

# Project Evaluation Report

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## Notes:

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# Baseline Evaluation of Aarambha Project

Accelerating Girls Through Literacy and Numeracy  
Skill

October, 2021



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## **Executive summary**

### **Background**

Aarambha project is funded by the UK AID flagship, Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) programme's Leave No Girls Behind (LNGB) window. The project is being implemented by People in Need (PIN) Nepal and aims to mitigate the risk of early marriage among Out-of-School (OOS) adolescent girls in order to uplift their social status, and help them lead healthy, safe and educated lives.

The project works in two districts of province-2, namely Bara and Rautahat. Over the period of four years, PIN will work with four cohorts and aims to reach 8,500 young married and unmarried OOS girls, 17,000 of their family members, 4,000 in-school girls and 4,000 in-school boys, 400 newly elected local government officials and community/religious leaders. The implementation capacity of project is to work directly with approximate 2125 girls each year (i.e., evaluation for each year will have approximate 2125 MOOS girls). In line with the main objective, the project implemented Community Learning Center (CLC) classes targeting the marginalized OOS girls, to enhance their learning proficiency, eventually preparing their transition into formal schooling. Apart from the learning intervention, the project also is teaching girls life skills that includes financial literacy, social skill, and family planning, training school teachers to create safe learning environment, organizing gender transformative workshops with in-school adolescents, and training MOOS girls' families and the local government officials.

The project has already completed its first intervention in Cohort I municipalities last year in 2020. This evaluation is for Cohort II which is currently being implemented in two municipalities of Bara and Rautahat district. The population of cohort two is slightly different than cohort I. In Cohort I only married out of school girls were included, but in cohort II, even unmarried girls have been included in the intervention. Cohort II is slightly different than cohort I also in terms of research design. For Cohort II, a pre-post research design was used unlike for Cohort I where quasi-experimental research design was used to compare the findings between treatment and control groups. Although there is a difference in regards to population and research design in Cohort II, the findings from both the cohorts are similar. Barriers such as poor household, unsupportive parents, repressive parental attitude existed in cohort II as well which refrained girls from accessing education.

### **Methodology**

The Aarambha-cohort-II baseline evaluation adopted pre-post research design to measure changes that can be attributed to the project interventions, unlike in cohort-I where quasi-experimental research design was used to conduct causal analysis and compare the findings between treatment and control cohorts. The evaluation was guided by the longitudinal mixed method approach, comprising of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The quantitative survey comprised of household survey with parents of the girls (400 sampled households), and girls

‘survey including ASER tool was conducted with 400 sampled OOS girls. The qualitative data collection comprised of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) with various stakeholders.

During the cohort II baseline evaluation, there was no major threat of COVID-19 because the lockdown from COVID-19 first wave had been lifted and the infection rate were decreasing. However, despite less threat, all the researchers and enumerators who went to the field for data collection followed full precautionary measures such as wearing masks, keeping a distance of 2 meters before approaching the respondents, and using sanitizers. Even for qualitative discussions which involved focused group discussion, number of people to be gathered were limited to either four or five. All the researchers and enumerators were insurance against covid-19.

### Learning

Girls’ achievement in literacy, and numeracy was measured using ASER<sup>1</sup> tool. OOS girls were categorized on the basis of proficiency level they demonstrated during the learning test. The learning tests were divided into three subjects i.e Nepali, English and Mathematics. The analysis of Nepali language proficiency categorized 52.25% girls as ‘non-learners’, and 41.50% as ‘emergent learners. Only a remaining handful of the OOS girls were categorized under ‘established learners’, and ‘proficient learners. Similarly, the analysis of English language proficiency categorized 71.25% OOS girls as ‘non-learners’, followed by 28.25% ‘emergent learners. Only 0.5% of the girls were found to be the ‘established learners’, and no one reached ‘proficient learners’ proficiency’. OOS girls perceived English literacy test to be relatively more difficult as compared to Nepali test because girls’ exposure to English language was low.

With regards to numeracy, data categorized 75.5 % girls as ‘non-learners’, 21.5% as ‘emergent learners’, and only 2.5% and 0.5% as ‘established’ and ‘proficient learners’ respectively. Qualitative finding suggested that OOS girls liked Nepali subject more than Mathematics. The reason for this as reported by girls was because girls could easily practice Nepali by simply talking, but did not get time to practice mathematics at home due to their busy schedule.

### Transition

Transition in LNGB is best understood in terms of the pathways that, OOS girls follow. By the end of the CLC classes, while OOS girls interested in learning get enrolled into formal schooling, other girls who do not demonstrate an interest in learning will be directed towards acquiring vocational skills for income opportunities in the future.

Transition pathway for respondents of different sub-groups were different. While some wanted to reenrol in school, others wanted to join vocational class. Qualitative findings showed, the girls who belonged to the age-group 10-14 irrespective of their school status showed interest in

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<sup>1</sup>ASER tool was developed by ASER Nepal, a member of People’s Action for Learning Network (PAL), a global network which is a partnership of countries working across three continents to assess basic reading and math competencies. The tool has been piloted numerous times before standardizing it by ASER Nepal. It is standardized for measuring the proficiency of students up to grade level 3 according to the curriculum of Nepal government. <https://palnetwork.org/aser-nepal/> <http://www.arcanalysis.com.np>

enrolling into formal school. These girls said that the primary reason they had dropped out of school, or did not get the opportunity to join school at all, in the first place, was due to poverty and household chores. But now since they were studying in CLC, they were hopeful that they would get the opportunity to go to school.

However, those girls who belonged to age group 15-19 were not keen on re-enrolment and showed less interest. They rather wanted to join vocational classes. The reason for this was because girls between the age 15-19 were already married and had greater responsibility of taking care of their children and their family. Findings suggested that most of the girls of this age group deemed school to be an added burden to household chores, because going to school meant investing a lot of time.

### **Barriers in learning and transition**

OOS girls in the intervention municipalities lived in an environment where there is prevalence of harmful social practices which act as a barrier to their learning, access to information and services, and ultimately lowers their self-value. The key barriers to OOS girls' learning and transition, as identified during the baseline evaluation, were safety issue, unsupportive parents, household chores, repressive parental attitude, and dowry.

With regards to safety, overall, 51.8% parents said that it was unsafe for girls to travel to school. It was cited during qualitative data collection that parents were worried about their daughter's safety due to frequent crimes reported in media. Apart from safety issues, the evaluation also highlights limited parental support in girls' education as one of the major barriers. Data depicted parents were not supportive towards girls' education. 48.8% of parents said they would not support girls to join formal school, 75.8% parents said they would not support them to initiate business, and 79.8% parents said that it was not worthy in investing in girl's education. This was because parents did not want their daughters go out of the house for long hours. In addition to this, parents feared that if girls go to school or start their business, they might not do the household chores.

Household chore was also a barrier that limited girls' access to education. 73.3% girls said that they were involved in household work most of the day, resulting in limited time for other activities. The study found that due to household poverty, girls were required to take over the chores as other members of the family go to work to earn the family's living.

Lastly, dowry was another impediment identified which has been hindering girls' access to education, and leading to early marriage. Qualitative consultations with various stakeholders led to a conclusion that if girls crossed an appropriate age of marriage, parents had to pay higher dowry.

### **Intermediate outcomes**

To tackle the problems prevailing in the community for girls, the project has engaged change champions from the community, government officials, community decision makers, and women-led community networks, which help to create conducive environment for girls' learning and transition. The project's key intermediate outcomes also focus on increasing girls' cognitive and

non-cognitive skills by building their decision-making capacity, increasing their life skill, changing parental attitude, and creating safe school environment for girls who transition to formal schools.

In this regard, the evaluation used household decision making index to capture information on OOS girl's decision-making capacity. 53% of the girls were found to have 'poor household decision making capacity'. This finding was corroborated with qualitative data which suggested that the final decision-making authority at the household level largely rests on men, particularly father-in-law or the husband of the OOS girls. This also resonates with the widespread male dominance and patriarchal social norms prevalent in the project intervention areas.

Similarly, life skill index had three major domains -- attitude, knowledge and practice. These three domains were based on the project's intervention that included financial literacy, family planning, and girls' social skills. The overall financial literacy index generated a value of 67.5%, which is slightly lower than the project's target of 70%. Although quantitative findings highlighted fair financial knowledge and behaviour among girls, this was contrasted by qualitative findings, as a number of girls we interacted with did not demonstrate any substantial knowledge about the basics of financial literacy, such as saving, financial institutions, among others. For OOS girls, the idea of earning money, saving, or borrowing it from someone else were all the alien concepts, simply because they have never done it.

The overall life skill index for family planning was only 7.91% indicating that girls' knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning was extremely poor. The reason for low score was identified to be the lack of awareness and because girls were not allowed to use it using, they gave birth to a son. When OOS were inquired what they thought about family planning, 71.5% girls said they were unaware about contraception. Qualitative finding suggested that girls lack of knowledge, attitude and practice could be because husbands decided everything, while women were actively subservient to their husbands. Girls also mentioned that their in-laws had forbidden the use of contraception until the birth of a son.

With regards to social skills, the overall social index score was 30.3% suggesting that girls lacked self-confidence. Qualitative finding revealed that girls heavily relied on their husbands or the parents/ in-laws for all their life decisions. The fact that girls could barely share their views or thought with their household members pointed towards their frail self-confidence.

Although PIN Nepal aims to foster positive social norms among parents and community members to encourage delayed marriage and allow OOS girls pursue their life plans, the evaluation did not come across any major evidence of this result. As also discussed earlier, the negative attitude of parents towards delayed marriage stems from their fear of girls eloping, high dowry, and societal pressure, among others.

## **Sustainability**

Sustainability is essential to the programme for it to achieve its set objectives. Sustainability of the project is measured at three levels i.e., at community level, school level and lastly, at system level.

From the baseline findings, sustainability efforts by the programme are yet to start at community level, school level as well as at the system level. During baseline evaluation, it was found that minimal level of engagement had started with government stakeholders taking any action to address the issue of early marriage, but still a lot of effort is needed from the project's side to fully run its awareness campaign on child marriage.

To sum up, the evaluation highlights a gap that the project should consider throughout another evaluation point. For instance, from the evaluation point of view, it seems like the focus of the project has been more on CLCs and less on other advocacy activities. For instance, the awareness level activity at the community level should be tailored to household level so that deep rooted barriers to girls' education and transition could be reduced. With the learning outcome, the process focuses on English, Mathematics and Nepali. Within a span of six months, girls should achieve a certain proficiency level which seems ambitious for the girls given their low cognitive skills, therefore the project could consider a 12-month CLC program for better learning outcome.

# Background to the Project

## 1.1 Project context

Nepal's new constitution created a significant opportunity for education development. School-level education fell under the jurisdiction of local government who could promote more effective governance according to local needs and preferences for better results. Nepal has made good progress in education sector where several initiatives such as School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP), School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) and Education For all (EFA) have largely contributed for increasing enrolment, and enhancing quality of education. Following the increment in access to education, Nepal commenced its journey for Sustainable Development Goals in 2015: for ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Despite the progress through efforts of national and international organizations, there is still a lag in educational achievements across communities, ethnic groups, and administrative boundaries. The education gap is sharp especially in province-2. i. e Bara and Rautahat district. Bara and Rautahat districts are situated in the south eastern region of Nepal. The two districts are home to majority of Madhesis -a category of Hindu ethnic and linguistic groups and, also includes Pahadis from Nepal's hill region. Bhojpuri is widely spoken in Bara and Bajika remain the mostly spoken languages in Rautahat district. While, some of its municipalities are bordered with India in the South, as a spill over effect, cross-border marriages are quite prevalent in this area.

According to The Equity Index 2018, Rautahat and Bara districts are ranked in the bottom (red-zones) as two of the least performing districts within Province 2 in terms of development indicators, especially relating to girls' education and life outcomes. Adolescent girls in the region face several barriers on the individual, community, and systemic levels in terms of their access to education stemming from their low social status, which lowers their agency, access to information and services, and self-value. The region accounts for highest rate of illiteracy i.e.(41%) in the country, followed by highest proportion of females who have never attended school (58.7% of females compared to 32% of males). Due to high school dropout rates, the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2016 exhibited that the province's net attendance ratio for female adolescents in secondary level is the lowest of all provinces (42%)<sup>2</sup>.The presence of gender inequality and orthodox practices has derailed the education status of this region and lead to lower levels of numeracy and literacy among adolescent girls.

In these districts, girls at young age are married off by their parents. Although it has been defined by law, the legal age of marriage in Nepal is 20 years for both of the parties to the marriage<sup>3</sup>, girls still get married at a young age resulting in school dropout.

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Health ,2016. Nepal Demographic and Health Survey. Retrieved from <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr336/fr336.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> UNFPA. Policy Brief 2016. Ending Impunity for Child Marriage in Nepal. Retrieved from [https://nepal.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Ending%20Impunity%20for%20Child%20marriage%28final%29\\_25Nov16.pdf](https://nepal.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Ending%20Impunity%20for%20Child%20marriage%28final%29_25Nov16.pdf)

Early marriage is one of the significant factors leading to higher dropout rates among adolescent girls in the province. The NDHS 2016 survey also showed that the adolescent marriage rate in Province 2 is 23%, and 18% of girls aged 15-19 had already begun childbearing, both being the highest of all provinces. In Nepal, early marriage/pregnancies were found to have the highest percentage linkage (32%) to early drop out among girls aged (12-17). The OOS adolescent girls in the region also have a notable age difference between their spouses, which lower their bargaining power with their husbands, in-laws, and acts as a barrier to their fulfilment of life plans and education.

Nevertheless, owing to the persisting situations, the findings from the formative research conducted by PIN Nepal in 2019 also strongly highlighted the social acceptance of early marriages and other harmful social practices, such as the dowry system in these districts contributing early dropouts of adolescents from schools. In this regard, the project, has planned its activities of creating awareness among parents and community members, and enrolling girls into formal school or transitioning them to safe-employment.

## **1.2 Target Beneficiary Group**

The project's direct beneficiaries include out-of-school (OOS) adolescent (10-19 years) girls of Province 2. Based on the project's marginalization framework, the following inclusion criteria were used to select the primary beneficiaries:

- Age: 10-19 years: 2484 OOS adolescent girls
- Age: 10-14 years: 1937 OOS adolescent girls
- Age: 15-19 years: 547 OOS adolescent girls who are married or promised to be married
- Marital Status: married (538) and unmarried (1916) or in a union or is waiting for "Gauna" ceremony, or promised to be married (27) and divorced (3)
- School Status: out-of-school girls who have never attended school (1517) and out-of-school girls who have attended schools but have dropped out at Grade 7 or below (967)
- Residence: living in the project target area for that specific Cohort (All 2484 girls)

With regards to Cohort 2, the initial identification of primary beneficiaries was conducted through communication with schools, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), health posts, and local authorities including local and ward level representatives and officials. Further identification and verification were conducted by the People in Need on the household level during pre-baseline. The beneficiaries identified during pre-baseline were enrolled in the Community Learning Centers (CLCs) by the project team, during which further verification of the eligibility was done.

### 1.3 Theory of Change

The project's theory of change is based on addressing the foundational barrier that has caused these girls to drop out and marry early: the low social status and value of girls in Nepal. The following figure summarizes project's theory of change.

**TABLE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE**

<b>Impact: Improved life chances of married out of school (M-OOS) adolescent girls in Central Terai</b>				
Outcome	(O 1) Improved <b>learning</b> outcomes for M-OOS adolescent girls	(O 2) Increased <b>transition</b> into formal education, informal literacy or vocational trainings according to M-OOS girls' life plans	O 3) Communities', schools' and authorities' gender equitable attitudes <b>sustain</b> improved life chances for M-OOS adolescent girls and prevent early marriage	
Risks & Assumptions	Community Learning Centers or other units are available - Education Review Office is open to collaboration on formal certification - Families will accept M-OOS participation, including those with high domestic labour burden and unsupportive of and perceiving low value girls' education - Adaptations for M-OOS with learning disabilities are feasible within the VfM considerations	- SRHR services are available and accessible for M-OOS girls. - Local trainers from women led community networks are available and willing to participate in the programs. - Backlash against improved negotiation skills can be mitigated (Output iv)	- Lack of available trainers for girls' and boys' workshops who meet the criteria are available - No political interference in the school-based project activities. - Collaboration between schools and relevant authorities is functional.	Local government is functional and staffed. - Authorities are open to the inclusion of M-OOS girls in service provision. - Collaboration between schools and relevant authorities is functional. - Community members willing to become Gender Change Champions. - Change Champions recognize unique needs of various sub-groups (girls living in poverty, GWDs, SGBV survivors, etc.)
Int. Outcome	(IO 1) M-OOS adolescent girls' improved attendance in literacy & numeracy courses	(IO 2) M-OOS adolescent girls have acquired cognitive and non-cognitive skills to develop and pursue life plans	IO 3) Schools have created enabling environments for students to learn and supportive of M-OOS girls' life plans	IO 4) Communities and authorities foster positive social norms that encourage delayed marriage and realization of M-OOS girls' life plans
Output	1) Improved access to numeracy & literacy courses for M-OOS adolescent girls	2) Access to life skill trainings, coaching sessions, cash assistance, and peer support networks	3) Access to safe and enabling learning environments in schools for students and M-OOS girls whose life plan is to re-enroll	(IO 4) Communities and authorities foster positive social norms that encourage delayed marriage and realization of M-OOS girls' life plans
Activities	i) Identification and training of female trainers ii) Curriculum development iii) Engagement with participants' families iv) Literacy and numeracy courses v) Catch up classes	i) Formative research ii) Identification and training of female community mentors iii) Curriculum development iv) Life skill workshops, coaching and life planning sessions v) Cash Assistance for peer-selected trainings &	) Training of mentors to lead workshops ii) Her Turn - gender transformative workshops with in and out of school girls iii) His Chance - gender transformative workshops with in and out of school boys iv) Gender-responsive	i) Gender transformative workshops for M-OOS girls' families delivered by community and religious leaders ii) Cash grants for M-OOS girls' family members to pursue life plans iii) Trainings for local government officials. iv) Gender transformative



		projects that address health, safety and livelihood needs	pedagogical trainings for teachers to create safe learning environments	community events led by Gender Change Champions
	<b>Individual level:</b> - Early marriage, pregnancy and childbirth. (IO2) - Limited access to literacy, numeracy or transitional programs. (IO1) - Social isolation, lack of peer support network. (IO2) - Limited access to family planning; motherhood, early pregnancy and childbirth related health problems. (IO2) - Limited life skills: low levels of self-esteem, agency, confidence, and ability to negotiate important life decisions. (IO2) - Vulnerability to or experience of SGBV. (IO2) - Power dynamics in household - burden of household chores, age difference between spouses, intra household bargaining power. (IO2) - Ethnic and caste status. - Low Nepali language competency (school medium language). (IO1)		<b>Community, School and System Level:</b> - Low social status of daughters-in-law: unpaid work, lack of decision-making power. (IO4) Risks & Assumptions - Harmful social norms and practices: mobility restrictions, menstrual restrictions, demands to bear children, early marriage. (IO4) - Lack of gender responsive, safe, and enabling schools' environments: lack of sufficient & adequate WASH facilities, gender sensitized teachers, prevalence of corporal punishment, bullying of married girls, education in minority mother tongues, lack of teachers from ethnic and caste minority backgrounds. (IO3) - Poor implementation of policies, strategies and programs preventing married adolescents from dropping out and encouraging M-OOS to reenroll. (IO3, IO4) - Lack of services available to M-OOS adolescent girls. (IO1, IO2, IO3, IO4) - Poverty within the community that prevents families' investment in educational opportunities for their children. (IO2, IO4)	
Low social status of M-OOS adolescent girls that leads to low agency, low self-esteem, and limited access to information				

Through Output 1, the intervention will ensure girls have access to, and are therefore able to attend, literacy and numeracy courses that will improve their learning outcomes. The literacy course will use culturally sensitive and contextualized adaptive learning approaches in the Freiran-Stuart tradition with a particular emphasis on interactive student-centered teaching practices, and gender-responsive pedagogies.

Within Output 2, the intervention will allow girls to acquire the additional skills needed to develop personal agency and pursue their life plans. Life skills sessions will be based on PIN's gender transformative approach and improve girls' non-cognitive skills such as negotiation skills, self-esteem, problem solving, reasoning, decision making, and communication. These sessions will also provide critical cognitive skills for OOS adolescent girls that will enable them to navigate health and safety related issues. OOS girls will also make life plans to pursue either formal or informal educational opportunities and careers. These life plans will be developed through coaching session with community mentors to directly identify how girls will transition either to school through reenrolment or choose vocational trainings.

Within output 3, schools, teachers, and student bodies will become enabling environments for OOS adolescent girls whose life plans include transitioning into formal education. Teachers will be capacitated to use gender-responsive teaching styles and non-violent class management methods. Students will undergo gender transformative workshops that enable the reporting of violence and harassment within schools and create supportive student-led peer networks. PIN's existing work

with schools in Nepal has produced evidence that this output has directly led to the reenrolment of out-of-school girls and boys into formal education.

Within output 4, change champions from the community will be engaged to challenge harmful social norms that affect OOS adolescent girls and create conducive environment. Furthermore, the project’s work with OOS adolescent girls’ families, government officials, community decision makers will focus on change in the social context to enable OOS adolescent girls to pursue their life plans. The Intermediate Outcomes 3 and 4 will also help ensure bi-causal linkages between early marriage and early dropping out are broken – helping future girls and boys from the community continue their education.

Most of the activities designed by the projects were implemented, however there were few activities which were delayed during the time of data collection due to COVID-19 pandemic. Activities like awareness campaigns were yet to be conducted as it involved mass gathering. Likewise, many school level activities could not be conducted due to closure of schools and lastly, the CLC classes which would often be held in big groups were divided into two groups. The CLC facilitators conducted classes in a group of A and B format to avoid overcrowding.

**TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF DIRECT BENEFICIARIES**

Direct beneficiary numbers	Total figures	
	Cohort I Baseline 2020	Cohort II Baseline 2021
Total number of girls targeted in cohort 2	1709	2125
Total number of girls expected to reach by end of project	8500	8500
Education level	Proportion of total direct beneficiaries	
Never been to school	53%	61%
Been to school but dropped out.	47%	39%
Age banding (The age bandings used is appropriate to the ToC)	Proportion of total direct beneficiaries	
10 to 14	6%	78%
15 to 19	94%	22%

**TABLE 3: LEVEL OF SCHOOLING BEFORE DROPPING OUT**

Level of schooling before dropping out	Proportion of cohort I direct beneficiaries (%)	Proportion of cohort II direct beneficiaries (%)	Data source
Never been to school	53%	61%	
Grade 1	1%	9%	
Grade 2	7%	23%	
Grade 3	6%	23%	

Grade 4	8%	16%	Project's CLC enrolment data
Grade 5	11%	16%	
Grade 6	3%	6%	
Grade 7	2%	5%	
Grade 8	5%	NA	
Grade 9	2%	NA	
Grade 10	2%	NA	
Note: As per the pre-baseline report for cohort 2, the average duration of time OOS adolescent girls dropped out is four years.			

**TABLE 4: PATHWAY**

Pathway	Which girls follow this pathway?	No. of girls following this pathway for cohort 2	Duration of CLC	No. of cohorts	Status of literacy and numeracy levels girls are starting at	Success for girls	Success for transition
Literacy and Numeracy classes Life skills courses	Younger (10-14) married OOS adolescents without children	20	Dec 2020 – July 2021	II	Level 0	N/A	Formal school reenrollment to the grade corresponding to their literacy/numeracy post participation Safe employment, as allowed by the Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act 2000 (less than or equal to 14 years) and Labor Law (above 14 years)
	Younger (10-14) married OOS adolescents who are mothers	1					Informal literacy enrolment, informal vocational training Safe employment, as allowed by the Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act 2000
	Older (15-19) married OOS adolescents without children	236					Formal school reenrollment to the grade corresponding to their literacy level post

## 1.4 Key evaluation question

**TABLE 5: EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA/ANALYSIS**

Evaluation question	Qual data/analysis required to answer question	Quant data/analysis required to answer question
How effective the project was in developing OOS girls' literacy and numeracy? How effective the project was in developing OOS girls' cognitive and non-cognitive life skills?	FGD with OOS girls	Proficiency level generated from ASER tool established the baseline value.
How, if at all, do literacy, numeracy, cognitive and non-cognitive life skills translate into household decision making and agency? How and why was this impact achieved? Were there different impacts for different sub-groups?	FGD with-OOS girls and parents to explore reasons and barrier to transition.	Proportion of girls engaged in different activities in the past year and in the present (Girls and Household survey)
How effective the project was in developing OOS girls' cognitive and non-cognitive life skills?	FGD with M-OOS girls to explore knowledge attitude, and practice in terms of financial literacy, Family planning and self-efficacy	Life skill index which includes knowledge attitude and practice relating to financial literacy, family planning, and social skill (Girls Survey).
How, if at all, do literacy, numeracy, cognitive and non-cognitive life skills translate into household decision making and agency?	FGD with M-OOS girls, parents KII with change champions to understand the general practice of household decision making.	Household decision making index
How, if at all, did the project succeed in creating enabling learning environments in schools, families, and communities, for the married, out of school adolescent girls to pursue their life plans?	KII with Teachers, head teachers	Aggregated score for Gender sensitive teacher tool, Score card and approach classroom observation
What is the community doing and how is it engaged to challenge harmful social norms that affect OOS adolescent girls and create conducive environments within which they can pursue life plans	KII with government officials, head teacher, parents, and change champions/ religious or community leaders to understand general, present and past trend of the society relating to marriage, and education. Activities being conducted as a part of the campaigns to make community people aware about the issue of early marriage.	N/A

## **Baseline evaluation approach and methodology**

### **2.1 Evaluation purposes and evaluation questions**

The project's theory of change is based on addressing the foundational barrier that caused girls to drop out of school, never go to school, and marry early. In this regard, the project worked primarily with unmarried and married, Out-Of-School (OOS) adolescent girls between the age group of 10-19 years from Bara, and Rautahat districts of province 2, along with other key stakeholders such as the girls' families, community leaders, and government officials. Through its interventions of literacy classes and advocacy, the project aims at addressing the underlying barrier that prevents girls from leading healthy, safe, and educated lives. The overall purpose of the evaluation therefore is to gauge the assertions, and progress of the intervention by measuring the outcome, and output level indicators developed by the project. The specific purposes of the baseline evaluation are outlined below.

- Generate the baseline values for the indicators to inform target setting for the project and allow comparisons in the subsequent evaluation points
- Identify and assess the barriers faced by the unmarried and married OOS girls for learning and transition
- Test the assertions made by the Theory of Change of the project and generate necessary evidences to inform the improvements in project design

The MEL framework has outlined a set of evaluation questions relevant to the overall evaluation design. While the subsequent evaluation points are aimed at assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project, the current evaluation point seeks to establish the baseline figures to set targets for assessing the aforementioned factors. Therefore, the following questions listed below guided the baseline evaluation.

**TABLE 6: EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND TOOLS USED**

Evaluation question	Indicator and Index	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the situation of learning of girls at the baseline?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls' proficiency level in numeracy and literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASER Tool</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the baseline transition status of girls?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of girls engaged in different activities in the past year and in the present to explore reasons and barrier to transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls and Household survey</li> <li>Qualitative consultation with OOS girls and parents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How effective the project was in developing adolescent girls' cognitive and non-cognitive life skills?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life skill index which includes knowledge attitude and practice relating to financial literacy, family planning, and self-efficacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls Survey</li> <li>Qualitative consultation with OOS girls</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How, if at all, do literacy, numeracy, cognitive and non-cognitive life skills translate into household decision making and agency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household decision making index</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls Survey</li> <li>Qualitative consultation with OOS girls, parents, change champions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How, if at all, did the project succeed in creating enabling learning environments in schools, families, and communities, for out of school adolescent girls to pursue their life plans?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aggregated score for Gender sensitive teacher tool, Score card and approach classroom observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative data not collected in the baseline due to delay in project activity</li> <li>Qualitative consultation with teachers, head teachers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the community doing and how is it engaged to challenge harmful social norms that affect OOS adolescent girls and create conducive environments within which they can pursue life plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities being conducted as a part of the campaigns to make community people aware about the issue of early marriage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative consultation with DEO, head teacher, parents, and change champions.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Evaluation methodology

### Overall evaluation design

The Aarambha-cohort-II baseline evaluation adopted pre-post research design to measure changes that can be attributed to the project interventions, unlike in cohort -I where quasi-experimental research design was used to capture the cause, and compare the findings. The reason for this change was because it appeared to be unethical to randomize study respondents to the treatment condition and to withhold them from joining schools for a year.

The evaluation for cohort II was guided by the longitudinal mixed method approach, comprising of quantitative and qualitative data collection technique. While quantitative data provided a numerical measurement of the assessments, the qualitative information validated, and contextualized quantitative findings. Sequencing approach was carried out for the data collection, whereby the areas of inquiry developed for qualitative consultation was informed by the preliminary analysis of the quantitative data collected. This allowed for comprehensive contextual analysis and verification of information generated by quantitative data.

The respondents for the baseline evaluation included project's primary beneficiaries who were unmarried and married Out of School (OOS) adolescent girls between the age 10-19 years. Apart from the primary beneficiaries, there were secondary beneficiaries such as parents of the OOS girls, change champions, and government officials for qualitative discussion. As the project is working with girls in a single cohort, the same set of girls will be tracked in the subsequent evaluation point.

### **Adoption of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion minimum standards into the evaluation**

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) was ensured throughout the evaluation process. Firstly, the data collection tools were designed cautiously to avoid cultural and gender insensitivity. The GESI expert at PIN) ensured that the tools adequately covered GESI specific questions, and ensured the language of the tools were gender and culturally sensitive. The tool was also reviewed by the Safeguarding focal person of PIN. Evaluation team ensured representativeness in terms of ethnicity, and age while selecting the sample. As the sample was calculated to be representative of the actual target population, girls across different age groups and ethnicity were represented in the sample.

Longitudinal evaluation modality of LNGB implied keeping record of identifiable personal information like name, phone number and address of marginalized girls. This meant that only female enumerators would be appropriate to collect such information to avoid scepticism among parents. Thus, understanding the cultural sensitivity, FDM recruited local female enumerators who were well acquainted with the context and the environment of the community. These enumerators also spoke the local language which meant that they could communicate with clarity with the respondents and their parents. In addition to this, as the girls' survey comprised of questions on sensitive topics, for instance, questions on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH), which the girls would not have been comfortable answering to, hiring female enumerators eased the interview process. As some of the questions such as ASRH, Washington Group Module in the survey were sensitive to administer, FDM trained all the field enumerators on rapport building, on how to approach questions using sensitive measures such as proper language and approach, following GESI-inclusion protocol to avoid trauma or shame while administrating these types of questions. The same training modality was applied for researchers conducting qualitative interviews with girls and their parents.

Lastly, for analysis, the data was disaggregated by ethnicity wherever required to ensure that the differences in the social background were reflected to inform the project adjustments.

## **2.3 Baseline data collection process**

### **Pre data collection**

The baseline data collection took place in a total of four municipalities of Bara, and Rautahat districts. The municipalities of Bara district were Adarsha Kotwal and Pachrauta municipality, and the municipalities in Rautahat were Katakariya and Maulapur municipality.

### *Sampling framework*

The girls for the baseline evaluation were identified and listed by the project. The primary sampling unit for the quantitative study was Community Learning Center (CLC) classes from where the girls were sampled. The sampling framework had listed 60 CLC classes (50% of the total CLCs) across four project intervention municipalities that had come into operation prior to the baseline evaluation. As the project broadly worked with two intervention subgroups based on age, the beneficiary list of girls attending CLC class were divided into two age groups of 10- 14 and 15-19 thereafter, the sample for each of the sub-groups was drawn from total number of beneficiaries and was divided proportionately among each subgroup.

### *Quantitative sample size determination*

The sample for baseline evaluation was calculated based on the sampling framework. After having the sampling frame, sample size was calculated based on GEC evaluation guideline, which suggested using minimum standards ( $p_0=0.58$ ,  $p_a=0.50$ , Power=80%, Confidence interval= 95%, Margin of error = 0.05, Test=2-sided test). Stat.ubc.ca website suggested by FM was used to calculate the total sample. Adding a further attrition buffer of 30%, the final sample size was 395, rounding off to 400. Hence, 400 girls from were selected as sample covering at least 50% of the CLCs so that clustering need not to be applied for sample size calculation.

Once the sample size was calculated, stratified random sampling was done to select the targeted OOS adolescent girls to draw out individuals for baseline from the sampling frame. The sample for each sub-group was drawn from total number of beneficiaries and was divided proportionately among each subgroup i.e OOS girls of age 10-14 and 15-19. Additionally, the project has also envisioned learning outcome as one of the transitions pathways for OOS girls; since the project has not yet defined the proportion of girls who will transition, the sample size for transition was the same as the learning sample. The sample selected for the evaluation was fully representative. Representativeness of sampling was ensured considering the project's marginalization framework, following inclusion criteria to select the primary beneficiaries.

The final sample sizes for each of the instruments (quantitative and qualitative) are presented below:



**TABLE 7: SAMPLE SIZES AGAINST THE INDICATORS**

<b>Tools</b>	<b>Beneficiary group</b>	<b>Sample size agreed in MEL framework</b>	<b>Actual sample size</b>	<b>Major changes to the tools</b>
ASER	OOS adolescent girls	<b>Baseline samples:</b> 400	400	All the learning tools were piloted and calibrated prior to baseline data collection
Girls' survey	OOS adolescent girls	<b>Baseline samples:</b> 400	400	Since the project had adapted logical framework based on the findings from baseline of cohort-I few new questions pertaining to child safe guarding, and perception on digital learning classes were added.
Household survey	OOS adolescent girls' parents	<b>Baseline samples:</b> 400	400	HH survey tools were made owing to the changes in the logical framework indicators as with the girls' survey.
Attendance records	CLC attendance records	All community learning centers	All community learning centers	N/A
FGDs	OOS adolescent girls and parents	N/A	OOS adolescent girls-8 HH/parents-4	N/A
KIIs	CLC facilitator Municipal chair Community leaders Project staff	N/A	CLC Facilitator-4 Municipal official-4 Community leaders-4 Project staff-2	N/A

***Sample for benchmarking***

Benchmarking was conducted as a part of quantitative data collection to collect information on in school girls' literacy level to set target for the project beneficiaries. Benchmarking was conducted in some the schools where OOS girls are expected to enrol. Schools were selected purposively based on feasibility. A total of 80 students (20% of the total sample size) was taken, and proportionately divided across grade 1-4 for this purpose.

