline	Endline	
Age group				
10 to 14	54.84	31.7	42.7	The girls who were 13-14 years old had reached 15-16 age
15-19	45.16	68.3	57.3	
Caste group				
Muslim	37.3	38.1	53.7	Change in ethnicity caused by the replacement sample
Terai Dalit	22.38	20	19.5	
Terai Janajati	24.4	26.8	25.4	
Poor household	40.73	53.2	24.3	

Girls with disabilities (at least a lot of difficulty in one of the domains)	7.26	5.5	3.2	
Girls with functional limitations (at least 'some difficulty in one of the domains)	38.1	19.2	14.3	
Non-Nepali speaking household	94.15	91.7	84.4	The interview was taken (Non Nepali)
Source: Girls and Household Survey				

Literacy overall finding

The girls scored remarkably well in the EGRA tests at the endline with 110.75 mean score out of 260. This was a statistically significant improvement in the learning as their score was 41.98 during baseline and 83.51 during midline.

Table 13: Literacy overall finding

Learning domain	Baseline	Midline	Endline	Difference from the midline to Endline	Significance
Mean EGRA score	41.98	83.51	110.75	27.24	$p < .05$
Source: EGRA test					

This change can be attributed to the multiple levels of interventions from the project side to improve the education of the girls. The project had targeted for a 50% increase in literacy at endline (from baseline); however, data showed that the score increased by 163.8% The remedial support classes for the girls, peer-to-peer learning, distance teaching and learning methods, big sister's mentoring and coaching, as well as reading and numeracy extracurricular activities to the teachers and the facilitators all appeared to have had an impact on the girls.

The little sisters/targeted girls cited the peer-to-peer education as well as the remedial education as the most effective intervention. Similarly, findings highlighted that the bridge classes conducted during the initial phase of the project had also been equally instrumental. The

establishment of the bridge class in the community instigated the girls' parents to better comprehend and monitor what and how their girls were learning. Even after they graduated from the bridge classes, the girls were followed up on and regularly urged by their big sisters to attend school regularly. A GIEN focal person from Sarlahi acknowledged that they have seen the project conduct the transition to education successfully which was deemed impossible by the community and the stakeholders.

" When I came to Dhobini 2 years back, I saw girls who used to rear goats and cows are now going to school. I was initially shocked and wondered how and then I came to know about ENGAGE project."
- Education Administering Officer, Parsa

The little sisters in Sarlahi reported that they had the opportunity to learn numerous things in bridge classes, including not only English, Maths and Nepali, but also learned about menstrual hygiene, gender-based violence (GBV), and adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASYRH). This highlights that the program has a broader focus beyond just academic learning, and is also addressing critical health and social issues that affect young girls in their communities. The teachers who have been teaching the girls who have transitioned to the schools have shared that the girls have been a bit timid during the initial days of the schooling. Slowly, the girls adapted to the school. They also stressed that the remedial classes held especially for the transitioned girls helped them in catching up with the regular students. The big sisters mentoring also played a significant role in maintaining regular school attendance.

"Because of the Madrasa, the Muslim girls are more interested in Nepali as they learn Urdu there which is somewhat related to Nepali. They are also willing to learn Nepali because they say it's the medium of communication".
- A headteacher from Banke

Functional Literacy skills of the beneficiary girls

The literacy level of the beneficiaries was categorized into 4 categories based on their scores in various sub-tasks namely, non-learner (0%) emergent learner (1-40%), established learner (41% -80%) and proficient learner (81-100%). The subtasks have also been divided according to listening comprehension, letter identification, symbol identification, familiar word identification and reading and comprehension. Since the EGRA tool was designed in such a way that the difficulty level of the sub-task increases as the sub-task progresses towards a higher level, the skills gap of the girl increases as the sub-task progresses to a higher level. It was found that the girls who fell into the non-learner were only 5% which was a remarkable decline from 11.7% in the midline for subtask 1. 50.9% were the proficient learner for subtask 1. For subtask 2, letter

identification, 21.1% were proficient learners whereas 21.1% were established learners. In this subtask also only 3% were non-learners. For subtask 3, the proportion doubled since midline from 7.8% to 14.5% for proficient learners. 45.9% of the beneficiaries belonged to the emergent learner category. Regarding subtask 4 familiar work identification, 17.3% were proficient learners which is a 6% increment from the baseline. Also, the percentage of the established learner also increased by 6% from the midline in this category. Lastly, in subtask 5, reading and comprehension 12.1% stood out as proficient learners. In addition, 18.1% were established learners while 36.8% were emergent learners. Majority of girls (33 %) of them were non-learners in this subtask. The functional literacy skills of the beneficiary girls is categorised in the following table.

Table 14: Functional literacy skills for beneficiary girls

Categories	Subtask 1: Listening comprehension			Subtask 2: Letter identification			Subtask 3: Symbols identification			Subtask 4: Familiar word identification			Subtask 5a: Reading and comprehension		
	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL
Non learner/ reader (0%)	30	11.7	5	11.7	12.1	3.0	59.5	19.3	16.1	55.8	20.1	11.7	65.9	48.5	33.0
Emergent learner/ reader (1%-40%)	35.5	22.9	12.7	55.3	53.7	45.7	32.3	52.9	45.9	32.9	46.5	43.7	26.2	38.4	36.8
Established learner/ reader (41%-80%)	28.8	57.9	31.4	20	16.5	30.2	6.5	20.1	23.5	9.1	21.9	27.4	5.8	8.7	18.1
Proficient learner/ reader (81%-100%)	5.6	7.6	50.9	13	17.7	21.1	1.8	7.8	14.5	2.2	11.5	17.3	2	4.4	12.1
	100	100	100	100	100	100.0	100	100	100.0	100	100	100.0	100	100	100.0
Source: EGRA test															

Oral reading fluency and comprehension analysis

The overall percentage scored by the girls in EGRA is categorised in the following table. It was found that 33 per cent of the girls scored less than 20% while 10.5% of the girls scored 20-39%, which has significantly decreased from 27.8% since midline. The proportion of girls who scored 40-59% increased from 10.7% in the midline to 26.4% in endline. Girls who scored 60-79% improved significantly from 2% in the midline to 12.1 % in the endline. 6% of the girls scored 80-99% which remains roughly unchanged from the midline value. In contrast, 12.1% of the girls were able to score 100% overall which is 3 times more than that from the midline and 6 times more achievement than baseline.

Table 15: EGRA Sub-task 5 percentage of girls with total correct answers

Group	Intervention		
Percentage scored	Baseline (%) (n=496)	Midline (%) (n=496)	Endline (%) (n=496)
0-19%	65.7	48.4	**33.0**
20-39%	17.1	27.8	**10.5**
40-59%	9.3	10.7	**26.4**
60-79%	3.6	2	**12.1**
80-99%	2.2	6.7	**6.0**
100%	2	4.4	**12.1**
Source: EGRA Test			

EGRA Sub-task 5: Word per minute analysis

The oral reading fluency analysis of subtask 5 is presented in the following table by analysing the proportion of girls who scored within each of the word per minute categories with 0WPM, 1-20WPM, 21-40WPM and >40WPM. 27.7% of the girls scored 0 words per minute as compared to 61.9% of those in the baseline and 41.1% in the midline. Meanwhile, 17.1% of them scored 1-20 words per minute which were 17.1% in the baseline and 27% in the midline. 17.5% of girls who scored 21-40 WPM which is just a slight increase from 15.3% in the midline. One significant achievement in literacy was that 38% of girls scored more than 40WPM in the endline. The value was 12.3% in the baseline and 16.5% in the endline.

Table 16: EGRA Sub-task 5 words per minute analysis

Group	Intervention		
Word per minute	Baseline (%)	Midline (%)	Endline (%)
	(n=496)	(n=496)	(n=496)
0 WPM	61.9	41.1	**27.4**
1-20 WPM	17.1	27	**17.1**
21-40 WPM	8.7	15.3	**17.5**
>40WPM	12.3	16.5	**38.0**
Source: EGRA test			

Numeracy

Overall findings

Table 18 below presents the overall achievement in numeracy score achieved by girls in the project area. There was an increase in the mean score from 16.22 at baseline, to 19.97 at the midline and to 42.17 at the endline. Although the project expected the EGMA score to be 50% above the baseline result at endline, the current increase itself should be considered as a positive achievement considering the difficulty that girls face in Mathematics in public schools.

Table 17: Numeracy overall finding

Learning domain	Baseline	Midline	Endline	Difference from midline to Endline	Significance
Mean EGMA score	16.22	19.97	42.17	22.2	$p < .05$.
Source: EGRA test					

As discussed above in the literacy section, the changes seen in numeracy are also explained by girls' involvement in bridge class itself. The curriculum of the bridge class included different subjects such as maths, Nepali and English. The big sisters taught the girls the basic reading writing comprehension as well as calculations. In addition to the bridge class itself, the mobilization of big sisters by the project for supporting girls' learning was found to be highly effective. The effort that big sisters put into persuading parents for sending girls to bridge classes, motivating girls to learn and supporting them outside of the informal classes had been appreciated by both the girls and the parents and found to be equally effective.

"My parents motivate me to study and assign household chores only when I am free after completing my assignments"
-A girl from Parsa

The perception of parents had changed towards girls' education after the project intervention because of which they were more supportive towards girls' education. They had also been supporting the girls with household chores, which gave girls extra time to focus on their studies. The improved score obtained at both EGRA and EGMA reflected that. The girls also shared during the FGDs that their parents had been supportive and had been allowing them to study.

The reason behind the improvement of education and learning of little sisters has been their positive outlook and perception towards education and the opportunities accompanying it.
- Big sister from Parsa

During FGDs with the girls, the girls aimed to pursue higher education (University) and get a job for a dignified life. They did not want to be a burden to their family and wanted to be independent. The girls were confident that they could be successful through education and many of them also expressed interest in working as big sisters and bringing change in society. The girls from Parsa expressed that they wanted to be doctors and police officers and be independent in life in terms decision making as well. One girl from Sarlahi shared that she wishes to work like big sister. Another little sister from Banke told that she wanted to be an accountant. This reflected that they were aware of such professions they could opt for if they managed to study well.

The project is successful because the big sisters helped the little sisters, and improved their learning, it would be good if the ENGAGE project is carried out in the future through GEIN.
- Big sister from Sarlahi

The role of the big sister was very instrumental as well. They followed up with the girls' parents, ensured the girls' safety and supported the girls in solving problems. They were also a mentor to the girls to get back to school and continue their education. The concept of big sisters was appreciated by multiple stakeholders, including little sisters, parents, teachers, municipal staff, project staff and other concerned authorities as well.

Skill gap analysis

Just like for literacy, a skills gap analysis was done for numeracy as well. The numeracy level of the beneficiaries was categorized into 4 categories based on their scores in various sub-tasks

namely, non-learner (0%) emergent learner (1-40%), established learner (41% -80%) and proficient learner (81-100%). The subtasks were number identification, quantity discrimination, missing numbers, addition and subtraction and word problems.

Since the EGMA tool was designed in such a way that the difficulty level of the sub-task increases as the sub-task progresses towards a higher level, the skills gap of the girl increases as the sub-task progresses to a higher level.

Endline results found that the girls who fell into the non-learner category declined from 7.2% in midline to 5.3% for subtask 1. 34.88% were the proficient learner for subtask 1. For subtask 2, quantity discrimination, 51.5% were proficient learners with significant increase from 6.4% in the midline. In subtask 2, 36.2% were established learners and only 2.8% of the girls were identified as non-learners. For subtask 3, 3.6% of girls were identified as proficient learners in midline which increased to 40% in the endline. 40% of the beneficiaries belonged to the established learner category. Regarding subtask 4; Addition/ Subtraction, 20.1% were established learner in the endline an increase of 9.2 points from the midline. Lastly, in subtask 5, word problems, 44.3% were proficient learners. In addition, 27% were established learners while 23.7% were emergent learners. Only 5% girls were non-learners in this subtask. The foundational numeracy skills of the beneficiary girls were categorized in the following table.

Table 18: Foundational numeracy skills of beneficiary girls

Categories	Subtask 1: Number identification			Subtask 2: Quantity discrimination			Subtask 3: Missing numbers			Subtask 4: Addition/ Subtraction			Subtask 5: Word problems		
	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL
Non-learner (0%)	22	7.2	1.8	28	8	2.8	27.8	8.7	5.8	34.7	10.1	11.1	34.1	10.9	5
Emergent learner (1%-40%)	50.4	48.1	23.7	55.8	45.1	9.5	58.9	71.6	29.2	49	76.7	64.8	38.5	54.8	23.7
Established learner (41%-80%)	18.8	36.8	24.7	11.1	40.6	36.2	11.3	16.1	40.0	16.1	10.9	20.1	22.6	27.8	27
Proficient learner (81%-100%)	8.9	8	49.7	5	6.4	51.5	2	3.6	24.9	0.2	2.2	4.0	4.8	6.4	44.3

	100	100	100.0	100	100	100.0	100	100	100.0	100	100	100.0	100	100	100
Source: EGRA test															

Despite improvement, it is necessary to understand the challenges that girls face in Mathematics in Nepali schools. Most of the girls in Parsa who were consulted by the qualitative team found that girls had a problem understanding Maths as they found it hard to understand the basic concept of mathematics. Even though, the girls had done well in terms of EGMA, the lack of self-study could be one of the reasons for the challenge.