***Qualitative sampling framework and sample size determination***

CLCs from each district were stratified based on their location. From the stratified list, two CLCs from each district were randomly selected for qualitative data collection. CLC was considered to be the primary sampling unit. A purposive sampling method was adopted to identify respondents in the communities in order to yield rich information on status of girls' education, early marriage,

and other underlying contexts. Purposive sampling was also useful to ensure representativeness in the qualitative discussions. The methods used for data collection were focus group discussions (FGDs) and key-informant interviews (KIIs). A total of 12 FGDs and 18 KIIs were conducted with direct and indirect beneficiaries.

OOS girls aged 10-14 and 15-19, along with CLC facilitators, parents, change champions, and social mobilizers were consulted. To triangulate the information gathered, parents, and social mobiliser from a different location other than the sampled location were informally consulted. In order to gather overall community perspective, head teachers, were also interviewed in which the girls were more likely to enrol into were mapped and visited. Primarily, sex, age and ethnicity were the factors that determined the participation of the stakeholders in the qualitative discussions. Respondents for the interviews were selected keeping in mind they represented different ethnic and age group.

**TABLE 8: SAMPLE SIZES FOR THE QUALITATIVE TOOLS USED AT BASELINE**

Respondent group	Number of FGDs	Number of KIIs
OOS adolescent girls	8	-
Parents of the MOOS adolescent girls	4	-
CLC Facilitator	-	4
Community leaders	-	4
Municipal education official	-	4
Project staff	-	2
School head teacher	-	4

### *Designing quantitative and qualitative tool*

Both qualitative and quantitative tool were designed by External Evaluator (EE) following the LNGB guideline. The tools developed by EE was reviewed by PIN and FM before its finalization.

In regards to quantitative tool, it included girls, and household survey questionnaire. Girl’s survey was the primary data collection tool among girls attending CLC classes. Since the tool and indicators were already revised during endline evaluation of cohort- I, and there were no further changes in the indicator as well, the questionnaire and format for the current evaluation adopted the same tool used during endline of cohort- I. Similarly, household survey questionnaire was administered with the parents/guardians of the sampled girls. As in every evaluation, first girls were tracked through CLCs, and only then their household were visited. Parents either mother or father, whoever was present and agreed for interview was approached for the HH survey. HH survey questionnaire was also adapted as it is from the endline evaluation of cohort I.

As a part of the quantitative survey, learning and numeracy assessment was administered using Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)<sup>4</sup> tool. The ASER tool was a replacement to Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) because the tool did not rightly capture the learning of the project's beneficiaries. The EGRA and EGMA tool was intended to measure the learning outcome of in-school children, and not the learning outcome of out of school children with basic literacy gained through CLC. Therefore, EE, FM and PIN jointly decided to use ASER tool which was standardized for measuring the proficiency of students up to grade level 3 according to the curriculum of Nepal government. The tool was piloted numerous times before standardizing it by ASER Nepal. However, EE still carried out a piloting of the tool to assess the relevancy of the tool in the context of the project beneficiaries, and later adopted the tool in its original format.

In regards to qualitative tool, checklists were developed to conduct Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) with the stakeholders. The qualitative checklists were designed based on the logical framework and indicators of the projects.

Moreover, the qualitative data collection followed a sequential approach such that the qualitative tools were designed based on the findings of the preliminary analysis of the quantitative survey. After the completion of quantitative data collection, preliminary findings were aggregated and the areas of inquiry were determined for the discussion during qualitative consultations. This helped EE in exploring further the reasons for the gaps identified from the quantitative data. Researchers also noted specific observation and impressions of the respondents to validate and triangulate the findings made during the discussion. Apart from qualitative and quantitative tool, EE also reviewed secondary data to measure one of the project indicators. Attendance data of girls were collected and compiled by project was used to calculate the attendance indicator value. In addition to this, project's school level sustainability indicator also required project to collect school level data to capture attitude change among in-school boys and girls, but, due to delayed intervention with the school, the project is yet to collect the school level data. Once the project completes its data collection, it will be sent to EE for analysis, and for generating the indicator value.

### *Enumerators, monitors and researchers*

Enumerators collected quantitative data, while the researchers conducted qualitative consultation in the field. FDM has a large pool of enumerators from which enumerators for this survey were recruited. Priority was given to those who had been involved in Aarambha project previously. This is because these enumerators were familiar with the questions, format and context of the survey.

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<sup>4</sup> ASER tool was developed by ASER Nepal, a member of People's Action for Learning Network (PAL), a global network which is a partnership of countries working across three continents to assess basic reading and math competencies. The tool has been piloted numerous times before standardizing it by ASER Nepal. It is standardized for measuring the proficiency of students up to grade level 3 according to the curriculum of Nepal government. <https://palnetwork.org/aser-nepal/>

The key qualifications sought in the enumerators was language competency - they needed to be able to converse in local languages spoken in the sampled Terai districts.

FDM also recruited one field monitor for each district based on their past experience of data management and coordination in the field. These field monitors were assigned with the primary responsibility of ensuring the quality of data collected by the enumerators as well as to ensure that the enumerators followed the research ethics. Field monitors were available at the field throughout the data collection and directly reported to the project coordinator.

For the purpose of qualitative consultation, researchers from FDM who had prior experience of working in GEC and LNGB project were selected. These researchers who are well experienced in conducting FGDs and KIIs and taking notes and transcribing were involved in the qualitative inquiry. The transcribing was not a verbatim but rather a summary of the interviews. The recording and notes of the interviews which were in Nepali language were translated, transcribed and summarized in English language for the analysis. A team of two researchers from FDM were deployed in each of the two districts. The qualitative data collection was conducted by FDM researchers who had been deployed from the office in Kathmandu.

## Training

After the selection of enumerators and monitors, FDM organized a three-day training in each district to share the purpose of the baseline study and its importance for the project. The event provided an in-depth knowledge about the questions, particularly on Life skill and Washington Group of Questions and Child Functioning (WGQCF) and also familiarized them with the use of mobile platform for collecting data. The enumerators were also oriented on quantitative tools – learning tests (ASER), household survey, and girls survey. The training additionally acquainted the enumerators with child safeguarding policies and the basic etiquettes to be maintained during the data collection. The training covered the following areas:

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<i>Day I</i>	The training commenced with discussion on the training agenda. After this, safeguarding expert from PIN conducted an online session on ‘do no harm’ and ‘child safeguarding’ policy to the monitors and enumerators. Thereafter, enumerators and monitors were trained on the basic use of tablet which was the medium of data collection and all the questions pertaining to household survey were explained thoroughly one by one. At the end, a mock interview was conducted to familiarize the enumerators with the question.
<i>Day II</i>	On the second day, girls survey questions along with ASER tool was discussed one by one in detail. After completing all the questions, the enumerators were divided in a group of two for the mock session. The session also included things like fieldwork planning, going through the filled-up questionnaire, data quality, reporting, and uploading the data. In addition to this, PIN team from Kathmandu conducted a virtual session on child safeguarding and protection to the enumerators, and monitors.
<i>Day III</i>	On this day, a pilot test, a part of the training itself, was conducted in the nearby village of Bara and Rautahat of districts. A team comprising of ten enumerators, and one monitor in each of the two districts were deployed for the pilot test. In the field, enumerators interviewed at least two individuals each. The feedback session from the pilot test was held at the respective location. In the pilot test, most of the bugs and errors in the android questionnaire were identified and resolved later before the commencement of the actual baseline fieldwork. This exercise helped the participants to become familiar with the questions and identify the field level challenges. After the piloting, the roles and responsibilities of enumerators, and monitors were discussed.

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In regards to qualitative consultation, prior to the field mobilization, the research coordinator provided a day orientation to the researchers from FDM on the project objectives, log frame, preliminary quantitative finding and what the designed checklist aimed to achieve through qualitative consultation. It was ensured that the researchers grasp the main idea of each question to gather rich information. In addition to this, these researchers were also oriented on collecting sensitive information from the girls. Since the researchers had been involved in the qualitative tool design process from the very beginning, an extensive training was not required for them. However, the Project Coordinator did conduct a brief orientation before the field visit to ensure that key areas were adequately covered during qualitative tool administration.

## During data collection

### *Quantitative data collection*

Baseline data collection commenced on 28 January, 2021 in both Bara and Rautahat district. The data collection took 16 days to complete in both the districts. Data collection was done through Open Data Kit (ODK) software in a tablet. Each enumerator used a tablet with ODK application installed that contained the structured questionnaire. An additional printed copy of the questionnaire and backup chargers were provided to the survey team in case of emergency use. The monitors in each team ensured the quality of the data collected. Monitors were responsible to lead the enumerators during times of difficulty or confusions that arose during data-collection. In addition, monitor ensured that the data collected in the tablet were uploaded to the server and communicated the field update with the project coordinator on a daily basis. A team in Kathmandu continuously monitored the uploaded data in the real time basis and provided feedback in case of errors in the data. Any emerging mistakes were sorted through telephone conversation with the monitors and enumerators.

In order to ensure that all the child safeguarding policies and ethical protocol were followed in the field, all enumerators were provided training on child safeguarding policies and ethical guidelines. A written consent from the girls and household was taken before each interview was conducted. Each of the respondents were made aware about the data protection and confidentiality of their information verbally. For the safety of enumerators, researchers, and monitors, FDM provided an insurance package. In addition to this, local authorities were formally informed about data collection prior to its commencement. FDM and the team worked in close coordination with the local partner for smooth data collection in the field.

A sampling list that comprised of name of all the girls, their respective CLC, age and ethnicity were provided to the enumerators and monitors. The first point of contact for enumerators was CLC and the CLC facilitator. The list of the girls was verified from the CLC attendance sheet, before conducting the survey. For some of the girls who were not present in the CLC on the day of data collection, enumerators had to visit their household for tracking them. When the same girls could not be met, enumerators planned for re-visit to their respective houses for the survey. Even when the girls were not available after three consecutive attempts, or if the enumerators were unsuccessful in locating the girls, a replacement strategy was used. While replacing the girls, it was ensured that the demographic characteristics including the CLC itself matched. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the girls for the purpose of replacement.

### *Qualitative data collection*

The baseline study adopted a sequential mixed method where the qualitative checklists were informed by the preliminary quantitative findings. The qualitative checklist was prepared by FDM which was first formulated in English language. Once the checklist was thoroughly worked upon by FM and FDM, the checklist was translated from English into Nepali language. While translating the checklist into Nepali language, it was ensured that no complex language with technical terms was used. Questions were not translated word to word, but it ensured that the questions did not lose its essence. Moreover, questions were simplified so that it was easy for the respondent to comprehend. Team leader checked translation before finalizing the

checklist. Field level qualitative exercise was rolled out thereafter. Both FGDs and KIIs were carried out with the relevant stakeholders in two districts simultaneously.

All the interviews and discussions were electronically recorded by the researchers with the consent from the respondents. Every qualitative consultation was initiated with general talks and rapport building. Questions pertaining to the projects and intervention were only asked when the stakeholders felt comfortable sharing their opinions.

Since there were two teams deployed in different districts simultaneously, general trend, experience, happenings of one district were shared with the researchers of another district. This helped to get a generalized and differences in view from both the districts to triangulate the information gathered. This further identified the areas that needed to be prioritised and probed when deemed necessary. Researchers' reflections during the qualitative consultations were also recorded. There was no such issue came up with people collection poor data. After the qualitative exercises concluded in the two 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.

### *Quality Assurance*

Appropriate measures were taken to ensure the quality of the study in each step of the survey. Before the actual fieldwork was underway, FDM team with conjunction with PIN team and FM, went through revisions on the format and the contents of the survey questionnaire as well as qualitative checklist in order to eliminate ambiguities, language complexity and complicated skip patterns. In addition, mature and experienced researchers and enumerators who had the contextual understanding of the study, were selected for the project.

Field work training was an essential part of the quality control process. The training focused on an in-depth discussion of the questionnaire in order to familiarize the enumerators with the questions, options, skip patterns and other details. Besides, the enumerators conducted mock interviews in order to train themselves on how to conduct interviews. Furthermore, detailed field plan was placed with a total of 20 enumerators and two monitors. Field plan was devised to meet planned as well as unforeseen challenges and thereby to ensure the smooth operation of day-to-day field activities. Monitors were essential part of the FDM team that helped further to ensure data quality. The monitors ensured data quality by assessing the performance of the enumerators. Monitors checked whether or not the enumerators were executing the tasks they were expected to perform. Below are some important specific checks the monitors conducted to ensure the smooth functioning of the fieldwork. Spot-checks were done by monitor to ensure that correct respondents were selected for interview, and the selection process are also correct. Additionally, back-end check was continuously being performed by core FDM team in Kathmandu to find the missing data and errors.

### *Post data collection*

#### *Data cleaning and storage*

The quantitative data received from mobile platform was taken utmost care to prevent the unforeseen loss of data during any cleaning and analysis process. Therefore, password

protected soft copies were saved in multiple computers of FDM's office. It was shared only between the core evaluation team members.

The android software, ODK, itself allowed for range-checks. During the data collection process FDM team in Kathmandu regularly checked and cleaned the database for complete blank entries and conditional field cleaning. Various errors in the data that would come during the fieldwork could come about due to the negligence of the enumerators rather than due to the limitations of the software. It is difficult to rectify such errors just by looking at the data. Thus, if the person in charge of data monitoring at FDM had doubts in the data sent in by enumerators, he/she contacted the concerned enumerator to identify the issue and rectify the error. Thus, at the time the fieldwork was going on, one person from FDM was constantly monitored the data that came in.

The data cleaning process followed a process of sorting variables, and checking for consistency. Data was also checked for the representativeness of the sample on the basis of ethnicity, school status, age and project areas. Frequency distribution was checked for each variable for identifying any missing data and inconsistency, which was subjected to update by recontacting the enumerators wherever possible. For instance, in this survey the actual sample size was 400. For every question after taking into account the filters, the base was 400. In case of extreme outliers, FDM checked how this has come about and whether or not such a response is justified. For example, the actual age of the respondent, and the age when the respondent got married was sometimes recorded too high than the current age. Cases such as these were informed to the concerned enumerators. Then the suitable course of action for dealing with such discrepancies was adopted. Data was also checked for any duplication which could easily be spotted through the unique id provided to each girl/household. While cleaning, it was ensured that the codes used in baseline matched exactly with the code of the master list. Once all the correction was entered into Excel, data were exported into SPSS. All the values were then properly labelled. A double entry mechanism was maintained to establish a backup database if the working file or sheet gets deleted or data is lost. In order to mitigate the risks of data loss, a master database was maintained in more than two computers and external storage devices.

While one team was cleaning the data, another research team was simultaneously collecting qualitative data at the field. While conducting the interviews the researchers recorded the entire interview so that it could be used for producing transcripts and field notes. Recordings were only done when all the participants provided consent to do so. The FDM researchers ensured that the qualitative data were also representative of various attributes that were looked at through quantitative data. The recordings were duly saved in FDM computer as a data protection strategy.

### *Data analysis*

#### *Quantitative analysis*

The cleaned data was exported to IBM SPSS 23 for analysis. The cleaned data was checked for normality test using box plot and normal curve for all of the continuous variables so that any existing outliers could be detected. The normal distribution and skewness of data was used as a basis for deciding on the parametric and non-parametric tests done. Descriptive analysis



was done for most of the variables including frequency distribution and various measures of central tendency and dispersion of variation. In addition, tests used during analysis to establish the relationship and test the significance were independent/two sample t-test, paired sample t-test, one-way anova, correlation, and chi-square test.

Qualitative analysis

Once the transcripts were prepared, further analysis of qualitative data was done. Following steps were used for qualitative data analysis:

Data coding: The transcripts of the qualitative discussion were coded for further analysis. The coding involved identification of key terms and grouping the responses. Descriptive coding was used for the study. This was especially important as it was pivotal in enabling the research team to efficiently pull out and refer back to data throughout report preparation. As the qualitative research was conducted under sequential mixed method design and was primarily intended to provide causal inference and explanation to finding from quantitative data descriptive coding was done.

Theme generation: In this step, the data with preliminary coding were further grouped into themes through the process of “focused coding” - combining smaller, related coded data into one category, subdividing more common coded data into sub categories or eliminate themes/categories that became outliers. The thematic coding was done during a two days’ workshop at FDM among the four research team members. Matrices were used for grouping of the coded data into themes which were identified based upon the log-frame indicator, evaluation questions, midline report template, and preliminary findings from quantitative data. This process also enabled the systematic organization of information from qualitative consultations and in determining trends among groups and contexts. An interrater agreement of 80% or above was sought for validation.

Data Interpretation: This step involved analysis of the data which were coded and categorized into themes and drawing conclusion. The interpretation i.e., analysis and conclusion of the data focused on explaining trends and findings casual interference to the quantitative data. This step also included presentation of opposing views, use of quotes and sought to establish inter thematic validation and relation of data.

After the analysis was completed following the above-mentioned methods, the findings were interpreted and consolidated into a report. The findings were presented following guideline provided by fund manager and also segregated based on the different sub groups identified during analysis.

**TABLE 9: CHALLENGES IN BASELINE DATA COLLECTION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION DESIGN**

Challenges	Mitigation Measure
Parents of some of the girls kept interrupting the interview during girls’ survey because they expected that they would get something in return	The monitors and enumerators had to reiterate the things written in the consent form few times, and explain with clarity the purpose of the survey, and explain that they would not get anything in return for participating in the research. Social mobilizers were informed by the field staff about the situation to protect it from escalating any further.

Girls who were the project beneficiaries but those who were not included in the sample persistently insisted the enumerators to interview them as well. This resulted in delay in data collection.	Monitor and enumerators explained the concept of sampling and how the data will be used. Social mobilizers were informed who further helped to explain that their non-participation in the survey would not hamper their learning or the benefits they get from the project.
Longitudinal evaluation modality of GEC implied keeping record of identifiable personal information like name, phone number and address. Collecting these sorts of personal information from the girls made some parents skeptical and sometimes they asked questions on how this information would later be used.	To mitigate this issue, FDM team did not directly ask their phone numbers of the girls but instead asked for their husband's or parents' number so that girls did not get into trouble for sharing phone number.
Difference in enumerators' understanding of questions resulting in irregularities in response	In order to make sure that enumerators were all on the same page in terms of understanding the questions, all sets of tools were separately discussed, question-by-question during enumerators training. Confusions flagged up during training were discussed and sorted out in the group itself. A mock-session was run among the enumerators themselves to make sure that everyone understood the questions in the same and uniform manner. Throughout the data collection process, monitors from the FDM, including the research coordinator, were available to answer any concerns raised by enumerators in data collection process.
Language barrier during qualitative consultation	Interpreter with local language competency was hired for easy communication between researcher and the participants. The interpreter was trained on the types of questions so that the essence of the question or answer would not be lost in translation.
OOS girls in some of the CLCs were not able to talk or express their opinion freely. A fair amount of time was invested in rapport building and probing.	Before proceeding with the checklist questions, researchers started with informal conversation a bit longer than usual and then only proceeded with the questions.

### *Limitations*

Apart from the challenges mentioned above, there were few limitations which might have affected the robustness or reliability of the evaluation design. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative results reported herein should be considered in the light of some limitations which is given below:

- Sensitive information such as information on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) were the most difficult to administer, mainly due to religious and cultural factors due to which the response on these questions were low.
- There was some sort of self-reported bias in some of the questions which might have over-estimated the results. This was out of control of EE as studies like this involves opinions and behaviours of human which can hardly be verified independently. Furthermore, research ethics directs enumerators for respecting the views of respondents leading to taking the information at face values.

- Due to the pandemic, school level activity was yet to start from the project's side hence, school and classroom observation which were tools to measure school sustainability could not be done.
- Since qualitative research is a perspective-based, the responses given could not be measured. Moreover, in researcher's presence during qualitative consultation there could be biased response from the participants which is often unavoidable in qualitative research

### *Representativeness of the samples*

The sample selected for the evaluation was fully representative. Representativeness of sampling was ensured considering the project's marginalization framework, the following inclusion criteria was used to select the primary beneficiaries:

- Beneficiaries were between the age of 10-19 years
- Beneficiaries were unmarried, married or waiting for Gauna
- Beneficiaries were either out-of-school girls who had never attended school, out-of-school girls who had attended some level of schooling but were currently dropped out.
- Girls who resided in the project intervention area.
- Residence: living in project target area

It was ensured all beneficiaries met the above-mentioned criteria to enrol in the project, regardless of their disability status, literacy levels, caste/ethnicity, or any other socio-economic and cultural factors, as well as literacy level. Once the sample size was calculated, stratified random sampling was done to select the target OOS adolescent girls to draw out individuals for baseline from the sampling frame. During stratification, the proportionate inclusion of sub groups was taken into account. The identified treatment and comparison groups was representative of at least 50% of the learning centres. 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 intervenes in the two broad age groups of 10-14 and 15-19. The girls within age group 10-14 will be enrolled into formal education after CLC class. Girls within age group 15-19 will either enroll into formal education or participate in the skill development training and then get into employment.

### 3. Context, educational marginalization and intersection between barriers and characteristics

This section discusses the characteristics of the sampled population, along with the key barriers, identified during baseline, which supports in understanding the educational marginalisation of girls across different sub-groups. The characteristics are presented in section 3.1, and barriers are presented in section 3.2 below:

#### 3.1 Characteristics

##### Ethnicity

Based on the distribution of households by ethnicity, majority (35.3%) of the sampled OOS girls belonged to Terai Madhesi Dalit, and 27.5% girls belonged to Terai Madhesi Others. The representation of girls from Muslim ethnicity were 25.8% and Terai/Madhesi Janajati had the lowest representation of 11.5%.

**TABLE 10: ETHNICITY**

Characteristics	Total	Sub-group		Source (Household /Girls School survey)
	Overall (n=400)	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	
<b>Ethnicity</b>				Girls Survey
Terai/Madhesi Dalit	35.3%	34.9%	35.8%	
Terai/Madhesi Janajati	11.5%	9.5%	14.9%	
Terai/Madhesi others	27.5%	33.7%	16.9%	
Muslim	25.8%	21.8%	25.8%	

##### Language

OOS girls who spoke Bhojpuri language were the highest (57.4%) for girls within the age group (15-19) and Bajika was the most used language (54.4%) among girls between the age group (10-14). Despite the variation in percentage between Bajika and Bhojpuri, data clearly showed that all the girls extensively used only their primary language as a medium of communication.

**TABLE 11: PRIMARY LANGUAGE**

Characteristics	Total	Sub-group		Source (Household /Girls School survey)
	Overall (n=400)	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	
<b>Language</b>				Girls Survey
Bhojpuri	50%	45.6%	57.4%	
Bajika	50%	54.4%	42.6%	

## Household Income

Data depicted the majority (62.5%) of the sampled households relied on agriculture as their source for income. Age wise disaggregation showed that 63.1% who relied on agriculture belonged to age group (10-14), and 51.5% belonged to age group (15-19). Daily wage was the second highest source of household income which accounted for 33.3%. Disaggregation based on age showed 32.9% were of the age group (10-14) and 33.8% were of the age group (15-19). Job and Service was lowest (0.3%) contributor to household income across both the age groups.

**TABLE 12: SOURCE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Characteristics	Total	Sub-group		Source (Household /Girls School survey)
		Overall (n=400)	10-14 (n=252)	
<b>Source of household income</b>				Girls Survey
Agriculture	62.5%	63.1%	61.5%	
Livestock rearing	1%	0.8%	1.4%	
Job/Services	0.3%	0.4%	0	
Business	-	-	-	
Daily Wage	33.2%	32.9%	33.8%	
Foreign employment	3%	2.8%	3.4%	

## Household

The household characteristics comprised of three sub-categories, which are, 'OOS girls with children,' 'education of parents', and 'girls having more than five members in the family.' 13.5% of the OOS girls accounted for having children of their own. From the age group (15-19), 36.49% of the OOS girls had children while girls from age group (10-14) did not have any children.

**TABLE 13: GIRLS' CHARACTERISTICS**

Characteristics	Total	Sub-group		Source (Household /Girls School survey)
		Overall (n=400)	10-14 (n=252)	
<b>Household</b>				Girls Survey
Girls with children	13.5%	0	36.49%	
Head of household has no/ limited education	93.3%	92.5%	94.6%	
Households having 5 or more than 5 members	95.3%	94.8%	95.9%	

In terms of the education level of OOS girls' parents, overall, 52% had little to no education at all. Data disaggregation based on sub-group showed that 47.62% parents of girls between age (10-14) and 59.46% parents of girls aged (15-19) had little or no education at all. Data depicted

that 95.3% of the total girls had more than five members in their family. Disaggregation based on subgroup showed that for both the age groups (10-14) and (15-19) more than 94% households had five or more than five members in the household.

### Poverty

The poverty characteristics were sub-categorized by ‘household not having land for themselves,’ ‘roof made out of hay,’ ‘unable to meet basic need,’ ‘gone hungry without sleep’, and ‘not having enough cash income’.

For poverty characteristics, 43.7% OOS girls belonging to the age group (10-14) and 36.5% from age group (15-19) reported not having a land for themselves. In regards to the condition of the house, 38.5.6% girls between the age (10-14) had roof of the house made out of hay, while only 24.3% girls of age (15-19) had roof made out of hay. This showed that girls of age (10-15) lived in better house than girls of age (10-14).

In terms of household unable to meet their basic need, out of the total sampled girls, 53% said they were unable to meet basic need. Disaggregation on the basis of age showed that 54.4% of the girls between the age (10-14) were unable to meet their basic need. The percentage was slightly lower for the age group (15-19), where 50.7% of the girls reported that they were unable to meet their basic need.

**TABLE 14: POOR HOUSEHOLD**

Characteristics	Total	Sub-group		Source (Household /Girls School survey)
		10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	
	<b>Overall (n=400)</b>			
<b>Poverty</b>				Girls Survey
Household not having land for themselves	41%	43.7%	36.5%	HH Survey
Roof made of hay	33.3%	38.5%	24.3%	HH Survey
Unable to meet basic needs	53%	54.4%	50.7%	HH Survey
Gone hungry to sleep many days in the past year	72.3%	73%	70.9%	HH Survey
HH with not having enough cash income	51.9%	48.4%	59.5%	HH Survey
Household not having land for themselves	41%	43.7%	36.5%	HH Survey

Households were also asked if they had to go hungry to sleep at night. 72.3% of the respondents said that they had to go to bed hungry. Disaggregated data depicted that a slightly higher (73%) percentage of girls belonging to the age group 10-14 went to sleep hungry, than girls of the age group 15-19 (70.9%).

Lastly, households were asked if they had enough cash income to meet their daily need, out of the total, 51.9% households said they did not have enough income. Data disaggregation on the basis of age showed that 48.4% households belonging to girls of age (10-14) said they had

shortage of cash income. In regards to age group (15-19), 59.5% households said that they did not have enough cash income.

The summary of main characteristics group identified in the baseline is outlined below.

**TABLE 15: SUMMARY OF GIRLS' CHARACTERISTICS**

Characteristic/Barrier	Proportion of baseline sample (%)
Single orphans	N/A
Double orphans	N/A
Living without both parents	17.25%
Living in female headed household	26.5%
Married	18.3%
Married but waiting for Gauna	3%
Mother under 18	13%
Mother under 16	1.9%
Household doesn't own land for themselves	41%
Material of the roof (hay)	33.3%
Household unable to meet basic needs	53%
Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	72.3%
HoH has little to no education	93.3%
girls aged 10-14	63%
girls aged 15-19	37%
Muslim girls	25.75%
Never been to school	52.50%
Dropped out	47.5%
Daily Wage	33.2%
Agriculture	62.5%

The purpose of this section is to summarize the characteristics subgroups that were identified by PIN, and additional subgroups that were identified by FDM. These subgroups were the basis for outcome and output level analysis throughout the report.

PIN identified girls aged 10-14 and 15-19 as the major characteristic subgroups. The baseline report was disaggregated based on these two sub-groups. Apart from age as a subgroup mentioned above, Muslim ethnicity was also identified as an additional subgroup because the government of Nepal identified the Muslim community as a religious minority, and socially excluded group that need upliftment.

School going status i.e. 'never been to school or 'drop-out' were also identified as subgroups. Girls who had not been to school and girls who had dropped out of school were taken as a subgroup due to their high representation in the sample. It was also to see the differences between learning and numeracy level of girls those who had dropped out and those who never went to school the analysis for these two groups has only been done with the literacy and numeracy.

‘Married but waiting for Gauna,’ had only 3% representation in the sample, hence this was not considered to be a significant subgroup for detailed analysis. Likewise, married girls accounted for 18% out of the total sample. Since all the girls from the age group 15-19 are mostly married, the age-group will compensate for this group.

Likewise, in terms of language, Nepali was not the primary language of all the girls in the sample. Despite 100% of the girls did not speak Nepali, this characteristic was not considered to be either a subgroup, or a barrier because no significant result was generated when language, and learning scores were cross-tabulated. In addition to this, qualitative findings also suggested that language was not a barrier for girls as most of them, including Muslim girls, wanted to learn Nepali to be able to read information written on the board, newspapers, and other documents. They further added that learning Nepali would make them less dependent on their husbands and in-laws.

Characteristics like ‘household not having land’, ‘materials made out of hay’, ‘household unable to meet basic need’ and ‘gone hungry to sleep’ were all clubbed as ‘poor household’ and it was also be analysed as barrier in the report.

Characteristics like ‘girls with children,’ ‘agriculture and labour work as a primary occupation,’ and ‘parents with no education’, ‘girls living without both parents’ were initially considered to be potential subgroups. However, these were not taken to be the major subgroups despite having high representation in the sample because they did not generate any significant result when cross-tabulated with different barriers.

### **3.2 Barriers**

The project in its theory of change outlined barriers to girls learning and transition based on their experience of working with adolescent girls. The barriers identified by the project were social isolation, lack of peer support network, limited access to literacy and numeracy, limited access to family planning, early marriage, limited life skills- low levels of self-esteem and vulnerability to or experience of GBV. Apart from the barriers outlined by the project, the baseline evaluation showed ‘Safety issue’, ‘Unsupportive parents’, ‘Household chores’ and ‘Poor household’ as key barriers to OOS girls’ learning and transition.

#### **Safety issue and restriction in mobility**

With regards to safety issue, overall, 51.8% of parents said that it was unsafe for girls to travel to school. The reason for unsafe environment was found to be due to distance of school from home, road blocks and harassment. Data showed that 38.6% parents reported it was unsafe for girls to travel to and back from school due to long distance, 21% reported it to be due to roadblocks, and 15% said it was due to harassment and teasing, and the remaining others were due to poor road conditions, conflict among others. Disaggregation based on age showed that 56.1% girls belonging to the age group (15-19) considered travelling to school unsafe. The percentage was slightly less (49.2%) for girls of age group (10-14). However, the relationship between age group and safety issue was not statistically significant.

Disaggregation based on ethnicity also showed that percentage as high as 61.2% Muslim girl considered travelling to school unsafe as compared to 48.5% non-Muslim girls. the relation between the two was statistically significant. There were two main reasons why parents thought



it was unsafe to send their daughters/daughter-in-law to school. The first reason was the fear of girls eloping, and the second reason was the frequent crimes that took place in the neighbouring districts. During interactions, most of the parents of OOS girls expressed concerns about sending their daughter/daughter-in-law outside the house. It was because of the fear that girls may fall in love with some random boy, and elope. This fear stemmed from advancement of technology like the use of smart phones which increased the number of girls eloping. In FGDs conducted with parents in Bara, parents feared their daughters or daughter-in-law's interaction with other men would compromise their image in the society. Parents from Rautahat also shared similar view. CLC facilitators from both the districts added that even they sometimes got questioned if they arrived a little late at home. They further added that most of the times their brother or even mother-in-law dropped them off to CLC, so that they did not have to go alone.

**TABLE 16: SAFETY ISSUE  
DATA DISAGGREGATED BASED ON AGE AND ETHNICITY**

Safety issue	Age group		Ethnicity		Total (n=400)
	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	Muslim (n=103)	Non Muslim (n=297)	
Fairly unsafe or very unsafe to travel to school	49.2%	56.1%	61.2%	48.5%	51.8%

The other reason for parents thinking that it is unsafe for girls to travel to school was due to frequent crimes in the nearby areas. This could also be validated by quantitative finding where 84.3% parents have stated that there is a possibility of girls being physically harmed or teased on their way or back to school. In Rautahat district parents shared that few rape cases in a neighbouring village as reported by media took many of the parents by shock. Project has mainstreamed protection component (PSS, gender audit, service mapping, service referral pathways) in project intervention (including DTL delivery and girls' telephone tracking). Moreover, acid attacks in villages, and border areas also have been reported, due to which parents do not want to take any risk. The finding was validated by community leader of Bara district who shared about acid attacks in the nearby villages.

Parents showing concern regarding their daughter's safety is reasonable given the crime rate of province-2. Province 2 police statistics show women are more unsafe outside of homes than inside. The number of complaints of violence against women in the eight districts of Province 2 surged dramatically from 602 three years ago to 10,243 in the past year.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nepalitimes.com/from-the-nepali-press/alarming-rise-in-violence-against-women/>

<https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/mediaperson-arrested-on-the-charge-of-attempting-to-rape-teenager-in-bara>

<https://kathmandupost.com/province-no-2/2019/09/07/yet-another-acid-attack-badly-injures-15-year-old-girl>

A crucial aspect of concern towards girl’s safety is to some extent sensible, but also appears patriarchal. Women do face the risk of abuse, but at the same time, sometimes “ensuring safety” meant restriction which is deprivation of basic human right.

“A girl should always be under her husband’s feet and agree with him”- Parent, Bara district  
 - Parent, Rautahat district

Patriarchy is the prime reason for girls’ secondary status which the girls fail to realize. Most of these girls have grown in a place with a certain tradition, and assumptions about ways of living, and behaving. Restriction in mobility for these girls is simply a protection from their family which branches from the socialization process. The fact that parents think it is unsafe for girls to travel outside limits their freedom of movement. Parents in all the FGDs have mentioned that girls’ role should be limited within the household.

Parents believed that girls’ post marriage, should do everything as per husband’s and family’s will. Community leader of Bara district also commented on this saying, “*it is a duty of a boy to protect girls from bad people by limiting where they go*” Hence, it is important for the project to understand that altering a social structure is difficult and there is a need of a tailored program that emphasizes on parents and husbands.