The children find Mathematics harder than Nepali as they do not have an early base for Maths also the children do not have a practice of going home and doing homework or readings, which makes maths more challenging for them
- Mathematics teacher from Parsa

The Muslim girls who attended Madrasa were never taught basic math because of which they found the subject challenging. Most of the madrasas did not have trained teachers and good physical infrastructures which limits the learning of the girls. Likewise, in Parsa, some girls pointed out that they wanted to talk to the mathematics teacher after class and clear the confusion, but due to time constraints, they were not able to do so. Since 36.76% of girls were from poor households, they could not afford for private tuition, nor the school provides any remedial classes. The little sisters in Banke shared that the Maths teacher got agitated when they asked questions related to maths.

"In one class, there is 70-100 students. The primary level teachers have to also teach higher level students."
- Mathematics teacher from Parsa

Characteristic subgroup analysis of the learning outcome

The average percentage score attained by girls in different subgroups is discussed in the following table.

Table 19: learning scores by key characteristic subgroups and barriers

Characteristic subgroup	Proportion of the total girls taking learning tests at endline	Average numeracy score% (aggregate)			Average literacy score %(aggregate)		
	(n=496)	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL
Age group							
10 to 14	32.3	22.91	27.03	41.80	17.55	34.71	54.43
15-19	67.7	26.06	32.01	43.20	19.94	35.09	56.26
Caste group							
Muslim	53.7	28.05	31.66	50.06	24.53	35.41	58.72
Terai Dalit	19.5	20.44	25.48	35.89	13.83	32.1	54.34
Terai Janajati	25.4	20.02	32.26	32.31	14.34	37.98	50.23
Poor household	24.3	23.3	30.11	54.74	18.21	33.78	36.76
Girls with disabilities	14.5	26.23	21.82	45.21	19.55	29.53	31.14
Functional Limitation							
Seeing	(12 girls) *[2]	10	55	45.50	15.6	51	36.03
Hearing	(20 girls) *	7	36.14	33.09	10.1	34.08	21.25
Walking	2.8	30.42	22.13	35.71	25.36	25.18	32.09
Self-care	0.6	N/A	7.11	43.42	N/A	9.13	41.41
Communication	2.41	18.58	9.1	25.11	20.91	16.11	22.37

* These girls were identified as having functional limitations in seeing and hearing via the Washington Group questionnaire administered at endline

Learning, remembering and concentrating	8.65	17.91	11.76	43.76	7.12	18.69	28.53
Accepting change, controlling behavior and making friends	6.24	11.99	11.47	40.53	3.3	18.42	29.45
Mental health (Anxiety and depression)	1.41	32.51	27.26	36.47	17.24	38.53	37.42
Girls with functional limitation	14.49	22.7	27.57	45.21	18.09	33.29	31.14
Non-Nepali speaking household	84.30	23.88	30.12	47.17	18.31	34.28	55.18
Source: Girls and Household Survey							

The sub-group analysis showed that there had been improvement in both the literacy and numeracy average scores irrespective of the characteristics. For both age groups, literacy scores and numeracy scores increased from baseline to midline in a similar trend. Muslim girls achieved the highest baseline scores with 28.5% in the baseline compared to other categories. They achieved 58.72% at endline in literacy with slightly higher scores as compared to girls representing other ethnicities. The explanation for this may be because the representation of the Muslim sample was 53.7%, in the endline because of replacement strategies the quantitative team had taken. Also, the madrasa of the Muslim community had some learning concepts before joining a school which gave them a competitive advantage. However, this depends upon the kind of Madrasa the girl attends. In some religious Madrasas, they are dedicated to Islamic teachings, religious concepts and Urdu and in few Madrasas are recognized by the government as official educational institutions, they are taught other subjects like maths, English and Nepali. This is based on the discussion with the Muslim girls during FGDs as they mentioned that even though they never attended schools, it was easier to catch up on the curriculum in the bridge class because of the learning from Madrasa schools. In addition, besides Maths and Science, all the other subjects taught in the schools are literacy based. Nepali is the language which is widely used in the community and also the medium of instruction in government schools of Nepal.

Assessment of learning of children with disability

Literacy

Under literacy, it was found that average EGRA score for children with hearing impairment was 42 (ML-34.08, BL-10.1) while the average EGRA score for children with visual impairment was 55

(ML – 51, BL-15.6).[3] More than half of the children with visual impairments appearing in the test were able to answer most number of questions based on the story narrated by the project team, letter identification and symbol identification while they could not perform well in the sections following that. Children with hearing impairment found it difficult to explain the subtask 5 (reading passage) and multiplication and division. Children with visual impairments highly improved on all the sub task of literacy. Letter identification was relatively easier for them than other subtasks.

Table 20: Foundational literacy skill for children with hearing impairments

Categories	Subtask 1: Story narration-comprehension			Subtask 2: Letter identification			Subtask 3: Symbols identification			Subtask 4: Familiar word identification			Subtask 5a: Word per minute			Subtask 5b: Reading and comprehension		
	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL
Non learner/ reader (0%)	86.4	14.3	12.1	40.9	0	9.5	63.6	4.8	7.4	72.7	14.3	9.2	100	23.8	17.2	100	42.9	41.3
Emergent learner/ reader (1%-40%)	9.1	28.6	25.4	13.6	66.7	52.2	27.3	42.9	36.9	22.7	71.4	67.3	0	71.4	67.1	0	42.9	40.8
Established learner/ reader (41%-80%)	0	14.3	17.7	31.8	14.3	17.1	4.5	23.8	13.1	4.5	14.3	12.3	0	0	7.5	0	9.5	11.2
Proficient learner/ reader (81%-100%)	4.5	42.9	44.8	13.6	19	21.2	4.5	28.6	42.6	0	0	11.2	0	4.8	8.2	0	4.8	6.7

[3] The results in this section use project data from baseline to identify children with hearing and visual impairments

	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Source: EGRA test (N=17)																		

Below table shows the improvement in the functional literacy for children with hearing impairments. Project did one to one coaching and peer to peer support even during COVID 19 pandemic for their resilience on learning.

Table 21: Foundational literacy skills (overall) of children with hearing impairments

Categories (n=17)	Total Average Score		
	BL	ML	EL
Non learner/ reader (0%)	77.3	16.7	11.3
Emergent learner/ reader (1%-40%)	12.1	54	42.6
Established learner/ reader (41%-80%)	6.8	12.7	19.3
Proficient learner/ reader (81%-100%)	3.8	16.7	26.8
Total	100	100	100
Source: EGRA test (N=17)			

Table : 22 Foundational literacy skill of children with visual impairments

Categories	Subtask 1: Listening comprehension			Subtask 2: Letter identification			Subtask 3: Symbols identification			Subtask 4: Familiar word identification			Subtask 5a: Word per minute			Subtask 5b: Reading and comprehension		
	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL
Non learner/ reader (0%)	29.4	8.3	11.1	70.6	8.3	11.1	76.5	16.7	22.2	88.2	25	33.3	88.2	58.3	33.3	100	58.3	44.4

Emergent learner/ reader (1%-40%)	0	8.3	0	29.4	41.7	33.3	11.8	41.7	11.2	5.9	33.3	11.2	5.9	0	33.3	0	0	33.3
Established learner/ reader (41%-80%)	17.6	33.3	33.3	0	8.3	11.1	5.9	0	33.3	0	0	22.2	0	0	22.2	0	8.3	11.1
Proficient learner/ reader (81%-100%)	52.9	50	55.5	0	41.7	44.5	5.9	41.7	33.3	5.9	41.7	33.3	5.9	41.7	11.2	0	33.3	11.2
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Source: EGRA test (N=9)																		

For the children with visual impairment, though there is improvement in the proficient learner from baseline to midline to endline.

Table: 23 Foundational literacy skills (overall) for children with visual impairment

Categories (n=9)	Total Average Score		
	BL	ML	EL
Non learner/ reader (0%)	75.5	29.2	11.2
Emergent learner/ reader (1%-40%)	8.8	20.8	11.2
Established learner/ reader (41%-80%)	3.9	8.3	22.2
Proficient learner/ reader (81%-100%)	11.8	41.7	55.4
Total	100	100	100
Source: EGRA Test			

Numeracy

In numeracy, it was found that average EGMA score for children with hearing impairment was 40 (ML -36.14, BL- 7), while the average EGMA score for children with visual impairment was 60 (ML-

55, BL -10). More number of children were able to complete subtask 1, 2, 3 and 4. There were also few learners with hearing impairments who could read above 80% of the questions. Peer to Peer education, preparatory classes, bridge classes, one to one coaching and big sister mentoring approach helps to achieve the numeracy and literacy skills of children with hearing and visual impairment. EGRA and EGMA tests were used to access the learning skills of hearing and visual impairment of girls who transitioned to the resource classes. Out of 28 children with disability enrolled into the resource classes (9 visual impairments and 17 hearing impairments) were assessed the EGRA and EGMA test. Two dropped out from the resource class. Survey from peer to peer education (conducted by the ENGAGE project in 2021) showed, 88% of children with disability were happy and found the peer to peer education and big sisters mentoring approach to improve their learning skills to be effective.

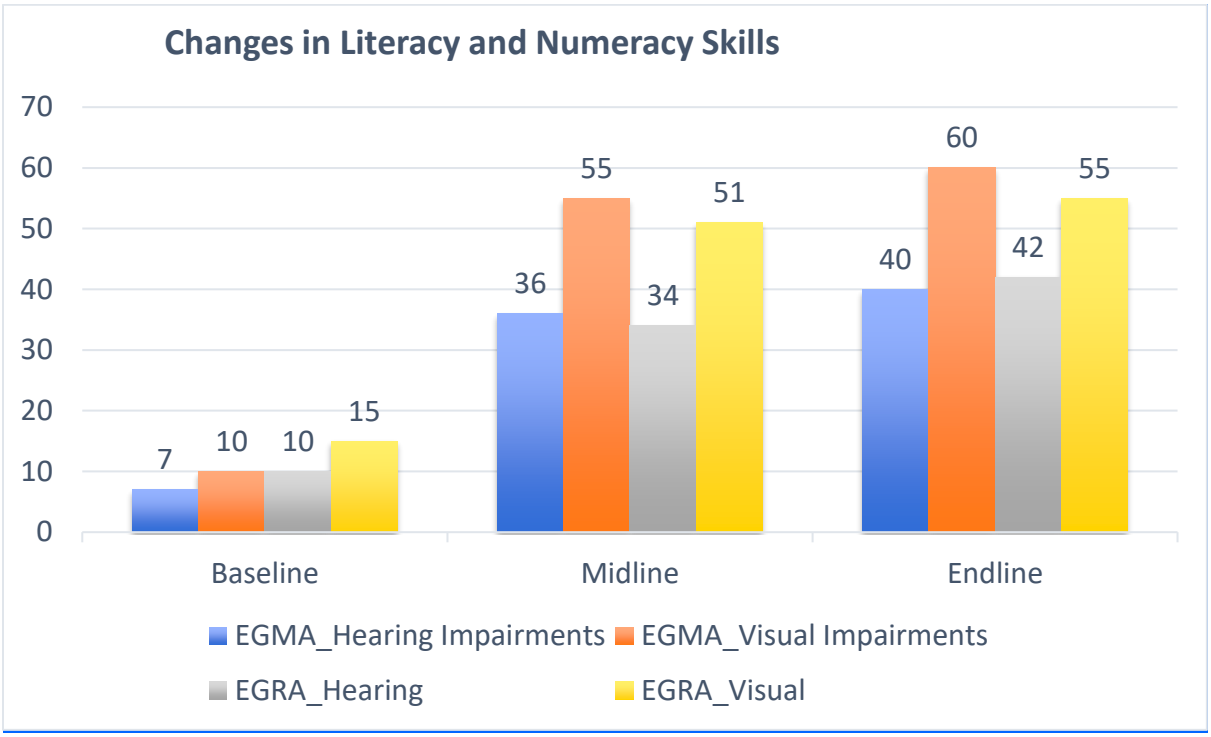
Table 24: Foundational numeracy skills (overall) for children with hearing impairment

Categories (n=17)	Total Average Score		
	BL	ML	EL
Non learner/ reader (0%)	82.7	21.9	11
Emergent learner/ reader (1%-40%)	10.9	40.9	44.2
Established learner/ reader (41%-80%)	2.7	28.6	30.6
Proficient learner/ reader (81%-100%)	3.6	8.6	14.2
Total	100	100	100
Source: EGMA Test			

Table 25: Foundational numeracy skills (overall) for children with visual impairment

Categories (n=9)	Total Average Score		
	BL	ML	EL
Non learner/ reader (0%)	85.9	18.3	11.2
Emergent learner/ reader (1%-40%)	5.9	26.7	11.2
Established learner/ reader (41%-80%)	0	15	33.3
Proficient learner/ reader (81%-100%)	8.3	40	44.3

Total	100	100	100
Score: EGMA Test			



N = 9 for Visual impairment and 17 for hearing impairment

Daily Living Skills

The ENGAGE project has also been catering to the needs of 94 children with severe disability with an objective to improve their existing condition. Based on the training package developed for parents and caregivers, the support skill training to the parents and caregivers of children with severe and profound disabilities was conducted in all three districts which aimed to enhance their capacity as the training extensively covered parent coping skills, daily living skills for their children, basic counselling skills, their personal wellbeing and sensitization on different specialized service providers and social-protection services for children with severe and profound disabilities.