### Unsupportive parents

Unsupportive parents were another barrier identified by the project. Four questions were analysed to measure this as a barrier, i.e., ‘does not get support to join school/formal class (support in life plan)’, ‘does not get support to participate in training (support in life plan)’, and ‘does not get support to initiate business (support in life plan)’. Overall, 48.8% parents accounted for not supporting girls to join formal school, 0.5% parents accounted for not letting them join trainings, and the highest (75.8%) parents accounted for not supporting girls to initiate business.

Disaggregation based on age showed that, for the age group 10-14 years, 50.4% parents said they would not support girls to join formal school, and 75% parents said they would not allow girls to initiate any kind of business. But, for the girls between the age (15-19), 45.9% parents would not support girls joining formal schooling, and 77% said they would not support in business. The age wise disaggregation, and unsupportive parents showed statistically insignificant relation.

**TABLE 17: UNSUPPORTIVE PARENTS  
 DATA DISAGGREGATED BASED ON AGE AND ETHNICITY**

	Age group		Ethnicity		Total (n=400)
	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	Muslim (n=103)	Non Muslim (n=297)	
Doesn’t get support to join formal school (support life plan)	50.4%	45.9%	49.5%	48.5%	48.8%

Doesn't get support to participate in training (support in life plan)	0.8%	0.0%	1.0%	0.3%	0.5%
Does not get support to initiate business (support in life plan)	75.0%	77.0%	72.8%	76.8%	75.8%

Disaggregation based on ethnicity showed that both Muslim (49.5%), and non-Muslim (48.5%) girls, were almost at the same level for not getting support from their parents to transition to schools. In regards to initiating a business, 76.8% parents of non-Muslim girls and 72.8% parents of Muslim girls, said they would not support the girls. The relation between unsupportive parents with ethnicity was statistically significant. During qualitative consultation with parents, it was found that parents were a bit apprehensive about sending their daughter to schools. This was because parents did not want their daughters out of the house for long hours. In addition to this, parents feared that if girls go to school or start their business, they might not do the household chores or take care of the family.

### Household chores

In regards to household chores, 73.3% girls said that they were involved in household work most of the day. Disaggregation based on age group showed that girls of age (10-14) had to perform relatively more household work than girls of age (15-19). 79% of the girls from age group (10-14) said they performed household chores most of the day, while 63.5% of the girls from age group (15-19) said they performed household chores most times of the day. From the data it can be depicted that girl of age 10-14 worked more than girls of age 15-19. The disaggregation between age group and household was statistically significant. When reason for this was explored qualitatively, it was found that parents were preparing younger unmarried girls especially of age 10-14 for their marriage by making them work more. The reason for less household work for girls of aged 15-19 was because most of these girls were already mothers, so they had to look after their child which minimized their household work.

*“When I was 15, I knew everything but my daughter who is 14 only knows how to cook, so I have to teach her everything so that it becomes easy for her when she goes to somebody else's house”.*

*- Parent, Rautahat district*

**TABLE 18: HOUSEHOLD CHORES  
DATA DISAGGREGATED BASED ON AGE AND ETHNICITY**

Household chores	Age group		Ethnicity		
	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	Muslim (n=103)	Non Muslim (n=297)	Total (n=400)
Has to perform household chores most of the day	79%	63.5%	67%	75.4%	73.3%

Disaggregation based on ethnicity showed that non-Muslim girls had to work more than Muslim girls. 75.4% girls from non-Muslim, and 67% girls from Muslim community said they performed household chores most of the days, but the relation between household chores and ethnicity was not statistically significant. Nonetheless, the reason for this was explored qualitatively, and it was found that Muslim households had many family members as compared to non-Muslim households, resulting in division of work among household members. In addition to this, parents from non-Muslim family mostly worked outside as labourer, while the practice of working outside of home for Muslim families was rare. Hence, Muslim girls mostly got help from their mothers or mother-in-law to do household chores.

Although data depicted Muslim girls worked less than non-Muslim girls relatively, all the girls invested more time doing household chores, than on other things. Girls said they were required to do the household chores including cooking, cleaning, and taking care of younger siblings or elderly among other things. Girls were of the opinion that it was their duty to do all the household chores because their mothers also did the same when they were young.

The burden of domestic work is not just a barrier for OOS girls but also a barrier for CLC facilitators who belong to the same community. When CLC facilitators in both Bara and Rautahat districts were asked what they thought about girls having to perform household chores, they shared that in the context of terai, all the girls had to work in the kitchen, and only after completing the work they were allowed to do other things. CLC facilitator from Rautahat shared an instance when she had to push the timing of the class by an hour because she was occupied with household chores. Similar instance was shared by another facilitator in Bara who mentioned that as soon as the classes got over, she usually rushes home to prepare dinner, due to which she rarely gets time to work on the lesson plan.

*“With the amount of domestic work, we have to perform, the question of going out for training or joining school is impossible”.*

*– OOS girl Bara*

Education officer of Bara agreed to the fact that a girls’ position in the household is so that from their childhood itself, they are trained to take care of the house, while boys fend for the family. Being involved in other activities like school or training is secondary for them. It can thus be inferred that irrespective of caste, class, or education, girls were primarily responsible for the household chores and this might impact the transition pathway they opt for. There still stands a risk of girls not getting enough time to study which might lead to discontinuity again.

It was assumed that COVID-19 increased the time spent on household chores for girls as many of the family members who were abroad working came home during that time. When this was explored qualitatively it was found that girls household chores remained the same even during COVID. Girls from both the districts unanimously said that they even when there was no COVID their work was the same as during the covid. The household chores neither increased or decreased because of the pandemic. Even though family members increased in

the houses, girls main work such as working in the kitchen, cooking for washing, washing clothes remained the same.

### Poor household

The poverty characteristics were sub-categorized by ‘household not having land for themselves,’ ‘roof made out of hay,’ ‘unable to meet basic need,’ ‘gone hungry without sleep’, and ‘not having enough cash income’. These characteristics were aggregated to generate a single value, and were identified as one of the barriers to girls’ learning. Data showed that out of total, 73.3% girls belonged to poor household. Disaggregation based on age showed that 73.8% girls of age (10-14), and 72.3% girls of age (15-19) belonged to poor household. The relation between age and poor household was not statistically significant.

**TABLE 19: POOR HOUSEHOLD  
DATA DISAGGREGATED BASED ON AGE AND ETHNICITY**

Poor household	Age group		Ethnicity		Total (n=400)
	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	Muslim (n=103)	Non Muslim (n=297)	
Household who are unable to meet their basic need, have poor income, roof of house made out of hay, have to sleep hungry most of the days	73.8%	72.3%	63.1%	76.8%	73.3%

In regards to ethnicity, higher number of non-Muslim girls belonged to poor household than the Muslim girls. There were 63.1% Muslim girls, and 73.3% non-Muslim girls who belonged to poor household. The values between poor household and ethnicity were statistically significant.

Poverty emerged as the most prominent barrier which led many girls to drop out of school, or kept them being out of school. 79% households reported difficulty to afford girls education. It emerged during qualitative consultation that due to poverty, girls were required to take over the household responsibilities to allow other members of the household to work and fend for their families. Most of the OOS girls opined that they had to do all the household chores and look after their brothers because both their parents went out to work. One of the FGD respondents of Rautahat district stressed, “when priority of the family is meeting the basic need, sending to school is a luxury.” Education officer in Bara also agreed to this point and said that it is difficult for poor families to send their children to school because they have to earn money to meet their basic need. Education officer of Rautahat further elaborated and opined that parent do not see

*“Who will do the cooking and feed the goats if my daughter goes to school? I work every day to make ends meet, we cannot afford sending our girls to school.”*

- Parent, Bara

the prospect of educating their girls as they eventually get married and have to take care of the household responsibilities.

### Other barriers

Apart from the barriers mentioned in the section which was generated through quantitative finding. Some other barriers such as ‘repressive parental attitude’, ‘Restriction in mobility’, ‘and ‘dowry’ were other barriers that was generated through qualitative consultation which has been discussed in the main report.

#### *Repressive parental attitude*

The quantitative finding reflected negative perception of household towards girls’ education. 79.8% households agreed to the statement that it was not worthy in investing in girls’ education. 74.8% household held the perception that girls were never likely to use their education as used by boys. Qualitative inquiry aligned with quantitative finding. Parents shared that they were not sure what their daughters would do after enrolling in school. When parents were asked how they came to terms for supporting girls to send them to CLC, they opined that CLC classes were safe space because there were no boys, it was located at a distance which could easily be monitored, and the CLC facilitator was a female. When parents were further probed as to why they sent their daughters to CLC, and if they had any future plans for them, parents asserted that they sent their daughters and daughter/in-law to CLC so that they could learn basics like writing names, recognizing numbers and be able to read and understand instructions written in Nepali. Parents did not seem eager with the idea of girls enrolling in school given their perceived risk of girls’ eloping, safety issue, and the time she had to invest in education which would hinder other household work. However, parents were positive on sending their daughters for vocational training, especially tailoring, if the training took place in the vicinity itself.

*“I will not be able to send my daughter alone for any kind of training, if all the girls in the CLC go, then I will send, otherwise I will not”*

*-A mother of a 15-year-old girl in Rautahat district.”*

A parent during qualitative consultation asserted, *“It is alright if my daughter-in-law learns tailoring, she will be able to help her husband in the shop.”* The fact that parents have not discerned that girl could opt for entrepreneur activity after learning tailoring showed limited opportunity a girl might have due to parental attitude.

To understand the context further, girls were asked if they would be allowed to go for training, or start a business, as much as girls wanted to do it, they said that their parents

would not allow. In an instance a girl shared, *“After learning about financial literacy in CLC, I wanted to go to the nearby cooperative with my father, but my father did not take me because he thought I would not understand, and also because it would not be appropriate if a girl went*

to such places.” This view of parents also indicates towards the social norms which affects girls’ liberty. These kind of gender norms are powerful beliefs deeply embedded in social structures. Once a girl reaches puberty, girls are made to behave in a certain way that portrays her good behaviour, i.e like wearing proper clothes, doing household chores more, not going out of the house among others, which is an essential aspect for finding a husband. Moreover, after the girls’ reach a certain age, they are restricted from appearing in public as it is termed as unsafe.

“We are not allowed to even go to the nearby shops to buy chocolates”

-OOS girl in Bara district.

It was found that the immediate neighbourhood was considered safer but places few steps further away like retail shops were not. Measures to protect a woman’s safety in public was by sending an escort with the girl, mostly a younger brother. In all four intervention areas of Rautahat and Bara, parents restricted girls’ movement, and their behaviour was closely monitored by neighbours and relatives. If a girl was seen not abiding by these rules, neighbours or relatives raised suspicion and

would interpret it as bad parenting. The situation for girls residing in the intervention area was the same irrespective of their age, ethnicity or religion. Such deep-rooted norms led to negative parental attitude. In existence of such norms, it will become a challenge for the project to transition girls either to school or even for safe employment.

### *Dowry*

Dowry was another impediment identified which was hindering girls’ access to education, and leading to early marriage. Qualitative consultation with various stakeholders led to a conclusion that the practice of dowry was common in the project intervention areas. Family of a girls irrespective of their religion, class, and ethnicity had to give dowry to the groom’s side of the family. According to education officer in Bara, dowry was demanded on the basis of total money that groom’s family spent in raising and educating the groom. He further added that poor families, who usually had lots of children, sold their lands to provide dowry for their daughters, and ended up becoming landless. For these parents’ early marriage is often seen as a strategy for economic survival- the younger the bride is, less the dowry- hence, they marry their daughters early depriving them of education. Due to early marriage, chance of girls enrolling in school is virtually nil.

“Nowadays groom side of the family do not settle with just money, they demand motor bikes, how can we afford motorbike, when we can barely meet our ends?”

-Parent, Rautahat district

When parents were asked if they knew early marriage was illegal, all the parents in both the districts knew about it. A change champion in Rautahat revealed the current happening in villages where parents bribed the local leader/mukhiya so that the leader would not complain about them marrying off their young daughter. Girls were also asked the reason behind early

marriage, and almost all the girls consulted knew about dowry; some of them were even aware that their ages had been increased in the citizenship card so that they could be married off early.

### 3.3 Intersection between key characteristics subgroups and barriers

This section provides a cross tabulation of the characteristics and significant key barriers mentioned in the previous section. Barriers such as ‘safety issues’, ‘high burden of household chores’, and ‘poor household’ were identified as three key barriers to girls learning. Therefore, only these three barriers were cross-tabulated with key characteristics. While ‘unsupportive parents’ also was one of the key barriers identified in the study, it did not generate statistically significant value with either of the two major sub-groups, i.e., age, and ethnicity, therefore, it has not been cross-tabulated with the characteristics in this section.

#### Safety issues

Safety issue was identified as one of the key barriers for OOS girls’ learning, as majority of girls’ parents reported that they felt unsafe for girls to travel to schools. Characteristics such as household members having equal and more than 5 members in the household, girls with children, household head with no education, household does not own land, roof made out of hay, gone to sleep hungry, and unable to meet basic need; and the barrier safety issue, showed non-significant relation. This implied irrespective of the household characteristics all parents had safety concerns if their daughters.

**TABLE 20: KEY BARRIERS TO EDUCATION BY CHARACTERISTIC SUBGROUPS FOR SAFETY ISSUE**

Characteristics	
<b>Fairly unsafe or very unsafe to travel to school</b>	
More members in the household	
Equal and more than 5 members in the household	50.0%
less than 5 members in the household	52.1%
Girls with children	
Girls with children	57.4%
Girls without children	50.9%
Family illiteracy	
HH head illiterate	51.2%
HH head literate	59.3%
No land ownership	
HH does not own land	49.4%
HH owns land	53.4%
House made up of hay	
Roof made by mud/thatch/plastics	43.0%
Roof made of others	54.4%
Gone to bed without food	
Gone to sleep hungry	49.1%
Not gone to sleep hungry	58.6%



Unable to meet basic need	
Unable to meet basic need	50.0%
Able to meet basic need	53.7%

### Household chores

Overall, the relation of OOS girls' household chores with characteristics such as 'more than 5 members in the household/less than 5 members in the household'; HH head illiterate / HH head literate, gone hungry to sleep for many days, and unable to meet basic need were non-significant. This suggests that these factors did not have impact on girls' household chores. Moreover, girls having children, also did not have any impact on the household chores performed by girls.

Characteristics like 'HH not owning land', however, did have a significant relationship with the household chores. Table below showed that higher percentage of girls' who did not have land ownership had to perform more household chores, as compared to those girls who owned land. This meant that OOS girls with land ownership had to perform fewer household chores.

Similarly, relationship of 'household chores' with 'roof made out of hay' showed significant relation. This meant that higher percentage of girls who lived in house made out of hay, had to perform more work. Household made out of hay signifies that these girls lived in a poor household. 'Household not owing land', and 'household's roof made out of hay' were characteristic to define poor household, the finding suggested that girls from poorer households had to devote higher amount of time to household chores.

Qualitative finding also generated similar finding. Since both of the parents of the girls living in poor household often went out to work, these girls had to perform all the household chores.

**TABLE 21: KEY BARRIERS TO EDUCATION BY CHARACTERISTIC SUBGROUPS FOR HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

Characteristics	
<i>Girls spent most of their time in HH chores</i>	
<i>More members in the household</i>	
Equal and more than 5 members in the household	72.30%
less than 5 members in the household	77.90%
<i>Girls with children</i>	
Girls with children	66.70%
Girls without children	74.30%
<i>Family illiteracy</i>	
HH head illiterate	74.3%
HH head literate	59.3%
<i>No land ownership</i>	
HH does not own land	79.90%*
HH owns land	68.60%*

House made up of hay	
Roof made by hay	89.2%*
Roof made of others	68.4%*
<i>Gone to bed without food</i>	
Gone to sleep hungry	70.9%
Not gone to sleep hungry	79.3%
<i>Unable to meet basic need</i>	
Unable to meet basic need	76.9%
Able to meet basic need	69.1%

### Poor household

Poor household was identified as one of the key barriers for OOS girls learning as majority of girls reported that they were from a poor household. All of the characteristics like ‘more than 5 members in the household/ less than 5 members in the household’, ‘Girls with children/ Girls without children’, and ‘head of the household had little to no education’ showed statistically significant relation with poor household. This suggests that ‘poor household’ has an impact on all these factors.

To elaborate more on this, household having ‘Equal and more than 5 members’ showed significant relationship with ‘poor household’. This implied that OOS girls belonging to poor household had more members in their house, had children.

It was also seen that household heads who belonged to poor household were illiterate. The finding is evident because girls from poor household often lack access to resources like family planning, and education, among other things. This is a vicious circle that girls fall into that occurs when poor family do not have access to necessary resources.

As mentioned above, poor household was defined by combining characteristics such as ‘household who did not own land’, ‘gone hungry to sleep for most of the days’, ‘HH unable to meet basic needs’, ‘roof made out of hay’. Due to this reason cross tabulation between poor household and combined characteristics was not conducted as it would not add value.

**TABLE 22: KEY BARRIERS TO EDUCATION BY CHARACTERISTIC SUBGROUPS FOR POOR HOUSEHOLD**

Characteristics	
<i>More members in the household</i>	
Equal and more than 5 members in the household	73.5%*
less than 5 members in the household	72.1%*
<i>Girls with children</i>	
Girls with children	79.60%*
Girls without children	72.30%*
<i>Family illiteracy</i>	
HH head illiterate	73.50%*

HH head literate	70.40%*
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### 3.4 Correspondence of sample characteristics with total population

The key characteristics used by the project to map the beneficiaries were age range (10-14 and 15-19). The sample selected from these groups were divided proportionately. Hence, the data collected by the evaluator naturally corresponded to the total population.

### 3.5 Correspondence of barriers with the project ToC

As mentioned above, ‘safety issues’, ‘household chores’, and ‘poor households’ were identified as key barriers to OOS girls learning, but apart from these barriers mentioned above, ‘repressive attitude of parents towards learning’ and ‘dowry’ were identified to be the two new barriers for girls’ learning and transition. It is important to note that while barriers relating to ‘safety issues’, ‘poor household’, and ‘household chores’ have been fairly straightforward to evidence by findings, barriers relating to attitudes and behaviours, such as ‘repressive attitude and dowry’ were harder to capture, hence, these barriers may be more extensive than reported.

PIN in its TOC had also identified some barriers that affected OOS girls’ learning and transition. The barrier mentioned in the TOC that did not come up strongly and those barriers which were in-line with the project’s intervention are explained in detail below:

#### Social isolation, lack of peer support network

Social isolation and lack of peer support network did not come up as a barrier during qualitative or quantitative data collection. This was because none of the girls reported that they lacked any kind of support from their friends or other members of the community. Therefore, FDM suggests to remove this as one of the barriers for girls’ education.

#### Limited access to literacy, numeracy or transitional programs

Project identified limited access to literacy, numeracy, or transitional programs as barriers for OOS girls. However, FDM findings suggested that limited access to literacy numeracy or transitional program was the result of poverty, household chores, repressive parental attitude, and safety issue (section **Error! Reference source not found.**) which has already been identified as key barriers to girls’ learning. FDM therefore, suggests to identify it as OOS girls’ characteristics rather than a barrier.

#### Low Nepali language competency

Low Nepali language competency was identified as one of the barriers by the project. In the project area although 100% girls spoke in their primary language, they were able to understand Nepali, but could were not able to read or write. Since all the girls in the CLC have shown interest in learning Nepali so that they would be able to read instructions, and write their names, girls are eager to learn more. Moreover, the project’s intervention to teach Nepali in CLC as it is the language of instruction in the school is relevant for overcoming the language incompetency.

## Limited access to family planning, motherhood, early pregnancy and childbirth related health problems.

Access to family planning was identified as one of the barriers by PIN. This barrier therefore is relevant for the project. Questions surrounding family planning were a part of life skill indicator, which suggested that majority of the girls lacked awareness on family planning. This has been explained in the latter section (The evaluation data showed that 78.5% girls from baseline were unmarried, while 3.3% were married, but were waiting for Gauna ceremony. Qualitative finding suggested that although parents were well aware about the legal age of marriage, the practice of marrying after the legal age was minimum due to intersecting factors like beliefs, social norms and economic factor. Qualitative finding generated four reasons for early marriage, which were, ‘appropriate age of marriage for girls’, poverty, tradition and societal pressure.

In the intervention area parents believed that beginning of a girls’ menarche should be taken as a sign for marriage. A parent of a 15-year-old OOS girls shared, “I married off my first daughter as soon as she got her first periods, I will do the same for my younger one. A girl should not be living with her parents after she menstruates.” Similar view was shared by another parent, who said “Girls after first menstruation becomes mature, therefore, they should be married”.

Likewise, poverty was also widely cited as a driver of early marriage in interviews with parents and OOS girls. Many participants shared examples where families who could not afford to fend for their families decided to marry their daughters’ young. A parents of Bara district shared “I cannot keep my daughter with me forever because if she ages, I will have to pay more dowry, I do not have good enough living conditions so it is better if she marries early.”

Such attitude of parents stemmed from wanting to ease the bad situation at home and also to ease bad condition for their daughters. Many parents wanted to try and to give their daughters a better life, so they for these parents, marriage to a man in a comfortable financial situation seemed to be the best way to do this.

This was validated by Education office of Rautahat who shared that in the girls’ case, the family decides on the marriage due to economic problems, they believe that if they marry off their daughter there would be one less mouth to feed

Similarly, traditional belief was identified to be another reason for early marriage. Girls in interviews emphasised that early marriage was considered to be a tradition in their communities which should be followed by everyone. Such thinking among girls as well as among parents shaped preference for the practice. A 14-year-old girl from Bara shared, “*my mother married at the age of 12 and, she says I should be ready for marriage too because I have reached the age of marriage, and also many of my friends are already married.*” This statement pointed towards the challenge in terms of encouraging young girls to think differently about a practice that they term as a tradition. Moreover, social mobilizers shared that when any families go against the general tradition those families were often cut off from the community. Analysis of data from the FGDs revealed that parents faced considerable pressure from extended families and neighbours to marry off daughters. It was clear from qualitative finding that marrying a girl young, was seen as a way to save family honour. This was an important consideration for families and a factor pushing girls towards marriage. Since early (child) marriage is rampant

& socio-culturally accepted in project areas, project has already started immediate and long-term interventions against child marriage in the project districts- including development of IEC materials in local languages, with engagement of families, local government and change champions.

The finding indicated that social norms supporting early marriage were still strong among communities and to change this would be a major challenge for the project. The project's intervention on creating awareness among community members, and parents seems to be not working well. It is suggested that instead of advocacy on not marrying early, a comprehensive intervention that promotes the benefits of marrying later, and showing examples of other girls who married after the legal age would be the best way to alter people's beliefs.

7.2.3 Intermediate Outcome Indicator 2.3: Life Skills Index). Moreover, quantitative findings from the baseline study also suggests that 71.5% OOS girls were unaware about using contraceptive method to control pregnancy. When explored this through a qualitative lens, girls with children mentioned that they were not allowed to use contraception until they gave birth to a son.

### **Early marriage, pregnancy and childbirth**

Early marriage, pregnancy and childbirth were another barrier identified by the project in the TOC. This particular barrier was neither the key barriers nor characteristics, because project had already identified girls between the age group of (10-19) who are married, pregnant and those who are mothers as primary beneficiaries. Although the findings suggested that parents were aware regarding the legal age of marriage, the trend of marrying early was still prevalent in the society. OOS girls reported that parents marry off their daughter at a young age as a way out for less dowry. Project through its intervention aims to reduce child marriage by raising awareness through change champions, and government official. EE suggests that such deep rooted social norm cannot be altered in few months' intervention. Hence, it is suggested to increase the frequency of awareness programs by extensively involving change champions and lobbying with the government.

### **Limited life skills: low levels of self-esteem, agency, confidence, and ability to negotiate important life decisions.**

Limited life skill (low self-esteem, confidence, and ability to negotiate) was identified as a barrier by the project and this barrier is relevant for the project. Data depicted that majority of the OOS girls fell under the category of having 'less than 50% self-efficacy This meant that majority of the girls did not have the ability and the confidence to stand up for themselves, or solve their own life problems. Most of the girls said during qualitative data collection that they were dependent on their elders to make even the smallest decisions for them. The given barrier is relevant for the project, and project should plan its intervention in such a way that it focuses on building confidence, and ways of meeting future aspiration.

### **Vulnerability to or experience of GBV**

The project had identified vulnerability to or experience of GBV as one of the barriers. However, no such evidence was found during both qualitative and quantitative data collection.

## 4. Key Outcome Findings

This section presents the findings on learning outcomes, transition outcomes, and sustainability outcomes.

### 4.1 Overview

The focus of the project through its interventions is to enrol girls back to school. The six-month CLC classes run by the project is aimed to increase the proficiency level of girls, so that by the end of the class, OOS girls enrol into formal schooling. The placement of these girls into a specific class will be decided by the school management based on the placement test the schools carry out. The girls who do not follow the learning track of intervention after CLC classes, will be eligible for acquiring vocational skills. The project will collaborate, and harmonize with parents and local NGO i.e Aasman Nepal, and link them with the vocational and other transitional pathway opportunities available.

During the time of baseline evaluation, OOS girls were in the first month of attending CLC classes. External evaluators conducted learning tests with all 400 girls for deriving the baseline learning levels. ASER tool was used to capture girl's literacy and numeracy proficiency level. EE followed the exact guideline developed by ASER Nepal for testing literacy and numeracy.

**TABLE 23: SUMMARY OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY TEST**

	Task I	Task II	Subtask III	Subtask IV	Subtask V
Nepali and English	Letter identification (contains 10 letters)	Word identification (contains 10 words)	Reading Sentence (contains 4 sentences)	Reading story (contains story that are composed by the combination of words used in subtask 3)	Story comprehension (contains 2 questions related to the story)
Mathematics	Recognize 1-digit number (contains 10 of the 1-digit numbers)	Recognize 2-digits number (contains 10 of the 2-digits numbers)	Recognize 3-digits number (contains 10 of the 3-digits numbers)	Subtraction (Contains 4 subtraction question of 2-digits number that needs borrowing)	Division (Contains 2 problems of 3-digits numbers divided by - digit number with reminder)

According to the ASER guideline, girls did not need to attempt all the subtasks; both literacy, and numeracy assessments were administered in a manner similar to adaptive testing: the assessment began at task 'three', and then proceeded either up to task 'four' or down to task 'two', depending on whether the girl completed task 'three' to a satisfactory standard. This administration method meant that each girl completed only two or three tasks per domain. For instance, girls were first asked to read out a sentence. If girls could correctly read out the sentence, they proceeded to reading the story. If they could easily read the story without mistakes, they advanced to comprehension level. However, if girls could not read the sentence itself, they regressed to word identification, and those who could not even identify words,

reverted to letter identification. Similarly, for numeracy, first girls were asked to identify three-digit number, if they could identify three-digit number, they proceeded to subtraction and division thereafter. However, if the girls were stuck at identifying three-digit number itself, they reverted to identifying double-digit number. If they even failed to identify double-digit number, they reverted to identifying single-digit number. OOS girls' proficiency level would then be classified as Non learner, Emergent learner, Established learner and Proficient learner. OOS girls were categorized on the proficiency level that they achieved during the learning test. Proficiency level was determined on the basis of the sub-tasks which the student passed. The proficiency level was set in a manner that those who could not identify anything were classified as 'non-learners.' Those who could identify letters and words were categorized as 'Emergent learners.' Those who could read out sentence and story correctly were categorised as 'Established learners', and lastly those who reached comprehension level, and answered the questions correctly were categorized as 'Proficient learners. For instance, if a girl completed reading a story and progressed to comprehension level, but if she could not answer the comprehension question, she would be categorised as 'Established Learner', and not 'Proficient Learner'. To measure the overall achievement level, the completion of final subtask was taken as a benchmark. In case where no girls have completed the final subtask, the second last subtask has been taken as a benchmark.

## 4.2 Learning outcome

The overall literacy (Nepali) proficiency showed majority (52.25%) girls as 'non-learners', 41.50% as 'emergent learners', 2.5% OOS girls were categorized under 'established learners', and 3.75% were categorized under 'proficient learners.' This meant that 3.75 % of the girls reached the benchmark of reading comprehension which is the last subtask.

Similarly, in regards to achieving proficiency in English, the highest (71.25%) OOS girls were categorised as 'non-learners', followed by 28.25% as 'emergent learners. Very low percentage i.e 0.5% were categorised as 'established learners', and there were none who were 'proficient learners.' The fact that no girls reached proficient level meant that they could not complete the final subtask of reading comprehension. Therefore, for English language, established learner category is taken as a benchmark. 0.5% girls reached the benchmark of completing the second last subtask which is sentence level subtask.

Qualitative consultation with OOS girls, and CLC facilitator highlighted that the reason for girls not being able to complete the final subtask could be because of their inclination towards Nepali than English. When girls were asked what subject, they liked to study the most, almost all of the girls said Nepali because they could comprehend it well than other subjects. When the reason for this was explored further, girls mentioned that they wanted to learn Nepali to be able to read newspapers, understand instruction written in Nepali, and to be able to write their names in Nepali. This finding was supported by CLC facilitator from both the districts who said that girls spent more time asking questions related to Nepali than other subjects.

**TABLE 24: OVERALL PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF GIRLS IN LEARNING**

Literacy	Non-Learner	Emergent Learner	Established Learner	Proficient Learner
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Nepali	52.25% (209)	41.50% (166)	2.5% (10)	3.75% (15)
English	71.25% (285)	28.25% (113)	0.5% (2)	(0)

### Literacy Nepali

The breakdown of OOS girls by their characteristic sub-groups showed 19% girls between the age group (10-14) who had never been to school were ‘non-learners’ meaning that they were not able to complete even the letters or words task correctly. Following this, there were only 0.25% who were ‘established learners’ which meant that only these small percentage of girls were able to complete reading the story task correctly.

For girls who were dropped out, 11.50% were ‘non-learners’, 12.5% were ‘established learner’, and 1.5% were ‘proficient learners.’ The difference in percentage between girls’ school status with the learning proficiency level showed non-significant relationship for this particular subgroup (age10-14).

**TABLE 25: LITERACY PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF NEPALI**

Age Group	Sub Group	Non-Learner	Emergent Learner	Established Learner	Proficient Learner	Total
10-14 (n=252)	Never been to school	57.1% (76)	38.3% (51)	0.8% (1)	3.8% (5)	133
	Drop out	45.4% (54)	45.4% (54)	4.2% (5)	5.0% (6)	119
15-19 (n=148)	Never been to school	62.3% (48)	32.5% (25)	5.2% (4)	(0)	77
	Drop out	43.7% (31)	50.7% (36)	(0)	5.61% (4)	71
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
(n=400)	Muslim	42.7% (44)	46.6% (48)	4.9% (5)	5.8% (6)	103
	Non-Muslim	55.6% (165)	39.7% (118)	1.7% (5)	3.0% (9)	297

In regards to age group 15-19 who had never been to school, 12% were ‘non-learners’, 6.25% were ‘emergent learner’, and only 1% were ‘established learners.’ There were no girls who reached ‘proficient level’, meaning that none of the girls from this particular sub-group could complete the comprehension task. Similarly, among the girls who were drop out, 6.25% were ‘non-learner’, 9% were ‘emergent learner’ and 1% were ‘proficient learner.’ The relationship between school status of girls with the Nepali learning outcome showed significant relationship for this particular subgroup (15-19 years).

Data depicted that irrespective of their school status (either dropped out, or never been to school), the percentage of ‘non-learners’ or ‘proficient learners’ were almost the same. The fact that girls of both the age groups i.e 10-14 and 15-19, who had attended some level of schooling, had almost the same proficiency level as those girls who had never been to school. The reason for this could be because most of the girls (88.1%) had dropped out of school before even completing their primary education and since it had been more than three years that



majority of these girls had dropped out of school, there were high likely to have forgotten the things learnt in school.

In regards to ethnicity, 11% Muslim girls were not able to identify even letters, and were classified under ‘non-learner’. 12% were able to read words and sentence and were classified under ‘emergent learner’, 1.25% were able to read story and were classified under ‘established learner’ and only 1.5% were able to solve comprehension passage and were categorized as ‘proficient learner.’ Among non-Muslim girls, 41.25% were ‘non-learner’, 29.5% were ‘emergent learner’, 1.25% were ‘established learner,’ and 2.25% were ‘proficient learner’.

Therefore, data suggested that although ‘non-learners’ were higher for ‘non-Muslim’ ethnicity, but higher (29.5%) ‘emergent-learner’ suggested that non-Muslim girls were better in identifying letters and words than Muslim girls. This may be because Muslim girls were new to learning Nepali as a language.

### Skill gap analysis

In regards to literacy, girls who were able to answer two questions of the comprehension task correctly were labelled as proficient learners. There were only 3.8% girls who were proficient in Nepali. There were 6.3% girls who reached up till the story level, and fully read it without mistakes. These girls were categorised as established learners. 29.5% girls those who could read only letters and words without any mistakes were classified as emergent learner. Lastly, 42.25% girls, those who could not answer a single question fell under ‘non- learner’ category.

**TABLE 26: SKILL GAP ANALYSIS**

Sentence		Word identification	
Start of the question (sentence level)	7.8% (31)	Emergent Learner	10.5% (42)
Story		Letter identification	
Established learner	6.3% (25)	Emergent Learner	29.5% (118)
Comprehension			
Proficient Learner	3.8% (15)	Non learner	42.25% (169)

### Literacy English

English literacy test was perceived by girls to be difficult as compared to the Nepali test. The reason for this as highlighted by qualitative finding directed towards girls’ willingness to learn Nepali more than other subjects. This was because girls deemed Nepali to be relatively easier. It is quite understandable that girls found English to be difficult as their exposure to English language was limited. Even during the classes, CLC facilitator were not very confident in teaching English to girls because of facilitator’s lack of experience of teaching a subject which is completely new for the girls. CLC facilitators themselves agreed to the fact that English was difficult for girls to grasp as many OOS girls did not have any foundation in English at all, and facilitators explained things in Nepali more than in English due to which its demand was low among girls.

For girls between the age group 10-14, who had never been to school, data depicted that 74.4% were ‘non-learners’ meaning that they unable to answer any of the questions correctly.

Following this, there were only 25.6% girls who were ‘emergent learners’, which meant, these girls were able to complete letter and word tasks.

For girls who were dropped- out, 68.1% were ‘non-learners’, 31.1% were ‘emergent learner’, and 0.8% was ‘proficient learner’.

In regards to the age group 15-19 who had never been to school, none of the girls were ‘proficient learners.’ For the same age group (15-19), but for girls who were drop-outs, of the total, only 1.4% girl fell under ‘proficient’ category while the others, 63.4% were ‘non learner’, and 31.1% were ‘emergent learner’.

Thus, it can be inferred that for both of the sub-group based on age, girls who were school drop outs, were relatively better than those who had never been to school. However, there were no statistically significant relationship between school status and learning outcomes of girls in English.

**TABLE 27: LITERACY PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF ENGLISH**

Age Group	Sub Group	Non-Learner	Emergent-Learner	Established - Learner	Proficient - Learner	Total
10-14 (n=252)	Never been to school	74.4% (99)	25.6% (34)	(0)	(0)	133
	Drop out	68.1% (81)	31.1% (37)	(0)	0.8% (1)	119
15-19 (n=148)	Never been to school	77.9% (60)	22.1% (17)	(0)	(0)	77
	Drop out	63.4% (45)	35.2% (25)	(0)	1.4% (1)	71
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
(n=400)	Muslim	61.2% (63)	37.9% (39)	(0)	1% (1)	103
	Non-Muslim	74.7% (222)	24.9% (74)	(0)	0.3% (1)	297

Breakdown based on ethnicity showed that 61.2% Muslim girls were ‘non-learner’. 37.9% were able to read letters and words, hence they were ‘emergent learner’, and lastly only 1% were classified as ‘proficient learners.’ Among non-Muslim girls, 74.7% were ‘non-learner’, 24.9% were ‘emergent learners’, and 0.3% were proficient learner. The relation between ethnicity and, learning outcomes in English was statistically non-significant.

### Skill gap analysis

The English test had the highest (70.25%) girls who were ‘non-learners’ and only 0.5% girls were ‘proficient learners.’ This clearly showed the gap in learning level of girls. Moreover, the fact that there were low percentage (0.5%) of ‘established learners’ also revealed that girls were weaker in English than in Nepali.

**TABLE 28: SKILL GAP ANALYSIS**

Sentence		Word identification	
Start of the question	0.5% (2)	Emergent Learner	4.8% (19)
Story		Letter identification	
Established learner	0.5% (2)	Emergent Learner	23.5% (94)
Comprehension			

Proficient Learner	0.5% (2)	Non-learners	70.25% (281)
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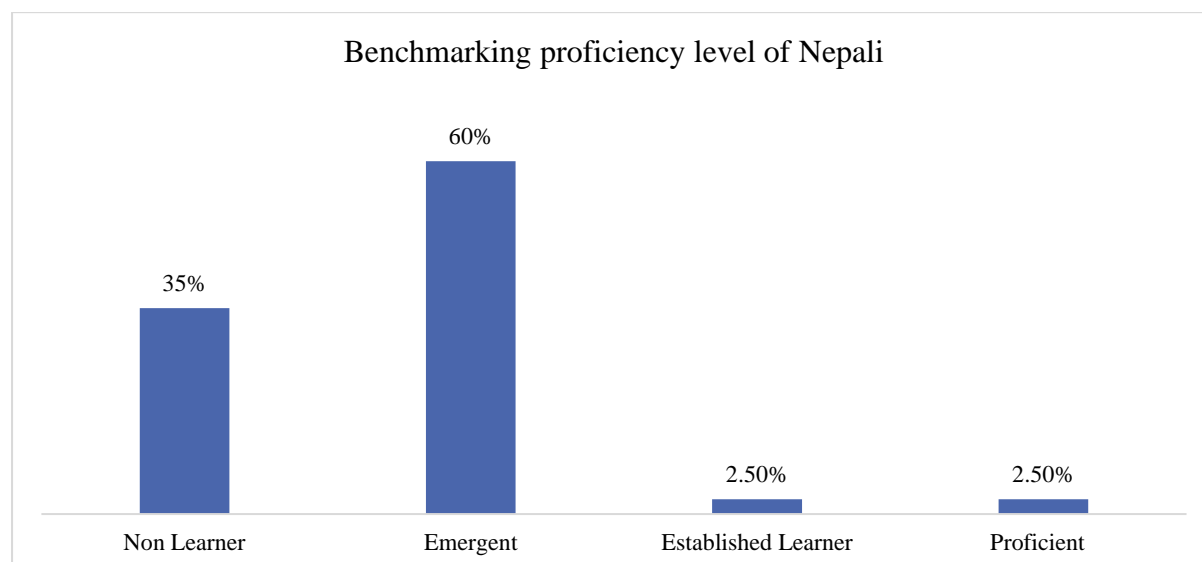
### 4.3 Target setting

Benchmarking was conducted as a part of quantitative data collection to collect information on girl's literacy level so as to set target that the beneficiaries were expected to attain.

Benchmarking was conducted in the schools the OOS girls are expected to enrol. Schools were selected purposively based on feasibility. A total of 80 students (20% of the total sample size) was taken, and proportionately divided across grade 1-4 for this purpose.

Overall, only 2.50% girls reach the benchmark of the reading comprehension which is the last and the final subtask for Nepali.

A more elaborate data depicted, out of total, 60% girls were categorized as 'emergent learner', this was followed by 35% girls who were non-learners, and 2.5% girls were established learner, and proficient learners. The fact that many students were classified under 'emergent learner' inferred that these students were able to identify letters and words.



**FIGURE 1: PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF NEPALI**

The breakdown of proficiency level based on in-school girls' grade showed that 50% of the girls who were non-learners belonged to grade one, followed by 28.6% girls who belonged to grade two, and 21.4% girls those who belonged to grade three. There were no girls from grade four who were categorised as non-learners.

**TABLE 29: PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF NEPALI DISAGGREGATED BASED ON GRADE**

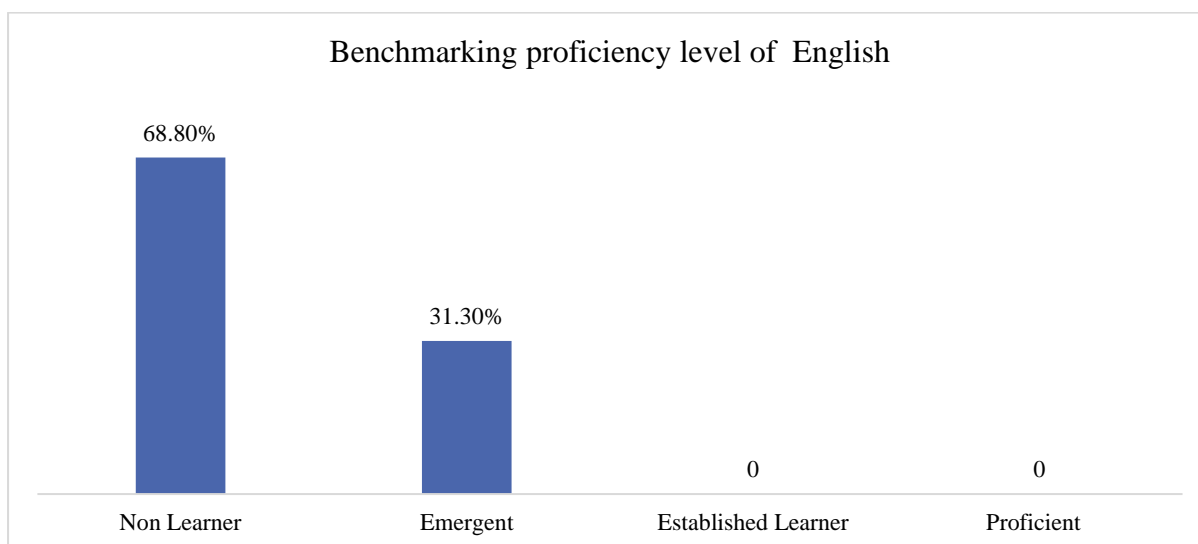
Grade	Nepali Learner			
	Non Learner (n=28)	Emergent (n=48)	Established Learner (n=2)	Proficient (n=2)
1.00	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
2.00	28.6%	20.8%	100.0%	0.0%

3.00	21.4%	29.2%	0.0%	0.0%
4.00	0.0%	37.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The data for in-school girls showed that, girls mostly identified letters, and words, hence, they were categorised as ‘emergent learners. For the OOS girls, the target for Nepali is to reach till story level, which will be categorised as ‘established learners.’

In English, 31.3% girls reached the benchmark of completing letter and words subtask.

Further analysis showed that majority (68.8%) girls were non-learners, followed by 31.3% girls categorized as emergent learners. There were none of the girls who were either established learners or proficient level learners. The fact that many students were non-learners meant that that percentage as high as 68.8% girls only attempted, but could not complete a single subtask. There were however 31.3% girls who could identify letters, and words and were categorised as ‘emergent learners.’



**FIGURE 2: PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF ENGLISH**

36.4% girls categorized as non-learners were in grade one, followed by 27.3% in grade 2, 23.6% girls categorized as non-learners belonged to grade three, and only 12.7% were from grade four. Out of the total girls who were emergent learners, 52% belonged to grade four, and 28% girls belonged to grade three. This showed that as classes increased, the proficiency level of the girls also increased.

**TABLE 30: PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF ENGLISH DISAGGREGATED BASED ON GRADES**

Grade	English Learning			
	Non Learner (n=55)	Emergent Learner (n=25)	Established Learner (n=0)	Proficient Learner (n=0)
1.00	36.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

2.00	27.3%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3.00	23.6%	28.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4.00	12.7%	52.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

For the OOS girls, project by the end of its intervention, targets to reach word level (emergent learner) for all the OOS girls but the fact that in-school girls could not even reach attain ‘emergent learner learning proficiency’ raises doubt on whether the OOS girls who have attended only few months of CLC classes would be able to attain the target set by the project. This finding also raises serious question on the quality of school education system. Therefore there is a scope for the project to work directly with the school to enhance the quality of school education.

### Numeracy overview

The numeracy proficiency level of OOS girls were measured in the same way, as it was measured for literacy. For numeracy, first, girls were asked to identify three-digit number, if they could identify three-digit number, they proceeded to subtraction and division thereafter. However, if the girls were stuck at identifying three-digit number itself, they reverted to identifying double-digit number. If they even failed to identify double-digit number, they reverted to identifying single-digit number. Overall, 0.5% school girls reached the benchmark of completing the final subtask.

### 4.3 Numeracy Outcome

In regards to numeracy, data showed 75.5 % girls as ‘non-learners’, 21.5% as ‘emergent learners’, and only 2.5%, and 0.5% as ‘established’, and ‘proficient learners’ respectively. The fact that there were 75.5% non-learners in numeracy, and only 52.25% in literacy (Table 24: overall proficiency level of girls in learning), meant that girls were better in the literacy than in numeracy. The reason for this was because girls could easily practice Nepali by simply talking, but did not get time to practice mathematics at home due to their busy schedule. CLC facilitators opined that girls’ barely got time to practice the things learnt in class at home due household chores. When girls were asked what they thought about mathematics, some girls said they found it difficult as they would forget everything the next day, while others said they enjoyed it. CLC facilitators shared that since most of the students did not even have basic knowledge of mathematics, a lot of time was invested in familiarizing students with just numbers rather than moving forward with addition or subtraction. They also suggested that that lack of teaching material made teaching slow, and if they could use teaching materials like pattern boxes, dices, and images girls would be quicker to understand the subject. Moreover, CLC facilitator were positive that if additional time is to be allocated to teach OOS girls’ mathematics, they would get better.

**TABLE 31: OVERALL NUMERACY PROFICIENCY**

Literacy/Numeracy and other	Non-Learner	Emergent Learner	Established Learner	Proficient Learner
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Mathematics	75.5% (302)	21.5% (86)	2.5% (10)	0.5% (2)
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The breakdown of the girls by their characteristic sub-group to measure numeracy showed that 36.1% girls between the age group (10-14) who had never been to school were categorised as ‘non-learners’; meaning that these girls were unable identify single- and double-digit number task correctly. Higher percentage (63.2%) girls between the age 10-14 and who had never been to school were categorised as ‘emergent learners.’ Following this, there were only 0.8% girls who were ‘established learners’, which meant that only lesser percentage of girls were able to subtraction level, and there were none of the girls from this subgroup who were proficient in mathematics, meaning that none of them could complete division problem.

For girls who dropped- out of school, 33.6% were ‘non-learners’, 58.8% were ‘emergent learners’, 5.9% were ‘established learners’ and 1.7% were ‘proficient learners.’

The fact that 1.7% girls who had dropped out of school could achieve the benchmark of completing the final subtask and were categorised as proficient learner showed that girls who had dropped out were comparatively better than those who had never been to school.

**TABLE 32: PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF GIRLS IN MATHEMATICS**

Age Group	Sub Group	Non-Learner	Emergent-Learner	Established - Learner	Proficient - Learner	Total
10-14 (n=252)	Never been to school	36.1% (48)	63.2% (84)	0.8% (1)	0%	133
	Drop out	33.6% (40)	58.8% (70)	5.9% (7)	1.7% (2)	119
15-19 (n=148)	Never been to school	44.2% (34)	55.8% (43)	(0)	(0)	77
	Drop out	38.8% (24)	63.4% (45)	2.8% (2)	(0)	71
Ethnicity						
(n=400)	Muslim	35.9% (37)	59.7% (61)	3.9% (4)	0.5% (1)	103
	Non-Muslim	36.7% (109)	60.5% (181)	2.5% (6)	0.5% (1)	297

In regards to age group (15-19), who had never been to school, 36.1% were ‘non-learners’, and 63.2% were ‘emergent learners.’ No girls from this subgroup progressed to the category of ‘established or proficient learners. For the dropped-out girls of the same age range, 38.8% were ‘non-learners’, 63.4% were ‘emergent learners’, and 2.8% were ‘established learners.’ The disaggregated data based on girls’ mathematics proficiency, and their school status showed non-significant relationship, meaning that it could have happened by chance.

In regards to girls of Muslim ethnicity, the percentage of Muslim as non-learners (35.9%) were lower than the percentage of non-Muslim (36.7%). However, Non-Muslim girls had higher percentage (60.5%) of ‘emergent learners’ than Muslim girls (59.7%). Although Non-Muslim girls had higher percentage of ‘non-learners’ than Muslim girls, in the end, only 0.5% girl was categorised as proficient for both Muslim and non-Muslim ethnicity, meaning that 0.5% girls from both Muslim and non-Muslim achieved the benchmarking of completing the final subtask.

The overall numeracy finding showed that there is a good chance of improvement for girls in numeracy if the facilitators invest more time in teaching, and if project provided the teaching materials on time. Since many girls attended CLC class with the aim of opening a tailoring shop or starting a business, they will need Mathematics skills. Hence it would be effective if CLC facilitators could link mathematics and its relevance to daily life to encourage girls.

### Skill gap analysis

Data depicted that 33% girls belonged to ‘non-learner’ category, meaning that they could not identify even a single number. There were only 0.5% girls who were proficient in mathematics. 3% girls were established learners. Most of the girls (50.5%) had proficiency level of as “emergent learner” in mathematics.

**TABLE 33: SKILL GAP ANALYSIS**

3 Digit Identification		Identified 1-digit number	
Start of the question	13% (52)	Emergent Learner	11.5% (46)
Subtraction		Identified 2-digit number	
Established learner	3% (12)	Emergent Learner	39% (156)
Division			
Proficient Learner	0.5% (2)	Non learner	33% (132)

### Target setting

Majority (66.3%) girls fell under the category of emergent learner. This meant that girls were able to identify single -digit, and double-digit numbers. There were 31.3% girls categorised as non-learners as these girls could not identify any numbers. 2.5% OOS girls were established learners, meaning that these girls were able to identify three- digit numbers, and solved subtraction problems.

**TABLE 34: BENCHMARKING PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN MATHEMATICS**

Proficiency level	Mathematics
Non-Learner	31.3% (25)
Emergent	66.3% (53)
Established Learner	2.5% (2)
Proficient	(0)
Total	100.0%

68% of the non-learners were from grade one and the lowest 4% were from grade three. For emergent learners, the highest (35.8%) were from grade three, followed by 30.2% girls from grade four. Project, by the end of its intervention, targets to reach proficient level, meaning that by the end of the CLC classes, girls would be able to solve subtraction problems but looking at the data of in-school girls, there were only 2.5% girls who were able to reach ‘established learner’ proficiency which implied that only these girls could solve subtraction

problem, and even with regular classes, most of the girls were still under the category of ‘emergent-learner’.

**TABLE 35: PROFICIENCY LEVEL DISAGGREGATED BASED ON GRADES**

Grade	Mathematics learner			
	Non-Learner (n=25)	Emergent (n=53)	Established Learner (n=2)	Proficient (n=0)
1.00	68.0%	5.7%	0.0%	0.0%
2.00	20.0%	28.3%	0.0%	0.0%
3.00	4.0%	35.8%	0.0%	0.0%
4.00	8.0%	30.2%	100.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%

The fact that in-school students could not do well in mathematics is not surprising given the context of Nepal where students’ learning outcome in mathematics is low nationally. A national review<sup>6</sup> of government investment in school sector development conducted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology showed that 72 percent of students in Grade five failed to achieve basic minimum learning in mathematics. Although there is no specific reason for poor performance in mathematics, but the major factors could be due to teachers with poor teaching ability, poor student attendance due to factors like household chores, poverty, restriction among other things.

#### 4.5 Barriers analysis for learning and numeracy

This section presents the proficiency level of girls on the basis of characteristics, and obstacles associated with the lowest levels of learning. Although ‘safety issue’ was one of the foremost barriers identified in the characteristics and barrier chapter (section 3.2 Barriers), no significant relationship could be established when it was cross tabulated between the learning proficiency. Hence, the analysis for safety issue on learning outcome has not been included in this section, only the analysis of ‘Household chores’ and ‘Poor household’ have been done, as these barriers showed significant relationship with the learning outcome.

##### Impact of household chores on learning outcome

Household activities was identified as one of the impediments to girls’ learning and performing well in their studies. Data showed that 53.9% who were ‘non-learners’ had to perform household chores most of the day, while only 2.7% ‘proficient learners’ had to work most of the day. Data showed that as proficiency level of Nepali increased, percentage of girls performing household chores decreased. The relationship of household chores with Nepali learning proficiency was statistically significant.

**TABLE 36: IMPACT OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES ON PROFICIENCY LEVEL**

Nepali

<sup>6</sup> <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/72-in-class-5-have-no-basic-math-55-can-t-write-a-nepali-sentence/>



Key characteristics	Non Learner	Emergent Learner	Established	Proficient Learner
Has to perform household chores most of the day (n=288) *	53.90%	41%	2.4%	2.7%
English				
Key characteristics	Non Learner	Emergent Learner	Established	Proficient Learner
Has to perform household chores most of the day (n=288)	75.1%	24.6%	0.0%	0.3%
Mathematics				
Key characteristics	No Learner	Emergent Learner	Established	Proficient Learner
Has to perform household chores most of the day (n=288)*	35.8%	62.5%	1.4%	0.3%

The trend for English is similar to that of Nepali. 75.1% ‘non-learners’ had to perform household chores most of the day, followed by 24.4% ‘emergent learners.’ There were only 0.3% ‘proficient learners’ who performed household chores. However, the relationship of household chores with English proficient was non-significant. In regards to mathematics, the percentage was slightly different as compared to Nepali and English. Those girls who were ‘emergent learners’ (62.5%) performed more household chores than those who were ‘non-learners’ (35.8%), and the relation between the two were significant.

Household chores undertaken by girls in their own homes is an integral part of girls’ growing up, but in most cases, these works transform to work-loads, which affects girls’ education.

During qualitative consultation, OOS girls revealed that due to household chores, they lacked time to revise the lessons learned in CLC. When girls were asked what kind of work they performed at home, they said, they performed all the work from cooking to feeding the goats.

One of the OOS girls from Rautahat shared, *“I wake up early in the morning, around 5:00 am, and my duties are to clean the house, feed the cattle, sorting the vegetables, doing the dishes among other things. I normally finish all activities at 8pm.”*

The above narratives demonstrated that, girls overworked at home, which gave them very little time to study. Boys on the other hand, did not have anything in specific. When parents were inquired about boys’ work at home, parents did not have any answer. Although some of the parents objected that no discrimination between boys, and girls existed in relation to household chores, other parents opined that it was mandatory for girls to work in the kitchen, while the boys may help when they felt like it.

Although revising and studying at home enhances learning, from the above findings it can conclusively be said that girls were behind in education due to household chores. This clearly supports the low proficiency level in literacy and numeracy.

### Impact of poverty on learning outcome

Data depicted that 52.2% of the girls from poor household were ‘non-learners’ in Nepali, followed by 42.7% as ‘emergent-learners’. There were only 1.7%, and 3.4% OOS girls categorized as ‘established learners,’ and ‘proficient learners’ respectively belonged to poor household. To measure OOS girl’s proficiency in English, majority (73.4%) ‘non-learners’ belonged to poor household, and no one from proficient level were from the poor household.

Similarly for mathematics, 37.9% ‘non-learners’ belonged to poor household and there were very few 0.7% OOS girls who were at proficient level belonged to the poor household.

It can thus be inferred from the data that those who belonged to poor household were mostly ‘non-learners,’ meaning that they were unable to answer any of the questions. The relationship between poor household and all the three subjects also showed statistically significant result. This meant that girls from poor household were weaker in studies. Qualitative finding also suggested that girls from low-income families would not receive the encouragement to learn due to lack of supervision from parents, and their home environment. Education officer of Bara shared that, girls who were raised in poverty were much less likely to have their crucial needs met as a result their motivation to study was inevitably less as these girls often were at home looking after their younger siblings, and doing other domestic work while their caregivers worked long hours.

**TABLE 37: IMPACT OF POVERTY ON PROFICIENCY LEVEL**

Nepali				
Key characteristics	Non Learner (n=209)	Emergent Learner (n=166)	Established (n=10)	Proficient Learner (n=15)
Poor household (n=287)	52.2%	42.7%	1.7%	3.4%
English				
Key characteristics	Non Learner (n=285)	Emergent Learner (N=113)	Established (n=0)	Proficient Learner
Poor household	73.4%	25.9%	0.7%	0%
Mathematics				
Key characteristics	No Learner	Emergent Learner	Established	Proficient Learner
Poor household(n=287)	37.9%	60.1%	1.4%	0.7%

### Functional limitation analysis for learning outcome

There were a total of 30% respondents with at least one or more than one functional limitation across all the domains of disability (seeing, hearing, walking, self-care, communication, learning and remembering, behaviour change, and mental health).

Data depicted that out of total, 56.7% OOS girls with functional limitation were categorised as ‘non-learners’ for Nepali subject, this was followed by 36.7% as ‘emergent learners.’ There

still were 2.5% OOS girls who were ‘established learners’, and 4.2% OOS girls were ‘proficient learners’. In regards to English subject, 73.3% girls having at least one or more than one functional limitation fell under ‘non-learner’ category, while only 1.7% fell under the category of ‘proficient learner’. Lastly, for mathematics, the highest 56.7% OOS girls with functional limitation were ‘emergent learner’ and there were only 39.2% OOS girls as ‘non learners’.

It can therefore be inferred that OOS girls with functional limitations found numeracy test comparatively easier than the other two tests because the percentage of ‘non-learners’ were lower, and ‘emergent learners’ were the highest for mathematics than for other subjects. However, data also showed no significant relationship between functional limitation and learning outcomes.

**TABLE 38: IMPACT OF FUNCTIONAL LIMITATION ON LEARNING PROFICIENCY LEVEL**

Functional limitation (n=120)			
Nepali			
Non Learner (n=209)	Emergent (n=166)	Established (n=10)	Proficient (n=15)
56.7%	36.7%	2.5%	4.2%
English			
Non Learner (n=285)	Emergent (n=113)	Established (0)	Proficient (n=2)
73.3%	25.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Mathematics			
Non Learner (n=146)	Emergent (n=242)	Established (n=10)	Proficient (n=2)
39.2%	56.7%	3.3%	0.8%

## 5. Transition Outcome

Transition in LNGB is best understood in terms of the pathways that, OOS girls follow. These pathways map different points to which the girls could move overtime during the duration of the project. The six-month CLC classes run by the project is aimed to increase the literacy level of girls so that, by the end of the class, OOS girls enrol into formal schooling. The girls who do not follow the learning track of intervention after CLC classes will be eligible for acquiring vocational skills.

Both the qualitative, as well as quantitative tools, were used to explore these pathways. While the household and girls survey with parents of transition cohort girls generated information on the status of transition rates, the qualitative consultations explored the enablers and barriers to transition. The baseline value of transition is 0 for baseline because no OOS girls have yet transitioned into their respective pathways. A detailed transition pathway is presented in the table below.

**TABLE 39:TRANSITION PATHWAY DEFINED BY PROJECT**

Primary Beneficiary sub-group	Possible transition pathway	Aim for girls' transition
Younger (10-14) unmarried OOS adolescents who have dropped out of school less than a year ago	Formal school reenrolment to the grade corresponding to their literacy level post participation  Safe employment, as allowed by the Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act 2000 (less than or equal to 14 years) and Labor Law (above 14 years)	Enrols into formal school, or starts safe employment or engages in TVETs as per their life plans
Younger (10-14) married OOS adolescents who are mothers	Informal literacy enrolment, informal vocational training  Safe employment, as allowed by the Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act 2000	Enrols into informal literacy classes, or starts safe employment or engages in TVETs as per their life plans
Older (15-19) married OOS adolescents without children	Formal school reenrolment to the grade corresponding to their literacy level post participation, informal literacy enrolment, informal vocational training  Safe employment, as allowed by the Labor Law 2017	Enrols into informal literacy classes, or starts safe employment or engages in TVETs as per their life plans
Older (15-19) married OOS adolescents who are mothers	Informal literacy enrolment, informal vocational training  Safe employment, as allowed by the Labor Law 2017	Enrols into informal literacy classes, or starts safe employment or engages in TVETs as per their life plans
Married OOS adolescents who still live in their natal family waiting for Gauna ceremony	Formal school reenrolment to the grade corresponding to their literacy level post participation, informal literacy enrolment, informal vocational training.  Safe employment, as allowed by the Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act 2000 (less than or equal to 14 years) and Labor Law (above 14 years)	Enrols into informal literacy classes, or starts safe employment or engages in TVETs as per their life plans

To understand the general transition further, girls were asked what they were involved in, in the previous year. 92% girls said they were staying at home, 1.8% said they were busy looking after new born child, and 6.3% said they were going to school. This was followed by another question which asked the girls regarding their current situation, majority (81.5%) girls said that, they were involved in non-formal education and 1.8% said they were involved in training. During qualitative consultation when girls were asked what non-formal education, and training referred to, they mentioned that, it referred to CLC class.

A detailed analysis was done to gauge the difference in regards to the age, and ethnicity of girls. Data showed 38.9% girls between the group 10-14 had never been to school, and 61.1% girls of the same age group were drop outs. Similarly, for age group 15-19, 49,3% had never been to school, while 50.7% had dropped out of school.

**TABLE 40:TRANSITION STATUS BASED ON AGE AND ETHNICITY**

	Baseline			
	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	Muslim (n=103)	Non-Muslim (n=297)
Never been to school	38.9 %	49.3%	44.7%	42.1%

Been to school, but dropped out	61.1%	50.7%	55.3%	57.9%
Currently enrolled in formal school	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Currently employed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

For Muslim ethnicity, data suggested, the percentage of Muslim girls who had dropped out of school were higher than those who had never been to school. Among 103 Muslim girls, 55.3% were drop outs whereas 44.7% never went to school. For the non-Muslim girls as well, the trend was no different. Higher percentage (57.9%) were school dropped out, while 42.1% had never been to school. It can thus be inferred from the data that across all age groups and ethnicity, girls dropping out of schools was higher than those who had not attended school at all.

Transition pathway for respondents of different sub-groups were different. While some wanted to reenrol in school, while others wanted to join vocational class. Qualitative findings showed, the girls who belonged to the age-group 10-14 aspired to enrol in school, while those who belonged to age group 15-19 OOS girls were not keen on re-enrolment, rather, they wanted to join vocational class.

*“In just two months I have learned to write my name, learned numbers and, also learned to say thank you; if I get the opportunity to go to school, I will learn even more, but I will only be able to go to school if it nearby and easy to commute.”*

*– OOS girl, Bara*

To begin with, during qualitative consultation it was found that girls of age-group 10-14 irrespective of their school status showed interest in enrolling into formal school. These girls said that the primary reason they had dropped out of school, or did not get the opportunity to join school at all, in the first place, was due to poverty and household chores. But now since they were involved in CLC, they were hopeful that they would get the opportunity to go to school. All girls in Bara and Rauthahat district unanimously said that main reason they joined CLC was to

learn something new which would help them in the future while joining school. During FGD few girls from one of the CLCs of Bara district revealed that girls were interested to go to school provided that their parents allow them. Similar information was generated from Rautahat district where girls showed interest in enrolling into school, but got scared of the fact that their parents would not allow them to do so. This finding was verified by CLC facilitators of both Bara and Rautahat district. Both of these facilitators agreed that the ultimate decision whether or not girls should be enrolled in school was decided by parents, and not girls.

Girls between the age group (15-19) showed little interest in enrolling in formal education. The reasons were because they were already married, and some of them even had children. Findings suggested that most of the girls of this age group deemed school to be an added burden to household chores, because going to school meant investing a lot of time. Girls from Bara district shared that they mostly get so occupied with household work that it becomes difficult

to even attend CLC sometimes. In addition to this, they thought going to school would be an embarrassment as they would be teased or bullied for being married. In such a case, married girl specially of age 15-19 years see no possibility of joining school at all. Girls rather preferred to join vocational class, mainly tailoring because this was something they could do at home itself. During qualitative consultation girls from Rautahat district shared that if they chose tailoring, they could finish all their household work, and invest the remaining time to stitch clothes for the family. Similar view was shared by girls from Bara district.

The motivation for Muslim girls to join CLC was to learn Nepali and to learn new skills. These girls did not want to enrol in formal education, but instead wanted to be literate enough to understand Nepali scriptures so that they could read signboards or other kind of information. In addition to this, some of the Muslim girls wanted to learn tailoring so that they could stitch their own clothes. They said that if they learn tailoring, they would stitch clothes for the family which would decrease their household expenses. From the finding it can be inferred that Muslim OOS preferred to join vocational training so that they could stitch their own clothes and reduce household annual expense. These girls did not aim to open up shops or start something on their own, because of little to no idea regarding opportunities that might be available for them after completing vocational training

*“It is usually my mother in-law who buys my clothes and it rarely fits me, I want to be able to stitch my own clothes.”*

*– OOS girl, Katariya, Rautahat*

Although girls aspired to follow a certain pathway chosen for themselves, the decision on whether or not they would transition would entirely depend on their parents. Hence, the proposed pathways for enrolling girls in school or enrolling in certain business appeared to be a challenge given the conservative mindset of parents. CLC facilitators from both the districts agreed to this and said that irrespective of girls’ wishes, it is either parents, or husbands who decided everything for girls.

Some parents viewed school as a waste of time, because ultimately, girls would have to stay at home taking care of the family. In addition to this, parents feared girls’ interaction with unknown boys, which might compromise their reputation. One of the parents of Rautahat district, cited an instance where one of his neighbour’s daughters eloped with a school teacher. He further added that such incidents were frequent in the community which scares most of the parents, and therefore parents are apprehensive in sending their daughters to school. However, there were few parents who were willing to enrol their daughters to school provided that the project covered the expenses. Moreover, parents thought that girls should only go to school until the time they were married.

In regards to girls starting their own business, parents said they would support with a caveat that their business would not disturb the household chores. Also, because vocational work such

*“I would allow my daughters-in-law enrol for vocational training so that she could support in earning income for the family. “*

*- OOS girls’ parents, Rautahat.*

as tailoring was an acceptable profession for the females in the community, parents did not disapprove of this pathway. Parents were in-fact hopeful that vocational training such as tailoring would develop girls’ skill which would help her in the future. Some parents revealed vocational training to be the motivation for sending their daughters/daughter in law to CLC. This was because if girls had certain kind of skill, it would act as a selling point to negotiate on the dowry amount.

The transition pathway for girls of two different sub-groups i.e 10-14 and 15-19 were different. For instance, girls aged 10-14, were more interested in enrolling in formal education provided that their parents agreed to this. As all the girls between the age group 10-14 were unmarried, they still had the possibility to enrol in school as these girls did not have many responsibility unlike those girls who were married. Girls who belonged to age group 15-19, did not show interest in enrolling in formal education as they thought it was time-consuming; they rather wanted to run their own business from home than going to school. Even for Muslim girls, their pathway was learning tailoring so that they could stich their own clothes, all they wanted to do was to be literate enough to understand Nepali scriptures to be capable of reading signboards or other papers. The transition pathway was different for these three different groups; therefore, the project should consider subgroup-specific intervention for the transition.

## 5.1 Household characteristics analysis of the transition outcome

The household characteristics analysis of the transition outcome shown below revealed that 65.8% girls whose family income was agriculture were school drop outs, and, 59.5% girls had never been to school. For household whose source of income was daily wages, 34.3% had never been to school and 32.1% were dropped out. For this characteristic, there was not much difference between girls who had dropped out of school, and those who had never been to school.

**TABLE 41: TRANSITION STATUS BASED ON HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS**

	Never been to school (n=210)	Dropped out (n=190)
<b>Source of household income</b>		
Agriculture	59.5%	65.8%
Livestock rearing	1.4%	0.5%
Job/Services	0.5%	0.0%
Business	0.0%	0.0%
Daily wage	34.3%	32.1%

Foreign employment	4.3%	1.6%
<b>Household characteristics</b>		
Girls with children	15.2%	11.6%
Head of household has no/ limited education	92.9%	93.7%
Households having 5 or more than 5 members	83.3%	82.6%
<b>Poverty</b>		
Poor household	75.2%	73.3%

In regards to household characteristics, among those girls who had children, 15.2% had never been to school, and 11.6% had dropped out. Girls having children suggests that these girls were married. Hence, the transition pathway for married girls as discussed above was opting for vocational training. Data showed not much difference which would require comparison between those who had been to school, and those who had dropped out of school.

Poor household was defined by categorizing five factors i.e household having no land, roof made out of hay, unable to meet basic need, gone hungry to sleep many days, and household not having enough cash. From these households, there were 75.2% girls who had never been to school and 73.3% girls who were dropped out. Even for this characteristic, there were not much difference in the status of girls who dropped out and those who had never been to school hence no comparative analysis would be required.