Assessments of 76 children with severe disability (others drop out from the project) were conducted using self-reliance skills test, physical development, social development, general knowledge and language development. All the participants developed six months individual action plans for their children and committed for its implementation which will rigorously be

followed up by Community Mobilizers (CMs) and Big Sisters. The action plans outlined by the parents along with the consultant focuses on addressing the needs of children with severe disabilities i.e. improving their daily living skills, provision of rehabilitation services, home modification, assistive device use and maintenance etc. depending on their requirements. Almost 8% improvement is seen in most of functional activities of children with severe and profound disability from the midline evaluation. The largest improvement was found in physical development (40% from midline) while some of the changes were negative, i.e Language Development and Art, Sports and Entertainment.

Table 26: Daily Living Skills of Children with Severe and Profound Disability

	Self Help Skills			Physical Development			Art, Sports and Entertainment			Social Development			Intellectual Development			Language Development		
Evaluation	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL	BL	ML	EL
Score	450	674	720	375	605	850	225	330	310	450	665	780	530	720	800	374	572	460
Percentage Change from ML to EL	6.8			40.5			-6.1			17.3			11.1			-19.6		
N = 76																		

Transition Outcome

At the time of the project's planning phase, it was anticipated that the girls would choose between two main pathways; education or vocational training after their enrolment in the bridge classes. The transition pathway for the younger girls in bridge class, who were between the ages of 10 and 14, was enrolment in a formal school. The transition paths for older girls (15–19) enrolled in bridge classes were either enrolment in formal education or vocational education for business skills. A detailed transition pathway is presented in the table below.

Table 27: Transition Pathways

Group tracked for transition	Successful transition	Unsuccessful transition
Girls within age group 10-14 years age (Enrol into Bridge Classes)	Enroll into formal school Continuation to be in school and progressing through the relevant grades or repeat a grade Remain enrolled in the school even after marriage Move to different school Dropped out of school and moved to vocational training or/ and employment (applicable for girls who will pass the age of 14 during the project's lifetime)	Dropout and stays at home Completes bridge class but does not enroll back to school Unsafe employment Dropout due to different conditions (marriage, lack of interest in education, negative social norms or other barriers specific to children with disabilities)
Girls within age group 15-19 years age (Enroll in bridge classes)	Enroll into formal school Continuation to be in school and progressing through the relevant grades or repeat a grade If fails in placement test of school, still working with project on business skills	Dropout and stays at home Engaged in unsafe employment Engaged in unpaid domestic work only Unemployed

Group tracked for transition	Successful transition	Unsuccessful transition
	Remain enrolled in the school even after marriage Move to different school Dropped out of school and moved to vocational training or/ and employment If not interested in formal school, possibility of business skills based on Personalized Social Support (PSS) Start small scale business or enter into the locally available labor market (for those who choose business skills pathways) Engage in vocational training and seek for employment/ income generation	Early marriage/child birth under 20 years
Girls within age group 15-19 years age (not following the track of learning intervention)	Enroll into business skills[4]5 Placement in local market or start small scale business (for those who choose business skills pathways)	Stays at home (not involved in vocational skills or income-generating activities) Engaged in unsafe employment Engaged in unpaid domestic work only Unemployed Early marriage/childbirth under 20 years

[1] *Business skill includes small scale livelihood development skills such as tailoring, beauty parlour, grocery shop, soft toys making, goat farming, etc.*

Enrolment in formal school for the girls in the bridge class, as well as transition to resource centres for the children with disabilities, was part of the learning transition. The business/livelihoods pathway included training in trades such as tailoring, beauty parlour, building up their own grocery shop, enhanced goat farming, soft toys and cushion making, vegetable and fruit shop, boutique, bangles bead manufacturing, poultry/duck farming, mobile restaurant (*panipuri, chatpate*), restaurant, embroidery, handicrafts. After receiving training and material assistance, the girls were expected to start their own small-scale businesses based on the skills and supplies they obtained. As shown in table 28 below, all 671 girls in the endline sample had successfully transitioned. (Girls who dropped out before transitioning could not be recontacted). Therefore, table 29 uses transition data from project monitoring of the entire beneficiary population.

Table 28: Transition rates of sampled girls across baseline-endline (n=671)

Transition cohorts	Baseline transition rate	Midline transition rate	Endline transition rate	% of target achieved
Girls within age group 10-14 years age (Enroll into Bridge Classes)	0%	85.5%	100%	NA
Girls within age group 15-19 years age (Enroll in bridge classes)	0%	85.8%	100%	NA
Girls within age group 15-19 years age (not following the track of learning intervention)	0%	100%	100%	NA
Source: Girls Survey				

Transition rate at endline

Table 29 : Transition rate observed at endline (source: project tracking of all girls)

Transition status	Transition pathways	10-14 (n=858)	15-19 learning cohort (n=206)	15-19 (VT cohort) (n=888)	Total (n=1952)
Successful transition	Enrolled in formal school	869	195	0	1064

	Non-formal education	0	0	0	0
	Engaged in vocational training	0	0	888	888
	Engaged in Business/self-employment			888	
Unsuccessful transition	Dropped out during the bridge class	NA	NA	NA	573

The sample in the Endline Shows 100% successful transition rate. However, drawing on records from the project monitoring database, 1064 girls were admitted to formal schools after completing bridge classes, of whom 995 were still in school when the project closed. Similarly, 888 primary actors transitioned to the livelihood skills and continuing the business.

The quantitative findings from the endline study showed that out of the 671 girls surveyed, 74.1% had taken education pathways whereas 25.9 % had opted for livelihood pathways. The girls who transitioned to education were lost because of various reasons such as marriage and migration. A few had dropped out of school for unknown reasons which led to an attrition rate of 45.9 and replacement of the sample to get assess the learning outcome.

Qualitative findings regarding transition

Livelihood Pathway

The girls who were consulted for FGDs shared that the major reason they opted to take part in skills development was due to socioeconomic reasons. One of the factors was age. Out of the 174 girls of livelihood pathways surveyed, 71.3% of them had opted for vocational education pathways because they belonged to the age group of 15 to 19. They said that they were too old to learn in grades 3 or 4.

"I was already 18 when I came to ENGAGE and I thought I did not have time for education and parents also want to marry us off after 20 so I thought learning vocational skills would be more beneficial as we were told we will start to earn money."- Girl from Khajura, Banke

Another factor why girls had opted for vocational education was because of their parents' occupation. Most of the girls who had opted for vocational education were daily wage workers and as older siblings, they were required to take care of their younger siblings and household

work when parents were away. Even those who were engaged in agriculture also went to work as wage workers on other people's farms. Furthermore, some of the girls shared that they needed to take care of their younger siblings and do household chores in the absence of their parents if they were the older siblings in the family.

If I learn skills and get work, I will not have to ask money from my parents to buy something or eat something. – A girl from Parsa

The parents from Jagarnathpur Parsa also admired the efforts of the Big Sisters, who went to everyone's house and persuaded their parents to allow their daughters to receive skill training. From the study, it was found that the girls were also attracted towards the livelihood pathway because the project had promised to provide support should they do so. For instance, the girls who took goat rearing training got baby goats, some got carts to sell vegetables, some got sewing machine and others got materials as per their needs. At the end of the project, some had already started their business while some were ready to expand it. From the project database, it was found that out of 888 girls who have adopted livelihood pathway, 208 girls from Sarlahi, 235 from Parsa and 359 from Banke have started their business. Goat farming, tailoring and grocery shop were amongst the most initiated business by the beneficiaries.

While the girls did appreciate vocational training, the girls stated that the training of 3 months was not enough as the training lacked various components. The girls in Parsa shared that tailoring is the most successful training in this sector, whereas boutique training did not result in any job. None of them had formed a business, but they did some tailoring from their homes. Apart from this, a huge gap in the market linkages were found during the qualitative studies. For instance, a girl who took a training for embroidery was unable to pursue it currently as it required a team of 3 or 4 to do the work on saree embroidery. Her counterparts left due to health issues and marriage, and she could not continue as there are no other girls in her community who took the embroidery training. So, there are no options for linkage in the market as the parents are also not willing to send her far from the community to work.

They usually took NPR 220 to make 1 set of Kurtha and earned roughly NRs. 300-400 each day during the wedding season. The girls from Sarlahi stated that they gave their earnings to their family for support and had started savings in their mother's account. The girls had also planned to expand their business by taking loans only if the business is profitable in the future. However, they were uncertain that their parent would allow them to take loans to do the business. During the quantitative study, 75% of the girls agreed that they could take loans to expand their business if necessary. The parents, when inquired during the qualitative discussion also shared that they would not risk their girls in to taking loans.

The case was similar with the girls at Sarlahi and Banke as tailoring was one of the most useful skills that could be immediately put into use and since most of the Muslim communities had tailoring as professions, the parents also shared that they were happy with what girls had learnt.

The girls highlighted that the project had a beneficial influence on them and their community when questioned about the improvements they have noticed since the project. The OOS girls were now capable of reading and writing since they received coaching from the program through the bridge classes. They also had the opportunity to earn money and had knowledge of a variety of topics including saving money and menstrual hygiene. Vocational training had greatly aided the girls as they now earned money on their own, whether on a large or small scale. The girls' progress had been seen by their family members, big sisters, and the girls themselves.

I did not know about menstruation before I came to bridge class and also about the hygiene. Here, I know about making pads, how often to change them and importance of drying them in the sun."- a girl from Sarlahi

"We have been empowered and because of this project now we can read, write and have some skill, and we can use it to uplift our life. The confidence that we have now is all because of the help from the project and big sisters" – A girl form Banke

Formal education pathway

Another group of girls aged 10-14 during the starting phase of the project belonged to the education cohort. When asked the reason for choosing the education pathway, one of the motivating factors for the girls was their zeal to continue learning. 66.4% of the girls stated that they wished to continue their learning. Moreover, 45.5% stated that being in school was important for them. 30% of the girls wanted to have a decent job opportunity in the future, hence they chose to enroll inschool. Receiving the seed money from the project was another motivation for the girls to choose this pathway which helps addressthe costs of education. 7.4% of the girls have also acknowledged this support during quantitative study. Besides, 34% of the parents motivated the girls to go to school which is a good outcome on parental engagement.

"Before my parents did not understand that girls also could do something by getting education and now, they have understood and are continuously supporting in my studies."- A girl from Banke

Few of the older girls who had chosen education pathways were of the opinion that while they will have enough time later in life to learn vocational skills but if they miss this time to study, they

will not get a second chance in education. In addition, the project has also been able to address the barriers to education by conducting parent engagement programs, bridging the transportation gap by providing them with seed money to buy cycles, and addressing economic barriers by providing seed money to buy school uniforms and stationeries. The role of big sisters has also been observed as significant in the transition of the girls to education. In the quantitative findings, 55.1% of the girls stated that the support and motivation they got from the big sisters urged them to join school to continue education. This has been acknowledged by the parents as well. The big sisters motivated them by stressing the importance of education, the effects of early marriage and the importance of being self-sufficient.

"We did not understand the role of the big sisters in the beginning but the changes that came in our daughters when they were able to read and also understand things made us realize their importance."

The big sisters also recalled that they were originally mistreated in the neighbourhood and blamed for attempting to get the children out of the house. The parents did not answer the phone and even ignored the big sisters when they came to visit. Later, when the girls began to study and their confidence grew, they began to appreciate the big sisters as well They also shared project information and educated them on the hazards of early marriage. Big sisters also keep on checking their progress work and were always ready if they need assistance as mentioned by a parent from Banke and Sarlahi.

The parents and community had been highly influenced by the job of the big sisters as they could see the visible change in their children. During the initial phase of the project the parents were resistant about the benefits of bridge class and even disrespected the big sisters. A big sister in Banke said that they could see the changes in big sisters as well regarding how they worked, how they were active in community to retain girls in school. This led to the parents wanting their girls to be more knowledgeable and confident like big sisters. These findings have been reciprocated by the big sisters of Banke as well as Sarlahi. The big sisters from Parsa also shared that she had confidence in herself to complete her tertiary education after being connected with ENGAGE.

We were not appreciated, and our presence was also ignored by the parents. Slowly, they started to realize how we were working for their daughter's education and our regular follow up during the time of pandemic made them realize our importance"- A big sister from Sarlahi

The headteachers also asserted that initially they was unsure if the girls who were older would be able to catch up with the regular students. But their progress was quite positive. A GIEN member and municipality representative from Kaudena Sarlahi mentioned that she never

thought that the project would be able to successfully bring the OOS girls into mainstream education. But the girls had been continuing their studies and parents were also aware about the importance of education. The quantitative finding also complemented this statement as 60.8% of the parents shared that they would want their girls to complete at least high school while 22.1% shared that they would want them to complete University degrees. A mathematics teacher from Dhobini Parsa stated that the school made an effort to help the girls to understand mathematical problems by using teaching material tools.

"I strongly agree that the ENGAGE project has changed the mentality of the parents towards girls' education"- a teacher from Parsa

Sustainability outcome

The project had planned for its long-term sustainability throughout the system, community, and learning space. The log frame consisted of three indicators pertaining to sustainability outcomes. The indicators included the (1) number of municipalities having a functional database system; (2) number of GIEN (SEN) functionalized in the palikas; (3) and the number of functional learning hubs in the schools and community promoting learning practices. All these indicators measured the sustainability of the project at the system, community and school levels.

Qualitative consultations with the headteachers, subject teachers, municipal education officers and GIEN members were conducted in the project districts. Meanwhile, quantitative measures were also adapted to measure the sustainability outcome indicators of the learning space. In this regard SIP assessment checklists, disability-friendly infrastructure as well as classroom observations were administered. These were used to measure the three indicators on learning space i) % of schools scoring acceptable or above in disability infrastructure sustainability assessment, ii) % of schools demonstrating acceptable or above on teacher training sustainability assessment, and iii) % of schools demonstrating acceptable or above in implementation of inclusive SIP sustainability assessment. The findings from these have been included in the IOs section in detail. The EE were unable to administer these in a few of the schools since some of the schools had exams and some schools were closed because of the cold weather.

The following table guides the score to be provided for each of the indicators ranging from 0-4 based on the finding from the evaluation.

Table 30: Scorecard for sustainability

Score	Rating
0	Negligible
1	Latent
2	Emerging
3	Becoming established
4	Established

Table 31: Sustainability indicators

Indicators	Status
# of functional learning hubs in the schools and community promoting learning practices	The learning hubs established during the midline have been functional and have already been handed over to the community. The learning hubs are used as a library in the community where students can use the educational materials and the project beneficiaries are aware of the transformation of learning hubs to community learning centres. The project has established 27 learning hubs in the project area and has reported that they are functional. They have been handed over to the community and measures are yet to be taken for full functionalization as a focal person is not yet selected and is not accessible full-time. The EE provides a score of 3 at endline for this indicator
# of GIEN (SEN) functionalized in the palikas	112 GIEN have been formed in both the schools and municipality levels. Capacity-building on resilience, climate change and empowerment had been completed. Project strengthened the GIEN through capacity-building initiatives and enabled them to lobby and collaborate with the local government. The project has drafted a 3-year GIEN strategic plan for sustainability. However, the consultations with the GIEN members revealed that they are not much aware of this as there are big sisters who are responsible to coordinate the activity of GIEN. The EE provides a score of 2 at this level .
# of Municipality having functional database system	All the palikas have received equipment for the database and some have received IT training for the operation of the database. The project regularly coordinates with the local government to functionalize the database management system. Additionally, the project supported a database of assistive devices, a pre-baseline

Indicators	Status
	survey, and WGQCF to Palika. However, database management is yet to be fully functional. EE provides a score of 2.5 at endline for this indicator
Baseline sustainability score (0-4)	0.33
Overall sustainability score at midline (	1.6
Overall Sustainability score at endline (0-4, average of the three level scores)	2.5

Community

Sustainability at the community level had been envisioned by the project since its inception. The learning hubs were to be established in the schools or communities and later be handed over to the local government or local community groups for proper functionalisation. The learning hubs that the researcher visited had already been handed over and reformed as community learning centres. The centre was not only accessible to the project beneficiaries but also other children in the community. The project provided the learning Committee members orientation on the roles and responsibilities of learning hubs and their functionalisation and maintain the records. The 27 learning hubs have been provided with the learning materials and equipment needed. Moreover, all the hubs were accessible to children with disabilities. The availability of various resource materials and books would be beneficial to the students as the learning centres were open on Saturdays and evenings to accommodate the need of the school-going students. However, there were yet some measures to be taken to make it fully functional such as appointing a focal person for the daily operation, and maintenance as they had recently been handed over to the respective wards and communities. During the project phase, the big sisters were responsible to manage the learning hubs and the EE were able to conduct a few qualitative consultations at the learning centres. The little sisters during the FGDs also shared that since they operated during school holidays and Saturdays, it was convenient for them to access the resource materials and study in groups and be guided by the big sisters at the same time. The girls from all the districts have agreed that the learning centres would be beneficial to them.

We come to the learning centres on Saturday as we have homework during the weekdays. We meet big sisters here who help us in our studies. – a little sister from Sarlahi

The disability network was very active and has created a meaningful impact in the community especially among disabled children. 75 of the disabled children are involved in vocational trainings and have been earning through tailoring or sewing business. It was noted that the trainings provided on disability awareness and the project interventions had helped the parents change their perception on disability in the community. The network in Sarlahi shared that they have been advocating with the municipality for their rights along with facilitating the person with disabilities to access the government resources. The project had also helped link the disabled children to related organisations to smoothen out the phase out process. One of the most notable aspects under disability was the inclusion of disabled children by the project at Tri Juddha School in Birgunj with vision and hearing disability.

System

System strengthening was one of the key components for prioritising inclusive education in community schools. The project had envisioned system-level sustainability by strengthening the system through capacity-building training on GIEN, Child protection, DRRs to establish the functionalized systems and structures. Assumptions were made in the project's theory of change that Nepal's public education was characterized by strong policies and weak implementation which stands true. Resource mobilization is a critical component for effective functioning at the local level. Local governments are responsible for subsidizing school education at the local level, in addition to federal and provincial government funding. However, the local government's prioritization of the education sector is an issue of concern. The constitution of Nepal 2015 has mandated school education within the jurisdiction of the local government. In addition, Education Act 2018 has mandated the free and compulsory education to ensure that no children are left out of school. In this regard, the local government are committed to ensuring education for all and that too inclusive education.

The project had worked for system strengthening by working with various stakeholders at the community and system levels. Training on database management had been provided to the municipality staff. The municipal education officer at Sarlahi shared that, they had been able to maintain the database of the children within the municipality which has been easier after the local partner facilitated the training. For instance, before the inception of the project, most of the children with disability were not in the database of the municipality but after the project interventions, they were able to track 116 out-of-school children with disability and maintain their records in the database. This finding has been validated by the project officer of Sarlahi mentioning that out-of-school children were not prioritized by the local governments in their database initially and claimed that the database covered all the children. In addition, the municipal officer from Parsa stressed that they also plan to record the students who dropped out and bring them back to school for sustainability. The Palika, therefore, was enthusiastic to

continue the project activities even after it was over. Even though the database system had been established in all the municipalities, there were challenges in operating the system fully.

We have been given 3 days of training on database management. We have maintained the data but we still need some support in updating the data.- A municipality staff from Banke

Meanwhile, there have been positive developments in local governments allocating budget for education. For instance, Khajura Municipality had allocated Rupees 100000 for emergency child protection along with a total budget allocation for education of Rupees 3,26,53,000. They also planned a budget to enroll out-of-school children in school with a target of 50 children including those without parents and support in their education as guardians. Likewise, Malangwa Municipality had made provisions not to transfer teachers who participated in capacity-building training for at least 3 years. Khajura Municipality had also formed a procedure to improve the quality of education at public schools. Similarly, Jagarnathpur Palika had allocated 3 crores rupees which included the budget for maintenance, toilets, and drinking water for 31 schools. The budget range was from rupees 8-30 lakhs for each school depending on the need. Palika itself had allocated rupees 15 lakhs for the learning centre for sustainability. Other municipalities had also internalized the need for proper budgeting to promote inclusive education.

It is encouraging to see local governments taking steps to improve the quality of education in their regions. This shows a commitment towards promoting inclusive education and ensuring that all children have access to education, especially for the marginalized groups of the Terai region. The collaboration of the project with municipalities and support in maintaining database, training the staffs and also coordination through GIEN is the factor that enabled the municipalities to prioritize education in their budget allocation. During the KII with project staff from Parsa, it was found that the Jagarnathpur Palika has pledged to provide ongoing support for children with disabilities (CwDs) in terms of materials, maintenance, and repairs after the project ends. Both Jagarnathpur and Dhobini Palikas have promised to allocate budgets to sustain project activities. Dhobini council has separated a budget of rupees 82 lakhs during the project handover ceremony and promised to implement good practices of the project. They plan to set budgets for providing materials to schoolgirls and CwDs, as well as providing advanced training. The DYC has also pledged to help the Palikas maintain accountability for their work in the future. Overall, there has been a positive reception from parents, community, and Palikas.

"We have made some plans and also have a budget plan for next fiscal year for big sisters and people with disability but the exact amount is not yet decided, the plans are yet to be refined." A municipal officer from Khajura, Banke

A GIEN representative from Parsa stated that The Palika has separated Rupees 5 lakh for the school through the advocacy of GIEN. In the future, she is assured that the Palika will provide support to GIEN and the project both and that they have agreed to the responsibility after the handover from the project as well.

" After getting connected with this network we got to know a different aspect of the society, as well as our confidence level and our knowledge towards different things, have increased, because of which we are becoming a different version of ourselves". – a GIEN member

School

A total of 32 schools out of 34 project schools were assessed for disability-friendly infrastructure, out of which 62.5% scored well for the school building which is double compared to that of midline (31.81%). It is also a considerable increase from the baseline value of 3.33%. This increase can be attributed to the project's support to the schools to provide easy access for children with disability. The project provided WASH and Ramp support to the schools. This included the construction of a ramp, the construction of disability accessible toilets, a drinking water facility, or any other support as deemed necessary. The project had targeted all 34 intervention schools and met the target by the 4th year of the project period. In the schools where the children with disability were enrolled, they have all the infrastructure in place, however, the maintenance of the infrastructure had not been proper as there were accessible drinking water taps but there was no drinking water in one of the schools visited by the qualitative team in Sarlahi. In a school in Parsa, the newly constructed toilet was locked. Although the teachers who took part in the consultations shared that they had realized the importance of inclusive education and that the infrastructure must be in place to accommodate the children with special needs, there were still a few who said that the structure was not required if there were no children with disability. The government of Nepal has also made it mandatory for schools to have the disability-friendly infrastructure to promote inclusive education.

Since the project was working with disadvantaged girls, notably children with disabilities, and many of them have already enrolled in formal schools, the schools in the project region had begun to see the need to upgrade their infrastructure to make it more disability-friendly. While schools can accept children with certain mobility difficulties, but if children with other types of functional limitations were to be enrolled, the school infrastructure must be renovated, and all the teaching personnel must be trained in disability-friendly teaching-learning mechanisms. The schools mentioned that their teachers had received training related to disability inclusion, gender-sensitive teaching, child protection and inclusive education pedagogy. The frequency of

the training was mentioned 4-5 days by some schools where some mentioned that the teacher received up to 11-12 days of training.

The EE were able to visit 25 schools for administering the School Improvement plan (SIP). All the schools the EE visited had SIPs but few of them were unable to present the document citing the reasons that the SIP was inside the cupboard and the staff who had keys was absent at a few schools. Another factor that affected the consultations with the headteacher about the SIP was that new head teacher were appointed in a few schools who were unaware of the details of SIP and no other staff knew the matter which might have effects on the score. Other schools, however, had fared well when it came to SIPs and had attempted to make SIPs inclusive. However, there still existed a trend amongst some schools of formulating SIP to simply fulfil the requirement of municipalities (to secure the fund for schools).