## 5.2 Reflection of transition outcome

Based on the findings discussed above, EE foresees few challenges in sustainably supporting transition of girls. OOS girls who have been envisioned transition to school are attending CLC classes for only 6 months, and these classes only operate for 3-4 hours in a day. In a short period of 6 months, with only 3-4 hours of classes a day, these girls have to learn all the things required for enrolling in school. This appears to be a challenge for the girls as well as the project because majority of OOS girls are categorised as ‘non-learners’ at this stage. It is less likely that in the next few months these girls would be able to learn everything envisioned by the project for their smooth school transition. Even if girls do learn and be able grasp Nepali and Mathematics- as more time is invested on teaching these two subjects- it would be difficult for them to learn English as it is a completely new subject for most of them.

In addition to this, the project is yet to identify the schools for its intervention which the girls are likely to enrol. This delay might ultimately lead to stall in school enrolment and girls might lose interest altogether. Therefore, these challenges might hinder girls’ enrolment in school.

The barrier section in the report highlighted the social norms around sending girls to school which involved factors like negative parental attitude towards education, fear of violence, household chores among many others. In this context, the project would require continuous engagement with parents to ensure that girls are sent to school. One of the primary reasons for school drop-out is because the schools were located too far. Hence, it would be a good idea if the project could lobby with the local government to provide some kind of transportation facility to these girls to assure parents the safety of girls, and so that lesser time is consumed in



commuting. The transition of girls to schools seems unlikely without change in the parental attitude.

In regards to skill and employment, the girls have only expressed interest in tailoring and embroidery. All of the beneficiary girls taking tailoring training would imply more “supply” than “demand” in the market which is already small in size. Parents are reluctant to send the girls too far from home to acquire skills or jobs. It is essential that the project maps the local market well while providing training to ensure that the training is effective and adds value to the livelihood of girls.

The project is currently working with adolescent group of girls among which most girls are unmarried. Given the context of the intervention area, there is high chance that some of these girls might be married and move to other village and discontinue school or skill training. Although the project has activities around creating awareness among parents, it might be difficult to completely eliminate the deep-rooted practice of early marriage. Hence, the project needs to take this into consideration possible actions while designing the interventions for sustainable transition.

## **6. Sustainability Outcome**

Sustainability of the project is measured at three levels i.e., at community level, school level and lastly, at system level. The overall sustainability level score in the baseline was 2 out of 12. The target for the endline is achieve at least 50% of the sustainability indicators.

Community level indicators included percentage of key family members (Husband, parents/in-laws) of OOS adolescent girls who demonstrated their support in their life plan, and percentage of community members who feel it is harmful for a girl to get married below the legal age. The activities of the project were to create awareness among family members regarding delay in marriage, and supporting girls by helping in household chores, and also in their transition pathway. Both of the indicators were measured through quantitative survey as well as through qualitative consultation. The baseline data showed that project was yet to conduct its community level activities.

In regards to school level sustainability indicator, it aims to measure gender sensitive school sustainability index, and percentage of school support committees scoring acceptable or above in sustainability assessment. All the activities are focused on school level. For this the project had to identify schools where the OOS girls are likely to be transitioned and then gender transformative workshop would be conducted with the teachers as well as students to create a conducive environment for OOS girls. To measure that a sustainable change at the school level, the external evaluator aimed to use barefoot assessment to observe classroom activities of teachers, observe the overall infrastructure of school (well-managed latrines, sanitary pad disposal, and complaint boxes among others) and conduct scorecard assessment with the headteachers. Furthermore, the external evaluator also planned to conduct KIIs with head teachers, school management committee and parents’ teachers’ association. However, due to the delay in the project’s intervention, this indicator was not captured during the baseline.

System level indicator captured percentage of government officials who can demonstrate their support to delayed marriage and alternative roles of girls and Local government incorporating some or all components of Aarambha project into local plan. Both the system level indicators were measured through qualitative consultation. Finding showed that project had not yet coordinated with the local government to implement its planned activities.

All three sustainability indicators were measured based on the scorecard approach whereby each achieved target was scored on the scale of 0- 4. Fully achieved target was scored 4, and unachieved target was scored 0. Once the total score was generated, it was divided by 12 (score 2 for each indicator) to generate the baseline value.

**TABLE 42: SCORECARD FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

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

**TABLE 43: SUSTAINABILITY INDICATOR**

Indicator	Community Level
<b>Community level indicator I:</b> Key family members (Husband, parents/in-laws) of M-OOS girls who demonstrate their support to their life plan	Community level indicator was measured at three level: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to join formal school: 55.6% of the family members said they would allow their daughters-in-law to join formal school</li> <li>Support to join training: 86.8% parents would allow to join trainings</li> <li>Support to work: 62.3% parents would allow them to work.</li> </ol> Although the quantitative finding paints a positive picture regarding parental support, qualitative finding suggested that parents are not open to the idea of girls going to schools, or joining training. A score of 1 out of 2 is given for this indicator because parental support is still lacking.
<b>Community Level Indicator II:</b> Indicator 2: % of community members who feel it is harmful for a girl to get married below the legal age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perception that girls under 15 should be married: 84.5%</li> <li>Perception that girls between 16-18 must be married: 70%</li> </ol> The perception of parents towards early marriage is still conservative hence, the score for this indicator is 0 out of 2.
<b>Total Community level sustainability Score (0-4)</b>	1
<b>School Level Sustainability Indicators</b>	
<b>School Level Indicator I:</b> Gender sensitive school sustainability index	No assessment was done during baseline due to delay in intervention hence the score is 0 out of 2

<b>School Level Indicator 2:</b> % of school support committees scoring acceptable or above in sustainability assessment	No assessment was done during baseline due to delay in intervention, hence the score is 0 out of 2.
<b>Total in School Level Sustainability Score (0-4)</b>	0
<b>System Level Sustainability Indicator</b>	
Indicator 3: % of government officials who can demonstrate their support to delayed marriage and alternative roles of girls	The KII with municipal officials at all the municipality indicated that they have not been actively engage in reducing child marriage or conducting campaigns due to COVID-19 because no evidence was gathered about project coordinating with the local government, the score for this indicator is 0, hence the score is 0 out of 2
Indicator 3.2: Local government incorporating some or all components of Aarambha project into local plan.	During the qualitative consultation with municipal officials CLC classes was appreciated and it was shared that CLC has had a positive impact on the community and there are chances the government might adapt the CLC model for teaching. Therefore, due to the positive impact of CLC, this indicator is scored 1 out of 2.
<b>Total system level sustainability score (0-4)</b>	1
<b>Total sustainability Score (0-4, average of the three level scores)</b>	<b>2 (0.67)</b>

The three sustainability components i.e Community, School, and System has two indicators each which has already been discussed in detail above. The summary of the scores for each of the indicators is given in the table below.

**TABLE 44:SUMMARY OF SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS' SCORING**

	Community Level	School Level	System Level
Indicator 1	0	0	0
Indicator 2	1	0	1
<b>Total score out of 4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

In the baseline, the score achieved by the project in sustainability outcome was 2 out of 12 which is (16.67%) in baseline.

*Sustainability on Community level:* PIN designed activities for community members to ensure continuation of these activities even after the project ends. This objective of this indicator is to create awareness among community members on the issue of early marriage and increase the support of parents towards girls' life plans. This is one of the most important indicators given the conservative environment girls live in. Internalized social norms and culture play a part in influencing girl's movement because some of the cultural beliefs do not support the idea of women going out of their homes to fend for their families or for training/education. This is viewed as a man's role, and women who do not adhere to this are ostracized in the community. Lots of effort has been put in to lower early marriage in the community, but there have been cases as generated by qualitative finding in both Bara and Rautahat that parents have bribed

local leaders to not complain about their daughters getting married early. In both the district there have been cases of parents increasing the age of girls in the citizenship, so that they can get them married off at an early age. Such deep-rooted values are difficult to be changed or altered by conducting a one-off activity. Therefore, a door-to-door campaign, along with awareness campaigns to be conducted on a regular basis is highly recommended.

*Sustainability on School level:* Enrolling into formal education is one of the transition pathways for girls. Therefore, PIN designed an intervention for creating an enabling environment for girls in schools. This will be done through establishing committees like SMC, PTA, and Gender focal points among others, who will have a defined role to ensure gender sensitivity. In addition, schools will also conduct a gender gap assessment and make a report to identify the issues. Schools will be trained on making SIP and ensuring GESI is incorporated in the SIP. However, due to delay in the project, these activities are yet to be rolled out.

The fact that CLC classes will be over by July, and girls will be ready to transition to schools raises a question to the project there will be a delay in the transition of girls who wish to enrol in school. Given the sensitive context of the Terai, it is highly likely that girls who are encouraged now to enrol in school, might not be interested later on if the transition delays. Therefore, the project should carefully consider how they would transition girls.

#### *Sustainability of System-level*

The project designed this indicator ensuring that they will work in -line with the government in discussions and creating awareness surrounding child marriage. The project's activity was to keep track of the number of campaigns conducted by the government, but Education officers of both the districts shared that they were not communicated about conducting campaigns or activities or keeping any kind of record of the activities or campaign conducted to reduce child marriage, therefore no specific data could be gathered to capture this indicator. Qualitative consultation with education officer and other municipality officials of both Rautahat and Bara district revealed that due to the pressure of managing COVID-19 cases, and owing to precautionary measures of not crowding, the government has not been able to conduct campaigns or gatherings. Although the government has been active in the 'beti bachau, beti padau' campaign to motivate parents and girls to delay marriage, this campaign cannot be used to measure the indicator. The sustainability indicator suggests that government is to support in delaying marriage but at this point it is unclear whether the project wanted to support the government to conduct campaigns or the project would simply keep track of the campaigns conducted by the government. Hence, it is suggested to rephrase the indicator.

The second indicator to ensure system level sustainability captures the effort of local government incorporating some or all components of Aarambha project into local plan, since this was the baseline, it is uncertain at the moment whether or not the government would incorporate any of PIN's components.

## **7. Key Intermediate Outcome Findings**

The project has identified key intermediate outcomes in its ToC to capture improved learning and transition of girls, and sustainability of the project activities. Such key outcomes are OOS

girls' improved attendance, OOS girls increased cognitive and non-cognitive skills, School's initiative to create environments for OOS girls' learning and communities and authorities' positive social norms that encourages delayed marriage and realisation of OOS girls' life plans. Each of these intermediate outcomes have been measured using mixed method approach which has been discussed in the section below.

## 7.1 Attendance

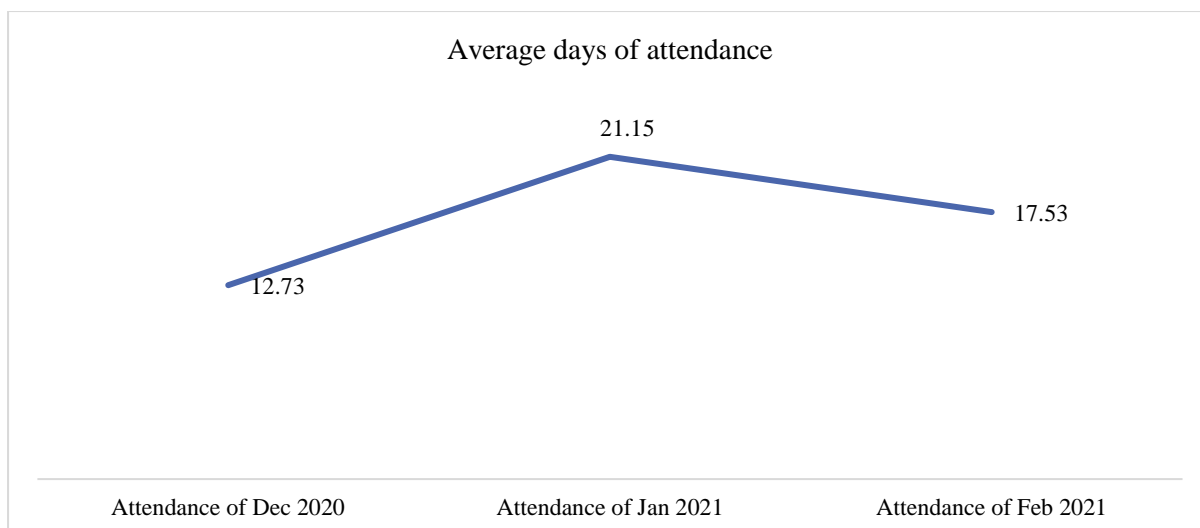
### Intermediate Outcome Indicator 1.1: OOS adolescent girls who have attended literacy and numeracy sessions

Girls' attendance was tracked to capture OOS girls' learning status. When the baseline evaluation was carried out, classes had just begun, therefore the baseline only captured data from the time of commencement of CLC classes till the time of the baseline evaluation. An aggregated attendance record of each CLC was provided by the project team for the analysis which included the attendance not just for the sampled girls, but for all girls enrolled in CLCs.

**TABLE 45: INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME: ATTENDANCE**

IO	IO indicator	BL	EL Target	Target achieved? (Y/N)
Married out of school (M-OOS) adolescent girls' improved attendance	% of OOS adolescent girls who have attended 70% or more literacy and numeracy sessions	65.9%	70%	No

The overall attendance rate for the period of three months was 65.9%. Looking closely at the data, during the starting phase of CLC i.e December, only 0.08% girls had 70% or more attendance, and the average attendance days for the same month was only 12.73 days. The reason for low attendance in the first month was because when classes began in December, OOS girls were not sure how they would fit a new schedule into their life. Since they were not habituated going out of the house regularly, it took some time for them to adjust to the new change. It was a joint effort from the CLC facilitators and social mobilizers who had to request them to attend the classes. CLC facilitator of Bara shared, *"I went to all the households nearby to motivate girls to attend CLC."* Social mobilizer of Bara also shared *"girls came along with their guardian to the CLC in their initial days. Guardian stayed until the classes were over. It was only after a month's time when guardian felt safe that they let girls come alone."* When girls got habituated the attendance increased, in January the average attendance days increased by double (21.15 days). However, in February the attendance again declined to 17.53 days. The reason for this decline was identified to be due to festivals where they were occupied doing most of the household chores. At times, when there were guests at home or during the time when the workload was high, parents/mother-in-law would order OOS girls not to attend the CLC. Apart from these, most of the married girls also visited their maternal house for the festival and did not return back for a longer time due to which they skipped their classes.



**FIGURE 3: AVERAGE DAYS OF ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is imperative for better learning and performance, but the fact that OOS girls still are expected to perform household chores, and they have a greater responsibility of taking care of the family than self-improvement, increases the chance of absenteeism which directly affects their learning. This was clearly visible from the ASER test where majority of the girls were categorised as ‘non learners’ in both numeracy and literacy. In addition to this, since the overall duration of CLC classes for Cohort II is only 6 months, and the attendance for three months is 65.9% during the baseline suggests that girls will need to retain its attendance to learn as much as they are envisioned to learn. Although a percentage of 65.9% may seem high at the baseline, but this percentage would most likely go down in the months to come due to absenteeism because of the upcoming festivals and harvesting season.

It is highly important that girls attend all the classes for better learning. If girls do not meet their learning target, it would be challenging for the project to enrol them in formal education. Therefore, it is suggested that the project focus more on direct consultation with parents to encourage girls to attend CLC classes regularly.

## **7.2 M-OOS adolescent girls have acquired cognitive and non-cognitive skills to develop and pursue life plan**

This domain captures girls’ ability on making decisions and, girls’ knowledge, attitude, and practice pertaining to different agencies like financial literacy, family planning, and self-efficacy.

### **7.2.1 Intermediate Outcome Indicator 2.1: Household Decision-Making**

Household decision-making indicator generated information on OOS girl’s decision-making capacity. This indicator was captured both quantitatively and qualitatively. The indicator value for the baseline was 37.3%.

**TABLE 46: INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME: HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING INDEX**

IO indicator	Measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	EL target	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Household decision making index	Quantitative and qualitative	FDM	37.3%	+10	Y

Data on Household decision making showed that, in deciding whether or not to take the girl to hospital if she falls ill, 95.3% said they made joint decisions, along with the whole family involved. 4.8% girls said only their husband decided it, and none of the girls made her own decision. Even in matters such as going to the hospital, girls did not have their opinion. An instance was cited by a local leader of Bara district, where a girl had to wait for 3 hours before she was taken to the hospital for her delivery because her husband had gone to the market, and there was nobody to decide on his behalf.

Similarly, in regards to buying household necessities like food, 51.8% girls reported that buying food and their household necessities were decided by other family members, 43% said everyone in the family decided it. 5.3% said that only their husband made decisions, and there were none of the girls who could make autonomous decision. When girls were asked about their views on the same during qualitative consultation, girls were of the view that even for smallest decision such as which utensils to use while cooking, also required permission from the mother-in-law.

In regards to going out of the house to meet friends or relative, 50.3% respondents said that other family members in the household made decisions for her. 41.8% reported that they needed permission from the whole family and they decided it. 8% said that only husbands made decisions for her and again, there were none of the girls had independence in decision making their own decisions. The restricted freedom of movement indicates patriarchy in forms of decision making, and dominance over girls. Such constraint limit girls' access to productive resources like information, and education which is a necessity for empowerment.

Girls in general had less power and autonomy in making decisions. During qualitative evaluation it was revealed that household decisions were often made by the eldest male member of the family. In general, older household members dominated household decisions as they acted supervisor for their age and knowledge.

Although major decisions like overall household management were done by male members, women, especially mother-in-law made decisions relating to domestic work. Older women (especially mothers-in-law) dominated younger female household members. For example, a daughter-in-law was likely to have considerably limited autonomy in the family. This was verified by one of OOS girls in Bara, who said that despite her willingness to enrol in school, her mother-in-law forced her to quit school. In another instance, one of the OOS girls from

Rautahat shared that, she is quite irregular in attending CLC class because of her grandmother’s objection.

Qualitative finding suggested that age and family structure were strongly associated with decision making autonomy of women. Older women were more likely to have better decision-making autonomy than a newly married daughter-in-law. Daughter-in-law has less decision-making power in the household, and is expected to perform only household duties under the supervision of her mother-in-law who is the primary decision maker.

Qualitative finding also revealed that OOS girls had to perform greater part of domestic work, and were intensely involved with the maintenance of the household. The deep-rooted social norm that defined the role of girl as someone who does household chores underpin and reinforce the multiple deprivations that many girls experience. For instance, OOS girls’ parents in Bara opined that the role of the girls was to obey what parents asked them to without any question because what elders decided was always correct. Similarly, parents in Rautahat shared the same thought. They believed that asking daughters or daughter-in-law for advice would not add value as they are too young to think correctly.

**TABLE 47: HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING CAPACITY**

	Treatment			
	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	Muslim (n=103)	Non-Muslim (n=297)
Good HDM capacity	39.7%	33.1%	41.7%	35.7%
Moderate HDM capacity	8.7%	11.5%	11.7%	9.1%
Poor HDM Capacity	51.6%	55.4%	46.6%	52.2%
Total	100%	100%	100.0%	100.0%

Data on decision making showed that overall, 53% girls fell under girls having ‘poor household making capacity’. Disaggregated based on age showed that for the age group (10-14), majority (51.6%) OOS girls accounted for having ‘poor decision-making capacity’, and 55.4% girls aged (15-19), accounted for the same. To get a more nuanced picture of decision-making capacity of OOS girls, data was also disaggregated based on Muslim and non-Muslim category. 46.6% Muslim girls, and 52.2% non-Muslim girls fell under ‘poor household decision- making’ category. OOS girls reporting ‘moderate household decision making capacity’ was low across different age and ethnic groups. This suggested that the decision -making capacity of girls was the same irrespective of their age group or ethnicity.

### 7.2.2 Intermediate Outcome Indicator 2.2: Targeted unmarried girls who are married or in a union during the project phase

**TABLE 48: INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME: UNMARRIED MARRIED OR GIRL IN UNION**

IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	EL target	Will IO indicator be used for next



					evaluation point? (Y/N)
% of targeted unmarried girls who are married or in a union during the project phase	Qualitative consultation  OOS girls Quantitative	FDM collected qualitative and PIN collected quantitative	78.5% unmarried  3.3% married but waiting for Gauna	Actual	Y

The evaluation data showed that 78.5% girls from baseline were unmarried, while 3.3% were married, but were waiting for Gauna ceremony. Qualitative finding suggested that although parents were well aware about the legal age of marriage, the practice of marrying after the legal age was minimum due to intersecting factors like beliefs, social norms and economic factor. Qualitative finding generated four reasons for early marriage, which were, ‘appropriate age of marriage for girls’, poverty, tradition and societal pressure.

In the intervention area parents believed that beginning of a girls’ menarche should be taken as a sign for marriage. A parent of a 15-year-old OOS girls shared, “I married off my first daughter as soon as she got her first periods, I will do the same for my younger one. A girl should not be living with her parents after she menstruates.” Similar view was shared by another parent, who said “Girls after first menstruation becomes mature, therefore, they should be married”.

Likewise, poverty was also widely cited as a driver of early marriage in interviews with parents and OOS girls. Many participants shared examples where families who could not afford to fend for their families decided to marry their daughters’ young. A parents of Bara district shared “I cannot keep my daughter with me forever because if she ages, I will have to pay more dowry, I do not have good enough living conditions so it is better if she marries early.”

Such attitude of parents stemmed from wanting to ease the bad situation at home and also to ease bad condition for their daughters. Many parents wanted to try and to give their daughters a better life, so they for these parents, marriage to a man in a comfortable financial situation seemed to be the best way to do this.

“I will marry my daughter the day I find a boy who has a job.”

*-Parent, Rautahat district*

This was validated by Education office of Rautahat who shared that in the girls’ case, the family decides on the marriage due to economic problems, they believe that if they marry off their daughter there would be one less mouth to feed

Similarly, traditional belief was identified to be another reason for early marriage. Girls in interviews emphasised that early marriage was considered to be a tradition in their communities which should be followed by everyone. Such thinking among girls as well as among parents shaped preference for the practice. A 14-year-old girl from Bara shared, “my

*mother married at the age of 12 and, she says I should be ready for marriage too because I have reached the age of marriage, and also many of my friends are already married.*” This statement pointed towards the challenge in terms of encouraging young girls to think differently about a practice that they term as a tradition. Moreover, social mobilizers shared that when any families go against the general tradition those families were often cut off from the community. Analysis of data from the FGDs revealed that parents faced considerable pressure from extended families and neighbours to marry off daughters. It was clear from qualitative finding that marrying a girl young, was seen as a way to save family honour. This was an important consideration for families and a factor pushing girls towards marriage. Since early (child) marriage is rampant & socio-culturally accepted in project areas, project has already started immediate and long-term interventions against child marriage in the project districts- including development of IEC materials in local languages, with engagement of families, local government and change champions.

The finding indicated that social norms supporting early marriage were still strong among communities and to change this would be a major challenge for the project. The project’s intervention on creating awareness among community members, and parents seems to be not working well. It is suggested that instead of advocacy on not marrying early, a comprehensive intervention that promotes the benefits of marrying later, and showing examples of other girls who married after the legal age would be the best way to alter people’s beliefs.

### 7.2.3 Intermediate Outcome Indicator 2.3: Life Skills Index

The life skill index measured girls’ attitude, knowledge, and practice about financial literacy, family planning, and general self- efficacy. Life skill tool was developed keeping in mind the project’s activities, and curriculum during baseline of cohort-I. EE referred to the previous similar surveys like Sisters for sisters, Stem, DHS (Demographic and health survey) to obtain the questions, which were later modified on the basis of the project’s activities. Since activities and curriculum were the same as cohort-I, even for cohort-II, the same tool was adapted for cohort II as well.

The analysis for Life skill index was done separately on the basis of three different domains i.e., financial literacy, family planning, and general self-efficacy. To generate the indicator value, all the responses were firstly computed and recorded to calculate a total percentage score. This percentage score was divided into three categories i.e ‘more than 70%’, ‘50-70%’, and ‘less than 50’. To calculate the indicator value, girls those who fell under the category of having good KAP’ i.e ‘more than 70%’ was computed to generate an average, which was the indicator value for each of the life skill indicators.

**TABLE 49:INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME: LIFE SKILL INDEX**

IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	EL target	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Life Skills Index Score (%)	Qualitative consultation	FDM	Financial Literacy: 67.5% Family planning: 7.91%	70%	Y

	OOS girls Quantitative		Self-efficacy: 30.3%		
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### Financial Literacy

The survey assessed OOS girls’ knowledge, attitude, and practice of financial literacy through a series of questions on financial planning, and specific questions about banking, saving, and borrowing. The overall financial literacy index generated a value of 67.5%, suggesting that financial literacy is only slightly lower than the project’s target.

Data depicted that girl throughout all age groups, and ethnicity fell under the category of having ‘good’ knowledge, attitude, and practice of financial literacy. 64.3% girls of the age group 10-14 had ‘good’ knowledge, 59.9% girls showed ‘good’ attitude, and 59.5% OOS girls had ‘good practice’ of financial literacy. There were very few girls from this age group who were categorized under having poor knowledge (14.7%), attitude (27.4%) and practice (15.9%).

For the age group 15-19, percentage as high as 84.5% OOS girls fell under the category of having ‘good knowledge’ on financial literacy and 83.1% OOS girls fell under the category of having had ‘good’ practice.

**TABLE 50: KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF FINANCIAL LITERACY**

**DISAGGREGATION BASED ON AGE**

Financial Literacy	10-14			15-19		
	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice
Good (more than 70%)	64.3%	59.9%	59.5%	84.5%	66.9%	83.1%
Moderate (50-70%)	21%	12.7%	24.6%	12.8%	13.5%	16.2%
Poor (less than 50%)	14.7%	27.4%	15.9%	2.7%	19.6%	0.7%

The finding for girls of Muslim and non-Muslim ethnicity also showed similar finding as above. Majority of the girls irrespective of their ethnicity, had good knowledge, attitude, and practice of financial literacy.

**TABLE 51: KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF FINANCIAL LITERACY**

**DISAGGREGATION BASED ON ETHNICITY**

Financial Literacy	Muslim			Non-Muslim		
	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice
Good (more than 70%)	78.6%	62.1%	72.8%	69.4%	62.6%	66.7%
Moderate (50-70%)	17.5%	12.6%	24.3%	18.2%	13.1%	20.5%

Poor (less than 50%)	3.9%	25.2%	2.9%	12.5%	24.2%	12.8%
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Although quantitative findings pointed towards a positive direction on girls demonstrating good financial behaviour, qualitative findings generated contrasting views. In the qualitative discussion with girls, it was found that girls did not demonstrate any substantial knowledge about the basics of financial literacy, such as saving, financial institutions, among others. Although girls knew what cooperative was as their parents frequently went to cooperatives, girls faintly knew how things functioned inside a cooperative. When girls were asked if they ever earned money would save it for the future, or rather spend it, girls shared they would spend on buying bangles, and clothes. None of the girls mentioned saving the money. For OOS girls, the idea of earning money, saving, or borrowing it from someone is an alien concept because they have never done it. The household head, or mostly the male members of the family are in -charge of handling the finances, and girls are always left out from such matters. When parents were asked why girls’ access to knowledge on financial literacy was limited, they shared that there was no point in knowing about finance when this kind of work was a man’s job. Girls themselves also have shared that they were not even allowed to go to close-by market, there was less chance they would be allowed to go to banks or cooperatives. A 17-year-old girl from Rautahat disclosed, ‘I never have cash in my hand, my mother-in-law buys everything for me of her choice.’

*Why does a girl need to go to banks when she has so much work to do at home? ”.*

*- Aparent from Bara*

### Family planning

The family planning index had questions surrounding girls’ knowledge, attitude, and practice on basic family planning process like gaps between children, use of contraception, access to contraception among others. The overall life skill index for family planning was only 7.91% indicating that girls’ knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning is extremely poor. The reason for low score was identified to be lack of awareness among girls, and the belief that using contraception would reduce the chance of having a boy child.

**TABLE 52: KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF FAMILY PLANNING  
DISAGGREGATION BASED ON AGE**

Family planning	Knowledge 10-14	Attitude 10-14	Practice 10-14	Knowledge 15-19	Attitude 15-19	Practice 15-19
Good (More than 70%)	3.2%	4.4%	0%	34.5%	4.7%	12.2%
Moderate (50-70%)	9.5%	57.5%	0%	23%	56.1%	1.4%
Poor (Less than 50%)	87.3%	38.1%	100%	42.6%	39.2%	86.5%

Data disaggregated on the basis of age showed that for girls aged (10-14), 87.3% fell under the category of having less than 50% knowledge, and only 3.2% fell under the category of having more than 70% knowledge on family planning. For the same age group, 100% girls had the practice of less than 50%. Meaning that girl's knowledge as well as practice on family planning was low. Similarly, for the age group (15-19), 34.5% girls had more than 70% knowledge on family planning, and percentage as high as 86.5% girls' practice was less than 50%.

The reason for relatively high knowledge of the girls aged (15-19) about family planning as compared to girls of age (10-14) could be because girls of age (15-19) were already married and most of them even had children.

Moreover, the difference between Muslim and Non-Muslim groups in terms of family planning did not show any stark difference. Knowledge attitude and practice level of both Muslim and Non-Muslim girls fell under the category of having less than 50% of knowledge, attitude and practice.

**TABLE 53: KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF FAMILY PLANNING  
DISAGGREGATION BASED ON ETHNICITY**

Family planning	Muslim			Non-Muslim		
	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice
Good (More than 70%)	20.4%	2.9%	3.9%	12.8%	5.1%	4.7%
Moderate (50-70%)	12.6%	60.2%	0%	15.2%	55.9%	0.7%
Poor (Less than 50%)	67%	36.9%	96.1%	72.1%	39.1%	94.6%

When OOS were inquired what they thought about family planning, 71.5% girls said they were unaware about contraception. Qualitative finding suggested that girls lack of knowledge, attitude and practice could be because husbands decided everything, while women were actively subservient to their husbands. Furthermore, girls also mentioned that their in-laws had forbidden the use of contraception until the birth of a son. Girls during FGD shared that within a year of marriage, their in-laws would ask them to give birth to a son. Girls further shared that it was the in-laws who decided whether or not to use contraception, so until the parents/in-laws permitted it, girls' access was non-existent. Hence, it can be inferred that family planning is still looked upon as a taboo in the community because of unawareness. Therefore, the project should actively provide more trainings to girls as well as their parents on the use of contraception, how to get an access to health post and clear out the negative stance towards contraception.

### Social Skill index

The social skill tool was designed to gauge OOS girls' self-belief to successfully navigate difficult situation, and make good decisions. The tool contained statements around self-decision making on life plans, convincing family members, and tackling problems. Adhering to the data collected by EE on social skill, the overall social index score was 30.3%. The fact

that the overall index score was only 30% suggested that girls lacked self-confidence. This finding can also be verified through qualitative information. Qualitative finding revealed that girls heavily relied on their parents for all their life decisions. When girls were asked what they would do in a situation where they would want to take part in a training, but would not be allowed by their family members. Most of the girls opined that they would not explicitly share about their interest. If the parents would allow, they would join, otherwise they would not. When asked why, girls replied that they did not have the guts to question their parents/in-laws' decision. The fact that girls could barely share their views or thought with their household members points towards frail self-confidence.

Disaggregation based on age showed the majority of OOS girls from both the age groups i.e, 10-14 and 15-19, fell under the category of having less than 50% social skill. This meant that the majority of the girls did not have the ability and the confidence to solve life problems and to tackle them.

**TABLE 54: SOCIAL SKILL OF GIRLS**

**DATA DISAGGREGATED BASED ON AGE AND ETHNICITY**

<b>GSE mean percentage</b>	<b>10-14</b>	<b>15-19</b>	<b>Muslim</b>	<b>Non-Muslim</b>
More than 70%	28.6%	33.1%	37.9%	27.6%
50-70%	32.5%	21.6%	30.1%	27.9%
Less than 50%	38.9%	45.3%	32%	44.4%

Moreover, the disaggregated data between Muslim, and Non- Muslim girls showed a different picture. Social skill of Muslim girls was higher than non-Muslim girls. 37.9% Muslim girls fell under the category of scoring more than 70% in social skill, while, only 27.6% non-Muslim girls fell under the category of scoring more than 70%. Likewise, 32% Muslim girls fell under the category of scoring less than 50% in social skill, whereas it was just 44.4% for non- Muslim. During qualitative consultations, it was observed that Muslim girls were a little more forthcoming in their interaction, than girls from other ethnic groups. The social mobilizer of the area explained that because Muslim religion permitted marriage within the community/family, girls, even after marriage, did not have to move to a new place. Since they were familiar with CLC facilitators and knew various people of the vicinity, they could easily talk to people without feeling shy to share their opinion. The other reason as cited by CLC facilitator of Bara district was that Madrasa classes could be the reason for Muslim girls' increased confidence where girls were habituated with interaction with teachers as well as with girls of their age. Although girls from Muslim community were more forthcoming in their interaction, this does not imply that their self-efficacy is higher. These girls still could not make their own decisions as the power to decision making rested in the hands of the elderly.

### 7.3 Schools have created enabling and supportive environments for M-OOS girls' learning

In the baseline, the indicator around school were not collected due to delay in project intervention. As soon as project conducts its intervention, this data will be conducted and will be incorporated in the final report.

#### 7.3.1 Intermediate Outcome Indicator 3.1: Gender-sensitive teacher tool

##### *Intermediate Outcome Indicator 3.1: Gender-sensitive teacher tool*

**TABLE 55: GENDER SENSITIVE TEACHER TOOL**

IO	IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Schools have created enabling and supportive environments for OOS girls' learning	Average score in the "gender-sensitive teacher tool"	Gender sensitive teacher tool Barefoot analysis (Classroom observation) KIIs with teachers FGD and KIIs with students and In-school girls	FDM	0	55%	Uncertain

#### 7.3.2 Key Intermediate Outcome 3.1 Attitude Change Index for in-school adolescents

PIN aims to improve the knowledge, attitude, and behaviour of in-school adolescent to create supportive environment for OOS girls' learning when they enrol into formal schooling. However, data for this indicator was not collected due to project's delay in school level intervention. Hence, the value of this indicator is 0

**TABLE 56: ATTITUDE CHANGE INDEX SCORE**

IO	IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	EL Target	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Schools have created enabling and supportive environments	Attitude change index score (%)	In school boys and girls survey. FGD with in-school girls and boys	Quantitative -PIN Qualitative-FDM	0	86%	Uncertain

for OOS girls' learning						
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## 7.4 Communities and authorities foster positive social norms that encourage delayed marriage and realization of OOS girls' life plans

### 7.4.1 Intermediate Outcome Indicator 4.1: family members who have supportive behaviors towards girls' education and employment

PIN by the end of the project aims to foster positive social norms among parents and community members to encourage delayed marriage and allow OOS girls pursue her life plans. Overall attitude change index was calculated by aggregating scores against the 9-attitude related statement around child marriage, social norms and OOS girl's education. The overall indicator value for the indicator is 0. This implied that none of the parents showed interest in delaying marriage, and supporting in girls' life plan.