"Before SIP was just for the sake of preparing SIP, we used to prepare it so that when someone asks we could give them, instead of preparing it for the betterment of the school. But now we prepare SIP on a need basis to uplift the school and to create proper plans and policies for school".- A headteacher from Banke

Off the 25 schools, 80% of those had formulated yearly action plan for the current academic year. School based EMIS was also maintained by all the schools. All the schools had provision of training the teachers on teaching pedagogies provided by the local governments and the partner organizations like Prerana, DEC Nepal and DYC. It was also claimed that the teachers shared the content learned at the training in monthly meetings or during tea breaks. But there was no exact method to measure or assess the level of sharing or how other teachers were benefited by it. The transfer of the teachers also impacted the training received as the EE found few headteachers transferred, retired or newly appointed. In this regard, Malangwa municipality had recently formulated school education management procedure 2079, where one of the provisions stated that if a teacher attended any training, then they were expected to serve in the same school for at least 3 years. This might be a positive step as the training received by the teacher as per need will be implemented in the same school where it was intended.

The schools were reported to have SIP which had provisions for training teachers on teaching pedagogies. Regarding the practicality of the SIP, 88% of the school mentioned that the SIPs were practical to be implemented. Teachers at 61.54% of schools have been participating in the training targeted for capacity-building by different organizations and 81.82% schools have practised sharing the learning of teachers' training among teachers. Qualitative discussion with teachers revealed that the sharing was more of informal practice rather than formal. As the issue of large classroom size and overburden to teachers persists, the effectiveness of such teacher

training is still questionable for inclusive teaching pedagogy. Furthermore, it should also be noted here that the frequency of these training had drastically reduced over time. One of the teachers in Banke noted a diminishing trend of training for teaching students with disabilities.

"ENGAGE Project has provided training and knowledge on gender-sensitive and disability-friendly teaching-learning practices which made us aware regarding supporting the learning and making the learning environment more gender and disability-friendly. However, there aren't many students with disabilities so the need to incorporate disability-friendly teaching learning pedagogy is not felt yet."

Key intermediate outcome findings

Attendance

Attendance was one of the key enablers identified by the project for beneficiary girls' improved learning and transition. The EE used project monitoring data to measure the attendance rate in bridge classes. Since the project had recorded attendance of those girls attending schools, EE used all the attendance data to calculate the overall attendance rate. However, it should be considered that the attendance presented here is for the overall girls attending school, and not only for the girls in the sample.

The project had provided seed money and bicycles to motivate girls to attend school and improve their attendance. Similarly, the project also engaged with parents through different parental engagement activities to convince them to send their daughters to the school on regular basis. Apart from that, the project also ensured that the teachers followed appropriate pedagogical methods to ensure that the classroom and materials are learner-friendly so that girls are encouraged to attend the classes regularly thereby increasing the attendance rate.

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML	EL	Endline Target	Target achieved? (Y/N)
Attendance	Attendance rate of direct beneficiaries	0	71%	76%	75%	Yes
Main qualitative findings						
The qualitative discussion highlighted that all the girls from the education cohort have enrolled into school. Parents were reluctant to send their girls to school at first, but the parents were also involved in different parental activities initiated by the project that helped convince them to send their daughters to school regularly. The big sisters played an influential role in convincing parents to send their daughters to school and continuously monitored and supported girls to enroll in school. Furthermore, their monitoring helped increase school						

attendance as well. It was revealed through consultation with different stakeholders that big sisters played a vital role in enrolling girls back to school and helping them with their everyday homework. The household chores are no longer a burden for girls as they only help their mothers in the kitchen after they come back from school. The perspective of parents has also changed as they also do not force their daughter to do household chores.

EE used the monitoring data provided by the project for deriving the attendance rate of the girls. The attendance was recorded after the girls enrolled to the school. From the attendance record, it was observed that the overall attendance rate for the girls was 76%.

"The enrolment has increased in the school but the retention and attendance are questionable as most of the students have only enrolled in the school because their parents want them to join school However, the parents are not able to follow up about their children's education so the children tend to take advantage of it.
-Headteacher from Banke

This statement was further endorsed by a headteacher from Parsa. Most of the parents of the girls were engaged in daily wage-based work which did not allow them to focus on the education of the girls. Project staff from Parsa further added that sometimes the parents were away from the house for weeks which makes the girls look after their younger siblings, resulting in the absence of girls in school because of their roles and responsibilities in the household.

The girls enrolled in the schools also found it somewhat challenging adjusting to the new environment, especially for those who had never been to school. For such girls, remedial classes or support classes were initiated by the school to improve their learning in all three districts. However, a school in Banke mentioned that this has created an extra burden to the school as well as to the teachers as they have to give extra attention to the girls and have an extra burden to carry because of the project intervention. It can be inferred from the findings that regular attendance in classes can be served as an enabling factor for improved learning since the long-term exposure to the intervention corresponds to the improved learning.

Environment for learning

The associated intermediate outcome for measuring the learning environment in the schools is IO5; improved safeguarding practices in schools. The indicators for this intermediate outcome are a percentage of schools scoring acceptable score or above in inclusive SIP progress assessment and disability infrastructure improvement assessment. Separate tools were designed and administered to capture the information on the relevant intermediate outcome indicators. SIP assessment was carried out based on the 22 questions and the respective score attained by

each of the schools on those questions. A total of 31 schools from Parsa, Sarlahi and Banke were covered in the assessment.

Disability infrastructure assessment checklist was another tool used to assess the intervention schools in terms of available disability-friendly infrastructure and whether the school infrastructures are accessible to children with disability. Disability infrastructure assessment checklist consisted of 49 questions to be filled out via enumerators' observation, 8 questions to be administered to head teachers in the schools and 5 questions related to the sustainability aspect

Inclusive SIP progress assessment

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML	EL	EL Target	Target achieved? (Y/N
IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school	Percentage of schools scoring acceptable or above in inclusive SIP progress assessment	10%	Not calculated as no new SIP had been formed	64.9%	60%	Yes
Main qualitative findings						
The qualitative consultations with teachers and head teachers revealed that most of the schools have updated their SIP. However, they also mentioned that no matter how effectively they were able to design the SIPs and have plans for improvement of school, they were constrained by the lack of resources and capacity to implement the plans that has been stated in SIPs. Moreover, the municipal education officers highlighted that the priorities for schools have never been on customized planning of their school. The schools simply follow the template and infrastructure development have been the most demanded area in SIPs. Some schools are not able to develop SIP because of the issue between SMC members.						

21 of the schools had updated their SIPs and 8 schools were not able to update theirs because of internal politics between SMC members. The project supported in all three districts Parsa, Sarlahi and Banke in formulating and updating the SIPs. In qualitative consultations, head teachers, teachers and SMC in the intervention schools expressed the importance of SIPs in effective planning and implementation for the betterment of the school. In one of the School in Sarlahi, when the qualitative team asked the Headteacher about the SIP, he made many excuse that the SIP in the cupboard but the keys are in his home. The Headteacher from Banke also said that the SIP is with the accountant, and she was absent on the day that the study team visited. There were only handful of school who were readily available to show their SIP to the evaluation team.

The qualitative consultations with the head teachers and teachers in the intervention schools portrayed that they know the need of formulating inclusive SIP. The head teacher of every school

understood if they do not have SIP they will not receive any budget allocated by the government. However, the schools were ignorant to SIP and mostly made it for the namesake only. The team have observed that the schools just change the date of the existing SIP, they are not even bothered to change the priorities of the school in the today's context. They were made aware by the project and local government (municipal officers) for making the SIP more pragmatic and follow the bottom-up approach for its formulation addressing the actual need of the school. However, most of the SIP gets stuck because of the internal politics between SMC says the Municipal officer from Parsa.

The qualitative exercises with the relevant stakeholders from the schools also found that most schools had formulated the SIP as per the government SIP guideline/template but they did not have the internal resources to implement the plans mentioned in the SIP. Schools relied on the funds disbursed by the local government for the implementation of the SIP but the funds allocated by the local level to the schools are mostly used up in salary and the scholarship to the students. Almost all the schools in the intervention districts rely on the budget allocated by the local government to carry out the plans mentioned in their SIPs, hence, lack of finance has hindered the implementation of the SIP to a great extent.

However, consultations with the municipal education officials from Banke revealed that there was lack of inclusive SIP, and functional SMC in the school due to which allocation of the government services is not possible. Nevertheless, municipal education officer of Parsa shares that the SIP has not been implemented though it is developed in most of the schools. Most of the schools followed the SIP guidelines and template provided by the government but did not prioritize their immediate and future plans. Plans to make the school and classroom child, gender and disability-friendly, implement child safeguarding and gender responsive pedagogies were not given much priority in the SIPs rather issues of fencing the school compound, making playground and increasing number of teachers are in the school immediate and/or priority plans in the SIP. These too were not being achieved because of lack of capacity of the schools and lack of funds from the government. Moreover, education officials from local government in Parsa highlighted that that SIP in some of the schools remained just as a mere document which is necessary for budget disbursement. Some of the schools hardly implement the plans and agendas set in the SIPs.

"The SIP has not really been implemented though it has been developed for many schools" - *an education officer from Parsa*

Municipality Education Officers had also raised concern about the designing and planning of the SIP. In Banke, the municipality education officer highlighted that the schools sometimes come up with impractical and unattainable plans while formulating the SIP and there were instances were

concerned authority had to discard some of the agendas set in the SIP. As per the local government official from the education sector, the schools should realize the resource and funding capacity of the local government while designing the SIP. Also, the priorities about the plans should be thoroughly discussed among the relevant stakeholders and they should be agreed upon by the majority.

"Schools must mention their needs in the SIP rather than asking us verbally as we hold monthly meetings with the headteachers. We are not allowed to provide services or facilities to the school if they have not prioritized those issues in the SIP."
-an education officer from Banke

Regarding the effectiveness of SIP formulation and implementation, municipal education officer from Banke also mentioned that even though they want to give resources to the schools in need, some schools have direct linkages with the local leaders which makes the work of education officer difficult as they allocate budget directly to those schools, so the schools who actually need that budget are highly affected.

Disability-friendly Infrastructure

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML	EL	EL Target	Target achieved? (Y/N)
IO5: Improved safeguarding practices in school	schools scoring acceptance or above in disability infrastructure improvement assessment	3.33%	9.09%	41.68%	60%	No
Main qualitative findings						
Consultation with teachers and head teachers revealed that they have understood that schools need to have infrastructure that is disability-friendly. Most of the schools compared to that of midline have improved significantly in making the infrastructures of the schools' disability-friendly. With a significant improvement of 32.59% from the midline to the endline, there is still a huge area for improvement in schools in this regard. It was seen that the newly built schools, especially which were built after the massive earthquake of 2015, had to follow the guidelines of Government of Nepal to build disability-friendly and earthquake resistant infrastructures, which can be one of the reasons for the improvement in the disability-friendly infrastructure. As the infrastructures are always kept at priority in most of the schools, the						

construction of new buildings and their improvement can be a reason for the significant improvement.

Most of the newly built schools had accommodated disability-friendly infrastructures. When observed, the team found out that most of the schools had not maintained the infrastructures of the school to be disability-friendly. The educational officer of Banke, mentioned that the policy of Nepal had been advocating about inclusive education but the schools were not fully ready to accommodate CwDs. There was lack of physical infrastructure and even human resources to address the needs of CwDs.

As per the response from the headteachers from many schools, they did not have the capacity to admit students with functional limitations and adapt them in the school environment. The physical infrastructures in the schools were not disability-friendly and the school staff and management committee were also not trained and equipped with disability-friendly teaching learning mechanism. Schools could accommodate children with some form of difficulty in mobility but if the children with other forms of functional limitations were to be enrolled, the school infrastructure needed to be upgraded and the teaching staffs needed to know disability-friendly teaching learning mechanism.

In terms of inclusiveness in teaching, a teacher from Parsa stated that the school did not discriminate CwDs nor does the teacher but there had been some instances where CwDs are bullied or discriminated by their friends or other fellow students. However, having said that most of the schools were not seen having a disability-friendly infrastructure. Most of the classes did not have adequate spaces for easy movement of wheelchair, nor were the toilets in easily assessable places. Schools still had latrines in the toilets which was not easy to use for the children with functional limitations. Even the schools which was especially targeted for children with visual impairments did not have signs in braille.

"Nepal Government had established special centers for CwDs, for example in Tri Juddha School in Birgunj, they teach children with vision disability. For special education, the teachers have received special training from Nepal Government."
- A head teacher from Parsa

One of the schools in Banke, had students with hearing problems where proper hostel facilities were provided but the school did not have any security for the protection of those students. Moreover, the school did not have any closed boundary so anyone could easily trespass the school area. Even though the physical infrastructures were always kept as priority in the SIP of

schools, it could be seen that the schools were still lacking behind in physical infrastructure and safety, especially the schools which is targeted for the CwDs.

Identification of CwD was done in Dhobini Palika in every school with visual and hearing tests. In terms of outreach, the Palika has tried their best to reach all the children but some may have been missed out.
- A Municipal Education Officer from Parsa

Moreover, findings from the qualitative consultations regarding improved safeguarding practices revealed that almost all the schools currently did not have the internal capacity to cater to the needs of the children with functional limitations. Schools could accommodate students who had some problems with mobility but if students with other forms of functional limitation were to be enrolled, the schools did not have the capacity to accommodate and adapt them in terms of infrastructure, learning materials, disability-friendly teaching mechanisms. For instance, new building of some schools had been designed as disability-friendly, while the old ones were not. Even the lock of the toilets in most of the schools were not disability-friendly or some toilets does not even have a proper locking system.

"The SMC is focusing on ensuring the improvement of schools infrastructures."
- SMC of Parsa

However, having said that the EE cannot deny the fact that there has been significant improvement in the disability-friendly infrastructure. The project has intervened in the school to build disability-friendly infrastructure and prioritize it in their SIPs so that they can get the budget allocated from the local government. Another reason for the improvement can be credited to the government policy. SSDP 2016/17- 2022/23 ensures the improved structural design that ensures accessibility for and the safety of all children including those with disabilities[6].

"School infrastructure is managed properly with external help."
- Headteacher from Banke

Besides children with disabilities have been admitted to resource schools in then respective districts. During the KII with a disability based network representative in Parsa, he says that Children with hearing impairment could not use sign language previously but can use it now. Vision-impaired children were admitted to TriJuddha school in Birgunj and the project also assisted with training and materials. All the facilitators and manpower from VSO was utilized that helped the project cover at least 50-60% of CwDs. Also, another network member from Sarlahi also mentioned that there has been a lot of change in perception of people towards children with disability in the community due to awareness raising activities from the project.

[6] https://www.doe.gov.np/category/ssdp.html

Teaching quality

To assess the teaching and learning environment of the schools, classroom observations were carried out in schools from Parsa and Sarlahi. A classroom observation checklist was prepared which consisted of 55 questions which were to be answered observing the classes in the intervention schools. Classroom observation checklists were primarily based on the overall teaching learning mechanism with respect to gender, child and disability-friendly pedagogies, classroom infrastructure and seating arrangements, accessibility to children with functional limitations, availability of reading and supplementary materials, teachers and children motivation, use of extracurricular activities, teachers attitude towards girls, children from marginalized communities and children with disabilities and the general techniques and methods used for the overall functioning of the classes.

Teaching quality was specifically assessed by 16 specific questions within the classroom observation checklist with respect to girls, children from marginalized communities and children with disabilities. These 16 questions and their analysis gave an understanding on learner-centered classroom practices.

Teaching quality in the schools was also assessed qualitatively by consulting with the relevant stakeholders from the schools; teachers and head teachers. Qualitative checklist mainly adhered to the aspects concerning teaching-learning mechanisms in the schools and issues and challenges faced by the schools or teachers in effecting teaching and learning. Education Officials from the local government were also consulted regarding the overall teaching quality and the teaching-learning mechanism.

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML	EL	EL Target	Target achieved? (Y/N)
IO4: Improved teaching quality	Teacher/ educators displaying learner-centered classroom practices	38.46%	40.91%	64.31%	60%	Yes
Main qualitative findings						
The qualitative consultations with teachers, head teachers and municipality officers marked that positive learning environment is created through proper learner centered classroom management and organization. They also stressed system level improvement rather than just focusing on classroom pedagogy improvement. The overall improvement in learning is achieved by quality of teaching coupled with the availability of the resources required for learner centered classroom practices. It was noted that the teaching quality is also dependent on the distribution of students in schools/classes. The teachers highlighted that with a larger number of students in a class, it is impossible to provide attention to individual students and thus the need of special students is						

overshadowed. They have also been using gender neutral languages and disability friendly languages. The teachers shared that they have been sensitive about the gender and disability.

The EE team was not able to make classroom observations in all the intervention schools because of the vacation that was going on during the field visit. However, the team had done 19 classroom observations and the observations findings may be a little biased as the teacher might be conscious of the presence of the evaluator, though the teachers were informed prior to the class that it is not the evaluation of teacher but of classroom and the activities in the classroom overall.

Among the total schools assessed, almost all classes had higher number of girls than boys enrolled in but the absence of students were more than 50% in case of boys whereas the attendance of girls was comparatively better than that of boys. Teachers were found largely to be displaying positive practices regarding their dealing with students in the classroom, which is the result teachers training provided by the project. The training provided teachers with knowledge and skills to effectively address the needs of children with disabilities in the classroom setting. This included training on how to create an inclusive classroom environment, how to use appropriate language and communication strategies, and how to modify teaching methods to meet the needs of diverse learners.

In addition, the training also addressed gender sensitivity and disability-friendly terminologies. This suggests that the project aimed to promote an understanding of the importance of using language that is respectful and inclusive of all students, regardless of their gender or ability status.

"The project has provided us training and also provide necessary teaching materials in order to support the education of girls and that of children with disability"
- Subject teacher from Dhobini, Parsa

The quantitative data was further validated by the qualitative consultations with the teachers, head teachers and education officers from the local level. The qualitative exercises showed that the teachers had the idea of child safeguarding and the gender responsive pedagogy but they lagged in effectively following those mechanisms in the classrooms because of huge difference in the teacher student ratio. This was also one of the reasons why teachers were not able to follow and practice child safeguarding and gender responsive pedagogy in real sense. A Maths teacher from Parsa said that the teacher student ratio was not balanced due to which taking extra classes is quite difficult. The teachers also did not wish to work in school as a part time teacher and asks head teacher for the vacancy in the school so that they were permanently employed which has always been an issue in most of the schools. The teachers did not take their

roles and responsibilities seriously until and unless they were made permanent in the school. The same teacher was used to teach one subject from primary to secondary level which affects the quality of education.

"There had not been any implementation or activities from government's side to train teachers."-A teacher from Parsa

The teachers who got the training shared it to their colleagues within 2-4 days so, the teachers who were not part of the training also get knowledge about the outcome of the training and bring it in practice. However, the sharing had been informal rather than in formal meetings as superficial information was shared rather than the knowledge transfer.

Agreeing to that, Municipal Education Officer of Parsa said that the Palika was planning to systematize the allocation of teachers so that the teacher-student ratio was maintained in schools and run classes in two shifts so that the students could also join school in the time feasible for them. The municipal education officer of Banke also agreed to the fact that there is a need to provide training to teachers from government side for better teaching learning practices.

"The major problem of the school is teacher student ratio. we have 750+ students but only 9 teachers. Though we have been continuously asking for additional teachers in school, we have not been able to get new teachers from the government or any private organization."
-A head teacher, Parsa

It was challenging for girls as well as for teachers to accommodate the girls at first, but the extra classes expanded the scope of improvement in girls. Initially, the girls struggled and were not used to the school setting, hence, the teachers provided more attention to them compared to other students. Muslim girls were given special training to adjust in the school. Now, people have started to educate their girl child seeing all the members in their community educating their girls.

The need for and importance of learner centered classroom practices were further explored qualitatively with head teachers, teachers and the education officials from the local level. The stakeholders had a common understanding that learner centered classroom management and organization is essential in creating a positive learning environment where a sense of belonging is established. Learner-centered classroom practices includes wide variety of skills and techniques that are used by teachers to keep students organized, focused, attentive, interested and on task. It required an adoption of teaching learning mechanism amongst wide range of students in terms of age, gender, marginalization and disability. They fully agreed that a well-organized and managed classroom appears to diminish student confusion, frustration and

disruptive behaviour, while increasing their ability to navigate the classroom independently, and promotes academically productive social interaction among students.

When asked about the practice of sharing the learnings from trainings, one of the head teachers in Parsa stated that, when one teacher went for the training he/she shared that knowledge among their colleagues as soon as they are back to school. However, it was necessary to establish a proper learning sharing mechanism in the schools since informal conversations and meetings alone will not be sufficient to transfer knowledge and skills to new teachers who come as replacements to the old/experienced ones.

"The teachers who gets the training shares the knowledge he/ she gets with their colleagues, so the teachers who did not attend the training also get the knowledge about the training."
- Head teacher from Parsa

Teachers are aware regarding the gender-sensitive pedagogies while they do not have much idea on disability sensitive teaching learning practices and infrastructures in the classroom since there are not many students with disability in the schools. Some of the schools do have children with disabilities but the number in minimal. In those schools, students with physical disabilities are well adjusted with other students and are learning well. Hence, there is no need to apply different teaching learning practice for children with disability as it is not needed. But if the students with other forms of disabilities such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, autism, etc. are to get enrolled into formal schooling, then then the teachers should be well trained prior to the enrolment of the students and the schools' infrastructures also should be made disability-friendly. Also, adequate and equipped human resources need to be in place who are aware of disability-friendly teaching learning mechanism before enrolling those students in the schools. Likewise, the overall infrastructure of the schools needs to be adapted as per the need and requirement of the children with disabilities. And for all these to take shape, schools in coordination with the local governments need to come up with plans and policies with proper budget implications.

Life skills

As agreed in the MEL framework, external evaluators assessed three areas- financial literacy, self-efficacy and Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health (AYSRH). The quantitative data for all three aspects on life skill were collected through the girls' survey. 671 girls had participated in the girls' survey. Focused group discussions with girls and their household members were also carried out in the project intervention areas to get deeper insights on life skills. The following section will discuss these three areas in detail.

Under life skills, the project was carried out several activities. With an aim to improve awareness on financial management, the project delivered financial literacy training to the girls who received the business skill training. The project also delivered training on AYSRH to all the adolescent girls including sanitary pad making training.

Financial literacy

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML	EL	EL target	Target achieved? (Y/N)
Increased entrepreneurship/livelihood and life skills of direct beneficiaries	Financial literacy score	67.78%	71.11%	74.21%	75%	No
Main qualitative findings						
The girls unanimously shared that their knowledge regarding financial matters have increased after they attended different financial literacy sessions. They could say where they can save money if they earn any in the future and that they can take loans if required to grow their business. They have also known the importance of saving family income and how the income could be wisely utilized for family well-being. However, the increase in knowledge level does not correspond to the practices. None of the girls have mentioned that they have consulted or have approached banks or any financial institutions for any financial transactions which constrains the practice of financial literacy by the girls.						

Based on the data collected by external evaluator, the average financial literacy score was found to be 67.78% in baseline,71.11% in midline and 74.21% in the endline. The team found that even though, the target was not met for the endline, the score achieved is higher than that of national average which is 57.9% as measured by the Nepal Rastra Bank[7], the central bank of Nepal.

Knowledge

The girls who had transitioned to livelihood pathways had been engaged in income generating activities. Various vocational activities were provided by the training so that the girls who did not want to pursue further in education, were provided option to work and live a dignified life. Despite, the presence of financial institutions and knowledge none of the girls had taken any loans or financial support from the financial institutions. The girls mostly depend on their parents for any financial support or work on their family business.

[7] https://www.nrb.org.np/contents/uploads/2022/12/Baseline-Survey-on-Financial-Literacy-in-Nepal-including-Financial-Inclusion-Indicators.pdf

"I have opened a tailor in the neighborhood now and it is running well. I want to save the money and then open a boutique in the Nepalgunj."
- A girl who has taken tailoring training from Banke

The girls who have transitioned to livelihood had envisioned to expand their business. For instance, if the tailoring business ran well, they had also planned to expand it to the city. Similarly, if the girl ran animal husbandry, they were planning to expand it by rearing other additional animals. With the help of their parents, those girls who had their own shop were planning to open a branch of their shop in the city area and extend their market. Having said that, few of the girls also told that 3 months of training specifically in the sector of tailoring was not enough to establish a business on their own. An advanced level training was needed for the tailoring business. Nevertheless, they were sewing basics and earning some sort of pocket money and since most of the Muslim girls opted for tailoring, they were also learning from their parents and family members. Mobility restriction in the Muslim community was mostly seen because of which, girls sought skills that could be done in the household in the future. This was seen in all the districts.

"I have learned tailoring, but I do not have access to financial institutions to open up my own tailor, neither I have the tailoring machine to start working from my home. And many girls are in the similar situation. I think it would have been better if the project provided support or seed money to all the girls who are willing to work."
- A girl from Banke

Skills

62.4% agreed that they could make good decisions about how to spend money. 64.4% of the girls agreed that they can set long term financial goals for a better future. 72.9% of the girls agreed that they could only spend money only on the things that could be afforded. 70.09% of the girls agreed that they could make good decisions about how the money should be spent at home. Despite the promising qualitative findings, it was unveiled that the plans were barely put into actions. When asked, what plans they had for the future regarding the skills that they possessed, most of the girls agreed to do whatever they had been taught.