**TABLE 57: SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIOR TOWARDS GIRLS' EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

IO	IO indicator		BL	EL Target	Target achieved? (Y/N)
Communities and authorities foster positive social norms that encourage delayed marriage and realization of M-OOS girls' life plans	% of M-OOS adolescent girls' families with changed attitude	Girls and HH survey FGDs KII with girls, parents, government official	0%	+15%	Y

Overall, 94.3% parents showed negative attitude towards delay in girls' marriage, and support them in their life plan, this was followed by 5.7% parents those who showed neutral attitude. There were no parents who showed positive attitude towards delay in early marriage and support to girls. The negative attitude of parents towards delay in marriage stemmed from the fear of girls eloping, high dowry, and societal pressure.

Data disaggregation based on age depicted that 94.8% of the girls who belonged to the age group of 10-14 had negative attitude, and very low portion of the population (5.2%) portrayed neutral attitude towards delay in marriage and support in girls' life plan.

In regards to the age group 15-19, 93.2% parents portrayed negative attitude, followed by 6.8% parents who showed neutral attitude, and there were no one who positive attitude about delayed marriage and support to girls' life plan.



**TABLE 58 GIRLS AGE GROUP AND ETHNICITY BASED ON PARENTAL ATTITUDE**

Category	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	Muslim (n=103)	Non-Muslim (n=297)
Positive attitude	0	0	0	0
Neutral	5.2%	6.8%	6.8%	5.4%
Negative attitude	94.8%	93.2%	93.2%	94.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source HH survey | n = 400

Moreover, 93.2% parents from Muslim ethnicity had negative attitude towards delay in marriage, and support in girls’ life plans than 94.6% parents of non-Muslim ethnicity. This meant that non-Muslim parents were more negative as compared to Muslim parents.

When this was explored through qualitative lens, it was found that parental attitude and support influenced the direction of girls’ life plans irrespective of their age or ethnicity. In both the districts, parents were mainly influenced by traditional beliefs regarding ideal roles of girls in the society as wives, and as mothers. Hence, parents married off their daughters’ young. Some parents believed that education was not needed for girls as they were temporal members of the family, while some parents thought, only attending basic school was enough. Girls were also considered less capable who required constant guidance and protection from male members of the household. One of the parents of Bara doubted her own daughter stating that she would never be able to work outside like her brother did. Apart from deep rooted social norms that

*‘Our family has to invest all our life earning during her marriage, I cannot wait for the time she gets married because all my burden will go away’*

- Parent Bara

influenced girls’ life decision, the other reasons for negative attitude of parents towards delayed marriage was identified to be due having to pay high dowry. Project staff from Rautahat also shared that, parents did not trust their own daughters, therefore, they married them early to avoid any unfortunate situation like eloping which apparently would hurt their image. Project staff further added that marrying their daughters early also meant that the parents could get rid of the burden of responsibility. Project has mainstreamed intervention against child marriage and associated harmful norms/practices

with engagement of local government, change champion and one-on-one family engagement activities. Additionally, life skill curriculum includes sessions around these issues for the girls.

In terms of supporting girls in their life plan, qualitative findings suggested that parents (or in-laws) would allow their daughters or daughters-in-law to pursue the life plans with a caveat that household chores were not affected, and that they would not go outside the house. This was verified by qualitative findings, where parents of the girls from Bara shared that they would

not support their daughter-in-law if it required commuting to different places. A similar thought was shared by parents in Rautahat. They said that they would only let her work if it could be done from home. This negative attitude was attributed to traditional socio-cultural beliefs regarding gender roles and abilities. Hence, it can be concluded that many families would have difficulty in accepting the need to equip girls with the skill and knowledge necessary. To tackle this problem, municipal officer of Bara suggested to conduct a longer interaction session targeting parents and community members. Similar suggestion was also given by municipal officer of Rautahat who said that the belief of early marriage was so engraved that a short-term program would not bring change, hence a longer-term program with greater outreach would be necessary to bring change.

#### 7.4.2 OOS adolescent girls' families who use the cash grants to support their life plans

OOS adolescent girls, as envisioned by project would transition by either enrolling back to school, or by choosing to start safe employment. In either of the cases, project would support the OOS girls to achieve their aspirations by providing them with non-cash materials. Those girls who wish to enrol to school would get necessary materials to continue their study, and would be retained in school; while for those girls who would choose to start safe employment, project would provide necessary training and also provide cash grant to the families to support girls' self-initiated business/ work. Since girls during baseline had not yet transitioned, the value was 0 for this indicator.

**TABLE 59: USE OF CASH GRANT BY FAMILIES TO SUPPORT THEIR LIFE PLANS**

IO	IO indicator	BL	EL Target	Target achieved? (Y/N)
Communities and authorities foster positive social norms that encourage delayed marriage and realization of M-OOS girls' life plans	% of M-OOS adolescent girls' families who use the cash grants to support their life plans	0	40%	N

## 8. Other findings

This section includes information on child safeguarding, perception of girl about digital learning classes, and impact of COVID-19. The information collected does not directly link to project's indicators, but these topics capture a general view of girls which would be helpful for the project in future planning of the project.

### *OOS girls who can identify where to report any safeguarding concerns*

The project works with marginalized adolescent girls between the age of 10-19, who live in a sensitive community. Therefore, project through its intervention have been raising awareness

regarding GBV and early marriage through local miking, and also through radio PSAs for child protection. The project has also been providing referral support to girls through its toll-free-number so that they could call in case of need. The objective of these activities is to not only help address problems of young girls, but also prevent risk of abuse, or exploitation in the future. EE collected data from OOS girls to capture their knowledge about where they would seek help from or reporting cases of misconduct or concern. The highest 38.5% girls did not know where to report, and the lowest 25.8% said they would report it to the police. It can therefore be inferred that majority of the girls still do not know where to report the cases. Hence, the project should teach girls and make them aware about how they could seek help while in need.

**TABLE 60:SAFEGUARDING**

Reporting agencies	Frequency
Police	25.8% (103)
Local government office (eg-ward office, palika office, etc.)	-
Community groups	35.75% (143)
Project staffs	-
Toll free number of Aarambha	-
Don't know	38.5% (154)
Total	100% (400)

### *Perception on digital teaching and learning*

Digital teaching and learning is done through phone calls where CLC facilitator contacts all the girls through phone and teaches them. OOS girls were asked what they thought about distance learning, in case there would be a lockdown again. 56.8% girls reported that they would not be able to attend it because they would not be able to use phones. 26.5% said that they would not be able to manage it due to household chores, and 16% said they preferred in-person classes over virtual class. OOS girls during qualitative consultation shared that if CLC classes were to be held by phone, they would not be able to participate as they did not have their own phones. In addition to this, most of the girls also shared that it would be difficult to ask for their parents' phone, unless someone from the project convinces their parents. When CLC facilitator were asked how would they manage distance learning class, CLC facilitators from both the districts were a bit apprehensive about the idea of teaching girls through phone. One of the CLC facilitator of Bara said that girls have just started to understand words, after so much of time and effort, conducting classes through phone would not be possible as these girls would not be able to understand it. The same view was shared by facilitator in Rautahat. She said, "How will we teach them when they can barely read instructions on the book?" Both facilitators, and girls were not open to the idea of conducting classes through phone. This might be because at this stage they have not thought about the possibility and ways of conducting classes, but if they are taught and supported by the project to operate classes through phone, EE thinks they would be able to do it based on the experience of cohort -I.

### *Impact of COVID-19*

The rise in COVID-19 cases started in Nepal since March 2020. Immediately after the rise in cases, the government of Nepal imposed nationwide lockdown which resulted the project activities to halt. Moreover, due to lockdown, many families in the intervention areas were affected. 51% parents said that increased prices in basic commodities and expenditure in child care affected their financial situation. 46.8% parents reported loss/ reduction in their income. Many of the families of OOS girls either worked in agriculture or wee wage workers, due to lockdown, these parents could not work which resulted in less income. According to a parent who was a wage worker in Bara said, “I did not like to stay at home at all due to the pressure of not having enough to feed the family.” It was found that most of the households in the invention are had difficulty due to financial burden.

## 9. Conclusion and Recommendation

### 9.1 Conclusion

It can be concluded that OOS girls' position in their family and the community is devalued due to deep-rooted social norms that limit them from different life opportunities. The study found that lack of decision-making power hampers the decision-making ability, which eventually affects girls' self-esteem and self-confidence in a negative way. Therefore, the project has a lot of space to work on these two factors, which are the contributing factors to various key barriers identified in the report.

#### *Learning*

Literacy and numeracy of girls was measured using ASER tool which classified girls into four different categories – “non-learner”, “emergent-learner”, “established-learner” and “proficient learner”. A majority of girls who appeared the learning tests were deemed as “non-learners”, while there are very few established learners. Girls' learning proficiency remained similar among girls who have never been to school and those who attended school for a certain period and dropped out. This shows that the girls' school status (either dropped out, or never been to school) does not have any effect on their learning. By the end-line, the project targets to lead 65% girls to established level proficiency and 30% to emergent learner proficiency. Given the findings of this evaluation point, the targets seem rather ambitious for Nepali and Mathematics. Moreover, the evaluation also indicates that six months of CLC classes are not quite enough to bring about substantial changes in girls' learning performance. Hence, the project should revise its modality by increasing the number of classes and revising the indicator value in a more realistic approach.

#### *Transition*

Transition pathways map different tracks which the girls might undertake throughout the project implementation period. The project aims to enrol girls interested in studies into formal schooling, and those who do not follow the learning track to vocational skills. As per the findings of this evaluation, transition pathways for respondents of different sub-groups were different. While some of the girls wanted to re-enrol in school, others wanted to join vocational training. Qualitative findings showed, the girls who belonged to the age-group 10-14 aspired to enrol in school, while those who belonged to age group 15-19 were not keen on re-enrolment, rather, they wanted to join vocational classes. Hence, the project should set its transition target keeping in mind the interest of the girls.

#### *Sustainability*

The sustainability of the project focused on community, school and system level. The community level indicator focused on changing people's attitude on child marriage. However, baseline finding suggested that people's attitude towards delay in marriage and supporting girls for safe employment was negative, as a result of deep-rooted cultural norms and widespread patriarchal values. PIN can therefore, conduct a door-to-door awareness program or design a new intervention altogether that will precisely impact on attitude change of the community.

The school level sustainability indicator to create gender sensitive learning environment by formulating supporting committees was found to be on limbo as the project has not yet started

its school level intervention. As no activity or intervention was implemented at the school level in the past six months of project intervention period, it is highly unlikely that the girls transitioning to formal schooling will have a project-induced favourable learning environment. This warrants immediate project attention on its school level activities as soon as possible otherwise it would be difficult to measure this at the endline.

With regards to the system level sustainability, the baseline finding suggested that the government were not clear about their roles of conducting campaigns in support to delay child marriage. It was unclear whether the sustainability indicator was trying to capture PIN's support to the government to delay child marriage or local government's effort as a whole to delay child marriage. Hence, changing the indicator is suggested for the next evaluation.

### *Intermediate outcomes*

One of the intermediate outcomes of the project is attendance in the CLCs. Better attendance in the CLCs is expected to result in better learning, as more the girls attend classes, the more likely they are to perform better in learning. However, owing to girls' excessive involvement in household chores and festivals, the study came across high absenteeism in the CLCs. In this light, the project should think of ways to work with household members to support OOS girls in their household duties so that they could regularly attend CLC classes.

In terms the second IO household decision making- it was found that, girls had very little decision-making freedom. Even the small decisions of day-to-day life, such as decisions to go to the hospital if girls fall ill, making small household purchases, or visiting other family members, are taken by the husband or the in-laws. The evaluation shows that decisions regarding household matters are often taken by mother-in-law. In contrast, other decisions regarding household finances are often taken by father-in-law or the husband. Hence, the findings suggest that girls hold a weak position in the household; therefore, awareness program to household members is imperative to change the attitude of parents.

The third IO on life skill index measured girls' attitude, knowledge, and practice about financial literacy, family planning, and social skill.

With regards to financial literacy, the overall index generated a value of 67.5%, suggesting that financial literacy was only slightly lower than the project's target of 70%. Although quantitative findings demonstrate an encouraging picture about girls' financial behaviour, qualitative findings paint a bleak picture. During qualitative discussions with girls, it was found that girls neither knew what saving meant, nor did they have any idea where to save. Since financial matter was always handled by male members in the family, girls are often kept out of it.

The family planning index had questions surrounding girls' knowledge, attitude, and practice on basic family planning process like gaps between children, use of contraception, access to contraception among others. The overall life skill index for family planning was only 7.91% indicating that girls' knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning is extremely poor. The reason for low score was identified to be lack of awareness among girls.

The social skill tool was designed to gauge OOS girls' self-belief to successfully navigate difficult situation, and make good decisions. Adhering to the data collected by EE on social

skill, the overall social index score was 30.3%, indicating that girls generally lack self-confidence. Qualitative findings revealed that girls heavily rely on their parents for all their life decisions which makes them dependent on guardians and hence, decreases their self-confidence. Since there is no dedicated intervention for increasing OOS girls' confidence, the project should implement a new activity that will solely work on improving girls' confidence and self-esteem.

With regards to the fourth intermediate outcome, PIN, by the end of the project, aims to foster positive social norms among parents and community members to encourage delayed marriage and allow OOS girls pursue their life plans. Project's performance against this IO indicator was found to be low as parents still get their daughters married at an early age due to the fear of high dowry, existing social and cultural norms, sense of fear about girls eloping, among others. In this light, it is advisable for the project to launch well-rounded interventions to engage the parents in dialogue and awareness activities, bringing about change in their attitude about rampant early marriage.

To wrap up, the baseline evaluation holds most of the project interventions appropriate and relevant in the context of project areas. However, some of the interventions and, some targets do require modification. It should be noted that the barriers and parental attitude which are a result of deeply rooted social norms might be a hard nut to crack, especially given short duration of project implementation.

It should be noted that despite all the upsides of CLC in increasing literacy among girls who have never been to school or reinforcing and revising education that the drop-out girls gained at school in the past, the six months of CLC engagement is not quite enough to bring about major changes in girls' learning proficiency.

Moreover, since most of the girls are only looking to become literate or participate in training which they expect to be held after the CLCs end, improving their learning skills is not a priority for them. In this light, therefore, the project should not set high transition targets, as most of the OOS girls themselves are not looking to set big future plans.

The project can, however, actively engage with parents and schools to foster attitude change. In other words, it is only with the engagement with parents and community members the project can yield more tangible results as compared to its engagement with OOS girls. To begin with, the project's engagement with parents in the form of dialogues and awareness activities to help them realize the importance of delayed marriage is very relevant and is also of urgent requirement. Changed attitude of parents will automatically increase girls' freedom to be involved in other activities.

## **9.2 Recommendation**

### *Learning*

- For literacy and numeracy, the target set by PIN is ambitious and unrealistic, given the short duration of the project. The chance for 65% girls to reach 'established learner proficiency' in Nepali, and Mathematics, and 30% girls to reach 'emergent learner proficiency' by the end of 6 months would be difficult given the short duration of CLC

classes, irregularity in attendance, and girls' limited cognitive skills. Therefore, it is suggested to increase the CLC classes to 12 months.

- With regards to numeracy skill, it is recommended that the project uses teaching material such as pattern boxes, dices, and images so that OOS girls could quickly grasp the lessons quickly and effectively.

### *Transition*

- At the baseline, girls are not clear about their transition pathways, and parents are also not sure if they would want to let the girls enrol in school or let them join vocational training classes. The project should consider the fact that in-laws/ parents may not be willing to support the girls in the transition pathway they would choose at the end of the intervention. Therefore, the project needs to focus extensively on convincing in-laws and parents to support girls in the pathway they would choose. Moreover, as parents are posing barrier to the girls' education and employment, it is advised that the project exposes parents to the girls in the communities who have been educated and doing well for themselves. This demonstration activity is expected to sensitize parents on the importance of education.
- The project should understand that not all the OOS girls might choose one of the envisioned transition pathways. Some OOS girls might simply choose to stay at home. This should not be categorized as 'negative transition' as the girls would have already met their objective of joining the CLC – to develop/improve the ability to read official documents, read road signs and better their learning skills overall. Hence, the transition outcome can include a new indicator that captures percentage of girls who continued to learn in CLC till its completion.

### *Intermediate outcomes*

- Based on the analysis of barriers and characteristics, some of the interventions need scaling up. Project activity focuses on creating awareness among parents of OOS girls to support them in their life plans. However, only few days of training will not be sufficient to change deep-rooted norms and practice. Therefore, an intensive training on awareness of family planning, gender equality is required for parents and the husbands of the OOS girls. Likewise, household chores were found to be the most significant barrier and a girl gets less to no support from male household members in the household chores she has to perform. A tailored intervention such as gender sensitive activities or involving boys in the household to encourage sharing burden of household chores along with their female siblings would be effective to mitigate such challenge.
- Project also focuses on improving girls' cognitive and non-cognitive skills by enhancing their social skills. The baseline value for girls' social skill is low. Hence, project needs to design activities which aims at increasing the communication skills and problem handling ability of girls to increase their confidence. There are no activities that solely focuses on girls' increase in confidence level. The project should therefore design a tailored activity that would focus on increasing girls' self-confidence.



- With regards to household decision making, the capacity of girls to make decisions for themselves is non-existent which stem from gendered power imbalances within households. This deep-rooted social norm can only be tackled through intensive training to household members of the OOS girls on discriminatory social norms and attitude. Therefore, PIN is suggested to work closely with the household members for an extended period of time. Only few awareness campaigns might not be effective for behavioural improvement.
- In terms of attendance, it was found that absenteeism was common especially during festival seasons. Given the limited time to complete the course, the project needs to plan for alternative ways to engage girls during festivals and retain its attendance for girls' learning.
- The project, through its intervention, aims to reduce child marriage by raising awareness through change champions and government officials. The baseline index for this was 0%. This shows less effort put in by the project in creating awareness among parents. In order to bring positive change, there should be more intervention around changing behaviour. Only using change champions to create awareness would not be effective to change such deep-rooted norms. Hence, the involvement of the local government for a change in attitude of parents is crucial in this regard. The project should explore avenues to lobby with the local government to bring about attitude change in parents.

### *Sustainability*

- For community level sustainability EE suggests on continuing the parental engagement activities for upcoming cohorts as well. Radio programs were found to be effective in changing parental attitudes regarding girls' education, hence, EE recommends in continuing such programs not only as a response to COVID-19 pandemic but also during pre/post COVID period.
- For school level sustainability indicator, the outcomes could not be measured due to delay in project's intervention. Therefore, EE suggests to not measure this particular indicator even in the endline as the project would not be able to complete its intervention in such a short span of time.
- System level sustainability indicator aimed at measuring the percentage of government officials who can demonstrate their support to delayed marriage and alternative roles of girls. However, this was not measured during baseline, as no such activity took place from the government's side in the given period. It was also seen that the government were only aware about CLC and were unaware about other activities like campaign on reducing early marriage. The project thus needs to ensure that the municipal officials are first aware about the project activities and secondly it is unclear whether this indicator is trying to capture PIN's support to delay child marriage or local government's effort as a whole to delay child marriage. Hence, it is suggested to rephrase this indicator

- The system level indicator captures whether or not local government incorporates some or all components of Aarambha project into local plan. Since many local governments were still not aware about a number of project activities in the baseline, it cannot be concluded if they would incorporate anything at all. For the government to develop an ownership on Aarambha's activities and take it forward, there is a need for a long-term and intensive intervention with focused engagement of the local government. Hence EE recommends continuing activities for system level in all cohorts even if other interventions are completed. Else, it is also advisable to measure such indicators at the final evaluation.

## Annex 1: Project Design and Interventions

The table below provides an overview of project design and interventions comprising of details of project interventions, intermediate outcomes and outcomes start and end dates of activities and the target beneficiary groups. The details have been provided by the project for completing this table.

### PROJECT DESIGN AND INTERVENTION (COHORT 2)

Activity	What output will the intervention contribute to?	What Intermediate Outcome will the intervention will contribute to and how?	How will the intervention contribute to achieving the learning, transition and sustainability outcomes?	Start to end date of activity	Target beneficiaries (and numbers)	Remarks
Literacy and Numeracy course delivered through trained facilitator in small group setting in CLCs	Output 1	% of M-OOS adolescent girls who have attended 85% or more literacy and numeracy sessions	Project identified 122 local facilitators and trained them twice during basic and refresher training to deliver literacy and numeracy courses including Life Skill sessions. All targeted CLCs were well set up in four local level and project successfully covered target beneficiaries. Similarly, for project sustainability, one-day community orientation for 122 CLCs were completed and 122 CLC management committee was formed consisting 9 members in each CLCs. Such committee was formed to mobilize community and to make them accountable in day-to-day operation of CLCs and project assignment with their meaningful leadership and	December 2020 to July 2021 (normal CLC setting)  14 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 onward DTL setting	2125	

			<p>participation. CLC management committee focus on girl's retention, minimize drop out, play bridging role in mitigating harmful practices, which would otherwise create barriers for project beneficiary and community. The committees played crucial role ensuring learning progress, transition and project sustainability.</p>			
<p>Distance Teaching learning via phone and in small group settings for the continuation of literacy and numeracy</p>	Output 1	<p>% of M-OOS adolescent girls who have attended 85% or more literacy and numeracy sessions</p>	<p>This approach provides a platform to think alternative mechanism for continuation of teaching learning in the immediate COVID-19 context. With well-designed curriculum, its adaptation with micro session plan and continuation of capacity strengthening of staffs made this intervention to implement successfully. Also, implementing such an approach was a lesson for us to think of alternative during emergency situation and consequently, project have also trained new facilitators in such approaches creating human resources in the local communities.</p>	<p>May to July 2021</p>	2125	
<p>Life skill courses through distance teaching learning approach</p>	Output 2	<p>Financial Literacy Index Score  Family Planning Index Score</p>	<p>This is similar approach as DTL, to continue life skill sessions with support of micro session and more focused is to ensure capacity</p>	<p>May to July 2021 (DTL setting applied during MTRP)</p>	2125	

		Social Skills Index Score	building of facilitators and key staff to deliver more effectively. Learning achievement with the support of specific questions as per lessons is developed to track girls' learnings after the completion of each lesson.			
Gender-responsive pedagogical trainings for teachers to create safe learning environments	Output 3	Average score in the "gender-sensitive teacher tool"	Project will work with selected community schools of working local level and the key participation will be members of SMC/PTA, teachers, child clubs and respective stakeholders with key focus to establish Gender-responsive pedagogical and to create safe learning environment. This will also support to establish CRM. Gender focal point will support to create safe and learning environment of CLC girls who will enrol schools after graduating from CLCs.	July 2021	School teachers and representatives = 35 # of schools= 12	
Gender-transformative workshop with in-school adolescents	Output 3	Attitude change Index (%) for in-school adolescents	Project have planned to work and strengthen adolescent girls and boys of particular schools in the participation of school stakeholders with major focus to ensure school have safe and effective learning environment, strengthen capacity of students to lead and for their meaningful	June 2021	2125	

			<p>participation in school governance and establish mechanism to address gender, quality education and related issues including creating favorable environment for in school and out of school children. School Gender focal point along with members from SMC/PTA will be playing crucial role to support students and schools for creating such environment.</p>			
<p>Radio Broadcasting  (PSA and issue-based dialogue)</p>	Output 4	Attitude change index score (%)	<p>Project have planned PSA in several thematic areas as per status and situation of beneficiary including local context. Similarly, weekly issue-based talk show and dialogue is planned on different thematic areas related to girl's education, status and planning of local level for out of school children, status of health system and facilities in the Palika's, effect of COVID-19 in education sector and respectively. Such approaches during radio program encourages these community actors to be accountable, and this has facilitated their engagement in the project for broader advocacy and support. Project have planned to handover all the materials to local level and stakeholder, which can be used</p>	December 2020 – July 2021	4250	This was a new added activity during the MTR period

			as resource materials as most of them is produced in local languages.			
Gender responsive workshops for M-OOS girls' families	Output 4	Attitude change index score (%)	Project have planned this intervention in two phases. During first phase, it will support to strengthen capacity of local religious leaders, members and officials of local level including selected stakeholders via Gender responsive workshop and will create environment to sign charter and among them Change Champion will be selected. Further these CC will contribute to promotion of Girls education.	January – April 2021	2125	
Trainings for local government officials, elected representatives and community stakeholders	Output 4	% of government officials who can demonstrate their support to delayed marriage and alternative roles for girls	Project have planned training/workshop with local government elected representatives and officials in regards to planning and promotion for girls education including local level support to CLC girls enrolled in formal education. Also, project planned to link intervention with Province 2 government ‘‘Beti Bachau Beti Padahu’’ campaign and will advocate to selected local level to ensure allocation of resources for girls’ education initiatives including to provide support to Aarambha project.	April-July 2021	100	




## Annex 2: Baseline evaluation approach and methodology

### 2.1 Evaluation purposes and evaluation questions

The project's theory of change is based on addressing the foundational barrier that has caused girls to drop out of school, never go to school, and marry early. In this regard, the project worked primarily with unmarried and married, Out-Of-School (OOS) adolescent girls between the age group of 10-19 years from Bara, and Rautahat districts of province 2, along with other key stakeholders such as the girls' families, community leaders, and government officials. Through its interventions of literacy classes and advocacy, the project aims at addressing the underlying barrier that prevents girls from leading healthy, safe, and educated lives. The overall purpose of the evaluation therefore is to gauge the assertions, and progress of the intervention by measuring the outcome, and output level indicators developed by the project. The specific purposes of the baseline evaluation are outlined below.

- Generate the baseline values for the indicators to inform target setting for the project and allow comparisons in the subsequent evaluation points
- Identify and assess the barriers faced by the unmarried and married OOS girls for learning and transition
- Test the assertions made by the Theory of Change of the project and generate necessary evidences to inform the improvements in project design

The MEL framework has outlined a set of evaluation questions relevant to the overall evaluation design. While the subsequent evaluation points are aimed at assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project, the current evaluation point seeks to establish the baseline figures to set targets for assessing the aforementioned factors. Therefore, the following questions listed below guided the baseline evaluation.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY AND TOOLS USED TO MEASURE THE QUESTIONS

Evaluation question	Indicator and Index	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the situation of learning of girls at the baseline?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls' proficiency level in numeracy and literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASER Tool</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the baseline transition status of girls?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of girls engaged in different activities in the past year and in the present to explore reasons and barrier to transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls and Household survey</li> <li>• Qualitative consultation with OOS girls and parents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective the project was in developing married out of school adolescent girls' cognitive and non-cognitive life skills?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life skill index which includes knowledge attitude and practice relating to financial literacy, family planning, and self-efficacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls Survey</li> <li>• Qualitative consultation with OOS girls</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How, if at all, do literacy, numeracy, cognitive and non-cognitive life skills translate into household decision making and agency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household decision making index</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls Survey</li> <li>Qualitative consultation with OOS girls, parents, change champions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How, if at all, did the project succeed in creating enabling learning environments in schools, families, and communities, for the married, out of school adolescent girls to pursue their life plans?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aggregated score for Gender sensitive teacher tool, Score card and approach classroom observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative data not collected in the baseline due to delay in project activity</li> <li>Qualitative consultation with teachers, head teachers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the community doing and how is it engaged to challenge harmful social norms that affect M-OOS adolescent girls and create conducive environments within which they can pursue life plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities being conducted as a part of the campaigns to make community people aware about the issue of early marriage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative consultation with DEO, head teacher, parents, and change champions.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Evaluation methodology

### Overall evaluation design

The Aarambha-cohort-II baseline evaluation adopted pre-post research design to measure changes that can be attributed to the project interventions, unlike in cohort -I where quasi-experimental research design was used to capture the cause, and compare the findings. The evaluation was guided by the longitudinal mixed method approach, comprising of quantitative and qualitative data collection technique. While quantitative data provided a numerical measurement of the assessments, the qualitative information validated, and contextualized quantitative findings. Sequencing approach was carried out for the data collection, whereby the areas of inquiry developed for qualitative consultation was informed by the preliminary analysis of the quantitative data collected. This allowed for comprehensive contextual analysis and verification of information generated by quantitative data.

The respondents for the baseline evaluation included project's primary beneficiaries who were unmarried and married Out of School (OOS) adolescent girls between the age 10-19 years. Apart from the primary beneficiaries, there were secondary beneficiaries such as parents of the OOS girls, change champions, and government officials for qualitative discussion. As the project is working with girls in a single cohort, the same set of girls will be tracked in the subsequent evaluation points.

### Adoption of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion minimum standards into the evaluation

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) was ensured throughout the evaluation process. Firstly, the data collection tools were designed cautiously to avoid cultural and gender

insensitivity. The safe guarding expert at People in Need (PIN) ensured that the tools adequately covered GESI specific questions, and ensured the language of the tools were gender and culturally sensitive. Evaluation team ensured representativeness in terms of ethnicity, and age while selecting the sample. As the sample was calculated to be representative of the actual target population, girls across different age groups and ethnicity were represented in the sample.

Longitudinal evaluation modality of LNGB implied keeping record of identifiable personal information like name, phone number and address of marginalized girls. This meant that only female enumerators would be appropriate to collect such information to avoid scepticism among parents. Thus, understanding the cultural sensitivity, FDM recruited local female enumerators who were well acquainted with the context and the environment of the community. These enumerators also spoke the local language which meant that they could communicate with clarity with the respondents and their parents. In addition to this, as the girls' survey comprised of questions on sensitive topics, for instance, questions on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH), which the girls would not have been comfortable answering to, hiring female enumerators eased the interview process. As some of the questions such as ASRH, Washington Group Module in the survey were sensitive to administer, FDM trained all the field enumerators on rapport building, on how to approach questions using sensitive measures such as proper language and approach, following GESI-inclusion protocol to avoid trauma or shame while administrating these types of questions. The same training modality was applied for researchers conducting qualitative interviews with girls and their parents.

Lastly, for analysis, the data was disaggregated by ethnicity wherever required to ensure that the differences in the social background were reflected to inform the project adjustments.

## **2.3 Baseline data collection process**

### **2.3.1 Pre data collection**

The baseline data collection took place in a total of four municipalities of Bara, and Rautahat districts. The municipalities of Bara district were Adarsha Kotwal and Pachrauta municipality, and the municipalities in Rautahat were Katahariya and Maulapur municipality.

#### **Sampling framework**

The girls for the baseline evaluation were identified and listed by the project. The primary sampling unit for the quantitative study was Community Learning Center (CLC) classes from where the girls were sampled. The sampling framework had listed 60 CLC classes (50% of the total CLCs) across four project intervention municipalities that had come into operation prior to the baseline evaluation. As the project broadly worked with two intervention subgroups based on age, the beneficiary list of girls attending CLC class were divided into two age groups of 10- 14 and 15-19 thereafter, the sample for each of the sub-groups was drawn from total number of beneficiaries and was divided proportionately among each subgroup.

## Quantitative sample size determination

The sample for baseline evaluation was calculated based on the sampling framework. After having the sampling frame, sample size was calculated based on GEC evaluation guideline, which suggested using minimum standards ( $p_0=0.58$ ,  $p_a=0.50$ , Power=80%, Power=80%, Confidence interval= 95%, Margin of error = 0.05, Test=2-sided test). Stat.ubc.ca website suggested by FM was used to calculate the total sample. Adding a further attrition buffer of 30%, the final sample size was 395, rounding off to 400. Hence, 400 girls from were selected as sample covering at least 50% of the CLCs so that clustering need not to be applied for sample size calculation.

Once the sample size was calculated, stratified random sampling was done to select the targeted OOS adolescent girls to draw out individuals for baseline from the sampling frame. The sample for each sub-group was drawn from total number of beneficiaries and was divided proportionately among each subgroup i.e OOS girls of age 10-14 and 15-19. Additionally, the project has also envisioned learning outcome as one of the transitions pathways for OOS girls; since the project has not yet defined the proportion of girls who will transition, the sample size for transition was the same as the learning sample. The sample selected for the evaluation was fully representative. Representativeness of sampling was ensured considering the project's marginalization framework, following inclusion criteria to select the primary beneficiaries.

The final sample sizes for each of the instruments (quantitative and qualitative) are presented below:

### SAMPLE SIZES AGAINST THE INDICATORS

Tools	Beneficiary group	Sample size agreed in MEL framework	Actual sample size	Major changes to the tools
ASER	OOS adolescent girls	<b>Baseline samples:</b> 400	400	All the learning tools were piloted and calibrated prior to baseline data collection
Girls' survey	OOS adolescent girls	<b>Baseline samples:</b> 400	400	Since the project had adapted logical framework based on the findings from baseline of cohort-I few new questions pertaining to child safe guarding, and perception on digital learning classes were added.
Household survey	OOS adolescent girls' parents	<b>Baseline samples:</b> 400	400	HH survey tools were made owing to the changes in the logical framework indicators as with the girls' survey.

Attendance records	CLC attendance records	All community learning centers	All community learning centers	N/A
FGDs	OOS adolescent girls OOS adolescent girls' parents	N/A	OOS adolescent girls-8 HH/parents-4	N/A
KIIs	CLC facilitator Municipal chair Community leaders Project staff	N/A	CLC Facilitator-4 Municipal official-4 Community leaders-4 Project staff-2	N/A

### Sample for benchmarking

Benchmarking was conducted as a part of quantitative data collection to collect information on girl's literacy level to set target that the beneficiaries were expected to attain. Benchmarking was conducted in some the schools where OOS girls are expected to enrol. Schools were selected purposively based on feasibility. A total of 80 students (30% of the total sample size) was taken, and proportionately divided across grade 1-4 for this purpose.

### Qualitative sampling framework and sample size determination

CLCs from each district were stratified based on their location. From the stratified list, two CLCs from each district were randomly selected for qualitative data collection. CLC was considered to be the primary sampling unit. A purposive sampling method was adopted to identify respondents in the communities in order to yield rich information on status of girls' education, early marriage, and other underlying contexts. Purposive sampling was also useful to ensure representativeness in the qualitative discussions. The methods used for data collection were focus group discussions (FGDs) and key-informant interviews (KIIs). A total of 12 FGDs and 18 KIIs were conducted with direct and indirect beneficiaries.

OOS girls aged 10-14 and 15-19, along with CLC facilitators, parents, change champions, and social mobilizers were consulted. To triangulate the information gathered, parents, and social mobiliser from a different location other than the sampled location were informally consulted. In order to gather overall community perspective, head teachers, were also interviewed in which the girls were more likely to enrol into were mapped and visited. Primarily, sex, age and ethnicity were the factors that determined the participation of the stakeholders in the qualitative discussions. Respondents for the interviews were selected keeping in mind they represented different ethnic and age group.

The table below illustrates sample sizes for the qualitative tools used at baseline.

Respondent group	Number of FGDs	Number of KIIs
OOS adolescent girls	8	-
Parents of the MOOS adolescent girls	4	-
CLC Facilitator	-	4
Community leaders	-	4
Municipal education official	-	4

Project staff	-	2
School head teacher		4

### Designing quantitative and qualitative tool

Both qualitative and quantitative tool were designed by EE following the LNGB guideline. The tools developed by EE was reviewed by the project team and FM before its finalization.

In regards to quantitative tool, it included girls, and household survey questionnaire. Girl's survey was the primary data collection tool among girls attending CLC classes. Since the tool and indicators were already revised during endline evaluation of cohort- I, and there were no further changes in the indicator as well, the questionnaire and format for the current evaluation adopted the same tool used during endline of cohort- I. Similarly, household survey questionnaire was administered with the parents/guardians of the sampled girls. As in every evaluation, first girls were tracked through CLCs, and only then their household were visited. Parents either mother or father, whoever was present and agreed for interview was approached for the HH survey. HH survey questionnaire was also adapted as it is from the endline evaluation of cohort I.

As a part of the quantitative survey, learning and numeracy assessment was administered using Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)<sup>7</sup> tool. The ASER tool was a replacement to Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) because the tool did not rightly capture the learning of the project's beneficiaries. The EGRA and EGMA tool was intended to measure the learning outcome of in-school children, and not the learning outcome of out of school children with basic literacy gained through CLC. Therefore, EE, FM and PIN jointly decided to use ASER tool which was standardized for measuring the proficiency of students up to grade level 3 according to the curriculum of Nepal government. The tool was piloted numerous times before standardizing it by ASER Nepal. However, EE still carried out a piloting of the tool to assess the relevancy of the tool in the context of the project beneficiaries, and later adopted the tool in its original format.

In regards to qualitative tool, checklists were developed to conduct Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) with the stakeholders. The qualitative checklists were designed based on the logical framework and indicators of the projects.

Moreover, the qualitative data collection followed a sequential approach such that the qualitative tools were designed based on the findings of the preliminary analysis of the quantitative survey. After the completion of quantitative data collection, preliminary findings were aggregated and the areas of inquiry were determined for the discussion during qualitative consultations. This helped EE in exploring further the reasons for the gaps identified from the quantitative data. Researchers also noted specific observation and impressions of the respondents to validate and triangulate the findings made during the discussion. Apart from qualitative and quantitative tool, EE also reviewed secondary data to measure one of the project

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<sup>7</sup> ASER tool was developed by ASER Nepal, a member of People's Action for Learning Network (PAL), a global network which is a partnership of countries working across three continents to assess basic reading and math competencies. The tool has been piloted numerous times before standardizing it by ASER Nepal. It is standardized for measuring the proficiency of students up to grade level 3 according to the curriculum of Nepal government. <https://palnetwork.org/aser-nepal/>

indicators. Attendance data of girls were collected and compiled by project was used to calculate the attendance indicator value. In addition to this, project's school level sustainability indicator also requires project to collect school level data to capture attitude change among in-school boys and girls, but, due to delayed intervention with the school, the project is yet to collect the school level data. Once the project completes its data collection, it will be sent to EE for analysis, and for generating the indicator value.

### Enumerators, monitors and researchers

Enumerators collected quantitative data, while the researchers conducted qualitative consultation in the field. FDM has a large pool of enumerators from which enumerators for this survey were recruited. Priority was given to those who had been involved in Aarambha project previously. This is because these enumerators were familiar with the questions, format and context of the survey. The key qualifications sought in the enumerators was language competency - they needed to be able to converse in local languages spoken in the sampled Terai districts.

FDM also recruited one field monitor for each district based on their past experience of data management and coordination in the field. These field monitors were assigned with the primary responsibility of ensuring the quality of data collected by the enumerators as well as to ensure that the enumerators followed the research ethics. Field monitors were available at the field throughout the data collection and directly reported to the project coordinator.

For the purpose of qualitative consultation, researchers from FDM who had prior experience of working in GEC and LNGB project were selected. These researchers who are well experienced in conducting FGDs and KIIs and taking notes and transcribing were involved in the qualitative inquiry. A team of two researchers from FDM were deployed in each of the two districts. The qualitative data collection was conducted by FDM researchers who had been deployed from the office in Kathmandu.

### Training

After the selection of enumerators and monitors, FDM organized a three-day training in each district to share the purpose of the baseline study and its importance for the project. The event provided an in-depth knowledge about the questions, particularly on Life skill and WGQCF and also familiarized them with the use of mobile platform for collecting data. The enumerators were also oriented on quantitative tools – learning tests (ASER), household survey, and girls survey. The training additionally acquainted the enumerators with child safeguarding policies and the basic etiquettes to be maintained during the data collection. The training covered the following areas:

<i>Day I</i>	The training commenced with discussion on the training agenda. After this, safe guarding expert from PIN conducted an online session on 'do no harm' and 'child safeguarding' policy to the monitors and enumerators. Thereafter, enumerators and monitors were trained on the basic use of tablet which was the medium of data collection and all the questions pertaining to household survey were explained thoroughly one by one. At the end, a mock interview was conducted to familiarize the enumerators with the question.
<i>Day II</i>	On the second day, girls survey questions along with ASER tool was discussed one by one in detail. After completing all the questions, the

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enumerators were divided in a group of two for the mock session. The session also included things like fieldwork planning, going through the filled-up questionnaire, data quality, reporting, and uploading the data.

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*Day III*

On this day, a pilot test, a part of the training itself, was conducted in the nearby village of Bara and Rautahat of districts. A team comprising of ten enumerators, and one monitor in each of the two districts were deployed for the pilot test. In the field, enumerators interviewed at least two individuals each. The feedback session from the pilot test was held at the respective location. In the pilot test, most of the bugs and errors in the android questionnaire were identified and resolved later before the commencement of the actual baseline fieldwork. This exercise helped the participants to become familiar with the questions and identify the field level challenges. After the piloting, the roles and responsibilities of enumerators, and monitors were discussed.

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In regards to qualitative consultation, prior to the field mobilization, the research coordinator provided a day orientation to the researchers from FDM on the project objectives, log frame, preliminary quantitative finding and what the checklist aimed to achieve through qualitative consultation. It was ensured that the researchers grasp the main idea of each question to gather rich information. In addition to this, these researchers were also oriented on collecting sensitive information from the girls. Since the researchers had been involved in the qualitative tool design process from the very beginning, an extensive training was not required for them. However, the Project Coordinator did conduct a brief orientation before the field visit to ensure that key areas were adequately covered during qualitative tool administration.

## **2.4.2 During data collection**

### **Quantitative data collection**

Baseline data collection commenced on 28 January, 2021 in both Bara and Rautahat district. The data collection took 16 days to complete in both the districts. Data collection was done through Open Data Kit (ODK) software in a tablet. Each enumerator used a tablet with ODK application installed that contained the structured questionnaire. An additional printed copy of the questionnaire and backup chargers were provided to the survey team in case of emergency use. The monitors in each team ensured the quality of the data collected. Monitors were responsible to lead the enumerators during times of difficulty or confusions that arose during data-collection. In addition, monitor ensured that the data collected in the tablet were uploaded to the server and communicated the field update with the project coordinator on a daily basis. A team in Kathmandu continuously monitored the uploaded data in the real time basis and provided feedback in case of errors in the data. Any emerging mistakes were sorted through telephone conversation with the monitors and enumerators.

In order to ensure that all the child safeguarding policies and ethical protocol were followed in the field, all enumerators were provided training on child safeguarding policies and ethical guidelines. A written consent from the girls and household was taken before each interview was conducted. Each of the respondents were made aware about the data protection and confidentiality of their information verbally. For the safety of enumerators, researchers, and monitors, FDM provided an insurance package. In addition to this, local authorities were



formally informed about data collection prior to its commencement. FDM and the team worked in close coordination with the local partner for smooth data collection in the field.

A sampling list that comprised of name of all the girls, their respective CLC, age and ethnicity were provided to the enumerators and monitors. The first point of contact for enumerators was CLC and the CLC facilitator. The list of the girls was verified from the CLC attendance sheet, before conducting the survey. For some of the girls who were not present in the CLC on the day of data collection, enumerators had to visit their household for tracking them. When the same girls could not be met, enumerators planned for re-visit to their respective houses for the survey. Even when the girls were not available after three consecutive attempts, or if the enumerators were unsuccessful in locating the girls, a replacement strategy was used. While replacing the girls, it was ensured that the demographic characteristics including the CLC itself matched. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the girls for the purpose of replacement.

### **Qualitative data collection**

The baseline study adopted a sequential mixed method where the qualitative checklists were informed by the preliminary quantitative findings. The qualitative checklist was prepared by FDM which was first formulated first in English language. Once the checklist was thoroughly worked upon by FM and FDM, the checklist was translated from English into Nepali language. While translating the checklist into Nepali language, it was ensured that no complex language with technical terms was used. Questions were not translated word to word, but it ensured that the questions did not lose its essence. Moreover, questions were simplified so that it was easy for the respondent to comprehend. Team leader checked translation before finalizing the checklist. Field level qualitative exercise was rolled out thereafter. Both FGDs and KIIs were carried out with the relevant stakeholders in two districts simultaneously.

All the interviews and discussions were electronically recorded by the researchers with the consent from the respondents. Every qualitative consultation was initiated with general talks and rapport building. Questions pertaining to the projects and intervention were only asked when the stakeholders felt comfortable sharing their opinions.

Since there were two teams deployed in different districts simultaneously, general trend, experience, happenings of one district were shared with the researchers of another district. This helped to get a generalized and differences in view from both the districts to triangulate the information gathered. This further identified the areas that needed to be prioritised and probed when deemed necessary. Researchers' reflections during the qualitative consultations were also recorded. There was no such issue came up with people collection poor data. After the qualitative exercises concluded in the two 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.

### **Quality Assurance**

Appropriate measures were taken to ensure the quality of the study in each step of the survey. Before the actual fieldwork was underway, FDM team with conjunction with PIN team and FM, went through revisions on the format and the contents of the survey questionnaire as well as qualitative checklist in order to eliminate ambiguities, language complexity and complicated

skip patterns. In addition, mature and experienced researchers and enumerators who had the contextual understanding of the study, were selected for the project.

Field work training was an essential part of the quality control process. The training focused on an in-depth discussion of the questionnaire in order to familiarize the enumerators with the questions, options, skip patterns and other details. Besides, the enumerators conducted mock interviews in order to train themselves on how to conduct interviews. Furthermore, detailed field plan was placed with a total of 20 enumerators and two monitors. Field plan was devised to meet planned as well as unforeseen challenges and thereby to ensure the smooth operation of day-to-day field activities. Monitors were essential part of the FDM team that helped further to ensure data quality. The monitors ensured data quality by assessing the performance of the enumerators. Monitors checked whether or not the enumerators were executing the tasks they were expected to perform. Below are some important specific checks the monitors conducted to ensure the smooth functioning of the fieldwork. Spot-checks were done by monitor to ensure that correct respondents were selected for interview, and the selection process are also correct. Additionally, back-end check was continuously being performed by core FDM team in Kathmandu to find the missing data and errors.

### **2.4.3 Post data collection**

#### **Data cleaning and storage**

The quantitative data received from mobile platform was taken utmost care to prevent the unforeseen loss of data during any cleaning and analysis process. Therefore, password protected soft copies were saved in multiple computers of FDM's office. It was shared only between the core evaluation team members.

The android software, ODK, itself allowed for range-checks. During the data collection process FDM team in Kathmandu regularly checked and cleaned the database for complete blank entries and conditional field cleaning. Various errors in the data that would come during the fieldwork could come about due to the negligence of the enumerators rather than due to the limitations of the software. It is difficult to rectify such errors just by looking at the data. Thus, if the person in charge of data monitoring at FDM had doubts in the data sent in by enumerators, he/she contacted the concerned enumerator to identify the issue and rectify the error. Thus, at the time the fieldwork was going on, one person from FDM was constantly monitored the data that came in.

The data cleaning process followed a process of sorting variables, and checking for consistency. Data was also checked for the representativeness of the sample on the basis of ethnicity, school status, age and project areas. Frequency distribution was checked for each variable for identifying any missing data and inconsistency, which was subjected to update by recontacting the enumerators wherever possible. For instance, in this survey the actual sample size was 400. For every question after taking into account the filters, the base was 400. In case of extreme outliers, FDM checked how this has come about and whether or not such a response is justified. For example, the actual age of the respondent, and the age when the respondent got married was sometimes recorded too high than the current age. Cases such as these were informed to the concerned enumerators. Then the suitable course of action for dealing with such discrepancies was adopted. Data was also checked for any duplication which could easily be spotted through the unique id provided to each girl/household. While cleaning, it was ensured that the codes used in baseline matched exactly with the code of the master list.

Once all the correction was entered into Excel, data were exported into SPSS. All the values were then properly labelled. A double entry mechanism was maintained to establish a backup database if the working file or sheet gets deleted or data is lost. In order to mitigate the risks of data loss, a master database was maintained in more than two computers and external storage devices.

While one team was cleaning the data, another research team was simultaneously collecting qualitative data at the field. While conducting the interviews the researchers recorded the entire interview so that it could be used for producing transcripts and field notes. Recordings were only done when all the participants provided consent to do so. The FDM researchers ensured that the qualitative data were also representative of various attributes that were looked at through quantitative data. The recordings were duly saved in FDM computer as a data protection strategy. The transcripts of the qualitative consultations were established on a

## Data analysis

### *Quantitative analysis*

The cleaned data was exported to IBM SPSS 23 for analysis. The cleaned data was checked for normality test using box plot and normal curve for all of the continuous variables so that any existing outliers could be detected. The normal distribution and skewness of data was used as a basis for deciding on the parametric and non-parametric tests done. Descriptive analysis was done for most of the variables including frequency distribution and various measures of central tendency and dispersion of variation. In addition, following tests were used during analysis to establish the relationship and test the significance were independent/two sample t-test, paired sample t-test, one-way anova, correlation, and chi-square test.

### *Qualitative analysis*

Qualitative recording and notes which were in Nepali language were firstly transcribed into English. The notes and recording were not transcribed word to word but summary of each question was written to make a transcript. Once the transcripts were prepared, further analysis of qualitative data was done. Following steps were used for qualitative data analysis:

Data coding: The transcripts of the qualitative discussion were coded for further analysis. The coding involved identification of key terms and grouping the responses. Descriptive coding was used for the study. This was especially important as it was pivotal in enabling the research team to efficiently pull out and refer back to data throughout report preparation. As the qualitative research was conducted under sequential mixed method design and was primarily intended to provide causal inference and explanation to finding from quantitative data descriptive coding was done.

Theme generation: In this step, the data with preliminary coding were further grouped into themes through the process of “focused coding” - combining smaller, related coded data into one category, subdividing more common coded data into sub categories or eliminate themes/categories that became outliers. The thematic coding was done during a two days’ workshop at FDM among the four research team members. Matrices were used for grouping of the coded data into themes which were identified based upon the log-frame indicator, evaluation questions, midline report template, and preliminary findings from quantitative data. This process also enabled the systematic organization of information from qualitative consultations and in determining trends among groups and contexts. An interrater agreement of 80% or above was sought for validation.

Data Interpretation: This step involved analysis of the data which were coded and categorized into themes and drawing conclusion. The interpretation i.e., analysis and conclusion of the data focused on explaining trends and findings casual interference to the quantitative data. This step also included presentation of opposing views, use of quotes and sought to establish inter thematic validation and relation of data.

After the analysis was completed following the above-mentioned methods, the findings were interpreted and consolidated into a report. The findings were presented following guideline provided by fund manager and also segregated based on the different sub groups identified during analysis.

## Challenges in baseline data collection and limitations of the evaluation design

Challenges	Mitigation Measure
Parents of some of the girls kept interrupting the interview during girls' survey because they expected that they would get something in return	The monitors and enumerators had to reiterate the things written in the consent form few times, and explain with clarity the purpose of the survey, and explain that they would not get anything in return for participating in the research. Social mobilizers were informed by the field staff about the situation to protect it from escalating any further.
Girls who were the project beneficiaries but those who were not included in the sample persistently insisted the enumerators to interview them as well. This resulted in delay in data collection.	Monitor and enumerators explained the concept of sampling and how the data will be used. Social mobilizers were informed who further helped to explain that their non-participation in the survey would not hamper their learning or the benefits they get from the project.
Longitudinal evaluation modality of GEC implied keeping record of identifiable personal information like name, phone number and address. Collecting these sorts of personal information from the girls made some parents skeptical and sometimes they asked questions on how this information would later be used.	To mitigate this issue, FDM team did not directly ask their phone numbers of the girls but instead asked for their husband's or parents' number so that girls did not get into trouble for sharing phone number.
Difference in enumerators' understanding of questions resulting in irregularities in response	In order to make sure that enumerators were all on the same page in terms of understanding the questions, all sets of tools were separately discussed, question-by-question during enumerators training. Confusions flagged up during training were discussed and sorted out in the group itself. A mock-session was run among the enumerators themselves to make sure that everyone understood the questions in the same and uniform manner. Throughout the data collection process, monitors from the FDM, including the research coordinator, were available to answer any concerns raised by enumerators in data collection process.
Language barrier during qualitative consultation	Interpreter with local language competency was hired for easy communication between researcher and the participants. The interpreter was trained on the types of questions so that the essence of the question or answer would not be lost in translation.
OOS girls in some of the CLCs were not able to talk or express their opinion freely. A fair amount of time was invested in rapport building and probing.	Before proceeding with the checklist questions, researchers started with informal conversation a bit longer than usual and then only proceeded with the questions.

### Limitations

Apart from the challenges mentioned above, there were few limitations which might have affected the robustness or reliability of the evaluation design. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative results reported herein should be considered in the light of some limitations which is given below:

- Sensitive information such as information on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) were the most difficult to administer, mainly due to religious and cultural factors due to which the response on these questions were low.
- There was some sort of self-reported bias in some of the bias in which might have over-estimated the results. This was out of control of EE as studies like this involves opinions and behaviours of human which can hardly be verified independently. Furthermore, research ethics directs enumerators for respecting the views of respondents leading to taking the information at face values.
- Due to the pandemic, school level activity was yet to start from the project's side hence, school and classroom observation which were tools to measure school sustainability could not be done.
- Since qualitative research is a perspective-based, the responses given could not be measured. Moreover, in researcher's presence during qualitative consultation there could be biased response from the participants which is often unavoidable in qualitative research

### **Representativeness of the samples**

The sample selected for the evaluation was fully representative. Representativeness of sampling was ensured considering the project's marginalization framework, the following inclusion criteria was used to select the primary beneficiaries:

- Beneficiaries were between the age of 10-19 years
- Beneficiaries were unmarried, married or waiting for Gauna
- Beneficiaries were either out-of-school girls who had never attended school, out-of-school girls who had attended some level of schooling but were currently dropped out.
- Girls who resided in the project intervention area.
- Residence: living in project target area

It was ensured all beneficiaries met the above-mentioned criteria to enrol in the project, regardless of their disability status, literacy levels, caste/ethnicity, or any other socio-economic and cultural factors, as well as literacy level. Once the sample size was calculated, stratified random sampling was done to select the target OOS adolescent girls to draw out individuals for baseline from the sampling frame. During stratification, the proportionate inclusion of sub groups was taken into account. The identified treatment and comparison groups was representative of at least 50% of the learning centres. 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 intervenes in the two broad age groups of 10-14 and 15-19. The girls within age group 10-14 will be enrolled into formal education after CLC class. Girls within age group 15-19 will either enroll into formal education or participate in the skill development training and then get into employment. Table below discusses the sample breakdown by intervention pathways. By districts, the project intervenes in two districts in Terai- Bara and Rautahat. Table 11 discusses the sample of girls by age. Table 12 discusses the proportion of girls having difficulty in different domains of disability as informed by Washington Group of Child Functioning Module. The girls who had the two levels of

difficulty- “a lot of difficulty” and “cannot do at all” were disaggregated by the domains of difficulty. Overall, there were 7.13% girls who were stated to have at least “a lot of difficulty” in either of the difficulty domains outlined in table 12.

## Sample distribution

The sample distribution according to different characteristics are presented in the tables below:

### EVALUATION SAMPLE BREAKDOWN DISTRICT

	Baseline	Endline
<b>Sample breakdown (Girls)</b>		
Bara	50% (200)	NA
Rautahat	50% (200)	NA
Girls sample size	100% (400)	NA

Source: Girl's survey n= 400

### EVALUATION SAMPLE BREAKDOWN (BY AGE)

	Baseline	Endline
<b>Sample breakdown (Girls)</b>		
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	NA	NA
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	14.3% (57)	
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	28.3% (114)	
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	31.8% (127)	
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	9.6% (38)	
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	16% (64)	
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	22.2% (63)	
Girls (sample size)	100% (400)	
<b>Sample breakdown (Boys)</b>		
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	NA	NA
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	NA	NA
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	NA	NA
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	NA	NA
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	NA	NA
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	NA	NA
Boys (sample size)	NA	NA
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	NA	NA

### Sample breakdown by intervention pathways

	Baseline	Endline
<b>Sample breakdown (Girls)</b>		
Girls within age group (10-14) who will enrol into formal education after CLC	63% (252)	NA
Girls within age group (15-19) who will either enrol into formal education or skill development training and employment	37% (148)	NA
Girls sample size	100% (400)	NA

EVALUATION SAMPLE BREAKDOWN (BY DISABILITY)

**Girls with disability (% overall)** Provide data per domain of difficulty and in addition if using child functioning set also present data by each question

Sample breakdown (Girls)		Baseline	Endline	
WG Child functioning questions		Domain of functioning	NA	
Difficulty seeing	Seeing	2.5% (10)		
Difficulty hearing	Hearing	2 % (8)		
Difficulty walking or climbing steps	Walking	2% (8)		
Difficulty with self-care	Cognitive	0.25% (1)		
Difficulty with communication		3.75% (15)		
Difficulty learning		12% (48)		
Difficulty remembering		11.50% (46)		
Difficulty concentrating		10.25% (41)		
Difficulty accepting change		10.50% (42)		
Difficulty in behaviour		14.25% (57)		
Difficulty making friends		15.25% (61)		
Anxiety (feeling anxious)		Psycho-social	2% (8)	
Depression (feeling depressed)			2.5% (10)	

Note: The approach adopted by the GEC is that a child identified as having a disability is one who is recorded as having a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all-in-one or more domain. This applies to both the Washington Group Short Set of Questions and the Child Functioning Set of questions.

EVALUATION SAMPLE BREAKDOWN (BY DISABILITY SEVERITY) – BASELINE

Domain of difficulty	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	
	A lot of difficulty	Cannot do at all	Some Difficulty	No Difficulty at all	
Seeing	0.25%	0%	0.75%	1%	
Hearing	0%	0%	0%	0.25%	
Walking	0.03%	0%	1.80%	1.00%	
Self-care	0%	0%	0%	80%	
Communication	0.8%	0%	3 %	96.30%	
Learning	0.3%	0%	11.8%	88%	
Remembering	0.5%	0%	11.0%	88.5%	
Concentrating	0.5%	0%	9.8%	89.8%	
Accepting Change	0.5%	0%	10%	89.5%	
Controlling Behaviour	0.8%	0.5%	13%	85.5%	
Making Friends	0.5%	0.8%	14%	84.8%	
Domain of difficulty	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times	Never
Anxiety	0.3%	0.0%	1.8%	69.5%	28.5%

Depression	0.3%	0.00%	2.3%	64.8%	32.8%
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## Annex 3: Characteristics and Barriers

This section discusses the characteristics of the sampled population, along with the key barriers which aids in understanding the educational marginalisation of girls across different sub-groups. The characteristics are presented below:

### 3.1 Characteristics

#### Ethnicity

Based on the distribution of households by ethnicity, majority (35.3%) of the sampled OOS girls belonged to Terai Madhesi Dalit, followed by 27.5% girls who belonged to Terai Madhesi Others. The representation of girls from Muslim ethnicity were 25.8% and Terai/Madhesi Janajati had the lowest representation of 11.5%.

Girls' characteristics (10-14 and 15-19)

Characteristics	Total	Sub-group		Source (Household /Girls School survey)
	Overall (n=400)	10-14 (n=252)	15-19 (n=148)	
<b>Ethnicity</b>				Girls Survey
Terai/Madhesi dalit	35.3%	34.9%	35.8%	=(
Terai/Madhesi janajati	11.5%	9.5%	14.9%	
Terai/Madhesi others	27.5%	33.7%	16.9%	
Muslim	25.8%	21.8%	25.8%	
<b>Source of household income</b>				HH Survey
Agriculture	62.5%	63.1%	61.5%	
Livestock rearing	1%	0.8%	1.4%	
Job/Services	0.3%	0.4%	0	
Business	-	-	-	
Daily Wage	33.2%	32.9%	33.8%	
Foreign employment	3%	2.8%	3.4%	
<b>Language</b>				Girls Survey
Bhojpuri	50%	45.6%	57.4%	
Bajika	50%	54.4%	42.6%	
<b>Household characteristics</b>				
Girls with children	13.5%	0	36.49%	Girls Survey
Head of household has no/ limited education	93.3%	92.5%	94.6%	HH Survey
Households having 5 or more than 5 members	95.3%	94.8%	95.9%	HH Survey
<b>Poverty</b>				
Household not having land for themselves	41%	43.7%	36.5%	HH Survey
Roof made of hay	33.3%	38.5%	24.3%	HH Survey
Unable to meet basic needs	53%	54.4%	50.7%	HH Survey

Gone hungry to sleep many days in the past year	72.3%	73%	70.9%	HH Survey
HH with not having enough cash income	51.9%	48.4%	59.5%	HH Survey

## Language

OOS girls who spoke Bhojpuri language were the highest (57.4%) for girls within the age group (15-19) and Bajika was the most used language (54.4%) among girls between the age group (10-14). Despite the variation in percentage between Bajika and Bhojpuri, data clearly showed that all the girls extensively used only their primary language as a medium of communication.

## Household Income

Data depicted the majority (62.5%) of the sampled households relied on agriculture as their source for income. Age wise disaggregation showed that 63.1% who relied on agriculture belonged to age group (10-14), and 51.5% belonged to age group (15-19). Daily wage was the second highest source of household income which accounted for 33.3%. Disaggregation based on age showed 32.9% were of the age group (10-14) and 33.8% were of the age group (15-19). Job and Service was lowest (0.3%) contributor to household income across both the age groups.

## Household

The household characteristics is comprised of three sub-categories, which are, 'OOS girls with children,' 'education of parents', and 'girls having more than five members in the family.'

13.5% of the OOS girls accounted for having children of their own. From the age group (15-19), 36.49% of the OOS girls had children while girls from age group (10-14) did not have any children.

In terms of the education level of OOS girls' parents, overall, 52% had little to no education at all. Data disaggregation based on sub-group showed that 47.62% parents of girls between age (10-14) and 59.46% parents of girls aged (15-19) had little or no education at all. Data depicted that 95.3% of the total girls had more than five members in their family. Disaggregation based on subgroup showed that for both the age groups (10-14) and (15-19) more than 94% of the household had five or more than five members in the household.

## Poverty

The poverty characteristics were sub-categorized by 'household not having land for themselves,' 'roof made out of hay,' 'unable to meet basic need,' 'gone hungry without sleep', and 'not having enough cash income'.

For poverty characteristics, 43.7% OOS girls belonging to the age group (10-14) and 36.5% from age group (15-19) reported not having a land for themselves. In regards to the condition of the house, 38.5% girls between the age (10-14) had roof of the house made up of hay or plastic and 24.3% girls of age (15-19) had roof made out of hay or plastic. This showed that girls of age (10-15) lived in a better house than girls of age (10-14).

In regards to household unable to meet their basic need, out of the total sampled girls, 53% said they were unable to meet basic need. Disaggregation on the basis of age showed that 54.4% of the girls between the age (10-14) were unable to meet their basic need. The percentage was

slightly lower for the age group (15-19), where 50.7% of the girls reported that they were unable to meet their basic need.

Households were also asked if they had to go hungry to sleep at night. 72.3% of the respondents said that they had to go to bed hungry. Disaggregated data depicted that a slightly higher (73%) percentage of girls belonging to the age group 10-14 went to sleep hungry, than girls of the age group 15-19 (70.9%).

Lastly, households were asked if they had enough cash income to meet their daily need, out of the total, 51.9% households said they did not have enough income. Data disaggregation on the basis of age showed that 48.4% households belonging to girls of age (10-14) said they had shortage of cash income. In regards to age group (15-19), 59.5% households said that they did not have enough cash income.

### 3.2 Barriers

The project in its theory of change outlined barriers to girls learning and transition based on their experience of working with adolescent girls. The barriers identified by the project were social isolation, lack of peer support network, limited access to literacy and numeracy, limited access to family planning, early marriage, limited life skills- low levels of self-esteem and vulnerability to or experience of GBV. Apart from the barriers outlined by the project, the baseline evaluation showed ‘Safety issue’, ‘Unsupportive parents’ and ‘Household chores’ as key barriers to OOS girls’ learning and transition.

Barriers	Category				
	Age group		Muslim		Total
	10-14 n=252	15-19 n=148	Muslim n=103	Non Muslim n=297	
Fairly unsafe or very unsafe to travel	49.2%	56.1%	61.2%	48.5%	51.8%
<b>Unsupportive parents</b>					
Doesn't get support to participate in training (support in life plan)	1.2%	3.4%	3.9%	1.3%	2.0%
Doesn't get support to initiate business (support in life plan)	33.7%	37.2%	41.7%	32.7%	35.0%
Doesn't get support to join school/formal class (support in life plan)	32.9%	40.5%	38.8%	34.7%	35.8%
<b>Household chores</b>					
Has to perform household chores most of the day	79%	63.5%	67%	75.4%	73.3%

#### Safety issue

In regards to safety issue, overall, 51.8% of parents said that it was unsafe for girls to travel to school. The reason for considering unsafe was found to be due to distance of school from home, road blocks and harassment. Data showed that 38.6% parents reported unsafe to be due to long distance, 21% reported it to be due to roadblocks and 15% said it was due to harassment and teasing, and the remaining were due to poor road conditions, conflict among others.

Disaggregation based on age showed that 56.1% girls belonging to the age group (15-19) considered travelling to school unsafe. The percentage was slightly less (49.2%) for girls of age group (10-14). Disaggregation based on ethnicity (divided into Muslim girls and non-Muslim girls), also showed that percentage as high as 61.2% of Muslim girl considered travelling to school unsafe as compared to non-Muslim girls.

### **Unsupportive parents**

Unsupportive parents were another potential barrier identified by the project. Three questions were analysed to measure this as a barrier, i.e. ‘doesn’t get support to participate in training (support in life plan)’, ‘doesn’t get support to initiate business (support in life plan)’, ‘doesn’t get support to join school/formal class (support in life plan)’. Data showed that overall, only 2% parents said that they would not support girls to take part in the training. However, there were 35% parents who said that they would not support the girls to initiate any kind of business or support in joining formal education.

Disaggregation based on age showed that, for the age group 15-19 years 40.5% parents said they would not let them joining formal school and 37.2% parents said they would not allow them to initiate any kind of business. But, for the girls between the age (10-14), only 32.9% parents opposed of joining formal schooling and 33% opposed of supporting in business. This showed that girls of age 10-14 had more freedom in pursuing or taking a transition path that for girls of age 15-19.

Disaggregation based on ethnicity showed that non-Muslim girls were more likely to get support from their parents to transition either to school or initiate a business than Muslim girls. Data depicted 41.7% parents of Muslim girls who would not support if their girls wished to initiate a business. The percentage for non-Muslim whose parents would not support them to initiate a business was less by almost half (32.7%) than the percentage of Muslim girls. Similarly, even for support in joining formal education, parents of Muslim girls are slightly apprehensive than parents of non-Muslim girls. 38.8% parents said that they would not support their girls formal schooling and 34.7% parents of the non-Muslim girls said they would not support in sending their girls to formal education.

### **Household chores**

In regards to household chores 73.3% girls said that they are involved in household work most of the day. Disaggregation based on age group showed that girls of age (10-14) had to perform relatively more household work than girls of age (15-19). 79% of the girls from age group (10-14) said they performed household chores most of the day while 63.5% of the girls from age group (15-19) said they performed household chores most times of the day.

The disaggregation of Muslim ethnicity and Non-Muslim ethnicity show that those belonging to non-Muslim ethnicity have to work more than Muslim ethnicity. 75.4% of the girls from non-Muslim and 67% of the girls from Muslim community said they performed household chores most of the days.

Apart from the barriers mentioned in the section which was generated through quantitative finding. Some other barriers such as ‘repressive parental attitude’, ‘Restriction in mobility’,

‘girls’ not being able to identify a good life transition’ and ‘dowery’ were other barriers that was generated through qualitative consultation which has been discussed in the main report.