During the FGDs, the girls shared that they could make independent decisions regarding their education and livelihood independently. They were confident that they would able to communicate their needs to parents in addition to convincing them in making financial decisions such as expanding their businesses and taking loans. They were also aware about the financial

institutions, and few had their own bank accounts while others deposited money in their parent's account.

Attitude

67.8% of the girls agreed that they have a monthly plan set on where to spend their money every month. In the light of findings that girls have good knowledge on financial matters, and that many girls have now chosen safe professions as their transition, there was lack of project support or mechanism, so that the girls can start earning and saving their money. For instance, most of Muslim girls were more inclined towards tailoring as their parents also support them in that. A girl from Sarlahi said that she took goats from the project support because their family already has few of them and she knew how to take care of them.

"I was interested in beauty parlour training, but the girls in our society are not used to going to the parlour. Also, the concept of parlour is not liked in my society so I took tailoring classes."
- A Muslim girl from Banke

The project has linked the beneficiaries with the micro finance Institutes (MFI)providing access to credit, the project aims to enable the girls to continue their education or pursue their livelihoods successfully. The project's approach of linking one MFI in each district with beneficiaries is a smart strategy as it helps to ensure that there is a dedicated financial institution for these girls to access credit from, and it also ensures that the MFI have contract with the implementing partner for 5 years to ensure the effective implementation of this linkage.

Self-efficacy

The Schwarzer's and Jerusalem's General Self-Efficacy (GSE) tool was used to measure the self-efficacy of girls. The tool contained 10 questions concerned with the personal agency of girls which assessed their self-belief to cope with difficult situations in life. This scale was administered to all the girls participating in the girls' survey.

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML	EL	Endline Target	Target achieved (Y/N)
OOS adolescent girls' improved attendance	Self-Efficacy score (%)	60.62%	64.25%	90.40%	70%	Yes
Main qualitative findings						

The girls have an increased perception of their self-confidence. They can set their plans and have their say about their future. The older girls foresee themselves starting their own business and making money from it while the younger girls had plans of continuing their education. Girls from both the age groups admitted that they want to accomplish their goals too. The parents also highlighted that their daughters are now able to say what is right for themselves and sometimes engage with them in making decisions. However, their say remains in small household decisions only. For instance, girls express their opinion about household issues but for sending them to school, the final decision of enrollment is taken by parents. Likewise, when it comes to the decision on marriage, girls are merely asked for their opinion.

The quantitative data collected on self-efficacy showed that the average self-efficacy of girls has been slightly increased from 60.62% at the baseline to 64.25% at the midline and 90.40% at endline. 6.9% of the girls did not know or could not say what they would like to do in future (in next five years). Of the total 671 girls interviewed, 42.5% see themselves rejoining school, 19.5% engaged in some sort of vocational training, 14% engaging in formal employment and 8.5% of the girls are planning to initiate business. This data was further validated during the FGDs with the girls, where it was uncovered that they have not only set plans but also look forward to accomplish them. Most of the girls when talking with the qualitative team assured that they want to continue their studies and be independent in life.

During qualitative discussion, most of the girls expressed that they make suggestions to their parents while making household decisions. They raise their voice when some decision about her life is being made, for instance, they are able to share to their parents that they want to go to school and complete higher education.

For the girls who opted for education pathway, the ones interviewed were determined to complete their schooling up to at least high school. They were confident that they would be able to revolt against early marriage, convince their parents for higher education and have set certain ambitions to be a social worker, doctor, nurse, police, or pilot. They were found to be highly influenced by the job of the big sisters since the big sisters were respected by the parents and the community in addition to the reasons mentioned in the transition section above. A big sister in Banke implied that they could see the changes in big sisters as well regarding how they worked, how they were active in the community to retain girls in school. This led to the parents wanting their girls to be more knowledgeable and confident like big sisters.

"To be a doctor, a lot of money is required. Therefore, I want to be a nurse as it is not as expensive as being a doctor."- a little sister from Parsa

In Banke, when there was a child marriage happening, there was a report to the police and the marriage was stopped because of which the community is more alert on making decisions related to early marriage. Although the case was not related to project, this gave confidence in the girls

that they could call the police about cases of forced marriage. However, when important decisions must be taken, their part of the decision-making process is rather modest. Girls are rarely asked if they want to get married, for instance as parents make the decision. Therefore, despite the sense of females' enhanced self-confidence, practically speaking, they are unable to do what they feel they are capable of.

"We want to study and build our future but it depends on our parents if they are willing to send us to school or not" – a little sister from Banke

Adolescent and Youth Reproductive and Sexual Health

Adolescent and Youth Reproductive and Sexual Health (AYSRH) was measured through questions designed specifically for the project in line with the interventions. All the girls were assessed for AYSRH knowledge, attitude and practice focusing around the areas of menstrual hygiene and family planning.

Knowledge

Table 32 below reflects that there has been an increase in all of the knowledge related variables from baseline to midline. In the baseline 55.09% of girls had heard about safe menstrual practices while 88.7% of them have heard in the midline and 96.7% of them have heard in the endline. The percentage of girls who have heard of family planning was 26.04% in baseline, 57.4% in the midline and with the increase to 63.8% in the endline. Of those girls who heard of safe menstrual practices, 70.6% heard from mother, 48.2% from sister, 37.9% from female friends, and 26.2% from NGOs. 93.9% received sanitary pad making training of whom 92.5% reported being able to make it by themselves now and 73.5% reported the training to be a lot of useful, 94.6% reported that they are able to practice safe MHM practices and 63.8% shared that they were able to share the knowledge and skills with their friends/sisters/relatives.

Table 32: Knowledge on AYSRH

Indicators measured	Baseline	Midline	Endline
Heard of safe menstrual practices	55.09%	88.7%	96.7%
Heard of Family Planning concept	26.04%	57.4%	63.8%
Knowledge on legal age of marriage for girls	76.60%	96.2%	98.1%
Knowledge on legal age of marriage for boys	92.64%	99.6%	98.1%
Source: Girls Survey			

Likewise of the girls who have heard about family planning, 42.1% heard from Mothers, 36% heard about it from their sisters, 32.9% from other female relatives, 30.6% from female friends, 25.5% from NGOs, 16.1% from government health workers. 66% of the girls reported that the AYSRH sessions were a lot of useful. It can be inferred from the quantitative findings that the project has been able to impart knowledge on ASYRH among the beneficiary girls.

The qualitative findings have also validated the quantitative findings. Girls shared that they found the ASYRH sessions conducted in the bridge class to be useful for them in terms of getting acquainted with the knowledge on sexual and reproductive health. They were specially fascinated by the sanitary pad making training and the contents of menstrual hygiene.

Moreover, the girls spoke without any hesitation and were able to express themselves openly with the qualitative researchers. They also presented their knowledge on ASYRH and how they came to know about it and how they talk about menstrual health at home. They credited this for the regular home visits, counselling and motivation form the big sisters. All the girls were aware about the consequences of early marriage on health. They learnt pad making training and had started to make pads, becoming more aware about the sanitation required during menstruation, which foods to eat during menstruation and getting to know about the importance of savings because they will be able to buy things they want and don't have to depend on parents for fulfilling their necessity.

"Will not be able to enjoy our life if we get married at early age"
- little sister from Jagannathpur, Parsa

Skills

In the baseline, the majority of girls (88.9%) stated they use a cloth during their period. While in the midline, 52% of the girls stated that they use cloth and 83.7% stated using sanitary pad, in endline it was reported that 38.3% of the girls use cloth and 89.2% use sanitary pad. Of those using pads, 58.9% change pad 3 times a day, 22.3% change more than 4 times a day. While 72.5% of the girls were found to be washing the cloth with soap and water and dry in the direct sunlight in the endline while 12% of the girls were found to be washing the cloth with water, soap and disinfectant and dry in the direct sunlight.

Pad-making sessions provided by the project was very good. Now, I can make my own pad which helps me to save money as I do not have to buy them. I also learned about safe menstrual practices and have been implying it in my life as well.
- a girl from Banke

Attitudes

As discussed in the above section, the increment in knowledge has shaped positive attitude of girls concerning their sexual and reproductive health. They have become open about discussion of issues related to their sexual and reproductive health. When asked whom they would approach in future for any queries they have about sexual and reproductive health, 67.1% of them will ask their mothers, 42.5% with sister, 18.2% with other female relative, 40.7% with friends, 14% with NGO workers. Only 5.1% of the girls shared that they will not approach anyone for the queries. Big sisters have observed that the girls have started discussing the issues related to AYSRH among their friends and FCHVs. Initially they did not feel comfortable talking over the matter other than with their mothers. Now they approach FCHVs and other female members who they think might help them with which has happened after they took the training on sanitary pad making and sexual health. The parents have also validated this by sharing that the girls share their issues without hesitations and even teach their mothers the importance of practicing menstrual hygiene. Also 63.8% of the girls shared about the safe menstrual practice with their friends or sisters.

Conclusion

The endline evaluation followed a panel approach where the same girls sampled in the baseline and midline evaluation of ENGAGE project were followed up in the endline evaluation. Since there was an attrition rate of 45.9% an additional 308 girls and households were included in the survey to make up for the attrition. The findings were presented for the total sample including the top-up sample.

Learning

The endline evaluation noted a significant improvement in the learning outcome of the girls as compared to the learning level of the girls at the baseline. For instance, the average score in literacy increased from 41.98 at baseline to 110.75 at the endline. Likewise, the numeracy score has increased from 16.22 at baseline to 42.17 at the endline. The change noted in both literacy and numeracy from baseline to midline was found to be significant with a p-value less than 0.01 in both tests. Even though the learning of girls had improved, they still lacked certain skills like reading small passages in EGRA while subtraction in EGMA. 50.9% of the girls are proficient learners in subtask 1 whereas most of the girls fit in the category of Emergent learners in subtasks 2, 3, 4 and 5 in EGRA. Whereas, in EGMA the girls are coming up as proficient learner in subtask 1, subtask 2 and subtask 5, established learners in subtask 3 and emergent learners in subtask 4.

Transition

The project defined different pathways for girls to choose from, depending on the girls' age group and girls' desire to pursue their dreams. The younger girls were expected to choose a learning pathway, meaning, enrolment back to school while the older girls had the option of either continuing learning or taking a profession. Out of total 2525 beneficiaries targeted, 1064 transitioned to school, including 995 who remained in school by the endline and 69 who had dropped out from school by the end of February. 888 opted for livelihood pathway while the remaining 573 dropped out of the project. The EE evaluated 54.6% of the girls had successfully transitioned to education whereas 45.4% of the girls have transitioned into livelihood out of 671 girls surveyed.

Sustainability

The project has envisioned community-level sustainability since the start of the project. The learning centers were to be built in schools or communities before being handed over to local governments or community organizations for appropriate operation. The disability network was quite active and had a significant influence on the community, particularly among children with disabilities. Most impaired youngsters are enrolled in vocational programs and make a living through tailoring or sewing businesses. It was noticed that the disability awareness training and project interventions have assisted parents in changing their perceptions of impairment in the community. The schools in the project region had started to recognize the need to modify their infrastructure to make it more disability-friendly since the project was working with poor girls, particularly children with disabilities, and many of them had already enrolled in formal schools. Schools could accept students with some mobility issues, but if students with other types of functional limitations were to enrol, the school infrastructure would need to be updated, and all teaching staff would need to receive training in teaching strategies that are accessible to students

with disabilities. The system had also internalized the need for inclusive education and started to allocate funds specifically for education. To functionalize the GIEN through the municipalities have been one of the important factors to sustain the girls in education and livelihood, and the local levels were committed to working through GIEN.

The commitment of the local partner to work with the MFI for five years is also a noteworthy aspect of the project's sustainability strategy. This commitment implies that the project is not just focused on short terms gains but has a long-term vision for the sustainability of the project. By committing to working with the MFI for five years, the project aims to build a strong and lasting partnership that can continue beyond the project's timeline.

Intermediate outcomes

There were five intermediate outcomes defined in the log frame which acted as enabling factors for improving the key outcomes. The first IO was improved attendance of the girls. During the baseline, attendance had not been measured as the bridge classes had just begun, while in the endline, after the girls enrolled into school, the attendance rate reached 76%. The second IO was environment for learning which comprised of two main domains. The first one was disability friendly infrastructure which was improved from 3.33% at baseline to 41.68% at the endline. However, the target for the endline was not met. Another was inclusive SIP sustainability assessment. The SIP formulated in the schools were found to be somehow inclusive and has improved and met the target set for the endline. However, there was minimal representation of parents during designing of SIP. Due to the resource constraint, the effective implementation of SIP had not been possible in the project area. Another IO was improved teaching quality. It was measured through learner-centered classroom. The target for the endline was met by this component. The trained teachers had not completely been able to follow the learner-centered pedagogical approaches due to constraints like large classroom size and unbalanced teacher-student ratio.