Characteristics subgroup and barriers of sample for portfolio level aggregation and analysis

Characteristic/Barrier	Proportion of baseline sample (%)
Single orphans	N/A
Double orphans	N/A
Living without both parents	17.25%
Living in female headed household	26.5%
Married	18.3%
Married but waiting for Gauna	3%
Mother under 18 (n=54)	13%
Mother under 16 (n=54)	1.9%
Difficult to afford for girl to go to school	20.8%
Household doesn't own land for themselves	41%
Material of the roof (hay)	33.3%
Household unable to meet basic needs	53%
Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	72.3%
Language different from mother tongue	100%
Girl doesn't speak LoI	NA
HoH has little to no education	93.3%
<i>Sufficient time to study: High chore burden (Performed HH chores the whole day %)</i>	73.30%
girls aged 10-14	63%
girls aged 15-19	37%
Muslim girls	25.75%
Never been to school	52.50%
Dropped out	43.80%

## Annex 4: Learning outcome

The girls for the baseline evaluation were identified and listed by the project based on the CLC they were enrolled in. It was then from the master list that girls were sampled for the survey. As the project broadly worked with two intervention subgroups based on age, the beneficiary list of girls attending CLC class were divided into two age groups of 10- 14 and 15-19, thereafter, sample for each of the sub-groups was drawn from total number of beneficiaries, and were divided proportionately among each subgroup. Thus, the baseline sample included 63% girls from age group (10-14) and 37% of the girls from age group (15-19). The analysis for learning outcome included the age subgroup but was not limited to just the age subgroup, but other groups such as school status i.e. never been to school and dropped -out of school, along with ethnicity, i.e. Muslim and non-Muslim

TRACKED AGES (COHORT-II)

Age	Baseline	Endline
10-14	63% (252)	NA
15-19	37% (148)	N/A
School status		
Never been to school	52.5%	NA
Dropped out of school	47.5%	N/A
Ethnicity		
Muslim	25.7%	NA
Non-Muslim	74.3%	N/A

### 4.1 Learning

The focus of the project through its interventions is to enrol girls back to school. The six-month CLC classes run by the project is aimed to increase the literacy level of girls so that by the end of the class, OOS girls enrol into formal schooling. The placement of these girls into a specific class will be decided by the school management based on the placement test the schools carries out. The girls who do not follow the learning track of intervention after CLC classes will be eligible for acquiring vocational skills. The project will collaborate and harmonize with parents and local NGO i.e Aasman Nepal, and link them with the vocational opportunities available.

During the time of baseline evaluation, OOS girls were in the first month of attending CLC classes. External evaluators conducted learning tests with all 400 girls for deriving the baseline learning levels. ASER tool was used to capture girl's literacy and numeracy proficiency level. EE followed the exact guideline developed by ASER Nepal for testing literacy and numeracy. According to the guideline, the girls did not need to attempt all the subtasks; both the literacy and the numeracy assessments were administered in a manner similar to adaptive testing: the assessment began at task -three, and then proceeded either up to task four or down to task two, depending on whether the girl completed task- three to a satisfactory standard. This administration method meant that each girl completed only two or three tasks per domain. For instance, girls were first asked to read out a sentence. If girls could correctly read out the sentence, they proceeded to reading the story. If they could easily read the story without mistake, they advanced to comprehension level. However, if girls could not read the sentence

itself, they regressed to word identification, and those who could not even identify words, reverted to letter identification. Similarly, for numeracy, first girls were asked to identify three-digit number, if they could identify three-digit number, they proceeded to subtraction and division thereafter. However, if the girls were stuck at identifying three-digit number itself, they reverted to identifying double-digit number. If they even failed to identify double-digit number, they reverted to identifying single-digit number.

#### SUBTASKS OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY TEST

	Task I	Task II	Subtask III	Subtask IV	Subtask V
Nepali and English	Letter identification (contains 10 letters)	Word identification (contains 10 words)	Reading Sentence (contains 4 sentences)	Reading story (contains story that are composed by the combination of words used in subtask 3)	Story comprehension (contains 2 questions related to the story)
Mathematics	Recognize 1-digit number (contains 10 of the 1-digit numbers)	Recognize 2-digits number (contains 10 of the 2-digits numbers)	Recognize 3-digits number (contains 10 of the 3-digits numbers)	Subtraction (Contains 4 subtraction question of 2-digits number that needs borrowing)	Division (Contains 2 problems of 3-digits numbers divided by - digit number with remainder)

OOS girls' proficiency level was classified as Non learner, Emergent, learner, Established learner and Proficient Learner. OOS girls were categorized on the proficiency level that they achieved during the learning test. Proficiency level was determined on the basis of the sub-tasks which the student passed. The proficiency level was set in a manner that those who could not identify anything were classified as 'Non-learners.' Those who could identify letters and words were categorized as 'Emergent learners.' Those who could read out sentence and story correctly were categorised as 'Established learners', and lastly those who reached comprehension level, and answered the questions correctly were categorized as 'Proficient learners. For instance, if a girl completed reading a story and progressed to comprehension level, but if she could not answer the comprehension question, she would be categorised as 'Established Learner' and not 'Proficient Learner'.

Likewise, for numeracy, those who could identify single-and double-digit numbers were categorised as 'Emergent learners. Those who could identify three-digit numbers and correctly solve subtraction were categorised as 'Established learner' and those who could correctly solve division were categorised as 'Proficient Learner'. Lastly, those girls who could not identify even a single digit fell under 'Non-Learner' category. Described below is the analysis of both numeracy and literacy proficiency of girls.

The overall literacy proficiency showed 52.25% girls were 'non-learners', 41.50% were 'emergent learners', 2.5% were 'established learners' and 3.75% were 'proficient learners.' Similarly, proficiency in numeracy showed 75.5 % girls as 'non-learners', 21.5% as 'emergent learners', and only 2.5%, and 0.5% as 'established', and 'proficient learners' respectively. The

fact that there were 75.5% non-learners in numeracy, and only 52.25% in literacy, meant that girls were better in the latter than the former.

### Overall proficiency level

Literacy/Numeracy and other	Non-Learner	Emergent Learner	Established Learner	Proficient Learner
Nepali	52.25% (209)	41.50% (166)	2.5% (10)	3.75% (15)
Mathematics	75.5% (302)	21.5% (86)	2.5% (10)	0.5% (2)
Other (English)	71.25% (285)	28.25% (113)	0.5% (2)	(0)

Similarly, in regards to achieving proficiency in English, 71.25% were ‘non-learners’, 28.25% were ‘emergent learners’, 0.5% were ‘established learners’, and there were none who were ‘proficient learners.’

## Literacy

### Nepali

The breakdown of OOS girls by their characteristic sub-groups showed 19% girls between the age group (10-14) who had never been to school were ‘non-learners’ meaning that they were not able to complete even the letters or words task correctly. Following this, there were only 0.25% who were ‘established learners’ which meant that only these small percentage of girls were able to complete reading the story task correctly.

For girls who were dropped out, 11.50% were ‘non-learners’, 12.5% were ‘established learner’, and 1.5% were ‘proficient learners.’ The difference in percentage between girls’ school status with the learning proficiency level showed non-significant relationship for this particular subgroup (age10-14).

### Literacy (Nepali) proficiency level across Baseline

Age Group	Sub Group	Non-Learner	Emergent Learner	Established Learner	Proficient Learner	Total
10-14 (n=252)	Never been to school	57.1% (76)	38.3% (51)	0.8% (1)	3.8% (5)	133
	Drop out	45.4% (54)	45.4% (54)	4.2% (5)	5.0% (6)	119
15-19 (n=148)	Never been to school	62.3% (48)	32.5% (25)	5.2% (4)	(0)	77
	Drop out	43.7% (31)	50.7% (36)	(0)	5.61% (4)	71
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
(n=400)	Muslim	42.7% (44)	46.6% (48)	4.9% (5)	5.8% (6)	103
	Non Muslim	55.6% (165)	39.7% (118)	1.7% (5)	3.0% (9)	297

In regards to age group 15-19 who had never been to school, 12% were ‘non-learners’, 6.25% were ‘emergent learner’, and only 1% were ‘established learners.’ There were no girls who reached ‘proficient level’, meaning that none of the girls from this particular sub-group could complete the comprehension task. Similarly, among the girls who were drop out, 6.25% were



‘non-learner’, 9% were ‘emergent learner’ and 1% were ‘proficient learner.’ The relationship between school status of girls with the Nepali learning outcome showed significant relationship for this particular subgroup (15-19 years).

Data depicted that irrespective of their school status (either dropped out, or never been to school), the percentage of ‘non-learners’ or ‘proficient learners’ were almost the same. The fact that girls of both the age groups i.e 10-14 and 15-19, who had attended some level of schooling, had almost the same proficiency level as those girls who had never been to school. The reason for this could be because most of the girls (88.1%) had dropped out of school before even completing their primary education and since it had been more than three years that majority of these girls had dropped out of school, there were high likely to have forgotten the things learnt in school.

In regards to ethnicity, 11% Muslim girls were not able to identify even letters, and were classified under ‘non-learner’. 12% were able to read words and sentence and were classified under ‘emergent learner’, 1.25% were able to read story and were classified under ‘established learner’ and only 1.5% were able to solve comprehension passage and were categorized as ‘proficient learner.’ Among non-Muslim girls, 41.25% were ‘non-learner’, 29.5% were ‘emergent learner’, 1.25% were ‘established learner,’ and 2.25% were ‘proficient learner’.

Therefore, data suggested that although ‘non-learners’ were higher for ‘non-Muslim’ ethnicity, but higher (29.5%) ‘emergent-learner’ suggested that non-Muslim girls were better in identifying letters and words than Muslim girls. This may be because Muslim girls were new to learning Nepali as a language.

### Skill gap analysis

In regards to literacy, girls who were able to answer two questions of the comprehension task correctly were labelled as proficient learners. There were only 3.8% girls who were proficient in Nepali. There were 6.3% girls who reached up till the story level, and fully read it without mistakes. These girls were categorised as established learners. 29.5% girls those who could read only letters and words without any mistakes were classified as emergent learner. Lastly, 42.25% girls, those who could not answer a single question fell under ‘non- learner’ category.

Sentence		Word identification	
Start of the question (sentence level)	7.8% (31)	Emergent Learner	10.5% (42)
Story		Letter identification	
Established learner	6.3% (25)	Emergent Learner	29.5% (118)
Comprehension			
Proficient Learner	3.8% (15)	Non learner	42.25% (169)

### English

English literacy test was perceived by girls to be difficult as compared to the Nepali test. The reason for this as highlighted by qualitative finding directed towards girls’ willingness to learn Nepali more than other subjects. This was because girls deemed Nepali to be relatively easier. It is quite understandable that girls found English to be difficult as their exposure to English language was limited. Even during the classes, CLC facilitator were not very confident in teaching English to girls because of facilitator’s lack of experience of teaching a subject which is completely new for the girls. CLC facilitators themselves agreed to the fact that English was difficult for girls to grasp as many OOS girls did not have any foundation in English at all, and

facilitators explained things in Nepali more than in English due to which its demand was low among girls.

For girls between the age group 10-14, who had never been to school, data depicted that 74.4% were ‘non-learners’ meaning that they unable to answer any of the questions correctly. Following this, there were only 25.6% girls who were ‘emergent learners’, which meant, these girls were able to complete letter and word tasks.

For girls who were dropped- out, 68.1% were ‘non-learners’, 31.1% were ‘emergent learner’, and 0.8% was ‘proficient learner’.

In regards to the age group 15-19 who had never been to school, none of the girls were ‘proficient learners.’ For the same age group (15-19), but for girls who were drop-outs, of the total, only 1.4% girl fell under ‘proficient’ category while the others, 63.4% were ‘non learner, and 31.1% were ‘emergent learner’.

Thus, it can be inferred that for both of the sub-group based on age, girls who were school drop outs, were relatively better than those who had never been to school. However, there were no statistically significant relationship between school status and learning outcomes of girls in English.

### Proficiency in other (English) across Baseline

Age Group	Sub Group	Non-Learner	Emergent-Learner	Established - Learner	Proficient - Learner	Total
10-14 (n=252)	Never been to school	74.4% (99)	25.6% (34)	(0)	(0)	133
	Drop out	68.1% (81)	31.1% (37)	(0)	0.8% (1)	119
15-19 (n=148)	Never been to school	77.9% (60)	22.1% (17)	(0)	(0)	77
	Drop out	63.4% (45)	35.2% (25)	(0)	1.4% (1)	71
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
(n=400)	Muslim	61.2% (63)	37.9% (39)	(0)	1% (1)	103
	Non Muslim	74.7% (222)	24.9% (74)	(0)	0.3% (1)	297

Breakdown based on ethnicity showed that 61.2% Muslim girls were ‘non-learner’. 37.9% were able to read letters and words, hence they were ‘emergent learner’, and lastly only 1% were classified as ‘proficient learners.’ Among non-Muslim girls, 74.7% were ‘non-learner’, 24.9% were ‘emergent learners’, and 0.3% were proficient learner. The relation between ethnicity and, learning outcomes in English was statistically non-significant.

### Skill gap analysis

The English test had the highest (70.25%) girls who were ‘non-learners’ and only 0.5% girls were ‘proficient learners.’ This clearly showed the gap in learning level of girls. Moreover, the fact that there were low percentage (0.5%) of ‘established learners’ also revealed that girls were weaker in English than in Nepali.

Sentence		Word identification	
Start of the question	0.5% (2)	Emergent Learner	4.8% (19)
Story		Letter identification	

Established learner	0.5% (2)	Emergent Learner	23.5% (94)
<b>Comprehension</b>			
Proficient Learner	0.5% (2)	Non-learners	70.25% (281)

## Numeracy

The numeracy proficiency level of OOS girls were measured in the same way, as it was measured for literacy. For numeracy, first, girls were asked to identify three-digit number, if they could identify three-digit number, they proceeded to subtraction and division thereafter. However, if the girls were stuck at identifying three-digit number itself, they reverted to identifying double-digit number. If they even failed to identify double-digit number, they reverted to identifying single- digit number. Overall, 0.5% school girls reached the benchmark of completing the final subtask.

The breakdown of the girls by their characteristic sub-group to measure numeracy showed that 36.1% girls between the age group (10-14) who had never been to school were categorised as ‘non-learners’; meaning that these girls were unable identify single- and double-digit number task correctly. Higher percentage (63.2%) girls between the age 10-14 and who had never been to school were categorised as ‘emergent learners.’ Following this, there were only 0.8% girls who were ‘established learners’, which meant that only lesser percentage of girls were able to subtraction level, and there were none of the girls from this subgroup who were proficient in mathematics, meaning that none of them could complete division problem.

For girls who dropped- out of school, 33.6% were ‘non-learners’, 58.8% were ‘emergent learners’, 5.9% were ‘established learners’ and 1.7% were ‘proficient learners.’

The fact that 1.7% girls who had dropped out of school could achieve the benchmark of completing the final subtask and were categorised as proficient learner showed that girls who had dropped out were comparatively better than those who had never been to school.

### Numeracy (Mathematics) proficiency across Baseline

Age Group	Sub Group	Non-Learner	Emergent-Learner	Established - Learner	Proficient - Learner
10-14 (n=252)	Never been to school	12% (48)	21% (84)	0.25% (1)	0
	Drop out	8% (32)	17.25% (69)	1.75% (7)	0.50% (2)
15-19 (n=148)	Never been to school	8.5% (34)	10.75% (43)	0	0
	Drop out	4.75% (19)	11% (44)	0.5% (2)	0
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
(n=400)	Muslim	9.25% (37)	15.25% (61)	1% (4)	0.25% (1)
	Non Muslim	27.25% (109)	45.25% (181)	1.5% (6)	0.25% (1)

In regards to age group (15-19), who had never been to school, 36.1% were ‘non-learners’, and 63.2% were ‘emergent learners.’ No girls from this subgroup progressed to the category of ‘established or proficient learners. For the dropped-out girls of the same age range, 38.8% were ‘non-learners’, 63.4% were ‘emergent learners’, and 2.8% were ‘established learners.’ The

disaggregated data based on girls' mathematics proficiency, and their school status showed non-significant relationship, meaning that it could have happened by chance.

In regards to girls of Muslim ethnicity, the percentage of Muslim as non-learners (35.9%) were lower than the percentage of non-Muslim (36.7%). However, Non-Muslim girls had higher percentage (60.5%) of 'emergent learners' than Muslim girls (59.7%). Although Non-Muslim girls had higher percentage of 'non-learners' than Muslim girls, in the end, only 0.5% girl was categorised as proficient for both Muslim and non-Muslim ethnicity, meaning that 0.5% girls from both Muslim and non-muslim achieved the benchmarking of completing the final subtask.

The overall numeracy finding showed that there is a good chance of improvement for girls in numeracy if the facilitators invest more time in teaching, and if project provided the teaching materials on time. Since many girls attended CLC class with the aim of opening a tailoring shop or starting a business, they will need Mathematics skills. Hence it would be effective if CLC facilitators could link mathematics and its relevance to daily life to encourage girls.

### Skill gap analysis

Data depicted that 33% girls belonged to 'non-learner' category, meaning that they could not identify even a single letter. There were only 0.5% girls who were proficient in mathematics. 3% girls were established learners. Most of the girls (50.5%) had proficiency level of as "emergent learner" in mathematics.

3 Digit Identification		Identified 1-digit number	
Start of the question	13% (52)	Emergent Learner	11.5% (46)
Subtraction		Identified 2-digit number	
Established learner	3% (12)	Emergent Learner	39% (156)
Division			
Proficient Learner	0.5% (2)	Non learner	33% (132)

### Learning outcome by key characteristics and barrier

#### Key subgroups Nepali

Key characteristics	No Learner (n=209)	Emergent Learner (n=166)	Established Learner (n=10)	Proficient Learner (n=15)
Girls with children (n=54)	16.7%	9.6%	20.0%	6.7%
Head of household has no/ limited education (n=364)	95.7%	94.0%	70.0%	66.7%
Households having 5 or more than 5 members (n=370 )	95.2%	94.6%	100.0%	100.0%
Household not having land for themselves (n=161)	45.9%	36.7%	10.0%	40.0%
Roof made of hay (n=131 )	35.4%	31.3%	30.0%	26.7%
Unable to meet basic needs (n=210 )	54.5%	52.4%	40.0%	46.7%

Gone hungry to sleep many days in the past year (n=281)	70.3%	77.7%	50.0%	53.3%
Poor household (n=287)	73.2%	75.3%	50.0%	66.7%
Has to perform household chores most of the day (n=288)	75.6%	72.3%	70.0%	53.3%
Fairly unsafe or very unsafe to travel to school (n=202 )	52.2% (109)	51.2% (85)	70.0%	40.0%

### Learning outcome by key characteristics and barrier

#### Key subgroups English

Key characteristics	No Learner (n=285)	Emergent Learner (n=113)	Established Learner (n=0)	Proficient Learner (n=2)
Girls with children (n=54)	15.1%	9.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Head of household has no/ limited education (n=364)	95.1%	88.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Households having 5 or more than 5 members (n=370 )	94.7%	96.5%	0.0%	50.0%
Household not having land for themselves (n=161)	46.3%	27.4%	0.0%	50.0%
Roof made of hay (n=131 )	36.8%	24.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Unable to meet basic needs (n=210 )	54.7%	49.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Gone hungry to sleep many days in the past year (n=281)	73.0%	70.8%	0.0%	50.0%
Poor household (n=287)	75.4%	67.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Has to perform household chores most of the day (n=288)	77.2%	63.7%	0.0%	50.0%
Fairly unsafe or very unsafe to travel to school (n=202 )	50.5%	54.9%	0.0%	50.0%

### Learning outcome by key characteristics and barrier

#### Key subgroups Mathematics

	No Learner (n=146)	Emergent Learner (n=242)	Established Learner (n=10)	Proficient Learner (n=2)
Girls with children (n=54)	17.8%	11.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Head of household has no/ limited education (n=364)	97.9%	91.3%	70.0%	100.0%
Households having 5 or more than 5 members (n=370 )	93.2%	96.7%	90.0%	100.0%
Household not having land for themselves (n=161)	49.3%	36.8%	30.0%	0.0%
Roof made of hay (n=131 )	32.9%	34.3%	20.0%	0.0%
Unable to meet basic needs (n=210 )	53.4%	54.5%	10.0%	50.0%
Gone hungry to sleep many days in the past year (n=281)	73.3%	71.9%	70.0%	50.0%
Poor household (n=287)	76.0%	72.7%	40.0%	100.0%
Has to perform household chores most of the day (n=288)	71.9%	75.6%	40.0%	50.0%

Fairly unsafe or very unsafe to travel to school (n=202 )	54.1%	50.8%	40.0%	50.0%
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## Annex 6: Beneficiaries tables

The project’s direct beneficiaries include married and unmarried/out-of-school adolescent (10-19 years) girls of Province 2. Based on the project’s marginalization framework, the following inclusion criteria were used to select the primary beneficiaries:

- Age: 10-19 years
- Age: 10-14 years: Married and Unmarried OOS adolescent girls
- Age: 15-19 years: Married OOS adolescent girls
- Marital Status: married and unmarried or in a union or is waiting for “Gauna” ceremony
- School Status: out-of-school girls who have never attended school, out-of-school girls who have attended schools but have dropped out
- Residence: living in the project target area

In some communities in the Tarai region of Nepal, marriages happen in two stages, a formal marriage ceremony first, followed some years later by a ceremony called a *gauna*. *Gauna* takes place mostly after bride reaches her puberty. The bride only after *gauna* goes to live with her husband and in-laws, and the marriage is consummated only after the ceremony.

The number of targeted primary beneficiaries of Aarambha is further outlined in table 1.

With regards to Cohort 2, the initial identification of primary beneficiaries was conducted through communication with schools, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV), health posts, and local authorities including local and ward level representatives and officials. Further identification and verification were conducted by the People in Need on the household level during pre-baseline. The beneficiaries identified during pre-baseline were enrolled in the Community Learning Centres (CLCs) by the project team, during which further verification of the eligibility was done.

**Table 7.1: Direct beneficiaries**

Beneficiary type	Total project number	Total number of girls targeted between baseline and endline	Comment
<b>Direct beneficiaries of Cohort 2 include married/out of school adolescent girls</b>	Overall target is 8500 Girls	2125	Project will reach the overall target in 4 Cohorts. Each Cohort will have baseline and endline so no midline between the project.

**Table 7.2: Other beneficiaries (Total over lifetime of the project)**

Beneficiary type	Number	Comments
<b>Learning beneficiaries (boys)</b> – as above, but specifically counting boys who will get the same exposure and therefore be expected to also achieve learning gains, if applicable.	NA	
<b>Broader student beneficiaries (boys)</b> – boys who will benefit from the interventions in a less direct way, and therefore may benefit from aspects such as attitudinal change, etc. but not necessarily achieve improvements in learning outcomes.	4000 boys	200 of these boys would also be those out of school
<b>Broader student beneficiaries (girls)</b> – girls who will benefit from the interventions in a less direct way, and therefore may benefit from aspects such as attitudinal change, etc. but not necessarily achieve improvements in learning outcomes.	4000 girls	200 of these girls would also be those out of school
<b>Teacher beneficiaries</b> – number of teachers who benefit from training or related interventions. If possible /applicable, please disaggregate by gender and type of training, with the comments box used to describe the type of training provided.	400 teachers	
<b>Broader community beneficiaries (adults)</b> – adults who benefit from broader interventions, such as community messaging /dialogues, community advocacy, economic empowerment interventions, etc.	8500 Family members 280 Community gatekeepers 1134 Women-led community networks and other active literate women from the community 400 Young male community members 300 Government authorities and 700 Community members	



**Table 7.3: Target groups - by school**

	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
School Age			
Lower primary	NA	NA	
Upper primary	NA	NA	
Lower secondary	NA	NA	
Upper secondary	NA	NA	
<b>Total:</b>			

**Table 7.4: Target groups - by age**

	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Age Groups			
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	NA	NA	
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	√	361 (This # do not include age 9)	
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	√	593	
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	√	723	
Aged 16-17 (% aged 16-17)	√	122	
Aged 18-19 (% aged 18-19)	√	326	
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	NA	NA	
<b>Total:</b>		<b>2125</b>	

**Table 7.5: Target groups - by sub group**

	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Social Groups			
Disabled girls (please disaggregate by domain of difficulty)	√	68 (This # was identified through the	

<b>Social Groups</b>	<b>Project definition of target group</b> (Tick where appropriate)	<b>Number targeted through project interventions</b>	<b>Sample size of target group at endline</b>
		administration of Washington Group/UNICEF Child Functioning Module)	
Seeing		17	
Hearing		9	
Walking		13	
Self-care		21	
Communication		14	
Learning		13	
Remembering		12	
Concentrating		9	
Accepting Change		6	
Controlling Behaviour		4	
Making Friends		18	
Anxiety		42	
Depression		37	
Orphaned girls	NA	NA	NA
Pastoralist girls	NA	NA	NA
Child labourers	NA	NA	NA
Poor girls	NA	NA	NA
Other (please describe)	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total:</b>		<b>68*</b> *some girls have multiple form of functional limitations	

**Table7.6: Target groups - by school status**

<b>Educational sub-groups</b>	<b>Project definition of target group</b>	<b>Number targeted</b>	<b>Sample size of target group at endline</b>
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	(Tick where appropriate)	through project interventions	
Out-of-school girls: have never attended school	√	1298	182
Out-of-school girls: have attended school, but dropped out	√	827	218
Girls in-school	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total:</b>		<b>2125</b>	

## 1.4 Comments on program

### *1.4.1 Data collected for direct beneficiaries*

The project is primarily working with Unmarried and married Out of School (OOS) girls (with or without children) between 10 to 19 years of age. These girls have either dropped out of school or have never been to school.

Initially, the project had envisioned identifying 2125 (OOS) girls from two rural municipalities, each from Bara and Rautahat districts, which would constitute 60% and 40% of girls between the age group 10-14 and 15-19 respectively. The assumption of the project to enroll 60% of girls of age 10-14 years, and remaining 40% of the beneficiary target for 15-19 age group was to increase the interest of girls to mainstream education.

### *1.4.2 Accurate age of beneficiaries, and challenges encountered when capturing age of the beneficiaries*

Recording girls' age is difficult during the enrolment because many girls did not know their own age. Even most of the parents of these OOS girls did not know the exact age. This was because parents did not keep track of the age when the girls were born. When respondents could not mention their age or when the age specified by the respondent appeared skeptical, enumerators asked parents their year of marriage and after how long they gave birth to their first child. The difference of the current year and the year of the first child was the correct age of the OOS girl.

Moreover, in most cases, parents who could not tell the age could tell the year of birth from which actual age was derived.

### *1.4.3 Reliability of proposed number of beneficiaries*

The project aims to reach to 8500 M-OOS adolescent girls by the end of the project in a duration of 4 years; which makes up reaching to 2125 girls each year. As this is education project and key objectives of this non-formal education is to mainstream these girls and groups in to formal education. Thus, in transition phase, project aim to transit more than 60% of girls in formal

education in line to their learning achievement and specific ages. The initial identification of the beneficiaries was done through pre-baseline survey after which the re-verification was done by the project team which allowed confirmation that each beneficiary met the selection criteria. The sample 400 girls were calculated thereafter where the sample represented at least 50% of the learning centres. Furthermore, to calculate the sample for each of the sub-groups as defined by the project the sample for each sub-group was drawn from total number of beneficiaries and was divided proportionately among each subgroup. The subgroups are as follows:

- OOS adolescent girls who are married /unmarried and have never been to school of age 10-14
- OOS adolescent girl who are married and have never been to school of age 15-19
- OOS adolescent girls who are married /unmarried and dropped out from certain grade of age 10-14
- OOS adolescent girls are married who dropped out from certain grade of age 15-19

This ensured that the sample was representative and reliable for the analysis.

## Annex 11: External Evaluator Declaration

**Name of project:** Aarambha Project- Baseline Cohort II

**Name of External evaluator and contact information:**

Foundation for Development Management

Level II, JDA Complex (adjoining China Town building, China Town Rd)

Kathmandu 44600

Nepal

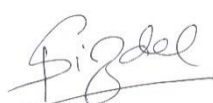
[info@fdm.com.np](mailto:info@fdm.com.np) , [infooffdm@gmail.com](mailto:infooffdm@gmail.com)

**Names of all members of the evaluation team:** Aashika Sharma, Kaleli Nyaichai, Deepa Shrestha, Swechhya Bhattarai.

I, Shailendra Sigdel, certify that the independent evaluation has been conducted in line with the Terms of Reference and other requirements received.

Specifically:

- All of the quantitative data was collected independently by the EE.
- All data analysis was conducted independently by the EE and provides a fair and consistent representation of progress (Initials: SS).
- Data quality assurance and verification mechanisms agreed in the terms of reference with the project have been soundly followed (Initials: SS).
- The recipient has not fundamentally altered or misrepresented the nature of the analysis originally provided by FDM (Initials SS).
- All child protection protocols and guidance have been followed ((initials: SS).
- Data has been anonymised, treated confidentially and stored safely, in line with the GEC data protection and ethics protocols (Initials: SS).



**Shailendra Sigdel**

**Professional Lead**

**Foundation for Development Management Pvt. Ltd.**

## Annex 12: Useful Resources

- ASER tool was developed by ASER Nepal, a member of People's Action for Learning Network (PAL), a global network which is a partnership of countries working across three continents to assess basic reading and math competencies. The tool has been piloted numerous times before standardizing it by ASER Nepal. It is standardized for measuring the proficiency of students up to grade level 3 according to the curriculum of Nepal government. <https://palnetwork.org/aser-nepal/>  
<http://www.arcanalysis.com.np>
- Ministry of Health ,2016. Nepal Demographic and Health Survey. Retrieved from <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr336/fr336.pdf>
- UNFPA. Policy Brief 2016. Ending Impunity for Child Marriage in Nepal. Retrieved from [https://nepal.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Ending%20Impunity%20for%20Child%20marriage%28final%29\\_25Nov16.pdf](https://nepal.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Ending%20Impunity%20for%20Child%20marriage%28final%29_25Nov16.pdf)
- <https://www.nepalitimes.com/from-the-nepali-press/alarming-rise-in-violence-against-women/>
- <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/mediaperson-arrested-on-the-charge-of-attempting-to-rape-teenager-in-bara>
- <https://kathmandupost.com/province-no-2/2019/09/07/yet-another-acid-attack-badly-injures-15-year-old-girl>

## **Annex 13: Project Management Response**

### **1. What is the project's response to the key findings in the report? Make sure to refer to main conclusions**

This is an opportunity to describe where the project feels the evaluation findings have confirmed or challenged existing understanding and/or added nuance to what was already known. For instance, have findings shed new light on relationships between outputs, intermediate outcomes, and outcomes and the significance of barriers for certain groups of girls – and how these can be overcome? This should include critical analysis and reflection on the project theory of change and the assumptions that underpin it.

Baseline findings have covered things well describing lessons learnt, challenges, conclusion and recommendation. Project has implemented most of the activities during cohort II in about 6 months as of COVID-19 and meeting the timeline of government school education calendar. This brought some challenges in the areas of outcome level like learning, transition and sustainability. Project had to be specific during cohort II as it required to complete teaching learning before school enrolment campaign that supported to girls transition as per their pathways. At this stage, project again replicated distant teaching learning approach to continue learnings during nation lockdown. Small group teaching learning was continued targeting low performing girls and absentees. During this time, most of school and community level intervention were kept on hold considering the criticality of pandemic and radio program was prioritized to reach beneficiaries that showed some best practices which required to replicated further.

### **2. What is the project's response to the conclusions and recommendations in the report?**

The management response should respond to the each of the external evaluator's recommendations that are relevant to the grantee organization. The response should make clear what changes and adaptations to implementation will be proposed as a result of the recommendations and which ones are not considered appropriate, providing a clear explanation why.

Based on findings, conclusion and recommendations, project has made short terms and longer terms plan to incorporate the given recommendations. Project has made certain changes and adapted suggestion by increasing timeline of learning centers from 6 to 8 months, low performing girls to be prioritized and additional time is allocated along with learning centres will be equipped by teaching learning materials that can support to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills further during cohort 3 including updating of seasonal calendar to ensure girls attendance. Additionally, new facilitators will be selected for continuation of life skills and will be trained effectively. Girls and Inclusive Education network in school and in local level will be formed to support in addressing girl's education initiatives along with GBV, child protection, gender sensitive schools and to laise to improve system level by engaging with school, community and local governance. Based on findings, gender transformative approach will be targeted for school girls, boys, teachers, parents and stakeholders including stakeholders from local government for their engagement towards girl's education. Additionally, local government elected representatives and officials will be well oriented via workshop, joint monitoring, review workshop and report sharing mechanism to ensure their participation and ownership to the intervention. Further, project will laise with them during local level planning process to incorporate such practices in their local level plan.

3. **Does the external evaluator's conclusion of the projects' approach to addressing gender inequalities across activities correspond to the projects' ambitions and objectives?**

Going with the findings as stated, girl's access to learning and their learning achievement during cohort II and in the time of COVID-19 is challenging to achieve set target within 6 months. This is rightly figured out which shows project required to plan to revise and add some more time to strengthen girl's learnings and support to transition. Similarly, community level indicator focused on changing people's attitude is found negative towards delay in marriage and to support girls in their life plans along with enabling gender sensitive environment in schools in which during cohort II, project was unable to start the intervention. Considering these learnings, project has defined specific community level engagement and prepared for school level gender transformative intervention to address these barriers.

4. **What is the project's response to any GESI risks identified by the evaluator?**

Enabling gender sensitive teaching learning environment in schools that might further leads to girls drop out even after they are enrolled, change in people's attitude towards girls and their transitional pathways along with existing deep-rooted social norms/child marriage, learning proficiency as of limited timeline of learning centers and access during pandemic were some of learnings and project limitations to implement during pandemic. Further, project have taken this consideration effectively and have planned to increase timeline of learning centers, small group teaching learning for low performing and having low attendance, Girls and Inclusive Education network in school and in local government to be formed and mobilized to address GESI and girls' education issues addressing social norms and schools will be prioritized for GESI sensitive interventions.

5. **What changes to the log-frame will be proposed to DFID and the fund manager?**

The management response should outline any changes that the project is proposing to do following any emergent findings from the baseline evaluation. This exercise is not limited to outcomes and intermediate outcomes but extends also to outputs.

Based on our project implementation experience and recommendations in the baseline report, project has learned lessons that some of the indicators and targets are not quite realistic and relevant. For instance, some of the indicators were proxy and were not easy to measure progress, while some targets were also not realistic and achievable. So, going forward, the project proposes that the log-frame should be customized to project intervention and ensured it is SMART. Also, project will ensure log-frame indicators will be fully measured, reflected upon for better learning, accountability and measuring effectiveness and efficiency of project interventions and results.

2. **What are the project's reflections on the ambition of the project?**

Given the learning base levels and characteristics of beneficiaries presented, does the project propose to change its learning and/or transition pathways and targets originally articulated?



In line with the findings of this report, project needs to reassess the ambitions set for the learning level of girls and similarly requires to define one more pathway as some girls want to graduate from learning centres by completing basic teaching and learning. As project needs to focus on different cohorts and reach out to new girls, thus setting up learning level and target is required building on these baseline learnings.