The final IO, life skills were measured through three domains. Financial Literacy, Girls Self-Efficacy scale and Adolescent and Youth Reproductive and Sexual health were three areas measured under life skills. It was found that the knowledge attitude and skills regarding financial literacy had left a positive impact on girls' life. However, girls had started their business and used their skills although depend on their family for big financial decisions. The girls' Self-Efficacy had improved as shown by the quantitative data, however, girls were found to have minimal exercise of the capacity they had. Regarding adolescent and youth reproductive and sexual health, there had been an impressive improvement in knowledge attitude and practice. The sanitary pad making training had been found useful in the transformation of their knowledge base and skill.

Recommendations

While the project has made efforts in providing education for OOS marginalized girls there are still constraints like large classroom size and unbalanced teacher-student ratio that affect the implementation of learner-centred pedagogical approaches. The future program should address these constraints to ensure that teachers are able to fully implement learner-centred approaches. Continuation of big sisters' mobilization through municipalities by replicating the mentoring approach could be one of the catalyst to improve the learning of not only the beneficiaries but also other girls from the community. Based on the findings from the evaluation, the EE provides the following recommendation for further programming:

Improving teaching quality:

Teachers should receive training on learner-centered pedagogical approaches and subject-based training, especially in Mathematics. This can help improve their teaching quality and ensure that they are well-equipped to teach students effectively. This can be done by municipalities in coordination with other NGOs working for education. Schools should consider the resources and funding available from the local government when designing their School Improvement Plans (SIPs). This can help ensure that the plans are feasible and achievable. Foster a Bottom-Up Approach by involving all stakeholders, including students, parents, and community members, in the SIP development process. This can ensure that the plan addresses the actual needs of the school and helps build ownership and commitment towards achieving the goals outlined in the SIP. The municipality should create an enabling environment for SIP development by engaging with School Management Committees (SMCs) and Municipal officers. Facilitating dialogue and building consensus around shared goals can help create a supportive environment for implementing the SIP by monitoring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the SIP regularly. This can help ensure that the plan remains relevant and effective over time.

Girls Inclusive Education Network (GIEN):

The GIEN should ensure that all members of the network are aware of the strategic plan and work towards achieving common goals. It should create opportunities for girls to participate in mentorship programs and leadership training to build their skills and confidence. This can help empower them to become advocates for their education and contribute to the education of others. The local government should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the network's programs and activities to ensure that they are meeting their objectives and making a positive impact on girls' education. Furthermore, it can promote a disability-friendly environment not only in schools but also in communities by working with policymakers to ensure that disability rights are protected, and that funding is allocated to support disability-friendly environments.

Lastly, it can partner with disability organizations to promote disability inclusion. This can involve collaborating on advocacy efforts, sharing resources and expertise, and working together to create inclusive environments.

Annexes

Annex 1: Project Design and Interventions

The detailed description of Theory of Change (ToC) is presented on page 22 of this report which is followed by ToC diagram on page 24 . Along with the description of the ToC, EE has commented on the barriers identified by the project in its ToC.

Annex 2: Endline evaluation approach and methodology

Attached separately

Annex 3: Learning Outcomes Data Table

The tables from Annexes are included in the main body. Please refer to the following tables corresponding to the tables in annexes.

Table number in Annex	Table number in main body
4.1	Table 13
4.2	Table 26
4.3	**Error! Reference source not found.**
4.4	**Error! Reference source not found.**
4.5	Table 27
4.6	**Error! Reference source not found.**8
4.7	NA
4.8	**Error! Reference source not found.**

Literacy

It is noted from the table below that the endline has marked improvement in the mean scores achieved by girls from baseline to midline in all the subtasks of literacy as tested by EGRA Test. The difference in the mean score across baseline to midline has been significant as tested by the t-test with p values less than 0.01 in all subtasks.

Table26: Literacy score averages (by subtask) across baseline and endline

	Score (average)		endline	p-value (midline vs Endline)	Statistically significant difference (Y/N)
	Baseline	Midline/endline			
	(N= 496)	(N= 496)	(N= 496)		
Subtask 1: Listening comprehension	1.8387	2.9758	3.8873	0.000	Y
Subtask 2: Letter identification	19.373	34.0806	46.7344	0.000	Y
Subtask 3: Symbols identification	12.5242	27.9335	36.6378	0.000	Y
Subtask 4: Familiar word identification	7.5968	16.2581	21.6720	0.000	Y
Subtask 5a: Reading comprehension	0.6552	1.0403	1.8390	0.000	Y

Numeracy

The endline evaluation has also provided the evidence that the numeracy skills of girls, as tested by EGMA has been improved since baseline across all the subtasks. While testing statistically, it was revealed from the table below that the difference in the mean observed was statistically significant for all the subtasks except for subtask 4.

Table 27: Numeracy score averages (by subtask) across baseline and midline

	Score (average)		Endline (n=496)	p-value (midline vs Endline)	Statistically significant difference (Y/N)
	Baseline	Midline/endline			
	(N= 496)	(N= 496)			
Subtask 1: Number identification	5.881	6.8972	13.78873	0.000	Y
Subtask 2: Quantity discrimination	2.1835	3.4819	7.732394	0.000	Y
Subtask 3: Missing numbers	2.254	2.6996	5.7042	0.000	Y
Subtask 4: Addition/ Subtraction	4.3185	4.6371	6.2334	0.000	Y

Subtask 5: Word problems	1.5887	1.9577	3.8873	0.000	Y

Annex 4: Characteristics and Barriers

The details characteristics and barriers have been presented in the body of this report on pages 41 to 52

Annex 5: Log frame and Medium-Term Response Plan Output Monitoring Framework

Attached Separately

Annex 6: Outcomes Spreadsheet

Not Applicable

Annex 7: Beneficiaries Tables

Table 20: Direct project beneficiaries by intervention

	Age	Number of beneficiaries	Major Intervention
OOS marginalized girls and girls with functional limitation	Age within 10-14 years Age within 15-19 years	2525	Bridge class PSS Transition into formal school or life skills In case of formal school: Remedial support for struggling students in formal school If case of life skill/vocational training: Financial literacy and business skills training Micro grant for small scale business start-up
OOS girls and boys with severe disability	Age within 10-19 years	94	PSS Assistive devices Minimum Intervention (details in activities)
OOS functional limitation girls and drop out above grade 5	Age 15-19 years	60	PSS Financial literacy and business skills training Micro grant for small scale business start-up Vocational training

	Age	Number of beneficiaries	Major Intervention
OOS girls and boys with hearing and visual impairments	Age within 10-19 years	40 (23 Hearing Impairment, 17 Visual Impairment)	Preparatory class Bridge class PSS Transition into formal or life skills Assistive devices If transition in formal school: Remedial support for struggling students in formal education If transition is life skills: Financial literacy and business skills training (if they are eligible and interested in life skills) Vocational training Micro grant

In total, 2525 children with functional limitation and marginalized girls are direct beneficiaries of ENGAGE project. Following table shows the summary of direct and indirect beneficiaries of ENGAGE project.

Table 21: Summary of direct beneficiaries

Direct beneficiary numbers	Total figures
Total number of girls reached in cohort 1	2525 (OOS Marginalized and girls with functional limitation)
Total number of girls expected to reach by end of project	2525 (Being single cohort project, the cohort will be same at the end)
Education level	Proportion of total direct beneficiaries (%)
Never been to school	57
Been to school but dropped out.	43
Age banding	Proportion of total direct beneficiaries (%)
10 – 14	43

15 - 19	57

Table 22: Proposed intervention pathways

Intervention pathway	Which girls follow this pathway?	How many girls follow this pathway for cohort 1?	How long will the intervention last?	How many cohorts are there?	What literacy and numeracy levels are the girls starting at?	What does success look like for learning?	What does success look like for Transition?
Formal school	Age between 10-14 years and 15-19 years	1064	Till the project end	Single	N/A	Improves literacy and numeracy	Transition to formal school after bridge class
Entrepreneurship	Age between 15-19 years (After PSS approach)	888	Till the project end	Single	N/A	Increase the financial, self-efficacy and life skills level	After bridge class, they will transit into entrepreneurship or life skills
Minimum Intervention	Age between 10-19 years	94 (Children with Severe disability)	Till the project end	Single	N/A	Improve daily life activities	They will be receive minimum intervention support

Table 23: Indirect beneficiary groups

Group	Interventions received	Total number
Boys with functional limitation	Remedial Support class, Community Awareness activities, assistive devices, PSS	118
Total big sisters	Approx. 33% in each three districts, PSS, Mentoring and Coaching, GBV training	400
National Volunteers	Training on Mentoring/coaching, AYSRH, literacy and numeracy training, Gender responsive training	9 (5 Male, 4 Female)
Community Mobilizers	Training on Mentoring/coaching, AYSRH, literacy and numeracy, Gender responsive training, PSS	18 (6 Male, 12 Female)
Teachers/ Educators	Training on inclusive pedagogy and orientation on appropriate mediums of instruction	309(185 Male, 124 Female)
Parents/care givers	Parents/careers of enrolled girls will receive support through linkages with livelihoods programmers' provision of training/assistive devices if their child is disabled, and support to understand the rights of Children with disabilities, parenting education training.	4120 (2060 Female, 2060 Male)
Community members	Awareness Raising activities	5500
Duty Bearers	Duty bearers, including elected municipal and district education and livelihood officers, and women and children officers, will be directly involved in consultations	314
Service Providers	Service Providers, including transport, health and social welfare workers, TVET and other livelihood services and district	143
Other in-school girls	in 203 schools (Remedial support class and WGQs)	13365
Other in-school boys	in 203 schools (Remedial Support class and WGQs)	12816

Table 7.3: Target groups - by school

School Age	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Lower primary (Grade 1-3)	Direct Beneficiaries	312	NA
Upper primary (Grade 4-5)	Direct Beneficiaries	605	NA
Lower secondary (6-8)	Direct Beneficiaries	78	NA
Upper secondary	Not any	No	NA
Total: Total Admission in School 1064 Total Retained 995			

Table 7.4: Target groups - by age

Age Groups	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	Not any	No	NA
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	Direct Beneficiaries	3.2 %	NA
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	Direct Beneficiaries	20.4%	NA
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	Direct Beneficiaries	29.2 %	NA

Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	Direct Beneficiaries	34.2 %	NA
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	Direct Beneficiaries	10.7%	NA
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	Direct Beneficiaries	2.2%	NA
Total:	**1883 (out of 2525, others are drop out from the project)**	**100%**	

Table 7.5: Target groups - by sub group

Disability type	Female	Male	Total	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Sample size of target group at endline
Severe	69	25	94	Direct Beneficiaries	NA
Intellectual	43	8	51	Direct Beneficiaries	NA
Physical	34	21	55	Direct Beneficiaries	NA
Hearing	19	4	23	Direct Beneficiaries	NA
Visual	12	5	17	Direct Beneficiaries	NA
Multiple	11	6	17	Direct Beneficiaries	NA
Speech	5	0	5	Direct Beneficiaries	NA
Total	193	69	262	Direct Beneficiaries	NA
Orphaned girls	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pastoralist girls	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Child labourers	0	0	0	0	NA
Poor girls	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other (please describe)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

**** Besides this, we need to have 171 boys as an indirect beneficiaries that includes 11 boys received intervention from bridge classes.***

Table7.6: Target groups - by school status

Educational sub-groups	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Out-of-school girls: have never attended school	**Direct Beneficiaries**	**1461**	**NA**
Out-of-school girls: have attended school, but dropped out	**Direct Beneficiaries**	**69**	**NA**
Girls in-school	**Direct Beneficiaries**	**995**	**NA**
Total:		**2525**	

Annex 8: External Evaluators Inception Report

The inception report has been attached separately.

Annex 9: Quantitative and qualitative data collection tools used for midline

The list of tools used for endline evaluation are:

1. HH Survey questionnaire
2. Girls Survey questionnaire
3. Learning Tools (EGRA/EGMA test)
4. Focus Group Discussion guidelines
5. Key Informant Interview guidelines
6. School Improvement Plan assessment checklist
7. Disability Friendly Infrastructure assessment checklist
8. Classroom observation checklist

The tools have been attached separately.

Annex 10: Quantitative datasets, codebooks, and programs

The quantitative datasets along with codebook to be uploaded to the UK data archive.

Annex 12: sampling framework

The sampling framework used in baseline and midline was used for endline as well. This has been separately attached.

Annex 13: External Evaluator declaration

Attached separately.